

# Advocate for Early Childhood Programs in Your School District



California's funding model for school districts is known as the Local Control Funding Formula (LCFF). Under LCFF, school districts have flexibility—and an unprecedented opportunity—to spend district dollars on early childhood education. Researchers, economists, and educators all agree: early childhood programs set kids up for success in school and in life.

Now is the time for district leaders to make sure that students in your community are getting off to a strong start. And you can help make it happen.

Meet with your district board members and superintendent to share your story about the impact of early learning and the opportunity LCFF offers for them to invest in early childhood. It's easy. Follow these two steps.

## ★ **STEP ONE: Set up a meeting with a board member of your local school district**

1. Visit your school district's website.
2. Find the Board of Education page.
3. Choose a member of the board with whom to meet.
4. Call or email to make an appointment.

## ★ **STEP TWO: Prepare Talking Points for Your Meeting**

### **Kids who get a strong start lead happier, healthier lives**

High-quality early education programs are proven to:

- Improve kids' overall health.
- Lower the instance of teen pregnancy.
- Decrease involvement in the criminal justice system.
- Lead to more secure future employment.

### **Spending money now saves money later**

Investing in early education programs:

- Ensures an educated, capable workforce down the road.
- Reduces the number of adults and families who will ultimately depend on social services.
- Reduces Special Education designations—and spending—in schools through proactive developmental screenings and referrals.
- Reinforces the importance of school attendance from the start, which in turn improves per student funding in schools.
- Decreases the need for spending on remedial services in later grades.

### **Examples of Effective Funding Solutions in California**

Districts across the state are seizing upon this opportunity:

- Fresno Unified is expanding its preschool slots and increasing its parent engagement efforts in the early years.
- El Monte City Unified is using LCFF funds to retain access to the preschool slots previously funded through LAUP.
- San Diego Unified is using LCFF funds to articulate a more cohesive pathway from early childhood through third grade by spending on professional development, class size reduction, and targeted interventions.

## **THE BIG PICTURE**

Children born into poverty are at an immediate disadvantage academically and developmentally. Without high quality early learning opportunities, the chance that these kids will fall behind—and stay behind—is large and immediate, and is often apparent developmentally at as young as age one or two.

Early learning programs are proven to improve student achievement, and keep kids born into poverty on track with their more affluent peers.

