



Early Childhood and Economic Development in Wisconsin *Get involved!*

Also available on-line at <http://wisbiz4kids.com/toolkit.htm>

How can you advance and activate business, economic development, and community leaders to act on the importance of investments in quality early learning experiences to a vibrant Wisconsin economy?

I. Learn more about the connection between early childhood and economic development.

- **Research is summarized on the wisbiz4kids website at <http://wisbiz4kids.com/building>.** Information outlines the connection between economic development and quality early learning experiences. Another compilation of research can be found at the Public Policy Forum of Milwaukee on-line early childhood through their early childhood outcomes study research matrix - <http://www.publicpolicyforum.org/issues.php?category=14> that catalogs the growing body of evidence in this field.
- **Read about early childhood, economic development events in Wisconsin - <http://wisbiz4kids.com/events.htm>** catalogs events in Wisconsin that have featured national economic leaders and state business champions who understand the importance of investing in high quality early learning opportunities.
- **Review information on national business gatherings** including the growing national momentum around this issue, such as the recent Telluride Davos meeting for business leaders, elected officials and foundations sponsored by the Committee for Economic Development and the Partnership for America's Economic Success - <http://www.partnershipforsuccess.org/index.php?id=18>
- **Listen to testimonials about this critical issue from Wisconsin business leaders including Michael Spector**, Former President, University of Wisconsin, Board of Regents and Former U.S. Associate Deputy Attorney General, and **Craig Culver**, CEO and founder, Culvers Restaurants, about why early childhood should matter to business and why each became personally involved. To access these on-line videos, go to tool-kit website - <http://wisbiz4kids.com/toolkit.htm>.
- **Listen to Nobel Laureate Economist, James Heckman's videotaped testimony** highlighting his research on this topic for a Wisconsin early childhood conference in 2006 - available on-line at <http://wisbiz4kids.com/toolkit.htm>.

- *Learn more about best practices for early learning* in Wisconsin, through the Wisconsin Model Early Learning Standards - www.collaboratingpartners.com/EarlyLS

II. Consider Other State's Efforts to Highlight and Support Early Learning

- *States that are placing early education as a high priority* in 2008 are highlighted in "Pre[K]Now - Dollars and Sense: A Review of Economic Analyses of Pre-K" - http://www.preknow.com/documents/DollarsandSense_May2007.pdf
- *Minnesota Business for Early Learning (MNBEL)* www.mnbel.org developed an alliance of over 200 businesses, sparked by local leadership of the Federal Reserve Bank. MNBEL has launched a tool kit *School Readiness Tool Kit for Employers: Special Preview* for business leaders that outlines specific steps at - *Ten Best Business Practices for Early Learning* - a business can take to support child care in their community. Both documents are available at www.mnbel.org.
- The *Illinois Coalition of Early Learning* www.illinoisearlylearning.org, has catalogued early childhood research, information and resources for interested stakeholders and has business leaders spearheading their efforts.
- The *Massachusetts Early Education for All Campaign* - www.strategiesforchildren.org - is a proactive and sustained effort to inform the business community and community leaders in advocating for early childhood programs in MA.
- The *Rochester, Minnesota First Steps Program* - <http://www.firststeps.us/aboutus.shtml> has successfully reached out to their business leaders, Chamber of Commerce, Early Childhood and community leaders to launch a community-wide effort drawing attention to this issue and developing action steps to turn energy into concrete action around building quality early learning systems.
- The *Tucson Regional Economic Opportunities, Inc.* has named education, including early education as one of their "*Power of Five*" *Blueprint recommendations* - <http://www.treoaz.org/TREO/media/docs/Executive%20Summary%20FNL.pdf> . "Businesses must become involved in the (education) process, as outcomes are critical to our competitive position" (*Arizona Daily Star*, July 22, 2007)

III. Get involved in your local community. Ideas for local engagement of business and community partners include:

- *Consider writing an editorial about the importance of this issue to business and to the community's economy.* The *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel* wrote an editorial supporting this issue that could be used as an example - <http://www.jsonline.com/story/index.aspx?id=635858> . Editorial could focus on

early childhood investment as one of the most viable economic development strategies offering a unique local business leader's perspective.

- **Develop messages that work** using information from the Annenberg Public Policy Center - Media and the Developing Child - <http://annenbergpublicpolicycenter.org/NewsDetails.aspx?myId=184> .
- **Recruit other business colleagues and community leaders** to champion early childhood education as an economic development imperative.
- **Consider implementing family-friendly business practices** as outlined by the Minnesota Business of Early Learning, www.mnbel.org.
- **Information on business practices also available through national and state resources to find tools that promote improving business practices for employees** through a variety of mechanisms - Child Care Partnership Project Tool Kit - <http://nccic.org/ccpartnerships/home.htm>; Wisconsin CCR&R Network Tool Kit (1-888-713-KIDS), Think Big. Start Small. Business involvement tips, www.thinkbigstartsmall.com.
- **Advocate for specific legislation** that would support building quality early childhood. Read the Pre-K *advocacy tool kit (Pre-K Advocates)* - <http://www.preknow.com/advocate/index.cfm> .
- **Review the State Early Childhood Policy Network Tool Kit, "Seven Things Policy Makers Need to Know about School Readiness"** - <http://www.finebynine.org/pdf/7%20Things.pdf> developed in response to requests for basic school readiness information for new legislators. This tool kit offers key points about school readiness, summarizes evidence supporting each area, offers power point slides on each topic, and offers relevant messages/talking points for each of the seven topic areas. Tool Kit sponsors and contributors include the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL) and the National Governors Association.
- **Sponsor a Business Roundtable** on the issue such as the [Milwaukee Economic Development Summit for Southeastern Wisconsin](#) (2006 event) and the Northeast Regional Summit in Green Bay featuring business leaders, information available at www.wisbiz4kids/events.
- **Provide local data to make your case. Sources that can be tapped include:**
 - **Vision 20/20 anti-poverty campaign** - www.2020wi.org for information on county data related to families.
 - **Child Care Resource and Referral** has data on local child care supply and demand, 1-888-713-KIDS

- ***WiskidsCount*** - http://www.wccf.org/proj_kidcount.php catalogues a number of child and family indicators by county

