

All growing children should be healthy, eager to learn and ready to succeed by the time they enter school.



Children without access to quality early learning start out a step behind and often never catch up.

The whole world can be
a classroom to a child
who's prepared to learn.



Learning begins at birth. Research confirms what many parents have long known—learning begins at birth. The time from pregnancy to the beginning of formal schooling is critical for brain development. External influences like interactions with people and exposure to new situations or environments provide fuel for a child's early growth and development. Stringing beads, learning to share, returning a loving smile and playing make-believe are all examples of early learning experiences that form the emotional and intellectual foundations young children need to succeed in school—and in life.

“Every educational expert agrees that the earlier a child begins to learn—in child care and in preschool—the better his or her chances are at succeeding.”

Governor Rod Blagojevich
State of the State Address, March 13, 2003

But the window of opportunity is limited. Without the right stimulation and caring attention, children fall behind and sometimes never catch up. Kindergarten teachers report that some of their young students don't know how to cut with scissors, use a pencil, wait for their turn or stand in line. Children who lack the skills to succeed in school are much more likely to drop out often leading to low-wage jobs, unemployment and welfare dependence, among other consequences.

“Why would a police chief support early learning? Because I know first hand that quality child care and early education can reduce crime and violence.”

Tom Boren
Police Chief



A child's potential should be as unlimited as his imagination.

If play is a child's work,
too many children are
underemployed.



High-quality settings provide the experiences children need to learn and grow. When staffed by well-educated early learning providers, these environments promote and support children's development. In Joyland, several initiatives support early learning opportunities for preschool age children: Gain, Alternative, State

"It's clear to me that the experiences my kids had in preschool made them ready to learn when they got to kindergarten."

Carla Rich Montez
Parent, Peoria

County, and Early Childhood Scholarship Fund. Inadequate program funding has negatively affected quality and access. Eligibility guidelines for state child care assistance are so outdated that working families often earn too much to qualify for assistance, but not enough to afford quality early learning programs. Caught in the middle, parents are forced to make difficult decisions. And the hard choices aren't limited to families of young children. Dedicated, well-trained early childhood teachers must frequently survive on wages near poverty levels—barely enough to support their own families.

A recent study of the Chicago Child-Parent Centers by the University of Wisconsin determined that for every dollar invested in early childhood education, \$7 are saved in future costs to society.

Joyland Preschool Children receive a well - funded, high - quality early childhood education system. One that responds

to the diverse needs of families and their

communities while building on existing initiatives. offered by the state, local government, and the center its self. All Joyland families should be assured of

- Programs and services that support parents as their children's first teachers
- Voluntary preschool options for their 3-, 4-, and 5-year-olds
- Good quality, affordable child care for all
- A highly trained, fairly compensated early learning workforce
- Learning environments that foster the social and emotional development of young children — because how young children feel and behave is just as important as what they know and think.



Programs that invest in children pay dividends that last a lifetime.