



**I'M THE GUY YOU
PAY LATER**

Sheriffs, Chiefs and Prosecutors Urge America to Cut Crime by Investing Now in High-Quality Early Education and Care

A MAINE REPORT BY:



Acknowledgements

FIGHT CRIME: INVEST IN KIDS is a national, bipartisan, nonprofit, anti-crime organization. The organization has a membership of more than 5,000 police chiefs, sheriffs, district attorneys, other law enforcement leaders and violence survivors. The members take a hard-nosed look at what approaches work—and what don't—to prevent crime and violence. They then recommend effective strategies to state and national policymakers. It operates under the umbrella of the Council for a Strong America.

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Executive Summary



Sheriff Joyce has a direct message for everyone who cares about the impact and cost of crime:

“The people behind bars in Cumberland County took the wrong path in life. This doesn’t have to be the case. Intervening at a young age can help solve many of the behavioral and academic problems that lead children to become criminals later in life.”

Law enforcement leaders around the nation know that one of the best ways to keep young people from dropping out of school and becoming criminals is to make sure they have a foundation for success in their earliest years. They are coming out in force to support high-quality early education and care for kids today so we will see less crime and incarceration in the years to come.

Law enforcement leaders like Sheriff Joyce base their views on personal experiences and research. A study that followed **children who participated in high-quality preschool and parent coaching programs through Chicago’s Child-Parent Centers found they were 20 percent less likely to be arrested for a felony or be incarcerated as young adults than those who did not attend.**

In recent years, studies of state preschool programs have found significant increases in academic performance, and also important decreases in the need for special education and in being held back in school. Studies of voluntary home visiting programs document reductions in child abuse and neglect, and later crime as well.

Reducing crime is one of the key reasons why Governors and state legislators across the political spectrum are making bold commitments to high-quality early education and care. And now we are at a key fork in the road: policymakers nationwide have an **outstanding opportunity to bring quality preschool to low- and moderate-income children in America.**

The cost of the state-federal partnership that will make this possible is \$75 billion over 10 years – a smart move when you

consider the fact that we currently spend \$75 billion every year on corrections nationwide, to incarcerate more than 2 million criminals. **The state of Maine spends \$161 million per year.**

By one estimate, this 10-year investment in preschool will produce over 2 million additional high school graduates nationwide, including 6,700 in Maine. **And if we can reduce the number of young people who commit felonies and the number who are incarcerated by 10 percent each** – roughly half the reduction achieved by the Chicago Child-Parent Center program – we can reduce the number of individuals who are locked up by 200,000 each year. The resulting savings—\$75 billion over the 10-year investment—is equivalent to the federal costs of the preschool program. **Maine could decrease its prisoners by over 200 each year and save \$16 million.**

These benefits have a tremendous bottom-line economic impact. An independent analysis of over 20 preschool programs demonstrated that quality preschool returned an average “profit” (economic benefits minus costs) to society of \$15,000 for every child served, by cutting crime and the cost of incarceration, and reducing other costs such as special education and welfare.

The state-federal proposal also offers states and communities resources for voluntary home visiting programs to coach new parents and for improving the quality of child care. One home visiting program, **the Nurse-Family Partnership, cut abuse and neglect in half and cut later criminal convictions of participating children by more than half.**

As stated by Sheriff Joyce, the choice is simple: “Pay for quality early education and care for Maine kids now, or pay far more for the costs of crime in Maine in the decades to come.”

I'M THE GUY YOU PAY LATER

Sheriffs, Chiefs and Prosecutors Urge America to Cut Crime by Investing Now in High-Quality Early Education and Care

A Fork in the Road

Our number one priority is protecting the safety of our communities in Maine. We do this by arresting, prosecuting and, when necessary, incarcerating people who commit crimes. But ultimately our best opportunity to improve public safety is to keep people from becoming involved in crime in the first place. To do so, we urge our elected leaders to invest in strategies and practices that have proven, positive and long-term impacts on crime reduction.

We already know where our current path is leading us:

- Although crime rates have fallen over the past 20 years, there are still 1.2 million violent crimes and 9 million property crimes committed against people in our communities across America every year.¹

In Maine, 54 percent of prisoners have less than a high school education.

- In Maine, there are 1,582 violent crimes annually, a rate of 120 per 100,000.² (See Appendix for data from Robert Wood Johnson County Health Rankings);
 - There are more than 2 million American adults in local, state or federal jails or prisons.³ **Maine has about 2,000 adults incarcerated;**⁴
 - Nationally, we spend nearly \$75 billion a year to incarcerate adults in federal and state prisons or local jails.⁵ **The state of Maine spends \$161 million a year;**⁶ and
- Seven out of ten state prisoners do not have a high school diploma, and finding stable employment once they leave prison is very challenging.⁷ **In Maine, 54 percent of prisoners have less than a high school education.**⁸

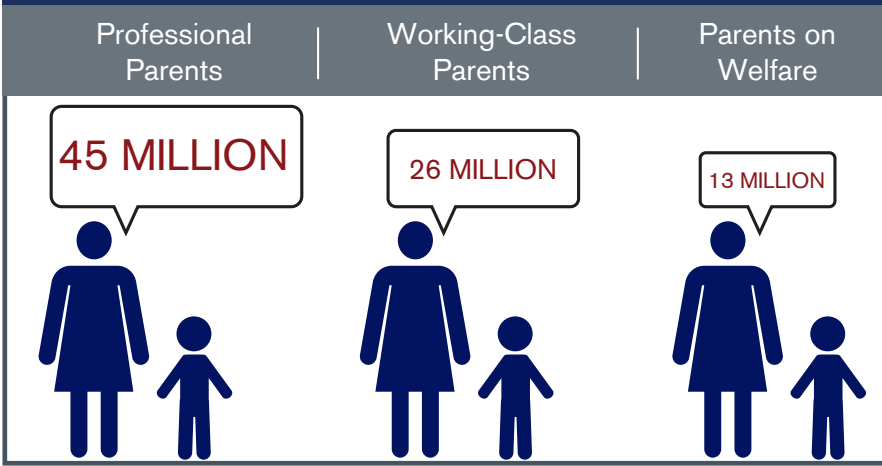
FIGHT CRIME: Invest in Kids

2 MILLION Adults in Prison - OR - 2 MILLION Additional High School Graduates

\$75 BILLION EACH YEAR for Corrections - OR - \$75 BILLION OVER 10 YEARS for Preschool

A FORK IN THE ROAD

Words Spoken By Parents to their Young Children



Source: Hart & Risley, 2004

While these facts are daunting, they do not even begin to reflect crime's other economic costs, or the suffering of crime victims in Maine. The path we are on is both fiscally unsustainable and devastating in its impact on human lives.

Making a Smarter Choice, at a Pivotal Time

Fortunately, we can steer millions of children across America toward successful lives through high-quality early education and care, which has been proven to lead to **less abuse and neglect, better performance in school, fewer high school drop-outs and, ultimately, fewer crimes committed and a reduction in the number of prisoners.**

The research behind these outcomes shows that the early childhood period (birth to age 5) is a time of rapid brain

development, and that hundreds of new connections in the brain form every second.⁹ Early experiences play a large role in determining how brain connections are formed and in the “wiring” that becomes the foundation on which all later learning is built.

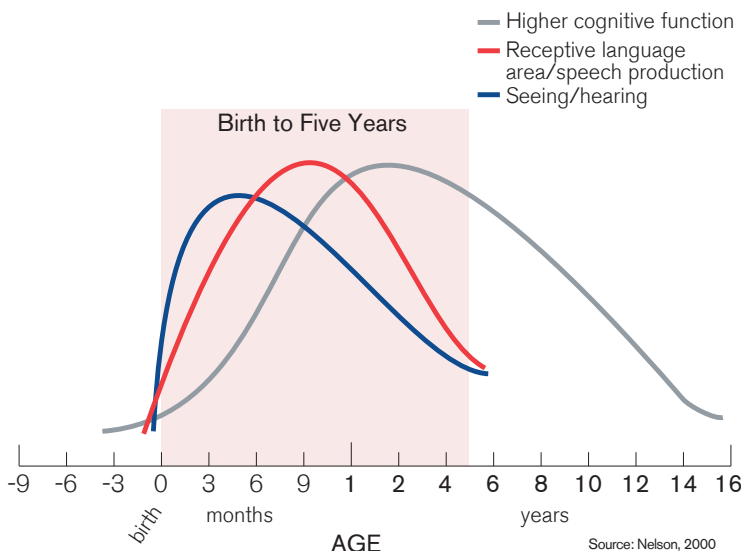
For example, by age 6 months, babies start to understand the link between words and their meanings. This sets the stage for language development and later reading. Yet children from different backgrounds have very different early experiences. Researchers observed children in their own homes monthly for over two years, until the age of three, and recorded how many words their parents spoke to them. There were large differences in the average number of words spoken to the

children by professional parents, working class parents, and parents receiving welfare:

- professional parents 45 million words
- working-class parents 26 million
- parents receiving welfare 13 million.¹⁰

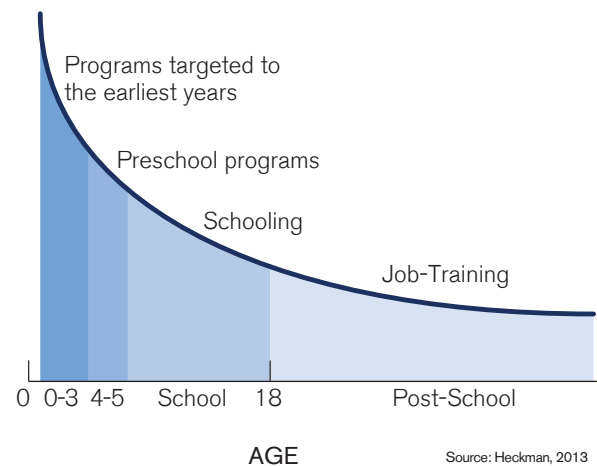
These differences affected the children's vocabulary development: by age three, children with professional parents had average vocabularies of 1,116 words, compared to 749 words for working-class and 525 for children of parents receiving welfare. By the time children reach kindergarten, too many are not only far behind in vocabulary development, but on pre-literacy and pre-math skills (such as knowing their alphabet or being able to count

Synapse Formation in the Developing Brain



Source: Nelson, 2000

Rate of Return

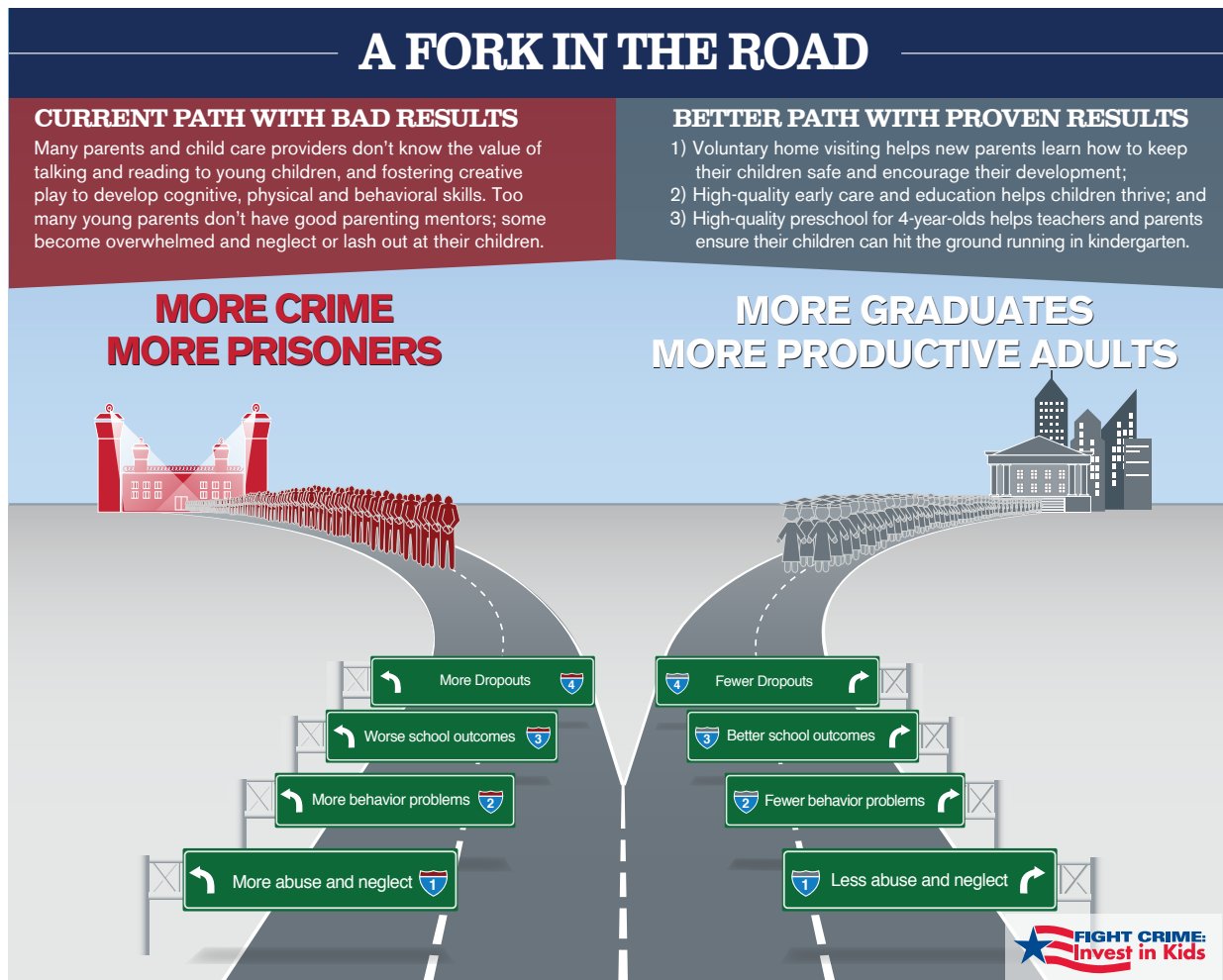


Source: Heckman, 2013

to ten), as well. Many also face challenges in learning to control impulses and behavior so they can get along with other students and teachers.

James Heckman, the Nobel-winning economist from the University of Chicago, has conducted groundbreaking work with economists, statisticians and neuroscientists and has proven that

the quality of early childhood development strongly influences health, social and economic outcomes. He argues that we should invest sufficiently in younger children and in coaching their parents because those early investments will generate the greatest return. But the opposite is happening: we actually spend far less on younger children than on older children and adults.¹¹



THE PATHWAY TO LESS CRIME

The path we set children upon, in their earliest years, can make a huge difference as they proceed through school and beyond. Research has shown that high-quality early education and care from birth through preschool will result in more successful outcomes:

1 Less abuse and neglect:

- The Nurse-Family Partnership is a nationwide voluntary home visiting program. The Chicago Child-Parent Center (CPC) is a preschool program that has served over 100,000 children and followed them up to age 28.

Both programs coach parents to help them understand their children's health needs, create safer home environments and develop parenting skills.

Both approaches cut child abuse and neglect in half for the children served, compared to similar children from families not being helped.¹²

2 Fewer behavior problems:

- Pennsylvania's Pre-K Counts program cut the portion of children at risk for problematic social and self-control behavior (such as taking things from others or not waiting your turn) from 22 percent to 4 percent.¹³

3 Better school outcomes:

- **Ready for school:** Boston's universal preschool program improved mathematics, literacy and language skills among participating children equivalent to seven months of additional learning, compared to children who did not attend.¹⁴ State preschool programs are also reporting important improvements.¹⁵
- **Less special education:** Pennsylvania's pre-k program's success in helping children learn self-control indicates fewer of those children will need special education. New Jersey, which has followed its children through the 4th and 5th grades, found that the children served were 31 percent less likely to be placed in special education than a control group.¹⁶
- **Not held back in school:** Participants in Michigan's state preschool, the Great Start Readiness Program, were held back in school 51 percent less often than non-participants.¹⁷ Children served in Tennessee's preschool program were half as likely to be held back in kindergarten.¹⁸ New Jersey's preschool program found its children were held back 40 percent less often.¹⁹ A home visiting program, Healthy Families New York, cut first grade retention rates by half.²⁰
- **Ahead in reading and math with no "fade-out":** North Carolina's Smart Start and More at Four initiatives to improve early education found that the children in counties that invested more in these efforts were five months ahead in reading at third grade and three to five months ahead in math by third grade when compared to children in counties that invested less.²¹

New Jersey's preschool program, which served disadvantaged school districts statewide, reported that participating children were three-fourths of a year ahead in math and two-thirds of a year ahead in literacy in 4th and 5th grades.²²

These findings show that academic benefits from high-quality preschool need not "fade out." The New Jersey researchers report that their findings are on par with the earlier results achieved by Chicago's CPC program, which later went on to achieve very strong graduation and crime reduction outcomes.

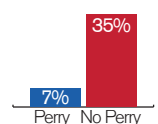
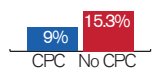
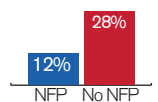
4 Fewer drop-outs:

- The Chicago CPC preschool program reported a 29 percent increase in high school graduation rates by age 20 among its participants.²³
- Michigan's Great Start Readiness program reported a 35 percent increase in graduates,²⁴ and
- The Perry Preschool Program saw a 44 percent increase in graduation rates by age 40.²⁵

In Maine, 16 percent of high school students still fail to graduate on time.²⁶

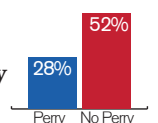
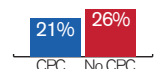
5 Less crime:

- The Nurse-Family Partnership children were **half as likely to be convicted of a crime by the time they reached age 19.**²⁷
- Children not served by the Chicago CPC program were **70 percent more likely to be arrested for a violent crime by age 18.**²⁸
- By age 27, children not served by the Perry Preschool Program were **five times more likely to be chronic offenders with five or more arrests.**²⁹



6 Fewer prisoners:

- By age 24, the people served by the Chicago CPC were **20 percent less likely to have served time in a jail or prison.**³⁰
- By age 40, the children served by the Perry Preschool program were **46 percent less likely to have been sentenced to prison or jail.**³¹



It All Adds Up

No baby is destined, at birth, to become a criminal. The road to criminal behavior is paved with childhood abuse and neglect, inadequate preparation for school, unaddressed behavior problems, poor academic performance and dropping out of high school. The path to success in life is driven by school readiness, the ability to get along with others, academic achievement and high school graduation. We need to take action, right now, to ensure children have the opportunity for quality early education and care so they are on the right path for life.



efforts can be brought to scale and deliver strong and lasting results. If a particular state preschool program isn't achieving meaningful and lasting results, such as reductions in children's behavior problems or improved math and literacy skills, the program administrators need to find out what the successful programs are doing differently. Steve Barnett, the Director of the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER), argues that "an accountability and continuous improvement system is a prerequisite for quality,

as is adequate funding for those being held accountable."³² Administrators of our most successful state preschool programs take nothing for granted and are constantly working to learn from each other and make improvements. Maine preschool meets six of the ten quality benchmarks established by NIEER.³³

No Excuses

Results from New Jersey, North Carolina and Michigan should effectively end the debate on whether high-quality state preschool

Support for Preschool Across America and Across the Political Divide

Twenty-Five Examples of Bipartisan Support for New or Expanded Pre-K in 2013

Gov. Bentley AL \$9.4M	Gov. Brown CA \$25M									Gov. Hickenlooper CO \$10M	Gov. Deal GA \$13M			
Gov. Abercrombie HI \$6.4M	Gov. Patrick MA \$26M*	Gov. Snyder MI \$65M								Gov. Dayton MN \$40M	Gov. Nixon MO \$3.4M	Gov. Bryant MS \$3M		
Gov. Bullock MT \$1M	Gov. McCrory NC \$12.4M	Gov. Dalrymple ND \$5M	Gov. Heinemann NE \$5M	Gov. Christie NJ \$14.4M	Gov. Martinez NM \$16.5M	Gov. Cuomo NY \$25M	Gov. Kasich OH \$12M	Gov. Kitzhaber OR \$6M	Gov. Corbett PA \$4.5M	Gov. Chafee RI \$0.5M	Gov. Haley SC \$26M	Gov. McDonnell VA \$5M	Gov. Inslee WA \$22.4M	Gov. Tomlin WV TBD*

Note: MA: \$26.5 increase primarily for childcare; preschool funding increase failed. WV: Education bill passed establishing universal preschool by 2016; however funding not yet determined.

States Know Early Learning Works

States recognize the benefits of high-quality early learning programs. In the past decade, the percentage of four-year-olds served in state preschool doubled, from 14 to 28 percent.³⁴ In Maine, the percentage of four-year-olds served has increased in the past decade, going from 10 percent in 2002 to 32 percent in 2012.

Preschool has received support from both sides of the aisle. In 2013, at least 25 states, more than half of them with Republican leadership, proposed and/or signed into law expansions of preschool.³⁵

Access to preschool, however, varies widely across the states, and most states do not serve the majority of their four-year-olds. In 2012, 10 states did not have any state preschool programs. More than half of the remaining states served 30 percent or fewer of their four-year-olds.³⁶ In a time of budget cuts, many states have struggled to pay for preschool, despite their commitments to early learning. And the NIEER-projected cost of high-quality preschool—a national average of \$9,076 per year and \$3,998 per year in Maine—is higher than many families, particularly low- and moderate-income families, can afford.³⁷ In 2012, Maine served 32 percent of its four-year-olds and spent \$10.6 million (\$2,213 per child). [See *The State of Preschool in America, 2012*, by the National Institute for Early Education Research, for more state information.³⁸]

Voluntary home visiting programs have also received widespread, bipartisan support. In 2012, 47 of the 50 states applied for and received federal Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting (MIECHV) grants to deliver home visiting services to

Increasing graduation rates decreases serious crime

University of California at Berkeley economist Enrico Moretti and Canadian economist Lance Lochner studied the relationship over time between changes in graduation rates and crime. They concluded that a 10 percentage point increase in graduation rates – going from 50 percent to 60 percent, for example – reduces murder and assault rates by about 20 percent.

Source: Lochner & Moretti (2004) *The American Economic Review*

high-risk families.³⁹ In recognition of the success of its Maine Families Home Visiting program, Maine received a competitive MIECHV grant to expand the program to serve more vulnerable families. For the current year, Maine has \$8 million in MIECHV competitive and formula grants to deliver home visiting services. Although comprehensive information on the proportion of high-risk families served by home visiting programs is not available, relevant data indicate that the programs reach only a fraction of eligible families.⁴⁰ The current proposal represents a serious effort to address this unmet need.

An Unprecedented Opportunity

We now have an opportunity to increase the number of children served in voluntary high-quality early education and care. In its 2014 budget proposal, **the Administration has proposed \$75 billion over 10 years for a state-federal partnership** to offer high-quality preschool programs to low- and moderate-income four-year-olds.⁴¹ The proposal also includes \$15 billion over 10 years to increase access to voluntary home visiting programs, and additional funds for improving the quality of child care for children birth through age three through the Child Care and Development Block Grant (CCDBG) and child care partnerships with Early Head Start.

\$75 Billion Every Year to Lock Up Criminals vs. \$75 Billion Over 10 Years for Quality Early Education and Care

We know from projections made by the national security organization, Mission: Readiness, that investments that bring high-quality preschool to scale for low-income children could



produce 2 million additional high school graduates nationwide over 10 years, once the programs are established.⁴² Maine could add 6,700 graduates over 10 years.

We don't know exactly how much high-quality state preschool programs could cut the costs of corrections. But, as recently as 2008, **America spent nearly \$75 billion a year to incarcerate more than 2 million adults in federal and state prisons or local jails.**⁴³ **That contrasts with \$75 billion in federal funding over 10 years to bring preschool to scale for low- to moderate-income children nationwide.** The state of Maine spends \$161 million a year on incarceration. This does not include spending for local or county jails.⁴⁴

Obviously we cannot simply stop paying the cost of incarcerating criminals. However, given that the federal cost of the proposed state-federal preschool partnership is one-tenth the cost of corrections nationwide, cutting the number of people who commit felonies and become prisoners by just 10 percent, or 200,000 people nationwide – half the 20 percent reduction realized by Chicago's CPC program – could begin to pay the equivalent of all of the federal costs of the preschool program (\$75 billion). Maine could decrease its prisoners by more than 200 each year and save \$16 million. This does not even take into account the many other benefits that accrue from high-quality preschool.



Stronger parents

The most successful early care and education programs with long-term results—such as the Perry Preschool, CPC, New Jersey's state preschool and the Nurse-Family Partnership—work with parents to teach them how to reinforce positive behaviors and encourage them to routinely read and speak to their children, so they are better prepared for success in the years to come.

That 10 percent reduction figure is presented to illustrate the potential of preschool to pay for itself from reductions in crime alone, rather than as a hard and fast projection. But a well-respected, independent cost-benefit analysis of more than 20 different studies of preschool programs showed that preschool can return, on average, a “profit” (economic benefits minus costs) to society of \$15,000 for every child served.⁴⁵ Other estimates are much higher. Clearly, preschool works and more than pays for itself.

The same cost-benefit analysis determined that the Nurse-Family Partnership voluntary home visiting program can return, on average, net benefits of \$13,000 per child served.⁴⁶

Cutting the number of people who become prisoners by just 10 percent, half the 20 percent realized by Child-Parent Centers in Chicago, could begin to pay the equivalent of all of the federal costs of the preschool proposal. Maine could decrease its prisoners by 200 each year and save \$16 million.

A Different Path for Our Country

Our members make no apologies for putting criminals behind bars in Maine. **But we all agree that a better and less expensive way going forward is to prevent as many young children as possible from growing up to become involved in crime.**

If America invests wisely now in preschool and in services such as evidence-based home visiting and high-quality child care, millions of children can become successful, productive adults, instead of individuals who fail themselves and cost taxpayers dearly. Over time, this may help America reduce the number of prisoners well below 2 million a year, while cutting costs dramatically.

When we support what works for our disadvantaged children, we put them – and our country – on a different, safer path. It's time to do what works, America.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation County Health Rankings & Roadmaps

Data by county: On-time high school graduation and adult violent crime

COUNTY	PROPORTION NOT GRADUATING HIGH SCHOOL ON TIME ¹	ANNUAL VIOLENT CRIMES ²	VIOLENT CRIME RATE ² (PER 100,000 POPULATION)
STATE	16	1,582	120
Androscoggin	22	164	153
Aroostook	14	45	64
Cumberland	14	458	165
Franklin	19	39	130
Hancock	17	39	74
Kennebec	17	143	118
Knox	14	19	49
Lincoln	18	29	85
Oxford	16	74	130
Penobscot	17	113	75
Piscataquis	15	22	130
Sagadahoc	16	15	42
Somerset	21	51	100
Waldo	17	32	84
Washington	17	90	279
York	14	221	110

1. Data from state department of education.

2. Data from FBI Uniform Crime Reporting Programing: <http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/>



Endnotes

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- 7 Harlow, C. W. (2003, January). Education and correctional populations. NCJ 195670. Washington, DC: U. S. Department of Justice, Bureau of Justice Statistics. Retrieved from: <http://www.bjs.gov/content/pub/pdf/ecp.pdf>. The figure, 68%, represents those without high school diplomas at time of incarceration. Some inmates participate in educational programs in prison and earn their diplomas.
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