



## Frequently Asked Questions

### **How does Prop. 82 strengthen elementary and K-12 education?**

California's classroom teachers support Prop. 82 because kids who go to preschool are better prepared to learn and succeed when they enter school. A recent poll showed that 96% of kindergarten teachers believe that it is important for children to attend preschool before kindergarten. A similar number say that children who attend preschool are better prepared for kindergarten. Preschool can also help close the persistent and troubling achievement gap between white and minority students. That's why Prop. 82 has been endorsed by the California Teachers Association, Superintendent of Public Instruction Jack O'Connell, and the California Head Start Association.

### **Why is preschool so important?**

Decades of research show that preschool builds a foundation for success in school and in life. Ninety percent of brain growth takes place before most children enter kindergarten. Preschool takes advantage of this period of rapid development to lay a strong educational and social foundation for elementary school and beyond. Today, 50% of California fourth graders are failing basic reading standards. But studies show that children who go to quality preschool are more likely to read by the time they reach third grade; less likely to be placed in special education or held back in school; more likely to graduate high school and go to college; less likely to be arrested or jailed; and more likely to support themselves as adults.

### **How many children already have access to preschool?**

Only 20% of California children are enrolled in quality preschool programs one year before kindergarten. Thousands of children can't find quality preschool, either because subsidized programs are full or because their parents can't afford the cost of a private program. A recent survey by the law enforcement group Fight Crime: Invest in Kids California found that 75% of publicly-funded preschool programs statewide have waiting lists. Even worse, working families who don't qualify for subsidies struggle to afford the cost of private preschool, which often runs higher than tuition to state universities.

### **Why invest in preschool now?**

Now is the right time for California to invest in our children and our future. The RAND Corporation projected that every dollar California invests in a quality, preschool for all program will return \$2.62 to society. The savings come from reduced remedial education costs, lower high school drop out rates, and the economic benefits of a better-educated workforce. Put simply, kids who get a strong start in school become net contributors to our economy. That's why Prop. 82 is supported by California business leaders and the Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Oakland chambers of commerce, among others. They know that an investment in preschool will pay off for us all.

### **Will I be able to choose where my children go to preschool?**

Yes, parental choice is a cornerstone of Prop. 82. Parents will be able to choose between public preschools operated by schools districts, private preschools, and community-based nonprofit programs. In addition, Prop. 82 is the first statewide preschool program to include family child care providers, allowing parents to enroll their children in a variety of preschool settings.

### **Would children be required to attend preschool?**

Absolutely not. Prop. 82 creates opportunity and choice for families who want to enroll their four-year-olds. The only thing mandatory would be quality experiences for children who do enroll, with statewide standards ensuring well-trained teachers, appropriate ratios of children to teachers, and developmentally appropriate classrooms and curriculum.

**Will preschools require four-year-olds to take standardized tests?**

No. Quality preschool programs allow children to socialize and learn through play. Prop. 82 requires the Superintendent of Public Instruction to develop age and developmentally appropriate standards to guide teachers. These standards will make sure that all children are excited about learning and ready to enter school, while allowing individual preschool providers to preserve their unique programs and activities.

**How is the initiative paid for?**

Prop 82 has no cost for 99.4% of California taxpayers. The initiative is funded by 1.7% of family income over \$800,000 and individual income over \$400,000. Prop. 82 restores tax rates first enacted by Republican governors Ronald Reagan and Pete Wilson so that we can invest in our children and our future. Better-educated children get better jobs, and a better-educated workforce strengthens California's economy for the future. That's why business leaders from across California and three of the state's largest chambers of commerce have endorsed Prop. 82.

**How does Prop. 82 protect taxpayer dollars?**

With strict financial accountability safeguards, Prop 82 puts taxpayers in control. The initiative establishes a separate dedicated preschool fund that can only be spent on preschool education and limits administrative expenses so that 94% of the funds go toward preschool education. Prop. 82 requires independent, annual audits of county programs and establishes criminal penalties for misuse of funds, including possible jail time.

**How will the program be run?**

The Superintendent of Public Instruction, a publicly elected statewide officer, will have ultimate responsibility for the success of the Preschool for All program, while County Superintendents will plan and administer programs locally. Counties may contract with a variety of preschool providers as long as they meet state quality standards. If any county fails to meet the requirements of the program, the state Superintendent of Public Instruction may remove local authority, administer the program directly, or assign responsibility for administration to a new entity.

**When will Preschool for All begin?**

Prop. 82 guarantees the right to preschool for all four-year olds born after the initiative passes. During the initial start-up phase, counties will offer preschool to children in areas with the lowest performing elementary schools, while the state invests in teacher training, school construction, and other needs. Shortly thereafter, all children will have access to a quality preschool near their home.

**What happens to existing preschool programs?**

Existing private and nonprofit preschool centers can elect to participate in Preschool for All provided they meet the program's quality standards. Prop. 82 will complement and expand public preschool programs like Head Start and the state preschool program.

**Do other states offer preschool for all?**

Georgia and Oklahoma already provide voluntary preschool to all four-year olds. Florida began its preschool for all program in 2005, and New York is also moving in that direction. Other states are discussing expanding preschool programs, as well.