

Why Early Childhood Development

27.17 Hours

Average amount of time Spartanburg County children spend in child care each week

x 50 weeks per year
x 4 years

= 5,434 hours of child care



Day care is a term of the past, often referring to the placement of children in care so parents can work. The reality is that **children need more than a safe and loving place to stay when they are not with their parents.** The years before a child enters school are critical to his or her future success. Research shows that when children are cared for in stimulating and secure environments, they develop much more than the basic skills – such as knowing their letters and numbers. They learn how to be productive team players, how to interact with others, and how to contribute to society. Enriching environments and skilled caregivers create situations for children to grow socially and emotionally.

Several longitudinal research studies that followed children enrolled in high quality child care programs into their adult years found that these children were more likely than their peers to:

- Perform better in middle and high school
- Graduate on time
- Attend a four-year college
- Earn more than \$20,000 a year
- Own a home

Furthermore, the research found that these children were less likely than their peers to:

- Need special education
- Repeat a grade
- Receive public assistance as an adult
- Be arrested

Low quality child care can actually damage a child by delaying language and reading skills and by reinforcing inappropriate social behaviors. A national study by the UNC Frank Porter Graham Child Development Center observed 400 child care centers and found that only 14% received a high quality rating, 74% received a mediocre rating, and 12% were deemed poor quality. **While it might meet the basic health and safety needs of young children, mediocre care is not sufficient for stimulating learning and development.**

Sources

- Noble, Rick. "The Best Economic Development Tool." *Business & Economic Review*, Vol. 51, No. 3.
- Dorfman, Lori. "Framing the Economic Benefits of Investment in Early Childhood Development." 2005.
- National Economic Development and Law Center. "Early Care and Education: Realizing a Collective Vision." 2005.
- Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. "Investing in Children: An Early Learning Strategy for Washington State." 2005.
- Galinsky, Ellen. "The Economic Benefits of High-Quality Early Childhood Programs: What Makes the Difference?" 2006.

Data Methodology

Data included in this report were collected by Priority Metrics Group (Spartanburg, S.C.) for the Mary Black Foundation. Priority Metrics Group conducted a telephone survey of Spartanburg County households with at least one child under the age of six from October 2006 - September 2007. Interviews were conducted throughout the day and evening to reach individuals who might be working or otherwise unavailable during normal business hours. Average survey time was approximately 19 minutes. Survey results presented in this report are weighted using age and income of respondents.

The sample size (n = 250) results in a confidence interval of + 0.12 ($\alpha = 0.05$, $\sigma = 1.0$) around an average response and + 5.4% ($\alpha = 0.05$, est. proportion = 25% / 75%) around a percentage response.

Please contact the Foundation for more information about this report or the data collection process.

Using this Report

Please acknowledge the Mary Black Foundation when using this report to improve the public's understanding of the importance of positive early childhood development. Additional copies are available by calling the Mary Black Foundation or may be downloaded from the Foundation's website, www.maryblackfoundation.org.

Photography: Carroll Foster, Hot Eye Photography

Bright Future

Working to Ensure a Healthy Community



**SPARTANBURG
CREATIVE ENERGY**

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*Early Childhood Development
2008 Report*

Spartanburg County's future economic growth depends in part on the availability of high quality early care and education for all of our children. Leading researchers in the Federal Reserve System and members of the Business Round Table, the Committee for Economic Development, and the Economic Policy Institute agree that **an investment in early childhood development** – as a specific economic development strategy – **will, by itself, do more than any other strategy to further economic growth and democracy in the United States.**

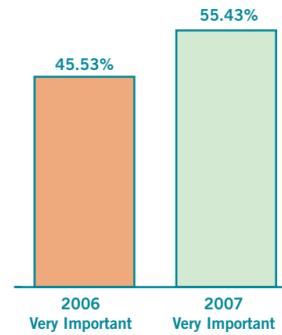
"Early education programs have long been regarded as an important step in preparing children for primary school — but investing in the education of America's youngest learners has emerged as one of the most promising ways to help strengthen the future economic and fiscal position of our states and nation."

– from the Committee for Economic Development's *The Economic Promise of Investing in High Quality Preschool*

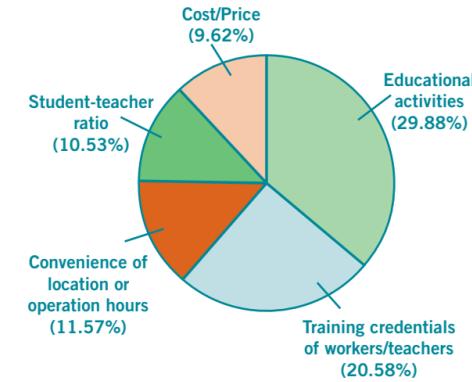
Children's success in school and in life is determined in large measure before they ever reach kindergarten. By the time most programs and funding are available to help them succeed, many children are already behind socially, emotionally, and cognitively, and the odds of their catching up are not high. Many of these children have spent their early years in low quality, unresponsive child care settings. When we, as a community, decide to provide high quality care and education to all of Spartanburg County's children, we will nurture well-developed children who know how to apply what they learn and who will be ready to become responsible and productive adults.

Quality Care is Important to Spartanburg County Parents

How important is it that your child's child care provider have National Accreditation?



Top Five Most Important Aspects in Choosing Child Care

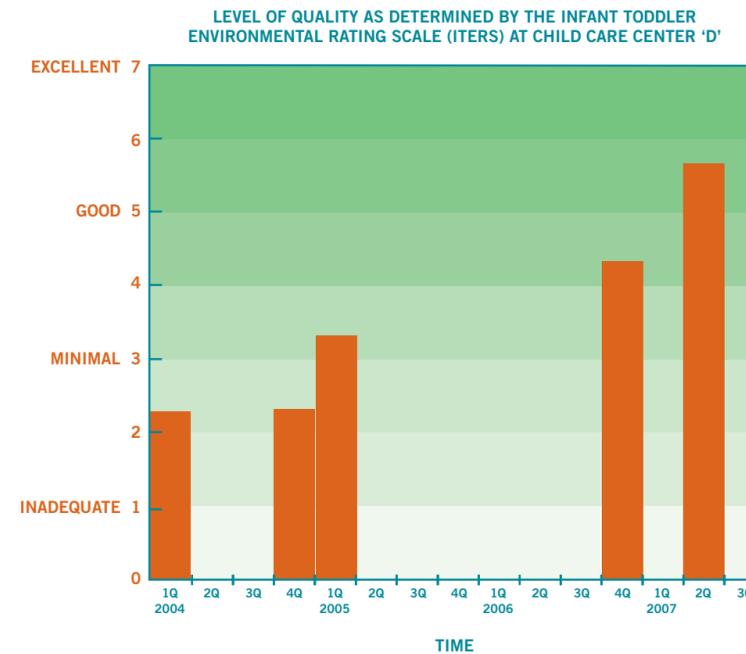


What Spartanburg County is Doing

Spartanburg County is moving in the right direction, improving the quality of care for young children. With funding from the Mary Black Foundation, Spartanburg County First Steps and the University of South Carolina's BASICspaces programs have made significant improvements in 10 child care centers in Spartanburg County that care for a combined 1,315 children on a daily basis. The initial successes of these efforts are now being expanded to additional child care facilities throughout Spartanburg County. The following graph highlights the changes and improvements in quality for just one of the ten child care centers.

CATEGORIES OF QUALITY
ITERS Assessment Areas

- Furnishings and Displays for Children
- Personal Care Routines
- Listening and Talking
- Learning Activities
- Interaction
- Program Structure
- Parents and Staff



What Still Needs to be Done

With so many communities competing for new business, child care can be a deciding factor for businesses looking to expand or relocate. A lack of high quality care and education for young children can keep Spartanburg County off the list of potential communities considered by a business and, thus, hurt our economic development efforts. Moving forward, Spartanburg County will need to incorporate early care and education in its community development plans.

Action Steps for Us All

Investments in early care and education will generate huge dividends in the future.

Action Step: Include high quality early care and education in economic development activities, such as business recruitment, support for small businesses, and workplace development programs.

There is no excuse for providing children from birth to age five with mediocre early care and education.

Action Step: As a community, we must demand high quality child care for our youngest residents. Talk with your child care provider about ways to strengthen the care and education your child receives.

We are interconnected — investing in young children now means a stronger society later.

Action Step: Schools should work closely with the local child care community, especially those centers that "feed" into their schools, to identify opportunities to improve the quality of preschool learning.

