

# Lack of Early Education Hurting the U.S.

Two recent articles highlight the major challenges in educational opportunity facing American children under the age of 5. Lack of quality early education programs is a [persistent problem for lower-income children](#), who frequently begin kindergarten behind in language and social development compared to their more affluent peers.

And middle-class families are increasingly [squeezed by the cost of early care](#), with negative impacts on those children. A report from the Center for American Progress found that 25% of middle and upper class children are not ready for kindergarten - not knowing any letters or numbers, for example.

According to the report, if current trends continue, 5 million jobs over the next decade will go unfilled or be outsourced due to a lack of skilled, educated American workers.

“If the heart doesn’t get us - the importance of helping kids, the other thing that should get us are the economic implications,” said David Johns, executive director of the White House Initiative on Educational Excellence for African Americans.

The cost of quality early education programs is at the core of these issues. In California, full-time preschool generally costs from \$18,000-\$24,000 a year per child. By comparison, a year of UC tuition and fees costs about \$13,000 per student. As a result, more families than ever must settle for lower quality child care programs.

While the middle-class clearly needs help paying for care, the reality is often that government must invest in programs to support the lowest-income families first. Mark Friedman, co-chair of Raising California Together, says, “We have to start with the lowest income children, but we can’t stop at that.”

Click below for the full articles.

*Black Voice News* - [Racial Disparities in Early Childhood Hurts U.S.](#)



*EdSource* - [Middle-class families get little help paying for early care](#)

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