



# Early Childhood Care and Education Commission EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Louisiana is advancing a bold and ambitious early childhood care and education agenda to prepare young children for kindergarten and beyond, and to support our working families.

## THE NEED IS SIGNIFICANT, AS IS THE RETURN ON INVESTMENT.

- ✓ **Many young children in need:** There are 173,000 children in need<sup>1</sup>, birth to three years old, currently living in Louisiana.<sup>2</sup>
- ✓ **Many working families:** Two out of three children under the age of five have both parents or their single parent working.<sup>3</sup>
- ✓ **Few quality early care and education options:** A child's brain is 90 percent fully formed by age 5<sup>4</sup>. Yet, fewer than 7 percent of in need children birth to two years old and less than 33 percent of three year olds can access quality child care in Louisiana. Louisiana's economy lost \$1.1 billion due to absences related to child care breakdowns.<sup>5</sup>
- ✓ **Early care and education works: Significant research shows that for every \$1 invested in high quality early care, the state yields a \$7.30 return on investment.** Children who participate in high-quality early care and education programs are less likely to:
  - Require special education services, or be retained a grade in school
  - Dropout before high school graduation
  - Develop a chronic disease in adulthood or be engaged in the criminal justice system<sup>6</sup>

**Due to inadequate funding, the current system cannot meet the need, particularly for children birth through three. This gap negatively impacts children's learning and their families' participation in Louisiana's workforce.**

## INVESTING IN A BETTER FUTURE

Louisiana is scraping the bottom of US maternal and early childhood health outcomes, and has decreased workforce productivity and economic competitiveness<sup>7</sup>. Without investment in early care and education, Louisiana can expect more of the same.

With investment in early care and education through LA B to 3, Louisiana will be transformed in one generation.<sup>8</sup>

The Commission recommends an investment of \$85.8 million to create LA B to 3, and an increase of nearly that amount annually over the next decade. State investment should launch this effort with expanded, combined funding (local, state, federal, philanthropy) thereafter.

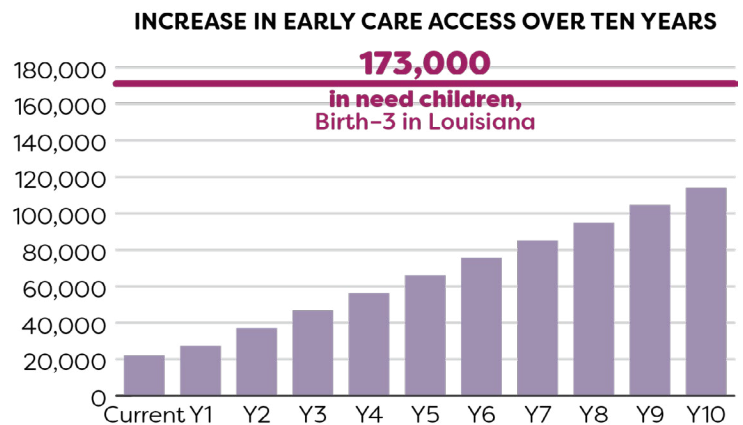
## THE SOLUTION: LEARNING FROM LOUISIANA'S PRIOR SUCCESS

**Louisiana created LA 4 and today 90% of four year olds in need have access to quality early learning.**

- ✓ The impact on learning is already being seen in Louisiana: Longitudinal research on Louisiana's Pre-K<sup>9</sup> students showed a decreased number of students repeating kindergarten, improving test scores, and reducing the need for special education placements.
- ✓ This investment occurred over 10 years so it was not an overnight success, but proves Louisiana can and has made these sizable, impactful investments.
- ✓ Louisiana needs to create LA B to 3, a commitment to serve children birth to three with the same high-quality care.

## FUNDS WILL:

- ✓ Expand quality seats to serve 114,000 Louisiana children in need, prioritizing children birth through three, an increase from only 22,000 children in that age range served today and
- ✓ Strengthen resources for all families, regardless of need, that support nurturing relationships with young children.



## WHAT CAN LOUISIANA'S POLICYMAKERS AND STATE PARTNERS DO TO ADDRESS THIS NEED?

- ✓ **Louisiana's future is tied to the success of its children. Commit to short- and long-term funding to implement LA B to 3.**

## FOOTNOTES

- 1 The term “in need,” used throughout the report, refers to families living at 200% of the Federal Poverty Level which is \$20,780 per year for a family of three.
- 2 Department of Health. Retrieved from: <http://ldh.la.gov/index.cfm/page/398>
- 3 Kids Count. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2018) Retrieved from: <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/5057-children-under-age-6-with-all-available-parents-in-the-labor-force?loc=20&loct=2#detailed/2/20/false/871,870,573,869,36,868,867,133,38,35/any/11472,11473>
- 4 First Things First. Retrieved from: <https://www.firstthingsfirst.org/early-childhood-matters/brain-development/>
- 5 Losing Ground: How Child Care Impacts Louisiana’s Workforce Productivity and the State Economy. Retrieved from: [http://www.brylskicompany.com/uploads/1/7/4/0/17400267/losing\\_ground-1.pdf](http://www.brylskicompany.com/uploads/1/7/4/0/17400267/losing_ground-1.pdf)
- 6 Quantifying the Life-Cycle Benefits of a Prototypical Early Childhood Program. The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) Working Paper (2018). Retrieved from: [www.nber.org/papers/w23479.pdf?sy=479](http://www.nber.org/papers/w23479.pdf?sy=479)
- 7 Kids Count. The Annie E. Casey Foundation. (2018). Retrieved from: <https://datacenter.kidscount.org/data/tables/5057-children-under-age-6-with-all-available-parents-in-the-labor-force?loc=20&loct=2#detailed/2/20/false/871,870,573,869,36,868,867,133,38,35/any/11472,11473>
- 8 Early Childhood Education: Quality and Access Payoff. James J. Heckman. Retrieved from: [https://heckmanequation.org/www/assets/2017/01/F\\_Heckman\\_Moffitt\\_093016.pdf](https://heckmanequation.org/www/assets/2017/01/F_Heckman_Moffitt_093016.pdf)
- 9 Eighth-Grade Outcomes for LA 4 Cohort 1 Students. (2013). University of Louisiana at Lafayette. Technical brief