

The Benefits of Early Learning

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Children and Families

City of Madison

November 18, 2009

Why Are These Folks Focusing on Early Childhood?

- Bill Gates & Warren Buffet Families
- James Heckman, Nobel Laureate
- Committee for Economic Development
- Ben Bernanke, Federal Reserve Chairman
- National Governor's Association

Focus of Presentation

- Research: Importance of First 5 Years
- Challenge: Changes in Society
- Good News: Early Education Works
- Agenda for Wisconsin
- Latest Developments: Federal

1. Research on the First 5 Years

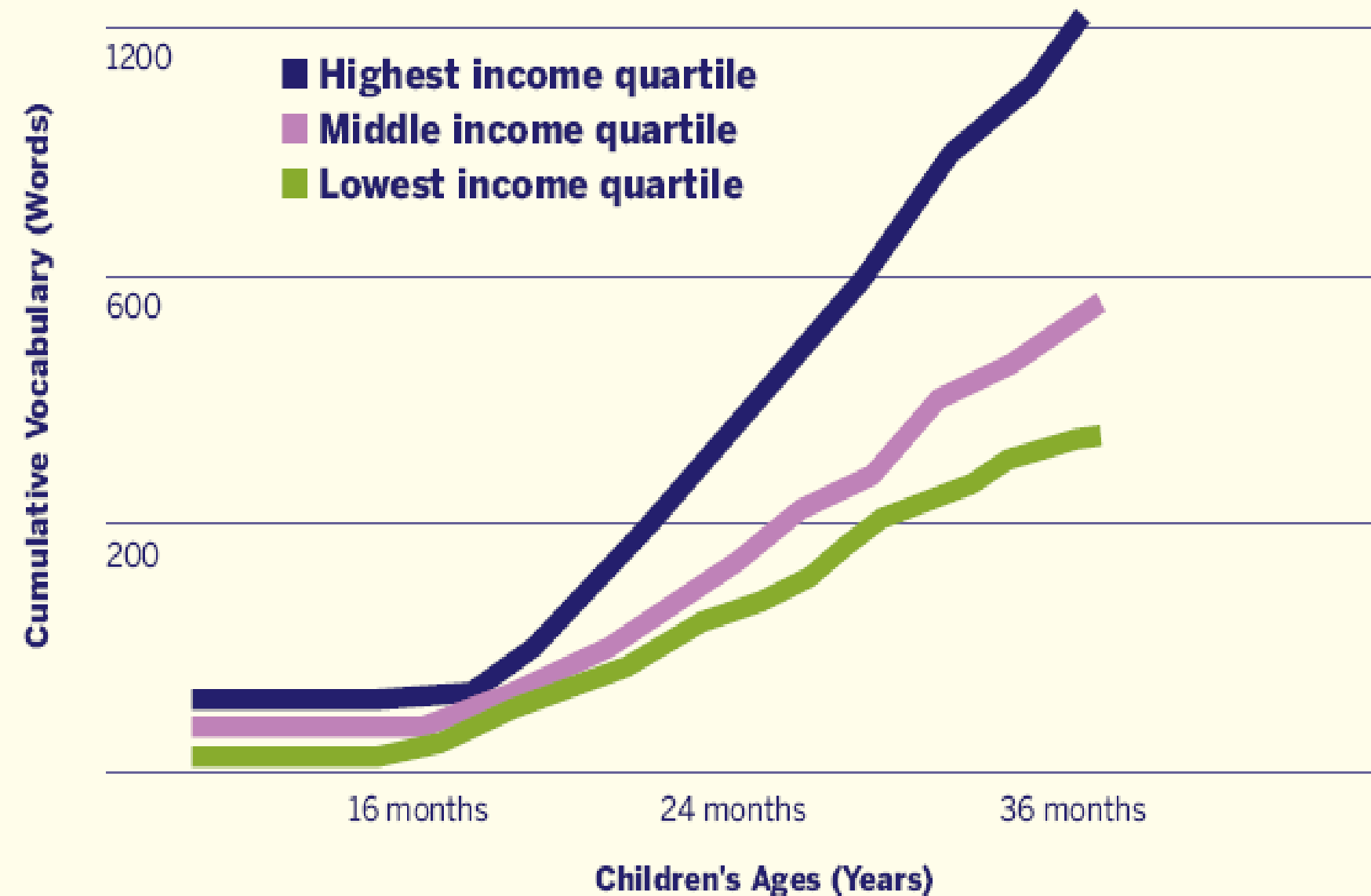
Brain development research shows:

- Foundation for all future learning & behavior
- 85% of the foundation of a child's intellect, personality and skills
- Educational gaps are more difficult and costly to correct later

School Achievement Gap

- Disadvantaged children fall behind at an early age- way before they enter school
- Early gap difficult to fix– they never catch up

Disparities in Early Vocabulary Growth



Source: Hart & Risley (1995)

Language Development = Reading Challenge

Extraordinary Finding:

Parents in disadvantaged families have less cumulative monthly vocabularies on average than the **children** in high income families

(Hart and Risley, 1995)

Vocabulary & School Success

"Vocabulary at age 3 predicts first grade reading success; first grade vocabulary predicts eleventh grade reading level..."

Andrew Biemiller, Vocabulary Development and Instruction: A Prerequisite for School Learning, Handbook of Early Literacy Research (Volume 2), New York, NY: Guilford Press 2005.

3. Good News: Early Education Works

“Investments in high-quality early education programs have the highest rate of return of any social investment”

- James Heckman, University of Chicago
Economist and Nobel Laureate

High Quality Early Care and Education: a High Yield Investment

Research Evidence: most notable 3
studies— rigorous longitudinal research

1. High/Scope Perry Preschool Project
2. Abecedarian Study
3. Chicago Child-Parent Centers

Key Features

- High quality well-designed programs with well-qualified staff with parent engagement
- At-risk populations
- Rigorous scientific methods used

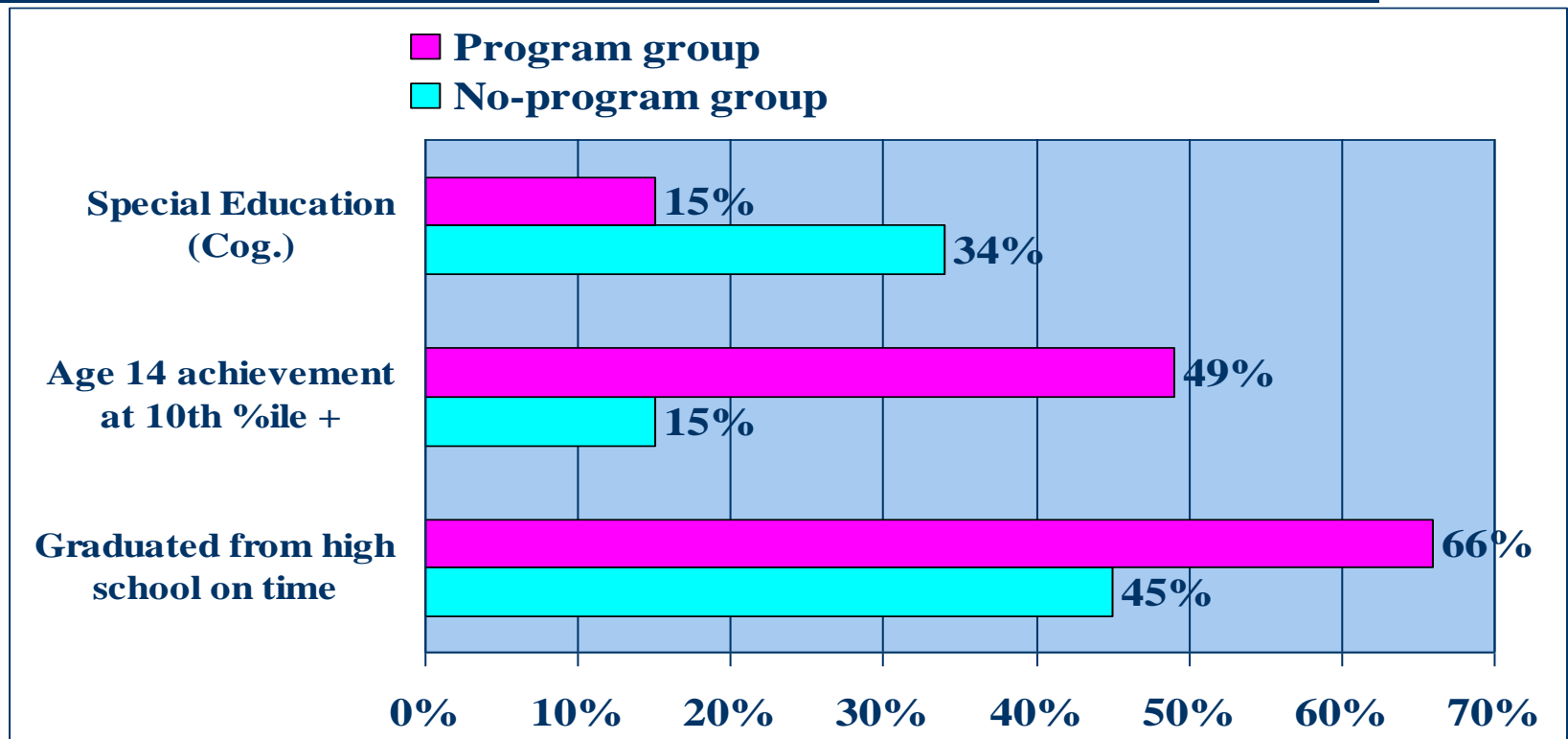
High/Scope Perry Preschool

At 40 years old:

Economic return:

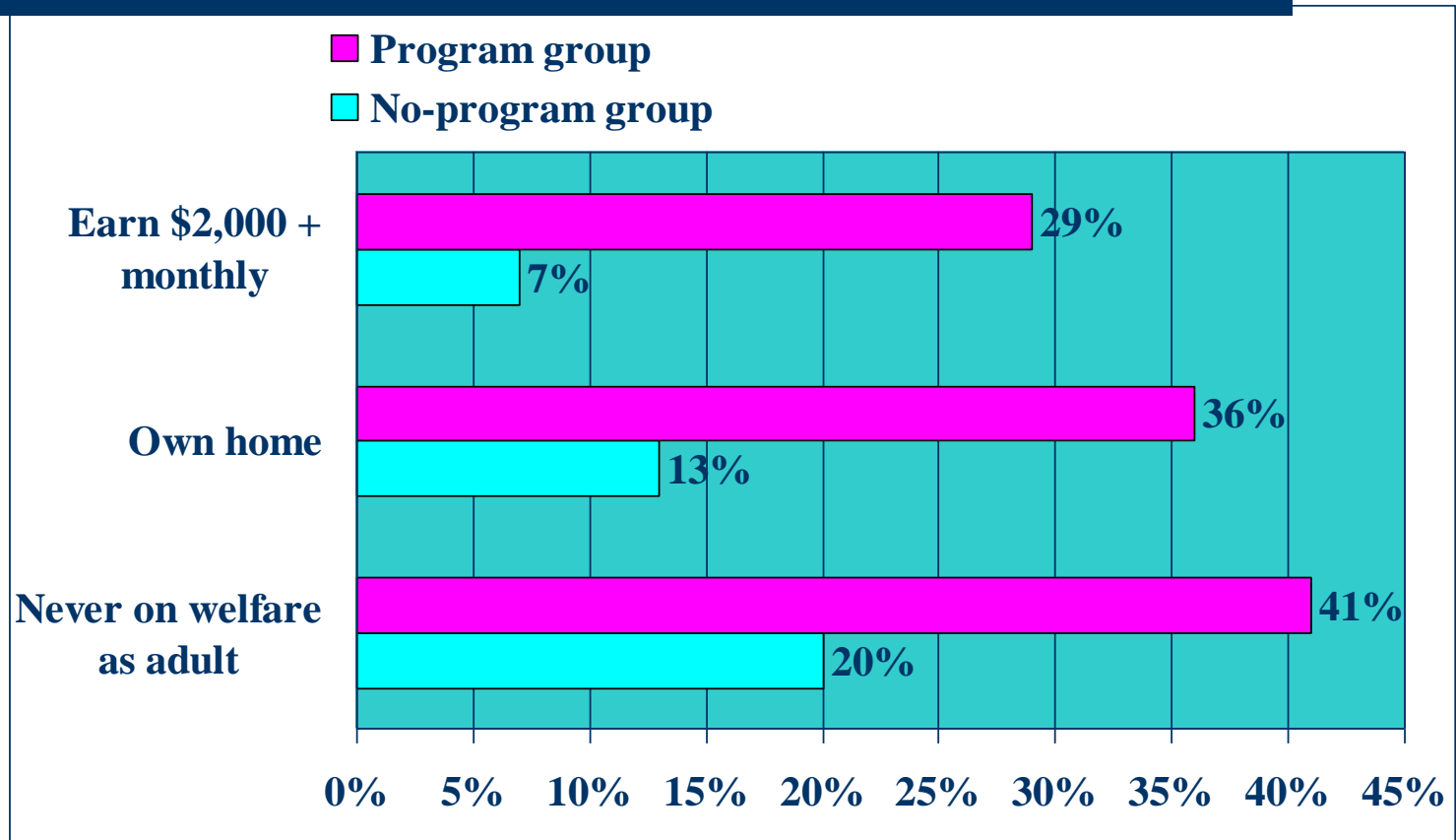
\$16 for every dollar invested

High/Scope Perry Preschool: Educational Effects



-Clement, J.R., Schweinhart, L.J., Barnett, W.S., Epstein, A.S., & Weikart, D.P. (1984). *Changed lives: The effects of the Perry Preschool Program on children through age 19*. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.

High/Scope Perry Preschool: Economic Effects at Age 27



Barnett, W.S. (1996). *Lives in the balance: Benefit-cost analysis of the Perry Preschool Program through age 27*. Monographs of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation. Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Press.

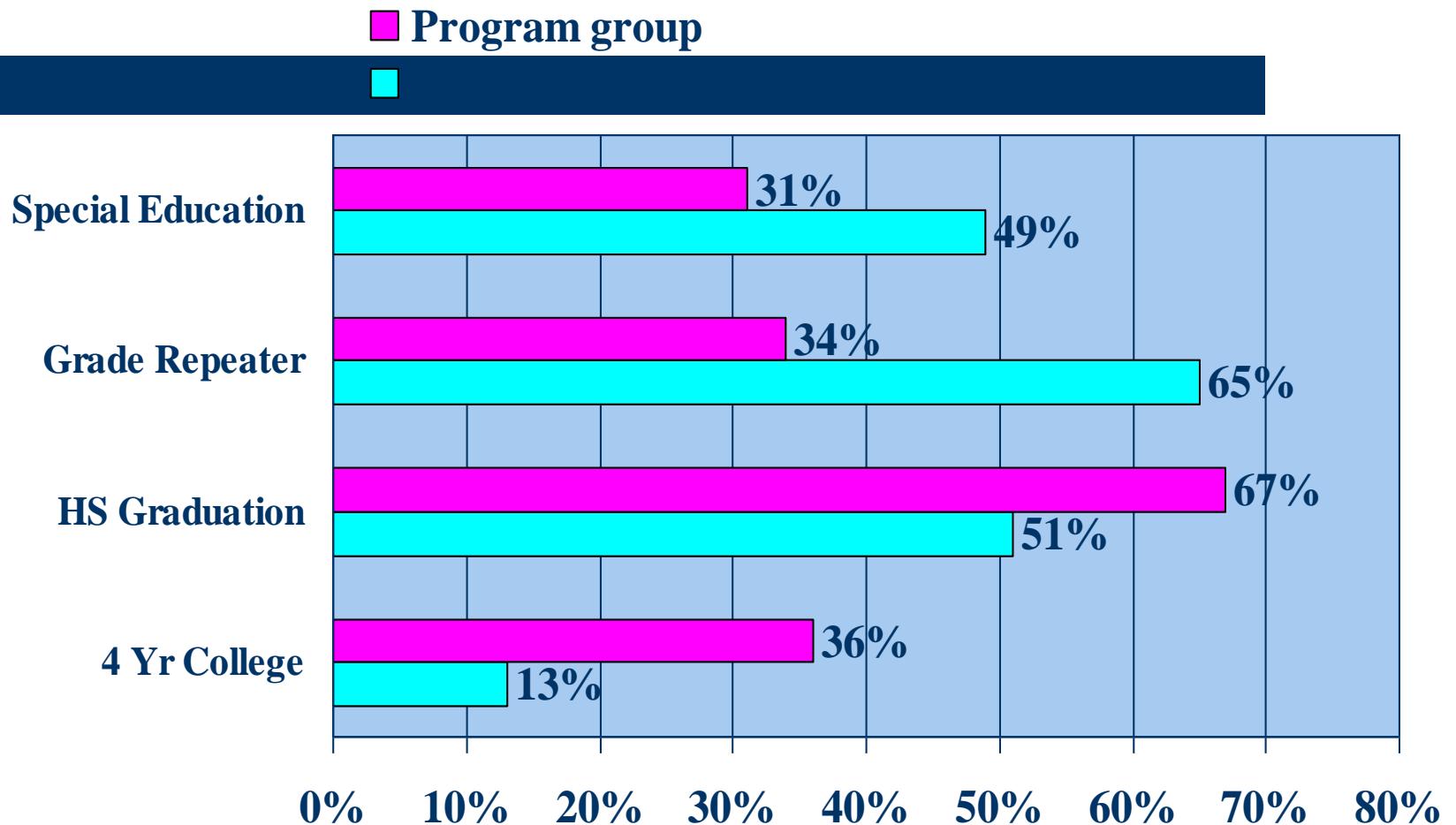
Abecedarian Study

At age 21, researchers found:

Economic return:

\$ 2.50 for every dollar invested

Abecedarian : Academic Benefits

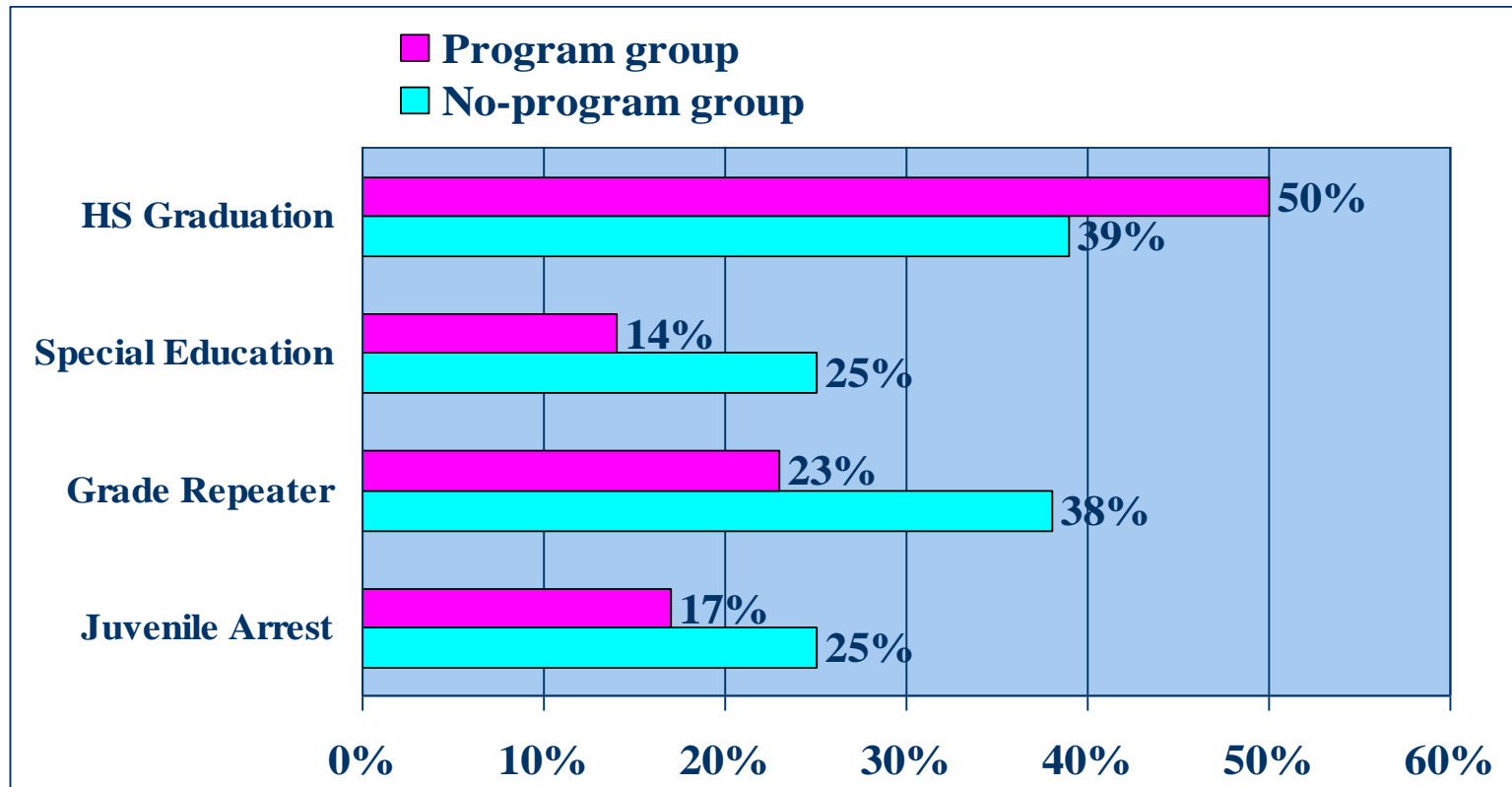


Chicago Child-Parent Centers

Economic return:

\$10 for every dollar invested

Chicago CPC: Academic and Social Benefits at School Exit



Temple, J. A., & Reynolds, A. J. (2007). Benefits and costs of investments in preschool education: Evidence from the Child-Parent Centers and related programs. *Economics of Education Review*, 26(1), 126-144

Ingredients to Good ECE Outcomes

- Well-trained and well-compensated staff
- Small class sizes and low child-teacher ratios
- Parent involvement
- Clear approach to learning and development –focus on rich interactions
- Strong program to promote healthy & safe children

Besides the big three, many other studies have found similar outcomes

Why Do High-Quality Early Childhood Programs Have So Much Impact?

- First 5 years are so critical – hard to catch up later
- Ellen Galinsky in CED paper:
Q: Why did these programs work?
A: Helped to inoculate children against school failure

Caution

- High rates of return likely to lessen as a program goes to scale
- Results are affected by the characteristics of children and families served and the level of quality and intensity of the program
- Minneapolis Federal Reserve estimates:
\$4 or \$5 for every dollar invested

Home visiting

- Research-based, well-designed home visiting programs targeted to poor families have strong outcomes for kids:
 - **Better health- children and parents**
 - **Higher language skills and achievement scores**
 - **Lower crime rates: children and parents**

Home Visiting Research

Nurse-Family Partnership

Cost: \$9,118

Benefit: \$26,298

\$1 invested yielded \$3 of benefits over time

Great progress determining which program elements are most effective.

Five Key National Home Visiting Programs

- Early Head Start
- Nurse-Family Partnership
- Parents as Teachers
- HIPPY (Home Instruction for Parents of Preschool Youngsters)
- Parent-Child Home Program

Note: Birth to 3 Intervention Program also has a strong component

2. What do we know about early care and education in Wisconsin?

- 1970: 40% of mothers of young children were in the workforce
- Today: 72 % of Wisconsin children under age 6 have all parents in the workforce
- Parents are caught in a squeeze:
 - Making a living
 - Raising their kids to be ready for school and life

Where are the Kids?

- Ages 3-5 About 60% in Early Care and Education (ECE) Settings out of home
- Ages Birth to 3: About 27% in ECE settings
- Of children in ECE settings, over 60% are in child care

2009 Survey of Milwaukee Kindergarten Teachers

- 97% said they can tell which children went to preschool
- 83% said attending an early learning program was very important for readiness
- Important readiness:
 - Social-emotional development
 - Communication and language skill
 - Learning capability
- Source: Public Policy Forum

How Good is the Quality?

Quality Research on Child Care: According to a 2002 study of Wisconsin child care centers participating in the child care subsidy program by the Wisconsin Child Care Research Partnership:

- **15%** were rated as good or excellent
- **74%** were rated mediocre
- **11%** were rated poor
- Ave. child care teacher has high school diploma and makes less than \$10 an hour

Why Isn't Child Care Quality Higher?

- Based on what parents can afford or willing to pay
- No real system in place (Madison is an exception)
- Often seen as a place to park kids so parents can work
- But these are crucial years for development

Does Wisconsin Measure Up?

- Fairly strong on access: 4K, Wisconsin Share child care subsidies, Head Start, Services to Children with Disabilities
- Major Gaps:
 - Lack of quality early learning for children in child care
 - Need early help to at-risk children and families—home visiting-

4. Agenda for Wisconsin: Invest Early

WCCF & Early Learning Coalition have an ongoing campaign:

Great Start: Early Learning Matters

All families should have voluntary access to services to help their children thrive in the early years

Agenda for 2009

WCCF and the Wisconsin Early Learning Coalition

- Improved early learning in child care settings.
Focus: children from low-income families

Working with DCF on QRIS proposal to the Legislature

- Expansion of home visiting programs for parents of newborns where there are risk factors (Early Head Start, Parents as Teachers, etc.)

No cuts in 2009-11 budget.

- Continuing expansion of 4-year-old Kindergarten, with emphasis on community-based models

4K start-up was continued

Child Care Subsidy Developments

Coalition primary agenda- improve early learning

However, last 2 budgets, weighed in strongly on WI Shares subsidy issues.

Legislative action:

2009-11: Added \$68 million

2007-09: Added \$70 million

Major proposals for cuts were rejected.

5. Latest Developments: Federal

Key initiatives under consideration:

- Early Learning Challenge Grants- new legislation
- Home Visiting – new legislation
- Head Start and Early Head Start- recent increase
- Child Care Block Grant- recent increase

SEE HANDOUT FOR DETAILS

What Can You Do?

- Join the Great Start: Early Learning Matters Campaign (handout available)

For More Information

Wisconsin Council on Children and Families:
www.wccf.org

Wisconsin Early Learning Coalition:
www.greatstartwi.org

To sign up for info:
<http://capwiz.com/wccf/mlm/signup/>