

## Factsheet: Educators<sup>1</sup>

### **Investments in education and workforce training may not be paying off**

- National education spending outstrips that of almost any other advanced industrial nation, but our students' performance falls short
- 15-year-olds in the US rank 25th in reading and 35th in math out of 72 countries on an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) assessment
- Nationally, two-thirds of 8th graders scored below proficient on reading and math, while 63% of 12th graders score below proficient on reading and 3/4 score below proficient on math
- Each year the US spends \$1.1 trillion on on-the-job workforce education and training, in an effort to close persistent gaps in skills and knowledge

### **Quality early childhood education provides a critical foundation for success in life and work**

- Strategies to close the skills gap tend to focus on addressing immediate consequences of underperformance in school and at work
- However, we need a long term strategy for investing in human capital: quality early childhood education lays the foundation for all learning and development later in life
- Childcare is the same as early education, as children are learning quickly and constantly starting from birth; ensuring children are placed in high quality learning environments is critical
- Developmental gaps emerge in the earliest years of life between lower-income children and their more advantaged peers; according to a US Chamber of Commerce Foundation report, "Many children enter school unprepared to succeed, and schooling largely cannot close initial gaps"
- A series of evaluations of quality early childhood programs show that returns to society typically range from 16-18%, through channels such as increased earnings, tax revenues, averted costs of the criminal justice system, reduced grade retention, higher achievements, and reduction in welfare payments

### **How educators can help overcome barriers to childcare access**

- Educators bring a critical perspective: they can speak for the importance of investing in early childhood education, since education at the levels of K-12, college, and workforce development are rendered much less effective without first establishing a solid early foundation for learning
- Educators can help advocate for solutions to childcare by joining public-private coalitions between public, private, and philanthropic entities

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<sup>1</sup> Main source for this fact sheet is Katharine Stevens, "Workforce of Today, Workforce of Tomorrow: The Business Case for High-Quality Childcare", U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation, 2017.