

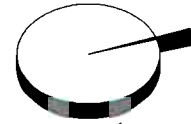
## Early Childhood in Wisconsin

### Background

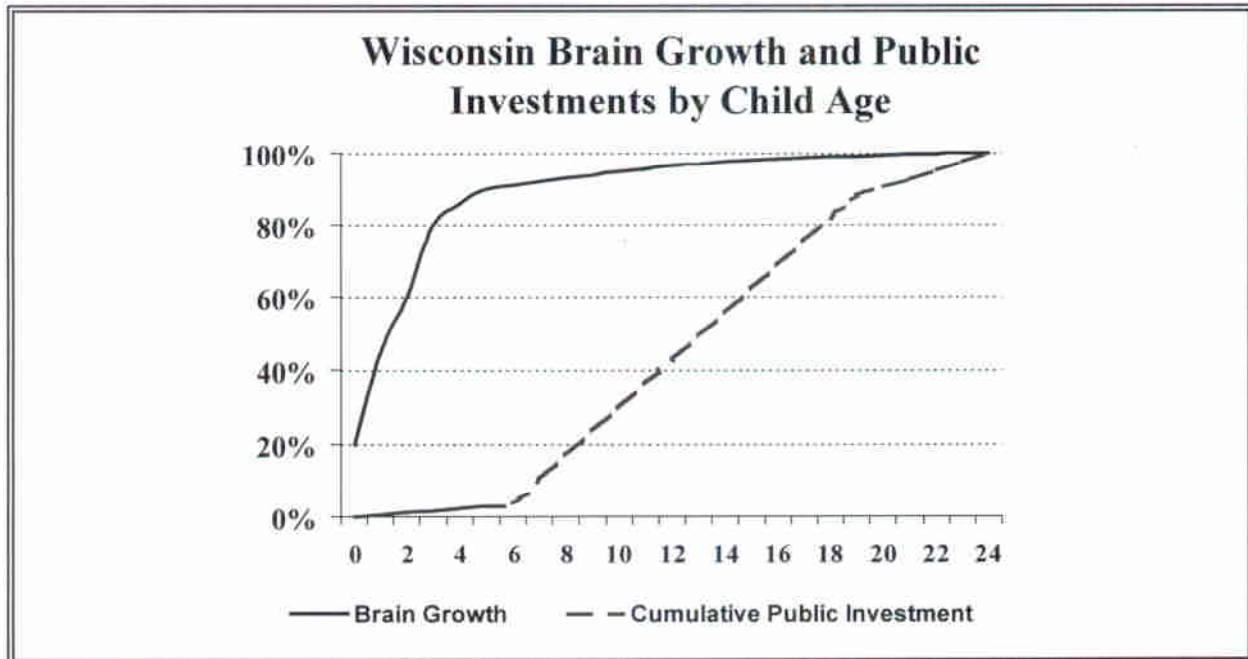
- Early childhood education takes place in a variety of settings for children from birth through age six, including center and home-based child care programs, four-year-old kindergarten, Head Start, Early Head Start, Birth to 3 Programs, Title 1, and early childhood special education.
- An estimated 342,340 children under the age of 5 live in Wisconsin; approximately 85,000 of these children remain in the care of their parents or others in their home; 15,878 in Head Start; 21,004 in 4K, 14,003 in Birth to 3 or other special education programs; and 138,330 in group or family child care settings (*Note: children may be in more than one setting*), Wisconsin Council on Children and Families –WCCF, 2006)
- More than two thirds of Wisconsin women with young children under age 5 are members of the workforce. (Urban Institute, 2004)
- Access, affordability and quality are essential components of quality early learning experiences essential to support parent's ability to contribute to Wisconsin's workforce.

### Challenges

- 80% of Wisconsin's regulated child care settings are assessed as fair or mediocre. (Wisconsin Child Care Research Partnership, 2002); Infant care is particularly challenging to locate and tends to be of lower quality than programming provided in 3-5 year old settings (NCCIC, 2004).
- While all Wisconsin school districts have the potential to provide four-year-old kindergarten programs, currently the program is only available in 61% of the districts; Head Start serves less than 60% of eligible children on a national level.
- Poor quality child care means children are less prepared to begin school ready to learn; the impact of poor quality education is exacerbated for low-income and vulnerable children. (Vandell and Wolfe, 2004)
- The achievement gap in Wisconsin is of grave concern and is perpetuated by unequal and poor quality early learning experiences.
- Fewer than 300 of more than 10,000 group/family child care centers in Wisconsin have achieved national accreditation – an important marker of quality. (NAEYC, 2006)
- Less than one third of Wisconsin early childhood teachers in full time child care centers in 2004 had earned an Associates Degree. Note: Higher levels of education are correlated with higher levels of quality. – (Wisconsin Child Care Research Partnership, 2005).
- An excerpt from *Early Learning Left Out* report, (Voices for America's Children and the Child and Family Policy Center, 2004) follows, illustrating the alarming disparity between the timing of Wisconsin public investments on education and development and the ages at which brain growth is most profound.



## Spending by Child Age on Education and Development



	Total	Both/Only Parent Working	% Parents Working		% in Poverty	% < 185% of Poverty
Children 0-5 with Two Parents	303,324	197,872	65.2%	Families with Child 0-5	12.2%	28.0%
Children 0-5 with One Parent	95,752	75,149	78.5%	Families with Child 6-17 Only	6.7%	18.1%
All Children 0-5	399,076	273,021	68.4%			
Children under 6 in Paid Child Care while Parents Work			37%	3- and 4-Year-Olds Enrolled in Preschool or Pre-K		44.9%

Source: United States Census Bureau, Census 2000 (except children <6 in Paid Child Care – Current Population Survey, March 2000-2002)

Child Age	in millions			Number of Children	in dollars		
	State and Local	Federal	Total		Per Capita State and Local	Per Capita Federal	Per Capita Total
Early Learning (age 0 to 5)	\$ 102.78	\$ 219.79	\$ 322.57	414,337	\$ 248	\$ 530	\$ 779
School Age (age 6-18)	\$ 6,873.70	\$ 454.94	\$ 7,328.65	1,035,304	\$ 6,639	\$ 439	\$ 7,079
College Age (age 19-23)	\$ 885.56	\$ 139.04	\$ 1,024.60	375,488	\$ 2,358	\$ 370	\$ 2,729

The spending figures for K-12 education and vocational education include local expenditures as well as state revenue. Both of those spending categories combine capital costs with other spending. For the University System, on the other hand, capital expenditures are separate and not available. The spending figures for the vocational and university systems are lower than those more commonly referenced because we estimated the portion of spending for students under age 24, rather than using total expenditures. Estimated spending for four-year-old kindergarten were counted in the 0-5 age group; but virtually all other K-12 expenditures were counted in the age 6-18 category. Spending by tribal governments was not included.