

Why is early learning so important?

The first years of life are crucial to a child’s lifelong development. Experiences and environments during the early years – birth to five – set the stage for children’s future development and success in school and in life. Research confirms that these early experiences and environments influence brain development by establishing neural connections that provide the foundation for language, reasoning, emotional health, problem solving and social skills.

Why is this a BRT priority?

This is in fact an economic development issue. Businesses need employees who are job-ready, team capable, and well-prepared. Research and experience show that Ohio’s failing workforce pipeline can be repaired. Yet, efforts to plug the leak in the state’s talent-pool pipeline must start early. In 2010, the BRT challenged policymakers and ourselves to commit to a bold goal: By 2020, ensure that 90% of Ohio children entering school will be ready to succeed in kindergarten.

What is the purpose of this report?

In this report, fashioned as a sequel to our 2010 report, we are taking stock. Where do we stand? Where are we headed? How do we get there? When will we get there? While we have advanced the ball, truth is, we have not done enough. After taking stock, we put forth a new game plan for re-energizing efforts to ensure that all Ohio children enter kindergarten prepared to succeed as learners.

How do we define success?

In recent years, the focus of early-learning investments has shifted from safe, caring environments to **high-quality early-learning experiences** that are both safe and affordable – and can help parents, especially those living in poverty, enter the workforce.

Do we set out a new K-readiness goal?

Yes, we have a new goal. By 2025, 90% of Ohio children entering kindergarten will be ready to succeed.

What are the BRT’s recommendations for achieving this new bold goal?

This is what we want to see happen going forward:

- 1) Fast-track significant state investment to take proven home-visiting and pre-kindergarten programs to scale
- 2) Relentlessly pursue quality programs – such as the Step Up To Quality system – that make a difference
- 3) Strengthen statewide leadership, giving it authority to sustain effective cross-agency decision making