

earlymatters

Proposed 10-year Vision for Houston and Harris County

What is Early Matters?

We are a broad-based coalition of business, civic, education, philanthropic and nonprofit organizations and volunteers, working together to raise awareness about the importance of high quality early education and to make a strong case for increased investment in this critical, high return on investment area.

Case Statement

The scientific evidence is abundantly clear – an investment in our young children through engaged parenting and high quality early education programs makes a lifelong difference in school outcomes and workforce readiness.

We need to put this knowledge to work, as we are at a critical time in our community's evolution with many more jobs requiring post high school education. Only 1 of 5 children in our region are graduating from high school and completing some form of post high school credential. However, Houston's rapidly growing employers in the petrochemical, medical and manufacturing fields desperately need employees with the post high school education.

Early education receives limited public funding, and the state standards for quality early education programs are far too low. As a result, few families are able to access high quality early education.

We must invest more heavily in the early stages of our children's learning and development, a time in which we see the highest financial return on investment and the greatest impact on preparing children for a bright and successful future.

The Vision

We envision a greater Houston region where young children are a part of supportive and nurturing families and are able to participate in high quality early education, knowing that intentional early investments significantly improve kindergarten readiness, 3rd grade reading mastery, high school graduation rates, post high school education/credentialing and workforce readiness.

Steps to Achieve the Vision

- **Parents** should have access to a range of resources to become the best parents they can be for their growing child.
- **Child care programs** should maintain high quality standards and be accessible to working families.
- **Pre-K Programs** must be of high quality and accessible.