

Testimony to the House Committee on Finance,
Wednesday, March 4, 2020

Good afternoon. My name is David Caprio, and I am the President and CEO of Children's Friend.

I am here today to support the continued expansion of Pre-K as described in Article 10 of the Governor's Proposed 2021 Budget.

The Pre-K program in Rhode Island is truly something that we should all be proud of because of its high-quality and the difference it is making for our young children.

Research at a national level has shown that state investments in high-quality early childhood programs are some of the best financial investments that a state can make in terms of return on investment. Research has documented annual rates of return as high as 13% for investments made in high-quality early education.

The RI Pre-K program with its high-quality, best practice standards, mixed delivery system, and work to improve the transition to kindergarten is a system that must continue and should be expanded.

One well known national study which has documented the positive impacts of high-quality early childhood services is the Perry Pre-School Project. In this study it is well documented that high-quality Pre-K significantly increased participants education, health, full-time employment, and reduced incidences of anti-social behavior and crime.

New research just released last year related to the Perry Preschool Project, by Nobel Laureate Economist James Heckman, documents substantial second generation positive effects on education, health, employment, and crime.

One example of these second generation positive impacts is that the children of the Perry Preschool children, were about 50% more likely to be employed full time compared to their peers in the control group.

This amazing new research documenting a two generation impact from high-quality early childhood education services provides even more independent support for the continued expansion of Pre-K in Rhode Island.

Thank you for the opportunity to testify today and I urge you to support the continued expansion of Pre-K in Rhode Island.