



PRESS RELEASE

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Universal Pre-K Program Would Pay for Itself in Just Eight Years

ALBUQUERQUE—Fact sheets released yesterday by the Economic Policy Institute (EPI) show that a high-quality pre-kindergarten program would provide New Mexico with major economic benefits in as little as eight years. The fact sheets are a follow-up to the report "Enriching Children, Enriching the Nation" released by the EPI in May. The report showed that, if implemented now, a voluntary pre-K program for all 3- and 4-year-olds would save New Mexicans more than \$1 billion in reduced crime costs in the year 2050. That's because a pre-K program sets children up for academic success, making them less likely to engage in criminal activity. Such a program would also benefit the state with \$2.2 billion in increased wages in 2050 because pre-K grads earn higher incomes as adults.

"This study is the first to look at the economic impacts of early childhood education," said Gerry Bradley, Research Director for New Mexico Voices for Children. "The projected annual cost is less than \$200 million, which is a relatively small amount in a state budget of more than \$5 billion. The fact that the program would pay for itself in just eight years makes implementing it a no-brainer," he added.

The fact sheets also show that a pre-K program targeting 3- and 4-years-old from low-income families would pay for itself in seven years. The report states that children who receive early child education are less likely to repeat a grade or require special education or child welfare services.

The study, written by well-known economist Robert Lynch, is available here: http://www.epi.org/content.cfm/book_enriching. The fact sheet for New Mexico, which is attached as a pdf, can also be downloaded here: <http://www.epi.org/books/enriching/states/nm.pdf>.

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New Mexico Voices for Children is a nonpartisan, nonprofit organization advocating for policies to improve the health and well-being of New Mexico's children, families and communities.
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