



Not just glorified babysitting

Apr. 20, 2011:

Early childhood education helps kids build critical skills they'll need for a lifetime of learning, says Global Philanthropy's Kim Jasmin. She discussed the social and economic benefits of pre-kindergarten programs at a recent event.

Helping youngsters get a critical head start on a lifetime of learning can help build a competitive local economy.

Kim Jasmin, Global Philanthropy director for the Northeast Region, recently laid out the business case for early childhood education at a meeting of community leaders in Westchester, N.Y.

Lessons on learning

Since 75% of brain growth occurs before the age of five, learning social, emotional and language skills before kindergarten can help children get the best possible start in life, Jasmin said.

And kids who start their education before the age of five are twice as likely to graduate from high school, attend college and develop into productive citizens.

But statistics show that many are already behind, she added. Sixty-eight percent of eighth graders in the U.S. can't read at their grade level—and most will never catch up.

"This trend is not quite positioning the U.S. to be a global leader in anything," she added. But quality pre-kindergarten learning centers could effectively change that direction.

Children from urban areas with high rates of poverty typically get the most out of quality early instruction. Global Philanthropy's education investments focus on increasing access to high-quality learning opportunities for children in economically disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Options for parents

Investing in early learning centers helps address another major issue, as well: childcare. "Parents need safe and affordable options for childcare so they can go to work," Jasmin stressed.

A recent Cornell University study revealed the average working parent in the U.S. misses one to two weeks of work each year because of childcare problems.

That high rate of absenteeism costs U.S. businesses more than \$3 billion a year and thousands of hours of workplace productivity.

High return on investment

Businesses that offer benefits to working parents, like flexible work arrangements and backup childcare options, and support early learning centers in the community can get a big return on their investment.

"For every dollar spent, we see four to seven dollars in return from reduced remedial services and increased earnings," Jasmin said. "It just makes good business sense." [» Learn more about JPMC's U.S. childcare benefits](#)



Kim Jasmin makes the case for early childhood education.



Jasmin recently represented JPMorgan Chase in a video produced by [Winning Beginning](#), a New York-based early childhood education advocacy group. [» Play](#) (6:41)

JPMorgan Chase supports [United Way STEPS](#) (Supporting Transitions from Early-education to Public School). The pilot program will benefit more than 1,000 kids and intends to increase reading and math proficiency, attendance rates and grade promotion for first-through third-grade students.

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