



25 By 25 -- Oklahoma Early Childhood Coalition 2016 to 2025

We are passionate about improving the condition of Oklahoma's future workforce: Oklahoma's children. We continue to be concerned that, despite a previously growing economy in recent years, conditions for children in many areas have actually worsened.

While all children benefit from early and proven investments in character and cognitive developmental programs, we know, as economic studies have proven, that children in lower socio-economic households benefit the most; rates of return for children from these economic backgrounds can be in the double digits. Sadly, Oklahoma has a relatively high percentage of children living in poverty (24%) and a high percentage of our low-income children not living in a two parent household (63%). Families who live in poverty face many obstacles to being able to provide safe, stable, and nurturing environments.

Our collective response to these trends is to create a nonpartisan coalition of impassioned organizations that are focused on the critically important issues that can help eliminate the conditions that are impairing our young children from becoming a successful workforce. We have neuroscientists on our side; we have Nobel Prize-winning economists on our side; we have evidence-based research spanning decades on our side, and now we need YOU on our side! We are committed to accelerated investments in four key areas that can make a huge difference in the future of Oklahoma children, both short-term and long-term. Our immediate emphasis will be in the following areas:

- Supporting and expanding home-visitation programs with a proven track record of success, that will focus on two generations, children and their parents, empowering both to lead productive and successful lives;
- Providing public-private financial support for working families seeking but unable to find affordable high-quality child care services;
- Focusing greater efforts on vocabulary expansion, literacy, and mathematics, emotional and social skills in the pre-kindergarten years; and
- Ensuring affordable access to brain (mental) and physical health care for all children.

We are in the process of creating a nonpartisan coalition of organizations (the 25 By 25 – Oklahoma Early Childhood Coalition) to act as catalysts for early childhood development. These like-minded organizations from across the state can help guide policy makers and legislators alike while providing the financial support to leverage additional dollars. We plan to utilize the experience and resources of our early childhood nonprofits to ensure that time, talent and treasure is efficiently and effectively utilized. We are also inviting our faith-based community to join our efforts in improving the educational, health and economic future of all Oklahoma children.

We remain among the bottom 25 percent of states in almost every significant indicator of child development. The time frame to "bend the trends" is long-term, but requires immediate action. We believe a goal to be in the top 25 states by 2025 is achievable and we are dedicated to start working on that goal in 2016. We need your active participation to make the "**25 by 25**" goal a reality. If you believe Oklahoma can be among the top states in the character and cognitive development of all our children; we urge you to contact the 25 By 25 – Oklahoma Early Childhood Coalition via the **Potts Family Foundation at 405.319.8260** to provide your support.