The Potential of Title I for High-Quality Preschool

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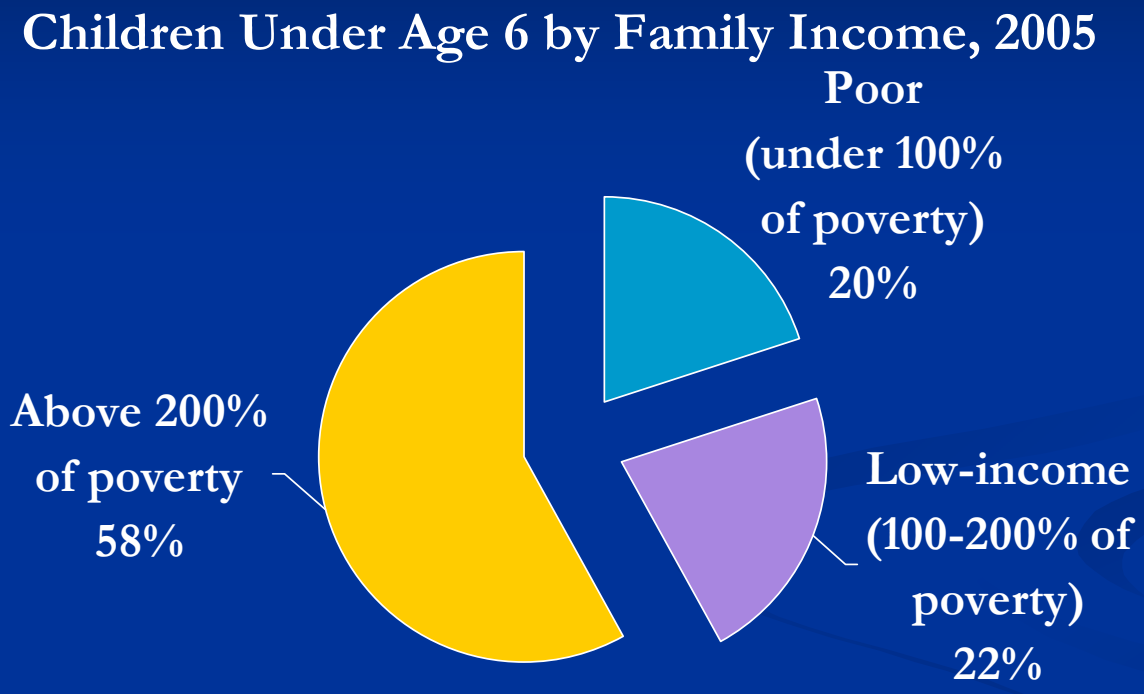
Presentation Overview

- Making the case for investments in young children in low-income families
- Defining high-quality pre-kindergarten
- No Child Left Behind 101
- The opportunity of Title I for young children
- Policy implications

Many Young Children Are Low-Income…

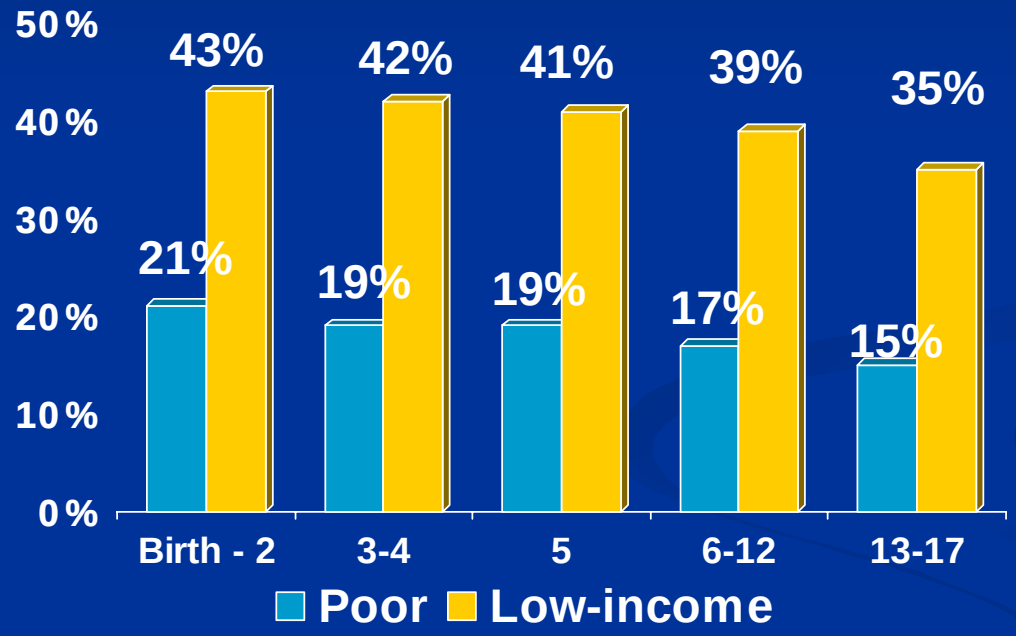


…and the proportion of low-income children has been increasing since 2000.

Source: National Center for Children in Poverty

Very Young Children Are More Likely To Be Poor...

Children living in low-income and poor families, by age group, 2005

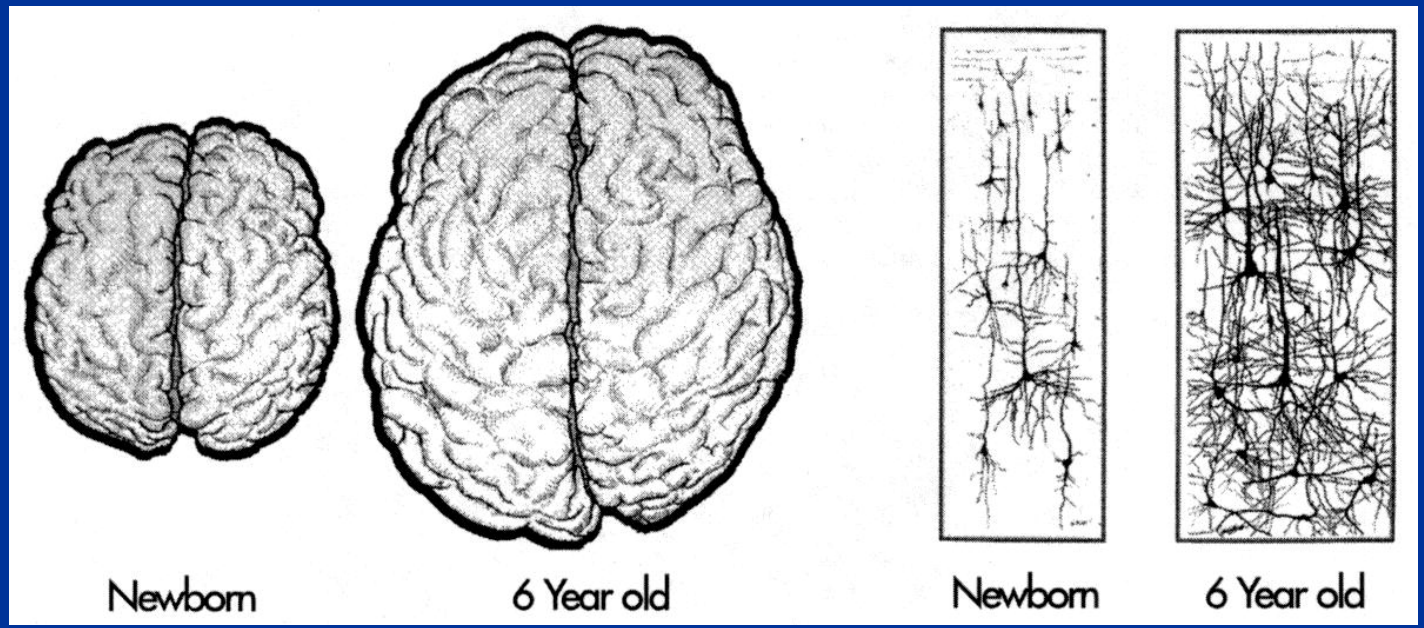


…and they face multiple risk factors affecting future school success.

Source: National Center for Children in Poverty

Important Connections are Made Prior to School-Entry

90% of brain growth occurs before kindergarten



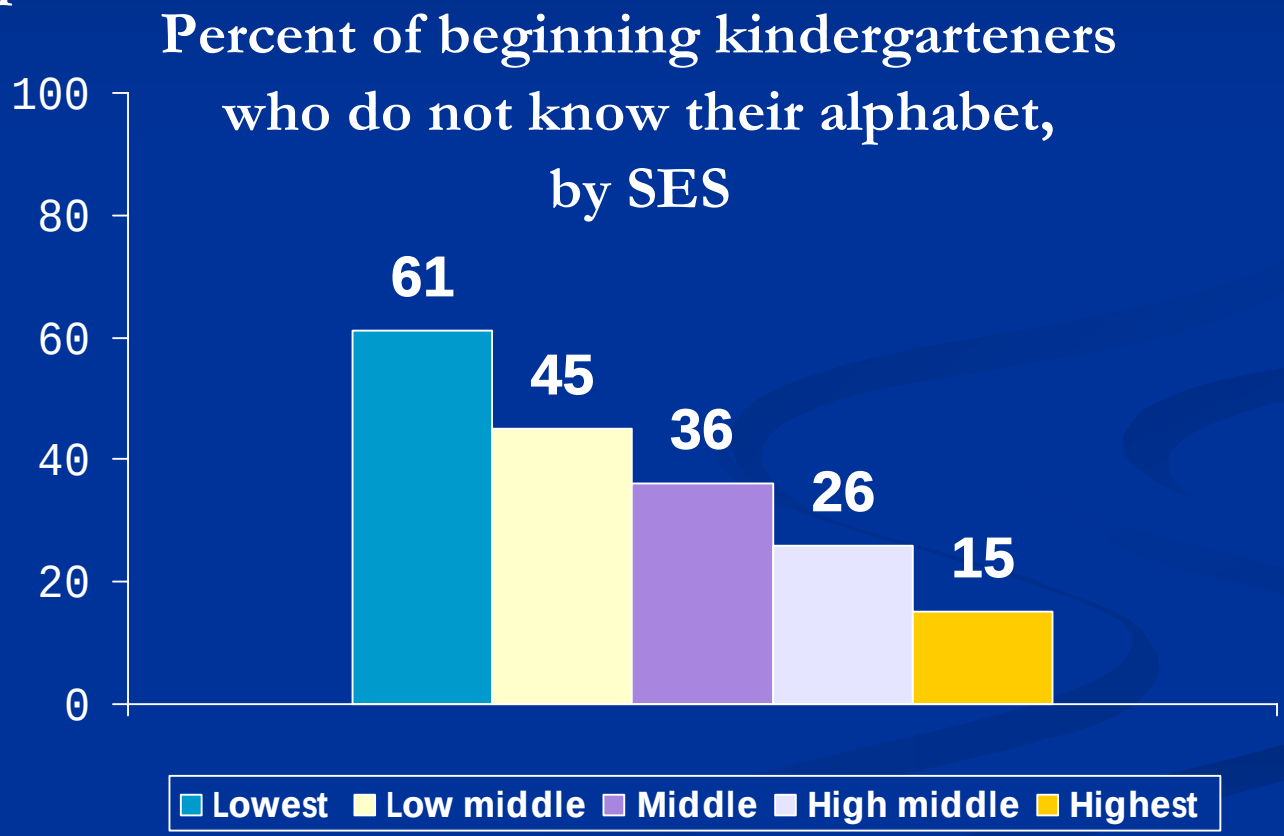
Newborn brain size compared to that of a 6-year-old brain

Newborn neural networks compared to networks of a 6-year-old

Source: Paul Lombroso, "Development of the cerebral cortex. VI. Growth Factors I." Journal of the American Academy of child and Adolescent Psychiatry *37(6): 674-675, 1998.*

Many Low-Income Children Enter Elementary School Behind

For example….



Source: U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics

Children Benefit from High-Quality Pre-kindergarten

- Increased achievement test scores
- Improved behavior and attitudes
- Decreased grade retention
- Decreased special education
- Decreased crime & delinquency
- Increased high school graduation
- Increased language acquisition

What is High-Quality Pre-kindergarten?

- Includes requirements for how a program should operate in order to create the conditions and context for early childhood learning and development in child care
- Components of program standards linked to better child development:
  - Low staff-to-child ratios
  - Small class size
  - Teacher qualifications
  - Requirement for a curriculum

- Provides access to comprehensive services, including health care, referrals, diagnostic assessment, and intervention

NCLB 101

A brief history of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (now the No Child Left Behind Act)

- WAR ON POVERTY
  - In 1965, Congress approved a sweeping array of education programs, including Head Start, guaranteed student loans and the Elementary and Secondary Education Act (ESEA), the centerpiece of which was, and remains, Title I—the largest source of federal education aid to states for low-income students.

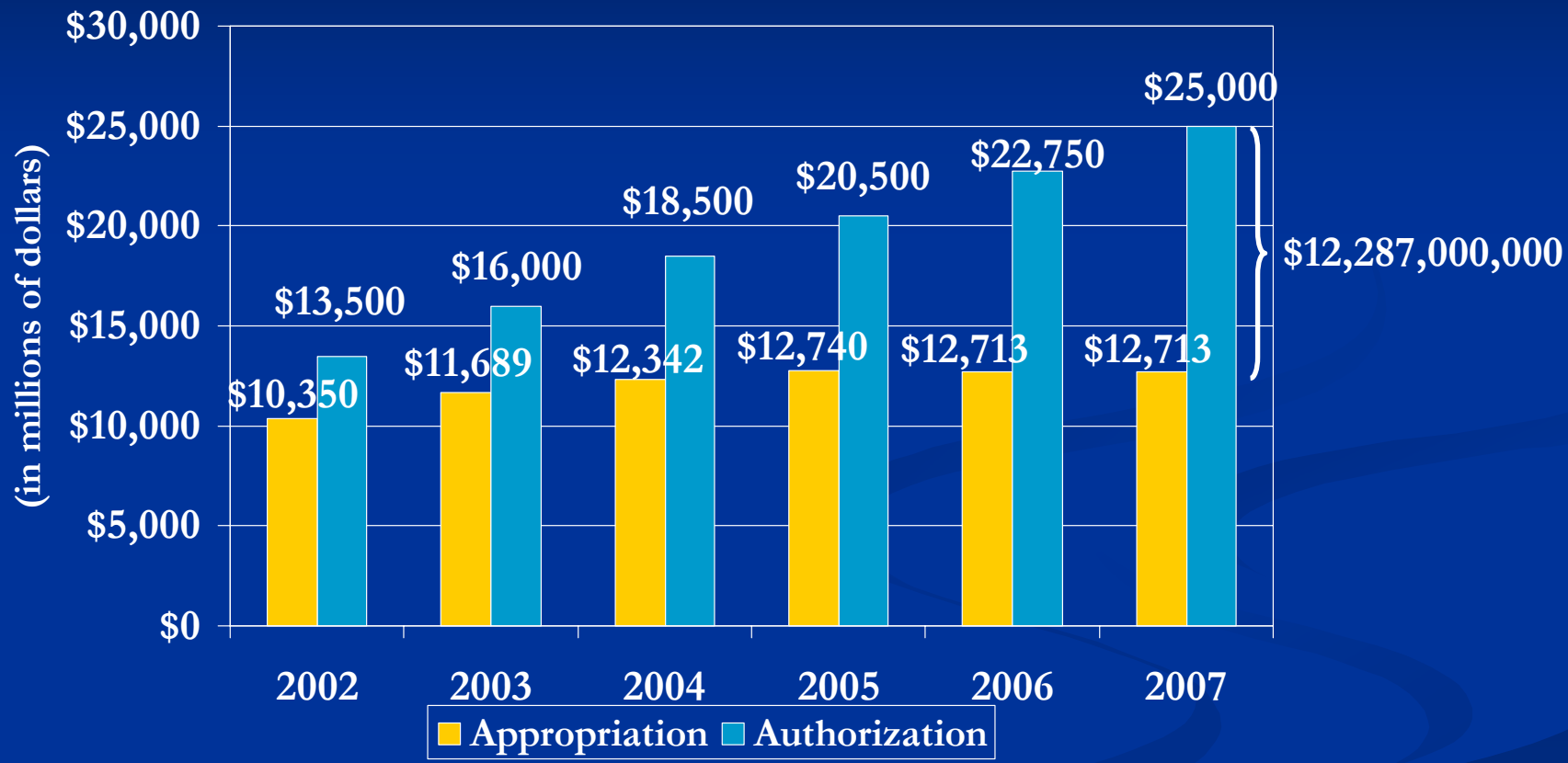
Key Elements of the ESEA

- Title I—Compensatory Education for Disadvantaged Students
  - Historically, supplemental programming or tutoring in reading and math for identified students
  - 1987 (following 1984 Nation at Risk): Concentration grants expanded to allow for whole school programming and "program improvement" provisions required monitoring individual student progress fall to spring
  - 1994 (following the Education Summit and Goals 2000): The Improving America's Schools Act further extended the accountability requirements.

NCLB Funding: Initial State (and District) Funding Increases Have Lessened

- When NCLB was passed, Congress provided funding authorization levels commensurate with the law's accountability and other requirements.
- Between 2002 and 2005, however, the gap between what Congress promised and what Congress provided for NCLB programs was $27 billion.
- While Title I was increased by 3% in fiscal year 2005, the number of children living in poverty increased by 6%—further limiting the Title I dollars available for each poor child.

Title I Funding Increased Initially But Remains Below Authorized Levels



Note: FY 2007 is amount requested in the President's Budget. Funds for the year have not yet been appropriated. Source: U.S. Department of Education

NCLB Funding in 2006-2007

- Title I has not received an increase in funding in two years, while the number of poor children has increased.
  - As a result, 62% of districts had Title I funds cut or frozen in 2006-2007.
- State Education Agencies must reserve 4% of total Title I funds for schools in need of improvement.
  - This has the effect of cutting or freezing funding for 90% of districts in 2006-2007 (Center on Education Policy).

Some States (and Districts) Lose Funding, While Others Gain

Changes in Title I Funding, 2006-2007

Ten Losing States, by % decrease	
Massachusetts	↓ 9.7%
Connecticut	↓ 6.6%
North Dakota	↓ 6.5%
Maine	↓ 6.2%
Missouri	↓ 4.7%
Wisconsin	↓ 4.2%
New Hampshire	↓ 4.2%
West Virginia	↓ 4.1%
Virginia	↓ 4.1%
Wyoming	↓ 3.4%

Top Ten Gaining States, by % increase	
Nevada	↑ 10.6%
Florida	↑ 6.5%
Ohio	↑ 6.2%
Indiana	↑ 5.6%
Oregon	↑ 5.2%
Arizona	↑ 5.0%
Colorado	↑ 4.6%
New Mexico	↑ 2.8%
Louisiana	↑ 2.2%
Alabama	↑ 2.0%

Source: Center on Education Policy

Benefits of Using Title I for Preschool

- Reach at-risk children in families with incomes above poverty
- Fund high-quality programs that meet Head Start educational standards
- Provide comprehensive services
- Serve children in community-based settings
- Fund teacher professional development
- Serve children from birth through age at school entry

How Can Title I Funds Be Used for Preschool?

- Title I-funded preschool is the second oldest federally funded preschool program.
  - In 1967, the Chicago Public Schools began using Title I funds to provide comprehensive educational and family support services—with significant positive longitudinal outcomes for participating children.

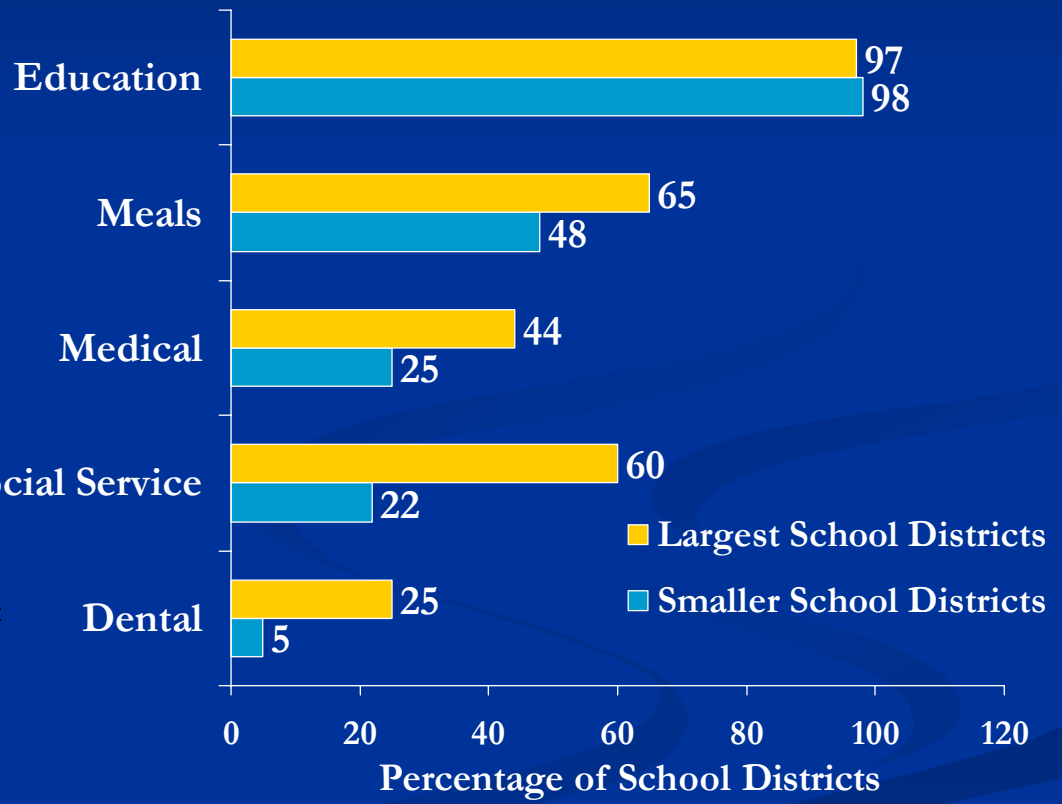
How Can Title I Funds Be Used for Preschool?

- Title I funds can be used for preschool or to supplement or expand other early childhood education programs, such as state-funded prekindergarten, Head Start, Even Start, or Early Reading First.

- Title I funds may be used in conjunction with existing programs, including community-based child care programs, and the Child Care and Development Block Grant.

How Can Title I Funds Be Used for Preschool?

- Title I funds can be used to fund:
  - Teachers salaries, professional development, counseling services, minor remodeling, and leasing or renting space in private facilities
  - Comprehensive services if a needs assessment shows that a child needs health, nutrition, or other social services and they are not available from other sources
  - Screening to identify children at risk



Source: U.S. General Accounting Office (2000). *Title I Preschool Education: More Children Served, but Gauging Effect on School Readiness Difficult.* 2000.

Title I Preschool Requirements

- Meet Head Start Education Performance Standards
- Include a parental involvement component
- Title I programs using an Even Start model must integrate ECE, adult literacy or adult basic education, and parenting education into a family literacy program and must comply with Even Start requirements
- In some Title I preschools, teachers must meet the NCLB "highly qualified" standard

Highly Qualified Pre-Kindergarten Teachers?

- Requirements "do not apply to early childhood or pre-K teachers unless a state includes early childhood/pre-K as part of its elementary and secondary school system."

To What Extent ARE Title I Funds Used for Preschool?

- No national reporting on Title I expenditures for preschool

- In FY 2002, an estimated 2-3% of Title I funds, or $200 million, served over 300,000 children in preschool programs.
  - 90% of children attend schoolwide programs
  - 9% of children attend targeted-assistance programs.

To What Extent ARE Title I Funds Used for Preschool?

- Full-school-day programs (layering funds)
  - **Houston, TX** uses Title I to provide full-school-day preschool to all eligible 4-year-olds in the district.
  - **Detroit, MI** uses Title I to extend the day for state pre-k and Head Start classes.

To What Extent ARE Title I Funds Used for Preschool?

- Full-school-day programs (layering funds)
  - **Asheville, NC** funds two full-day, full-year classrooms for 4-year olds who qualify—supported by Title I, More at Four, Head Start, and child care subsidy funds.
  - **Hamilton County Schools in Chattanooga, TN** use Title I funds along with Head Start and state pre-k funds to support 37 preschool classes, 12 in community-based settings. All classes use the same curriculum, and all teachers receive the same professional development, regardless of setting.

To What Extent ARE Title I Funds Used for Preschool?

- Home visiting
  - Title I funds the Parent-Child Home Program in **Pittsfield, MA** for 2- and 3-year olds.

- Screening and assessment
  - **Melrose, MA** uses Title I to offer comprehensive screening to all 4-year-olds in the district, to identify at-risk children.

To What Extent ARE Title I Funds Used for Preschool?

- Professional development
  - **Mesa County Valley School District in CO** uses Title I to develop highly qualified paraprofessionals for the district's preschool program.
- Enrichment
  - The VIP Village in **South Bay Union School District in CA** uses Title I to provide developmentally appropriate language and literacy enrichment for preschool children and a summer booster program for entering kindergarteners.

Preliminary Findings

To What Extent ARE Title I Funds Used for Preschool?

- Enrichment
  - The Twilight Family Learning Centers in **Elk Grove, CA** offers 4-year-old preschool funded through Title I. After school, adult education, and Title I parent involvement funds provide for classes for parents, including literacy, parenting education, GED, and ESL.
  - In several communities, Title I has been used to create programs to serve language minority children from immigrant families.

To What Extent ARE Title I Funds Used for Preschool?

- Between the 2001-2002 and 2005-2006 school years, the number of districts in California reserving Title I funds for preschool climbed from 30 to 57, and the amount of Title I funds available rose 76%, to $13.5 million.
- In the 2003-2004 school year, at least 13 state pre-kindergarten programs reported using Title I funds for preschool:
  - Kentucky spent $2.4 million
  - West Virginia spent $6 million

Source: California State Department of Education and National Institute for Early Education Research

Funding Context for Title I Preschool

- As the number of schools in improvement increases, the overall amount of Title I funds available for preschool may diminish.
- Schools may need to redirect resources to concentrate on the primary grades, in which children are being tested.
- Alternatively, schools may recognize the importance of early learning for closing the achievement gap and may choose to invest resources in early education.

Policy Implications

- Title I can fund high-quality preschool.
- Dollars are flexible: Communities can use the funds to best meet their own needs—to improve quality, provide comprehensive services, expand opportunities, or lengthen the day for low-income children.
- Decision makers in local school districts need research-based evidence to help move Title I dollars to preschool programs.
- NCLB pressures may be driving dollars away from preschool exactly when early investments will pay off the most and help states and local communities meet their 3rd-grade goals.

Questions for Further Research

- To what degree are Title I funds being used for preschool; to supplement other programs, to place credentialed teachers in preschool programs, and to provide comprehensive services?
- How do school districts make the decision to use Title I funds for preschool? How can they be encouraged to use funds to increase access to high-quality programs?
- Has NCLB had an impact on district thinking about the importance of early childhood to school success, an impact resulting in policy or programmatic changes?
- How can preschool investments be seen as part of school improvement plans?

Additional Resources

- *Missed Opportunities? The Possibilities and Challenges of Funding High-Quality Preschool Through Title I of the No Child Left Behind Act*

  www.clasp.org/publications/missed_opp.pdf

- *U.S. Department of Education Non-Regulatory Guidance on Serving Preschool Children Under Title I*

  www.ed.gov/policy/elsec/guid/preschoolguidance.doc