

Texas Children's Education Group

Prekindergarten

Parent or
Government
Responsibility?




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Regardless of who we believe should be responsible, we probably agree that any **public policy** should be **effective.**




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The public policy discussion in this area
has centered upon
Universal Prekindergarten (UPK).



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TCEG is not opposed to Universal
Prekindergarten, rather we
support effective public policy.

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There are approximately **350,000**
prekindergarten aged children in Texas.
(4 years old as of 9/1/06)

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Approximately 290,000 of these 350,000 attend an out-of-home prekindergarten program.



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Approximately **180,000** are enrolled in public school (publicly-funded) prekindergarten programs.

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Another **95,000** are enrolled in private prekindergarten programs. (parent pay)



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And approximately 15,000 are enrolled in Head Start Programs. (publicly-funded)

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That means that approximately 82% of Texas prekindergarten children are enrolled in an out-of-home prekindergarten program.

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In Georgia, only approximately 70% of the eligible prekindergarten population is enrolled in the publicly-funded Pre-K program.

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In Oklahoma also, only approximately 70% of the eligible prekindergarten population is enrolled in the publicly-funded program.

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Based upon these results in Georgia and Oklahoma, it is very **unlikely** that Texas would see any increase in enrollment of prekindergarten children in a UPK program.

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Even though one survey indicates that voters want the state to do more, we already invest a **large** amount of **public funds** in prekindergarten.

Public Pre-K in public schools (State)	\$488,000,000.00 per year
Head Start (Federal)	\$70,000,000.00 per year
Subsidized Child Care Programs (Federal)	\$120,000,000.00 per year

TOTAL **\$678,000,000.00** per year

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In addition to public funds, parents make an additional investment in prekindergarten.

\$117,000,000.00 per year



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Total Public and Parent (private) investment is:

\$800,000,000.00 per year

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A recent Cost/Benefit Analysis suggests that an investment of \$1 yields a return of \$3.50.

However, this benefit is only realized if we move a child from the "unready" side of the ledger to the "school ready" side of the ledger.

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Unfortunately, based upon assessments administered and reported by the public schools, **50,000** children do enter school “unready” each year, so there is a **need**.

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Also unfortunately, UPK would be ineffective public policy to address this need.

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Most of the **50,000** “unready” children come from the **60,000** children not attending an out-of-home prekindergarten program.

These children are also **unlikely** to attend a UPK prekindergarten program.

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Since data indicates that we will not be able to enroll these children in UPK, where will we see them with a chance to help them?



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The first place we will have an opportunity to intervene is in Public School Kindergarten and First Grade.

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A tightly **focused** academic **intervention** in public school for these **50,000** children would be our **most effective** public policy.

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To quantify effective public policy, we need to know where we are now and where we would be after the implementation of a new policy.

Currently, 35,000 students fail the Third Grade TAKS reading skills assessment.

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If Universal Prekindergarten is implemented, approximately **27,000** students will still **fail** the Third Grade TAKS reading skills assessment.

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If we implement a tightly **focused** academic **intervention** in Kindergarten through Third Grade for those that have an assessed need, we would leave **0** students **failing** the Third Grade TAKS reading skills assessment.