

PRESS RELEASE

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New National Report Shows Texas in the Bottom Third for Kids in Preschool

In Texas, 67 percent of low-income 3- and 4-year-old children are not enrolled in preschool

AUSTIN, TEXAS— A new report released today by the Annie E. Casey Foundation shows Texas in the bottom third of states for the percentage of kids who attend preschool. *The First Eight Years: Building a Foundation for Lifetime Success* highlights why critical investments in children's early development are essential for effective transition to elementary school and continued success into adulthood.

In Texas, two-thirds (67 percent) of low-income 3 and 4 year olds are not enrolled in preschool. By the age of six, 2 in 3 of these children will not have had a single developmental screening by a doctor. Unfortunately, this means that we are unable to identify potential problems that can be targeted for early intervention.

Our nation has ignored decades of child development research that clearly shows our most vulnerable children are not receiving the social and emotional support they need. These early supports are necessary for children to acquire the foundational skills necessary for success in the classroom and beyond.

"With more than half of Texas 0-8 year olds living in low-income families, it is imperative that our kids get a strong early start that helps counteract the effects of poverty and our failure to sufficiently invest in our kids," said Texas KIDS COUNT Director, Frances Deviney, PhD.

Both national and Texas research show that high-quality public preschool programs can have a positive effect on early learning for both low and middle-income children in the short-term, positive societal effects long-term, and are a profitable investment by saving tax-payer money down the road.

'Texas' elimination of Pre-K expansion funding and the impact of the Federal Sequester on Head Start programs leaves a huge early learning hole for the kids who need it most," said Deviney. "You can't get returns on investments you don't make. And right now, we are actively cutting many of our investments in early childhood. That's penny wise and pound foolish for our kids and the long-term strength of our state."



Additional Texas-specific data is available in the [KIDS COUNT Data Center](#), which also contains the most recent data on hundreds of indicators of child well-being. The Data Center allows users to create rankings, maps and graphs for use in publications and on websites, and to view real-time information on mobile devices.

For More Information

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