

SUMMARY OF FUTURE LEADERS TOWN HALL ON EARLY EDUCATION

IMPACT OF EARLY EDUCATION

- Children learn socializing skills, build relationships, are better prepared for kindergarten, are more mature, and learn how to play/work well with others
- Beginning an education at a very young age creates a willingness to learn that individuals carry with them throughout their lives.
- There is a strong relationship between economic success and lifelong learning.
- Children progress more quickly and further as a result of early education.
- A good early education foundation reduces the incidence of dropouts, delinquency, teen pregnancy and other social problems at later ages.

RESPONSIBILITY FOR QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION

- The community as a whole is responsible for working together to create high quality early education opportunities and outcomes.
- Government needs to mandate the same level of education for all children to reduce inequality created by geography, income, and language.
- Parents play the most important role as the “first teachers” to instill in their children the importance of learning.
- Teachers need to be provided the training and resources to deliver quality early education and be held accountable for doing so.
- Parents and teachers need to work together and support each other in achieving the goal of a high quality early education for all children.



CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES

- Funding needs to be addressed on several levels including affordability for all families.
- Lack of transportation and access to available programs are barriers to providing early education for all children.
- Specialized training and innovative learning techniques are required to enable teachers to effectively reach children of diverse backgrounds.
- Many early education programs lack access to basic supplies and technology.
- Competitive compensation needs to be provided to attract the best people to become and remain early education teachers.



MESSAGES TO ARIZONA'S ELECTED LEADERS

- Invest in early education rather than continuing to cut funding for these programs.
- Children are important to our future even if they cannot vote now.
- Visit our communities and schools to learn in depth about the issues facing children, parents and teachers around early education.
- Because Arizona ranks 48th in preschool education, look to other states and successful programs in our state and develop a plan for improvement.
- Investing in early education may reduce costs later if fewer remedial programs are needed, and more students complete their educations and contribute to the economy.

COMMITMENT TO ACTION

- Attend school district meetings to discuss this Town Hall and stress the importance of early education to the community.
- Visit classrooms, talk to teachers and figure out how to personally take steps to advance early education.
- Volunteer at an early education program.
- Serve as an example for young siblings and others to encourage a learning mentality.
- Expand advocacy from higher education to early education and emphasize the pipeline.



"The Arizona Future Leaders Town Hall raised awareness among our local students and encouraged them to think further about their own education. The ultimate goal was to have unity within the community in order to ensure early childhood education is beneficial to students."
Lily McLaughlin, Sierra Vista

"What an amazing experience to be part of. This is a great way to have your voice heard as a student." Charmayne Ortega, Sierra Vista

"I had an amazing time contributing to such an important cause. I enjoyed listening to everyone's ideas and thoughts." Natalie Hayashi, Sierra Vista