

January 27, 2010

To: Interested Parties
From: Ben Tulchin and Julie Lein, Tulchin Research
Re: **Pennsylvania Statewide Survey Finds Strong Support for Quality Early Childhood Education**

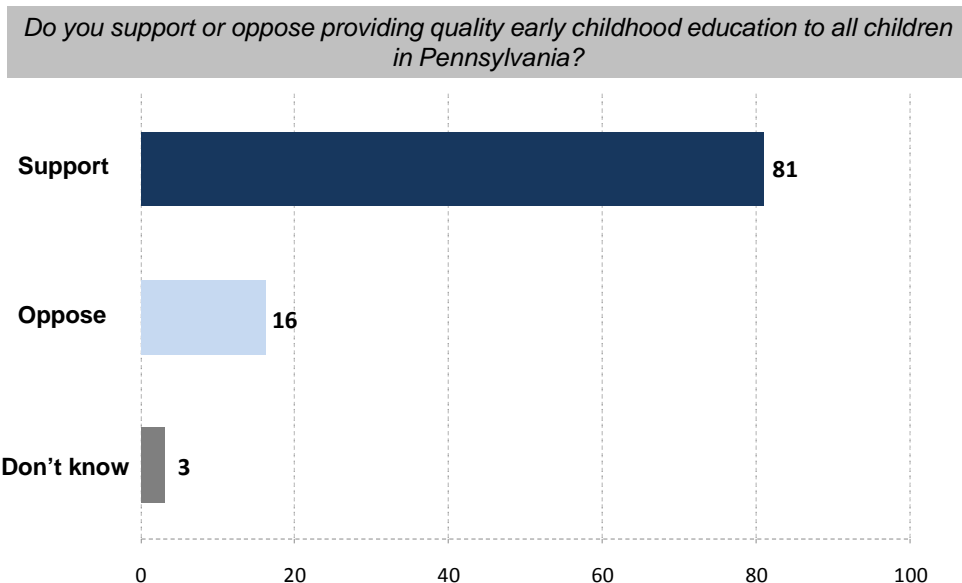
Summary

Even with severe budgetary constraints facing their state, Pennsylvania voters strongly believe quality early childhood education should be a top priority for state lawmakers. An overwhelming majority of voters – across all regions of the state – support continued government investment in quality early childhood education. Voters also strongly oppose rolling back the progress the legislature has made on the issue. A majority of voters say they are even more likely to support investment when informed of the long-term economic benefits of quality early childhood education: budgetary savings through reductions in criminal activity, remedial education, and high-school drop-out rates.

Strong Support for Quality Early Childhood Education Across Pennsylvania

A recent survey found overwhelming support for quality early childhood education throughout the state. Specifically, over four in five voters (81%) support providing early childhood education to all children in Pennsylvania. In contrast, only one out of six voters (16%) oppose it and even fewer (3%) do not have an opinion.

Statewide Support for Quality Early Childhood Education



Pennsylvania Statewide Survey Finds Strong Support for Quality Early Childhood Education

From Erie to Philadelphia, support of quality early childhood education programs is consistent across the state.

- In the T, the rural swath of the state outside of Pittsburgh and Philadelphia, voters indicate strong support for quality early childhood education, with 88 percent in the Scranton- Wilkes Barre media market, 81 percent in Johnstown-Altoona, and 69 percent in Harrisburg-Lancaster-York favoring the programs;
- In Western Pennsylvania, three in four voters (75%) in the Pittsburgh media market favor early childhood education;
- In Southeastern Pennsylvania, over four in five voters (81%) favor early childhood education, including an overwhelming 96 percent in Philadelphia, 80 percent in the suburbs, and 87 percent in the Berks-Lehigh area.

Support for Quality Early Childhood Education by Region			
	Support	Oppose	Don't know
All voters	81%	16%	3%
Southeastern PA	82%	16%	2%
Philadelphia	96%	4%	0%
Inner Suburbs	80%	17%	2%
Berks – Lehigh	87%	13%	0%
Pittsburgh	75%	22%	3%
Scranton- Wilkes Barre	88%	10%	2%
Johnstown – Altoona	81%	18%	2%
Harrisburg – Lancaster – York	69%	20%	11%

Support for the programs also crosses ideological lines. Approximately seven in ten conservatives (70%) favor quality early childhood programs, while nine in ten self-described liberals (92%) and moderates (88%) also express support.

Support for Quality Early Childhood Education by Ideology			
	Support	Oppose	Don't know
Liberals	92%	7%	1%
Moderates	88%	11%	1%
Conservatives	70%	26%	4%

Voters Want Government to Help Provide this Service

Not only do voters strongly favor quality early childhood education, but they want the government to help fund this service. Specifically, by nearly a three-to-one margin, Pennsylvania voters believe that government should fund quality early childhood education to children in the state (71% in favor – 26% opposed).

Support for Investment in Quality Early Childhood Education		
<i>Should the government help fund quality early childhood education to children in the state?</i>		
Yes	No	Don't know
71%	26%	4%

Pennsylvania Statewide Survey Finds Strong Support for Quality Early Childhood Education

Voters express a commitment to continue the investment Pennsylvania has already made, with three in four voters (75%) favoring reliable and affordable education for children in quality early childhood education programs.

Voters also firmly oppose cutting funding for quality early childhood education programs for children 0 to 5 years of age in order to balance the state's budget. Even in the context of addressing Pennsylvania's budget deficit, three in five voters (62%) oppose slashing funds for early childhood education, with only one in three voters (33%) in support. The two-to-one margin is indicative of voter priorities toward maintaining funds for these programs.

The Positive Outcomes of Quality Early Childhood Education Increase Support for the Cause

When informed of quality early childhood education's long term economic benefits and future cost savings, an overwhelming majority of voters say they are more likely to support the cause. Voters reported they were more likely to favor quality early childhood education after learning that the programs have been shown to:

- Reduce high school drop-out rates (69% more likely);
- Save money through reduction in criminal activity and remedial education (68% more likely);
- Reduce incarceration rates by 50 percent (67% more likely); and
- Reap higher rates of return than other social investments (67% more likely).

Reasons for Supporting Quality Early Childhood Education Programs	
	Reporting More Willingness to Support
<i>High quality early childhood education programs can reduce high school drop-out rates.</i>	69%
<i>According to the Federal Reserve Bank, for every dollar Pennsylvania spends on quality early childhood education, society reaps a return of up to 17 dollars through reduction in criminal activity, remedial education, and public assistance costs.</i>	68%
<i>High quality early childhood education reduces incarceration rates by 50 percent.</i>	67%
<i>According to leading economists, investments in high quality early education programs have the highest rate of return of any social investment.</i>	67%

Methodology

Delaware Valley Association for the Education of Young Children (DVAEYC), Pennsylvania Association for the Education of Young Children (PennAEYC) and the Pittsburgh Association for the Education of Young Children (PAEYC) hired Tulchin Research to conduct a poll measuring aspects of voter support for quality early childhood education across the state of Pennsylvania. From December 15 – December 20, Tulchin Research conducted a telephone survey of 650 likely voters in Pennsylvania, with 600 voters statewide and an oversample of 50 voters in the Southeastern PA. The margin of error is +/- 3.9 percentage points for the statewide sample.

Statistically valid results of this poll are available for most Pennsylvania media markets.
