

the Ounce
campaign *for*
early learning

**The Ounce Campaign
for Early Learning**

Co-Chairs

J.B. Pritzker
Diana Mendley Rauner

**Ounce of Prevention Fund
Board of Directors**

Billie Wright Adams, M.D.
Susan Baird
Jacolyn Bucksbaum
Susan Buffett
Eloise H. Cornelius
Pastor Thomas Cross, Sr.
Deborah Daro, Ph.D.
Kelly King Dibble
Yvette Evans
Bill Friend
Keith Kiley Goldstein
Patti Gustafson
Robert Heaton
Marcia (Rusty) Hellman
Abe Tomás Hughes, II
Burt Kaplan
Sokoni Karanja, Ph.D.
Norm Katz
Alan King
Timothy J. Landon

Judy Langford
Pastor B. Herbert Martin
Harriet Meyer
Charles Polsky, M.D.
J.B. Pritzker
Diana Mendley Rauner, Ph.D.
Raul I. Raymundo
Dick Rothkopf
Jean Schlemmer
Catherine M. Siegel
Joyce Skoog
Harrison I. Steans
Anne L. Tuohy
Angela Walker
Kelvin White
Helen Zell

**Honorary
Founding Directors**

Gregory L. Coler
Paul Metzger
Bernice Weissbourd

Chair

Dick Rothkopf

President

Harriet Meyer

Our Founder Irving B. Harris (1910-2004)

Twenty-five years ago, at the age of 72, the late Irving B. Harris, Chairman of Pittway Corporation, founded the Ounce and, in doing so, invested in the futures of countless infants and toddlers. Irving believed deeply in the importance of starting early to ensure that all children receive the care and nurturing needed from the very earliest days to give them the best chance to succeed. He infused the Ounce with a passion and commitment to the first years of life that drives our work to this day.

The Ounce of Prevention Fund has an ambitious vision for the future: to redefine the way our country thinks about education. Learning begins at birth; and, sadly for many infants born into poverty, the achievement gap begins shortly thereafter.

High-quality early intervention programs are proven to have lasting impact on the life prospects of children in poverty. With intervention, we can significantly narrow the achievement gap that puts an impoverished child an average of 18 months behind his more affluent peers by age four.

85% of a child's brain growth occurs by age three, yet our country spends only 5% of public education dollars on a child's first three years.

The Ounce invests in the first five years of a child's life to ensure that young children in poverty have the best opportunity to succeed in school and throughout life. Over the past twenty-five years, we have helped to establish Illinois as a leader among states' efforts to improve opportunities for our most vulnerable children. The Ounce uses public funds to implement the innovative programs it develops, but only private capital investment can be used for research, program development and advocacy to further our impact.

Our \$15 million Campaign for Early Learning will endow our innovative programs and fund our ambitious plans to convince more politicians, philanthropists, and opinion leaders that directing education dollars toward the earliest years, beginning even in the weeks surrounding birth, is both the wisest investment and surest way to shift the odds for our most vulnerable children.

Your support of the Ounce Campaign for Early Learning will help to ensure that infants and toddlers born into poverty have the best opportunity for success in school and life.



J.B. Pritzker



Diana Mendley Rauner

The Ounce of Prevention Fund invests in the first five years of a child's life to ensure that young children in poverty have the opportunity to succeed in school and throughout life. We work to develop strong parent-child relationships because we know that a healthy pregnancy matters... experiences in the first days and months of life matter...the quality of caregivers and teachers for the very young matters...parenting matters.

The Ounce is engaged in some of the most innovative work in the early childhood field. This year, we will:

Serve over 3,500 children and families directly through birth-to-five programs we fund and operate in Chicago as well as through our network of voluntary home visiting programs throughout Illinois.

Educate 3,000 program, community and opinion leaders about key issues and policies in early childhood development.

Integrate the latest research and best theories into our program development efforts.

Train over 500 community-based early childhood professionals in Illinois.

Advocate for more than \$500 million in state funding and \$2 billion in federal funding for early childhood services that reach hundreds of thousands of children and families.

Partner with 13 states to build their research-based programs and sound public policies for at-risk children birth to age five.

The Ounce Campaign for Early Learning

“This \$15 million campaign will seed our efforts to reframe the education paradigm in our country. We will know we have succeeded when the needs of our youngest learners—infants, toddlers, and preschoolers—are at the center of local, state, and national education agendas; when our public commitment emphasizes the education of our most vulnerable children beginning at birth.”

Harriet Meyer
President

“From the baby’s standpoint, education is a 24-hour activity starting from birth.” Irving B. Harris

The First Five Years

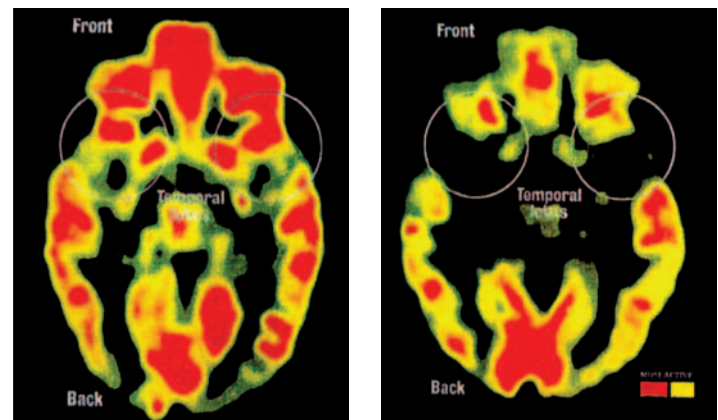
Recent neuroscientific research using new imaging technology confirms that the architecture of a developing child’s brain—literally the chemistry and neural connections that make up the brain—is shaped in the first years of life and is significantly influenced by the environment in which a child develops.

Learning begins at birth and thrives through nurturing and consistent relationships with caring adults. Early relationships have a powerful life-long influence on the development of self-confidence, coping skills, early communication abilities, motivation, and problem-solving skills—the very capacities children need to succeed in school.

Early language and communication skills are predictors of later reading success and academic achievement. Low-income children hear on average 8 million fewer words per year than their more affluent peers.¹ By age four, this cumulative gap of nearly 32 million words affects a child’s vocabulary, communication skills, and prospects for learning to read.

Children born into poverty often have multiple risk factors that can stymie their prospects for success in school and throughout life. Impoverished children are more likely to be exposed to excessive stress due to poor nutrition, severe maternal depression, young and single parents with little education, homelessness, parental neglect, and domestic violence. Toxic chemicals the brain produces when under stress alter the very chemistry of the brain, compromising the cerebral cortex and making a child more susceptible to poor outcomes.²

Comparison of the Developing Brain



Healthy Development

Development Affected by Environmental Stress

Source: Dr. H. T. Chugani, *Newsweek*, Spring/Summer 1997 Special Edition: “Your Child: From Birth to Three,” pp 30-31.

1 Betty Hart & Todd R. Risely, “The Early Catastrophe: The 30 Million Word Gap,” *American Educator*, Spring 2003, pp. 4, 6-9.

2 National Scientific Council on the Developing Child, *Perspectives: How Early Events Affect Growing Brains*. (2006). Retrieved December 4, 2007 from <http://www.developingchild.net>

Decades of evaluation research confirms that the first five years of life are the best opportunity to nurture a strong foundation for a baby's healthy development and later success. Studies of high-quality early education and home visiting programs, including the Abecedarian Project, Perry Preschool Project, Chicago Parent Child Center Study and Nurse Family Partnership program, among others, demonstrate that investing in the first five years of life can improve the life trajectory of our most vulnerable children.

Comprehensive program interventions that begin early in life have shown lasting benefits for low-income children, including:³

- Strengthened maternal-infant attachment
- Improved cognitive and attention skills
- Improved readiness for kindergarten entry
- Reduced grade retention and special education placement
- Improved math and language abilities
- Increased high school completion rates
- Increased rates of employment and home ownership
- Decreased rates of involvement with the criminal justice system



The promotion of healthy child development in the first five years creates a foundation for later school achievement, economic productivity, responsible citizenship, and successful parenting.

³ Dale C. Farran, "Another Decade of Intervention for Children Who Are Low Income or Disabled: What Do We Know Now?" in *Handbook of Early Childhood Intervention*, ed. Jack P. Shonkoff and Samuel J. Meisels (Cambridge University Press, 2000).

“The best evidence supports the policy description: invest in the very young.” James J. Heckman, Ph.D., 2000 Nobel Laureate in Economic Sciences

The Case for Early Childhood Investments

Neuroscientific research tells us that promoting healthy development initially is far more efficient than trying to fix things later. It is also a prudent investment.

A growing number of economists have studied early intervention programs and concluded that early investment in human capital is the most cost-effective strategy for improving outcomes for individuals and society as a whole.



Every \$1 invested in high-quality early childhood programs yields a return of \$8 to society, with a 16% internal rate of return.⁴

Early investments effectively prevent later, higher costs to society for remediation, special education, and crime services.

Learning begets learning and skill begets skill.⁵

Investments in the first years of life are the surest way to stem the exponential growth in the achievement gap between children who start out behind and their more advantaged peers.

The future strength of our labor force and, ultimately, the productivity of our economy depend upon higher levels of educational attainment.

Today, only 45% of high school dropouts are in the labor force compared to nearly 80% of college graduates. The unemployment rate of high school dropouts is almost 8% versus 3% for college graduates.⁶

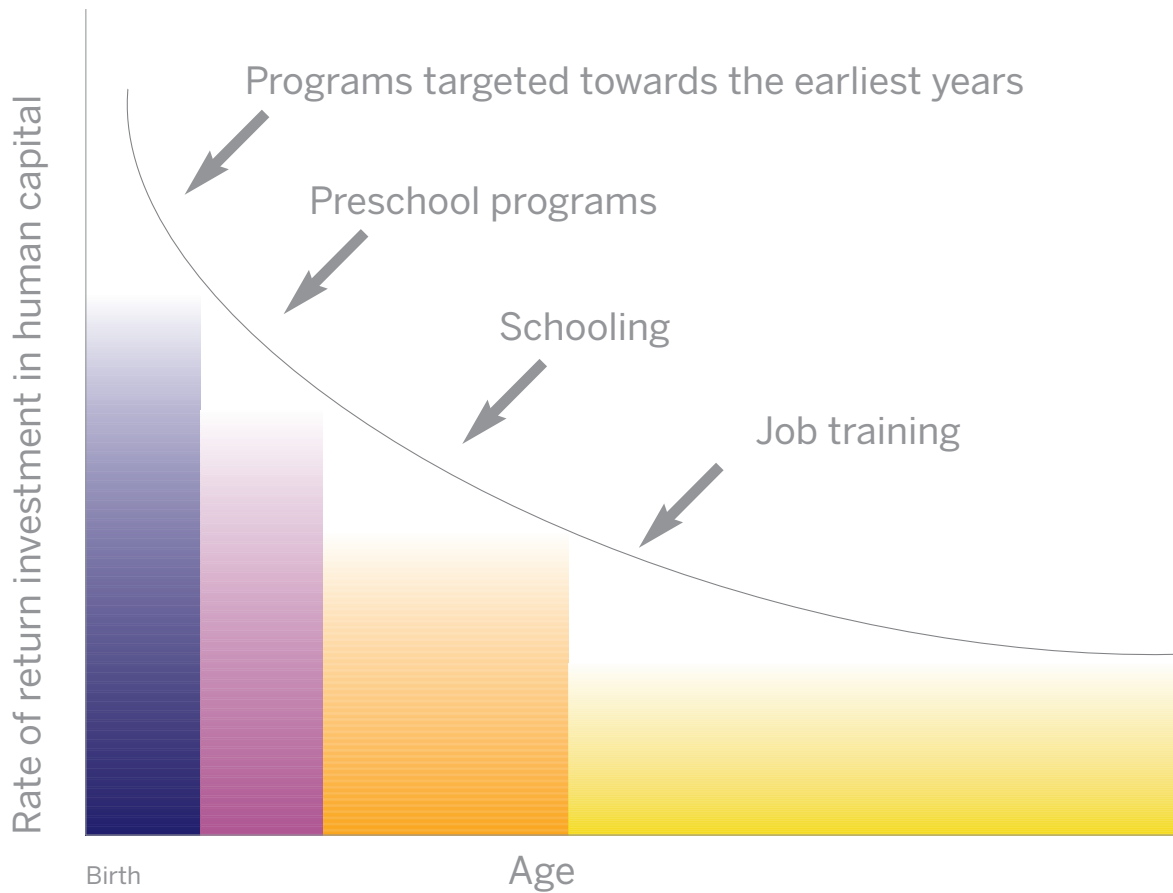
Politicians, philanthropists, and educators must act on the evidence that investments in early education, beginning at birth, are the wisest use of education dollars.

⁴ Art Rolnick and Rob Grunewald, “Early Childhood Development: Economic Development with a High Public Return,” *The Region*, December 1993.

⁵ James Heckman & Pedro Carneiro & Flavio Cunha, 2004. “The Technology of Skill Formation,” 2004 Meeting Papers 681, Society for Economic Dynamics.

⁶ Early Childhood Education and Our Economic Future, Sandra Pianalto, Federal Reserve Bank of Cleveland, January 10, 2006, Retrieved December 4, 2007 from http://www.clevelandfed.org/dsp_showdetail.cfm?contentID=515&detailId=470

**Rates of Return to Human Capital at Different Ages:
Return to an Extra Dollar of Investment at Various Ages**



Source: Cunha, Flavio; James J. Heckman; Lance J. Lochner and Dimitriy V. Masterov (2006). "Interpreting the Evidence on Life Cycle Skill Formation," in *Handbook of the Economics of Education*, E. Hanushek and F. Welch, eds. Amsterdam: North-Holland. pp. 697-812.

“As Warren Buffett has observed, all men are created equal, and that lasts for fifteen minutes.”

George B. Kaiser, Forbes 400 Businessman

The Ounce—A Leader and Catalyst for Change

As a public-private partnership, the Ounce leverages private capital to develop and evaluate new program and policy initiatives, and uses public dollars to bring successful programs to scale. After more than two decades in the field, the Ounce has emerged as an effective leader for young children and families.

We have a strong track record of success developing and expanding access to innovative program models, moving a comprehensive policy agenda forward, and strategically enlisting bipartisan support in the public and private sectors to advance our cause.

● **In the past 10 years, the Ounce has successfully developed, implemented, and advocated for the expansion of community-based doula services that pair specially trained home visitors with at-risk teen moms.** This exemplary program nurtures secure maternal-infant relationships that form the foundation for a child’s ongoing development and well being. Today, 24 publicly funded doula sites across Illinois annually reach hundreds of at-risk teen moms during the early days and months of a baby’s life.

● **Our Educare Center is a national model for improving at-risk young children’s preparedness for school.** Opened in February 2000, the Ounce’s Educare Center serves 149 children birth to five and, in partnership with parents, promotes the language and social emotional development of at-risk infants, toddlers, and preschoolers to prepare them for school entry and success.



● **The Ounce is now the primary source of staff training for over 170 research-based infant-toddler programs across Illinois.** Our new partnership with the Illinois State Board of Education Prevention Initiative helps to ensure staff working with our state's most vulnerable children are current in their knowledge and approach to implementing best practices.

● **As a strong advocate for young children and families, the Ounce has helped to cultivate bipartisan support for early childhood programs in Illinois.** Today, Illinois is a recognized leader in targeting education dollars to early childhood programs. We have ensured that 11% of early childhood education funding in Illinois is targeted to evidence-based services for at-risk infants and toddlers.

● **The Ounce is a national model for states across the country.** We partner with the Buffett Early Childhood Fund, Irving Harris Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, George B. Kaiser, and the W. Clement & Jessie V. Stone Foundation to build a network of high-quality programs modeled on our Educare Center in a dozen other communities across the country. We also provide consultation to advocacy groups in other states on Illinois' approach to influencing broad-based early childhood policy and funding improvements.



The Time for Action is Now

- Science and program evaluation demonstrate the efficacy of early childhood investments.
- The Educare model has seeded new collaborations and policy change in other states.
- Leading philanthropists are articulating a growing consciousness of and commitment to our issue.

As a result of our accomplishments in Illinois and our growing engagement with states across the country, philanthropic and opinion leaders are looking to the Ounce to help move the early childhood agenda forward.

Illinois and the rest of the country must act boldly to redefine education to include the first five years of a child's life. By creating program and policy change, we will help to address the consequences of intergenerational poverty and narrow the achievement gap for at-risk young children.

Our \$15 million Campaign for Early Learning will provide new development capital to expand our advocacy, program development and research activities to improve the odds for young children in poverty.

The Ounce leverages private capital to develop and evaluate new program and policy initiatives, and uses public dollars to bring successful programs to scale.

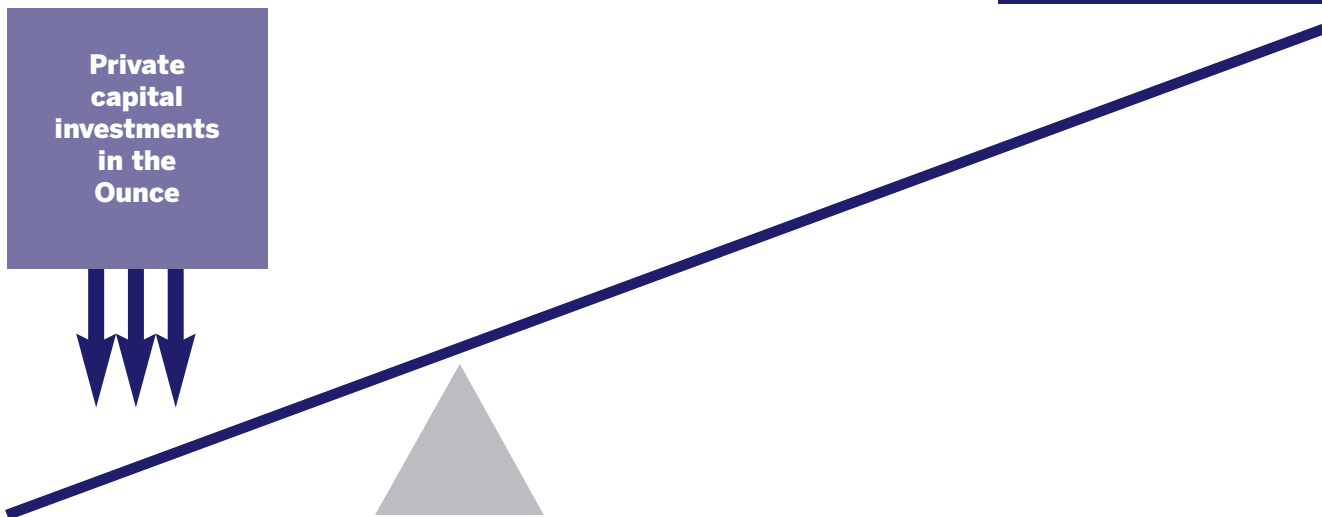
**Publicly funded,
proven program interventions**

**Public investment in
early childhood**

**Philanthropic leadership
and investment**

Policy change

**Expanded research and
expertise**



Making your gift

Campaign gifts may be made in the form of cash, securities or a planned gift.

For additional information on ways to make a gift, please contact:

Harriet Meyer

President

Ounce of Prevention Fund

33 West Monroe Street
Suite 2400
Chicago, Illinois 60603
Telephone 312.922.3863
ounceofprevention.org

the Ounce

Ounce of Prevention Fund
33 West Monroe Street
Suite 2400
Chicago, Illinois 60603
Telephone 312.922.3863
ounceofprevention.org