



July 2, 2009

Dear Governor Strickland, Speaker Budish, and Senate President Harris:

Ohio's pre-k program has been a source of pride for the state and a powerful tool to build human capital. We urge you to be a strong advocate for the children of Ohio and the future of your state's economy and to oppose short-sighted cuts to early education.

Pre-K Now, a campaign of the Pew Center on the States, collaborates with advocates and policymakers to lead a movement toward high-quality, voluntary pre-kindergarten for all three and four year olds, and we are concerned with the future of early education in Ohio. Data show that a dollar invested in high-quality pre-k returns up to seven dollars to taxpayers, a figure unmatched by most other government expenditures. That is why ten states are currently increasing their investments in pre-k despite budget shortfalls, and another seven states are holding steady with current investment levels.

In the face of one of the worst recessions our nation has seen, Ohio cannot afford to cut early education, which has been proven to put children on a path to academic success, increase the likelihood of graduating from high school, reduce the cost of remediation and special education and boost lifetime earnings. The proposal before lawmakers would eliminate high-quality early education services for 17,000 young Ohioans. Cutting off working families from pre-k and eliminating early education jobs will also do nothing to improve Ohio's 10.8% unemployment rate.

Ohio's pre-k program is proven to improve test scores. A recent study found that 72 percent of Ohio school districts that started a pre-k program in 2007-2008 saw an increase in the district's scores the following year when those children entered kindergarten. Please be bold in your defense of education for your state's youngest citizens, knowing that pre-k in Ohio is a proven investment.

Please let us know if we can be of any assistance by contacting Pre-K Now State Policy Associate Allison de la Torre ([adelatorre@pewtrusts.org](mailto:adelatorre@pewtrusts.org)) or me directly. Thank you for your leadership, and we look forward to hearing good news from Ohio in the near future.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Libby Doggett".

Libby Doggett  
Deputy Director, Pew Center on the States

cc: The Ohio Legislature