Idaho is one of five states that does not invest in preschool for families with children 3 to 5 years old. Only about half of Idaho students enter Kindergarten with the skills necessary to learn, such as the ability to hold a crayon and recognize letters, numbers and shapes. The students who start school without those basic foundational skills often never catch up – they are more likely to repeat grades, require special education, drop out completely or get into future trouble with the law.

The Idaho Association for the Education of Young Children has known all of this for years. What we didn’t know was exactly what Idaho voters and parents thought about early childhood education. So, we partnered with the public opinion research firm Moore Information in 2017 to survey a representative sample of registered voters statewide as well as an oversample of parents of children age 5 or younger. Here is what we found …

Idaho Voters & Parents
Recognize the Early Years are a Critical Time of Development

- 70% voters
- 76% parents

believe ages 0 to 5 are the most important time for a child’s brain development

- 70% parents

send their children to preschool or plan to do so for social development, Kindergarten preparation and helping their children get a head start on education

- 85% voters
- 91% parents

believe access to quality, affordable preschool options for Idaho families enhances their children’s educational performance in elementary school
The Quality of Existing Programs a Concern

Here’s the breakdown of voter responses when asked to rate the quality of preschool opportunities for Idaho children age 3 to 5:

- **24%** “below average” or “poor”
- **32%** “average”
- **22%** “excellent” or “above average”

Existing Preschool Options are Too Expensive

- **31%** voters believe preschool programs in Idaho are “very” or “somewhat” affordable
- **33%** parents believe programs are “very” or “somewhat” affordable
- **49%** voters believe programs are “very” or “somewhat” unaffordable
- **55%** parents believe programs are “very” or “somewhat” unaffordable
- **25%** of the parents who do not have a child in preschool say it’s because they can’t afford it

Support for State Investment in Preschool Options is Strong

- **69%** voters & parents believe the state should be doing more to ensure that Idaho children begin Kindergarten with the knowledge and skills they need to do their best in school. Only **25%** believe that our preschool-age children are prepared for Kindergarten
- **81%** voters believe quality, affordable preschool options for Idaho families is important to building the economy through a qualified and educated workforce
- **81%** voters believe state funding for preschool programs results in direct returns for our state and communities – the more we invest in preschool-age children, the more they give back later in life

Idahoans Would Utilize Public Preschool Options

- **76%** of parents believe they would be “very” or “somewhat” likely to utilize a public preschool program if the state of Idaho offered one

Survey methodology: Moore Information conducted a total of 509 interviews for the survey – 406 among a representative sample of registered voters statewide in Idaho, plus an oversample of 103 parents of children age 5 or younger. The live interviews were conducted April 27 to May 2, 2017, using both cell phone and landlines. The potential sampling error for the N=406 voter sample is +/-5% at the 95% confidence level and +/-10% for the N=103 parent sample. See the full results at https://idahoeyc.org/blog/2018/1/10/survey-finds-strong-support-for-state-investment-in-early-childhood-education.