



STRATEGIES FOR CHILDREN, INC.
NON-PARTISAN VOTER SURVEY FINDINGS SUMMARY:
AWARENESS OF AND ATTITUDES TOWARD PUBLICLY-
FUNDED HIGH-QUALITY EARLY EDUCATION IN
MASSACHUSETTS

This is a summary of the major findings of a recent non-partisan survey of Massachusetts voters. A total of 500 16-minute telephone interviews were conducted between the dates of September 29 – October 5, 2003.

The survey found extremely high support for the Early Education for All (EEA) Campaign. Nearly three-quarters (73%) of voters told us they favor a publicly funded program with the goal of making high-quality early childhood education available to all Massachusetts children, ages three through five. An astounding 56% indicated that they *strongly* favor EEA, while just 17% of voters oppose the campaign.

Support for EEA is strong across the entire spectrum of Massachusetts voters. A majority of Democrats and Republicans favor the campaign. We also find majorities in favor of the Campaign among young and old voters, parents and non-parents, and at all income levels.

Voters see an inherent goodness in EEA and the research indicates that they feel it is the government's responsibility to level the playing field by insuring all children have access to quality early education. When voters are asked to evaluate various reasons for supporting the program, the top rated reason is that it will help children develop better language and social skills. Other societal benefits, such as reducing crime and reducing government spending on remedial education, are viewed as good reasons for supporting the program, but not as important as simply giving children the tools to succeed from an early age.

Further evidence of voter support for EEA is evident when voters are asked about the funding for the program. A full three-quarters of voters believe that early childhood education should be publicly funded and, even in these extremely difficult financial times, over one-quarter of voters would be willing to pay additional taxes in order to fund EEA.

Major findings

- 73% of voters favor EEA—56% *strongly* favor and 17% *somewhat* favor.
- EEA is favored by 86% of Democrats, 71% of independents and 50% of Republicans.
- Among voters without children, 74% favor EEA, compared to 69% of voters with children at home.
- 86% of voters favor the fact that EEA would set high standards and insure all children are being taught the social and thinking skills they will need later in life—70% *strongly* favor and 16% *somewhat* favor.
- Only one-fifth (20%) of voters think most children in Massachusetts are *very well prepared* when they begin kindergarten, while 47% think children are *somewhat well prepared*.
- Nearly 9-in-10 voters (88%) agree that we need to insure that all children have access to quality early education programs in order to provide a level playing field.
- Three-quarters of voters (76%) believe early childhood education is crucial to creating an innovative and competitive workforce.
- Three-quarters of voters (75%) think early childhood education should be publicly funded.
- Three-quarters of voters (75%) think early childhood education is an investment in human capital that will pay off down the road.
- Four-fifths of voters (81%) also support full-day kindergarten for all children.