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Saturday, September 12, 2009

Rebuttal: Early education reduces social costs


Economists, business leaders and scientists all know from cold, hard data that high-quality early education provides a significant return on investment in terms of education, social and health outcomes.

That's why we at the First Five Years Fund were rather astonished to read that the Cato Institute's Neal McCluskey believes politicians "lavish" early childhood education with large sums of money ("Student loan fix will prove costly," Aug. 29 online commentary).


Really? Less than 3 percent of infants and toddlers eligible for Early Head Start receive it. Why? Because there's not enough money. Less than a third of disadvantaged preschoolers eligible for Head Start actually receive Head Start services. Why? Because there's not enough money.

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Perhaps McCluskey would also like to talk about the sums politicians "lavish" on special education, juvenile corrections and remedial programs. Research is clear that investing in high-quality early education significantly reduces those later -- and, incidentally, far greater -- costs.

Cornelia Grumman, Executive Director, First Five Years Fund, Chicago

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