

# ESSENTIAL FOR CHILDREN AND FAMILIES: VOTERS RATE EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AS A TOP NATIONAL PRIORITY.

For three years running, the First Five Years Fund's annual bipartisan poll shows that early childhood education is a national priority for Americans, regardless of party.<sup>1</sup> **Now more than ever, voters see quality early childhood education as a necessity for today's families and want the federal government to support states as they invest in new or expanded early childhood education programs.** In fact, voters say we have our education priorities reversed, and call for more investment in early education over higher education.

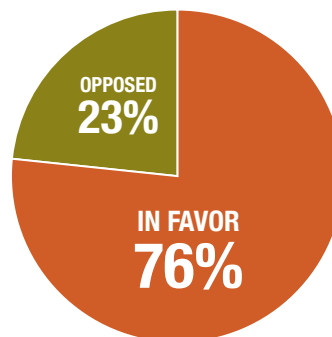
**Voters believe that learning in the early years is critical for future success.** 91% agree (63% strongly agree) that positive early childhood education experience lays the foundation for all the years of education that follow. 89% agree (65% strongly agree) that we need to ensure more children don't miss out on early learning and socialization experiences during the first five years of life when the brain develops more dramatically.

**Voters see access to quality early childhood education as a necessity for today's families.** 88% agree (66% strongly agree) that with families often needing two incomes to get by and many single parents working more than one job, access to quality early childhood education is a need for many families—not a luxury.

**A solid majority of the most critical swing voters say they would be impressed with a candidate who supports investments in early childhood education.**



**Over three-fourths of American voters support increasing federal investment to help states provide more access to high-quality early childhood programs for low- and moderate-income families.** This registers as overwhelming support among the electorate with little opposition. 76% favor the plan—the strongest level of support in three years—and only 23% oppose it. 59% Republicans; 69% Independents; 94% Democrats; 87% Millennials; 86% Hispanics; 78% Moderates; 76% Suburban Women; 68% Moderate Republicans.

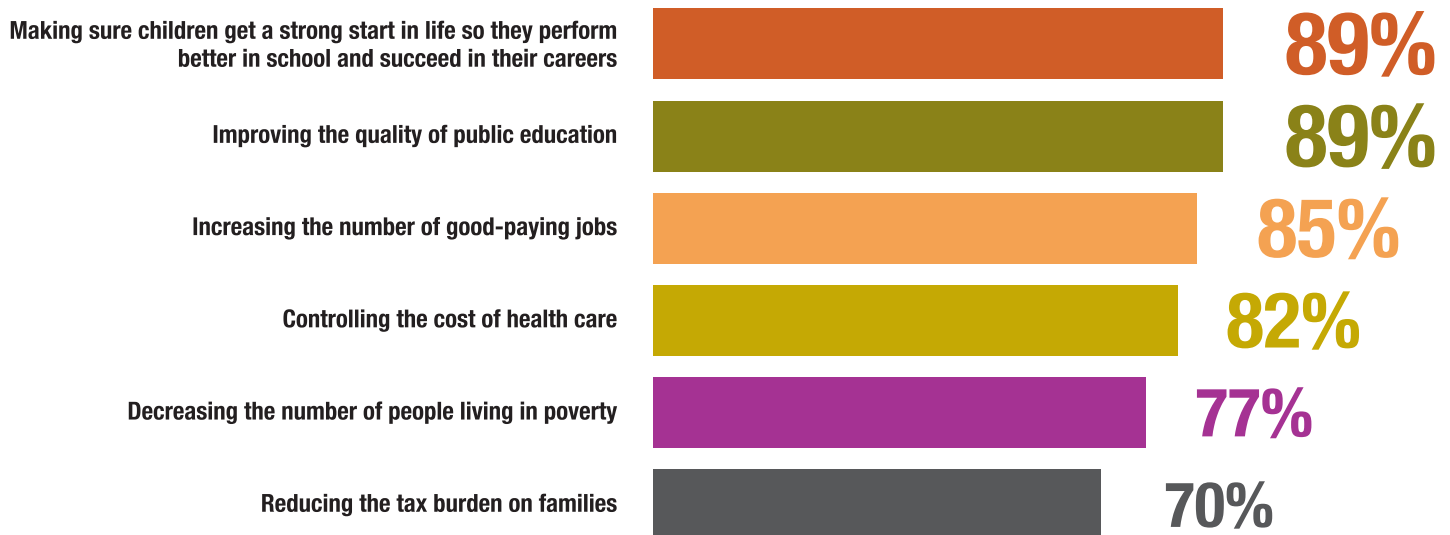


<sup>1</sup> **Methodology:** Public Opinions Strategies (P) and Hart Research (H) conducted a telephone survey of N=800 voters throughout the country on both landline and cell phones. The survey was conducted September 1-5, 2015 and has an overall margin of error of +/- 3.46%. The sample was distributed proportionally throughout the nation and is demographically representative of the electorate.

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**Voters support federal investment when it doesn't permanently add to the debt or deficit—something quality early childhood education has proven it can accomplish.** 74% find federal investment acceptable if it increases the deficit in the short-term, but pays for itself in the long-term by improving children's education, health and economic situations so that less spending will be needed in the future. 59% of Republicans see short-term investment and long-term return on investment as acceptable.

**Giving children a strong start in life is a top priority.** 89% say this is important, tied with improving the quality of public education, and ranking far above reducing the tax burden on families (70%).



**Voters overwhelmingly describe a candidate who supports federal investment in state and local early childhood programs as one who is looking out for working- and middle-class families.** 84% believe support for early childhood education describes a candidate looking out for working- and middle-class families; only 13% disagree.

**Americans say our education priorities should be reversed, calling for more investment in early education over college.** 42% say we should invest more in early education when children are beginning school and creating the foundation for their education experience. 33% say we should invest equal amounts in early education and higher education. Only 21% say we should invest more in college education.

**Quality early childhood education is essential for children and families.**

Learn more at [www.ffyf.org](http://www.ffyf.org)