

Full day schooling for 4 and 5 year olds an economic boost

August 30, 2010, 12:01 a.m.

A major new study concludes that Ontario's decision to provide four- and five-year olds with full time schooling will do more than raise children's academic achievement. It will also result in a big boost for the province's economy.

The study, by the Centre for Spatial Economics, found that early learning with extended day child care options provides a greater economic benefit than any other sector of the Ontario economy:

Biggest job creator: every \$1 million spent on early learning and child care creates 29 jobs: at least 23% more jobs than the next highest industry and a third more than the number of jobs generated by \$1 million in construction spending.

Strong economic stimulus: every dollar invested in early learning and childcare increases the economy's output (GDP) by \$2.02. This is one of the highest GDP impacts of all major sectors.

In addition, the study found that investments in early learning and child care more than pay for themselves in terms of benefits for society, with a \$2.42 payback through increased earnings, improved health outcomes and reduced social costs.

Governments continue to invest heavily in infrastructure and construction industry stimulus. This study shows that investments in our social infrastructure, and especially in early learning and child care are critical and provide a much stronger economic boost.

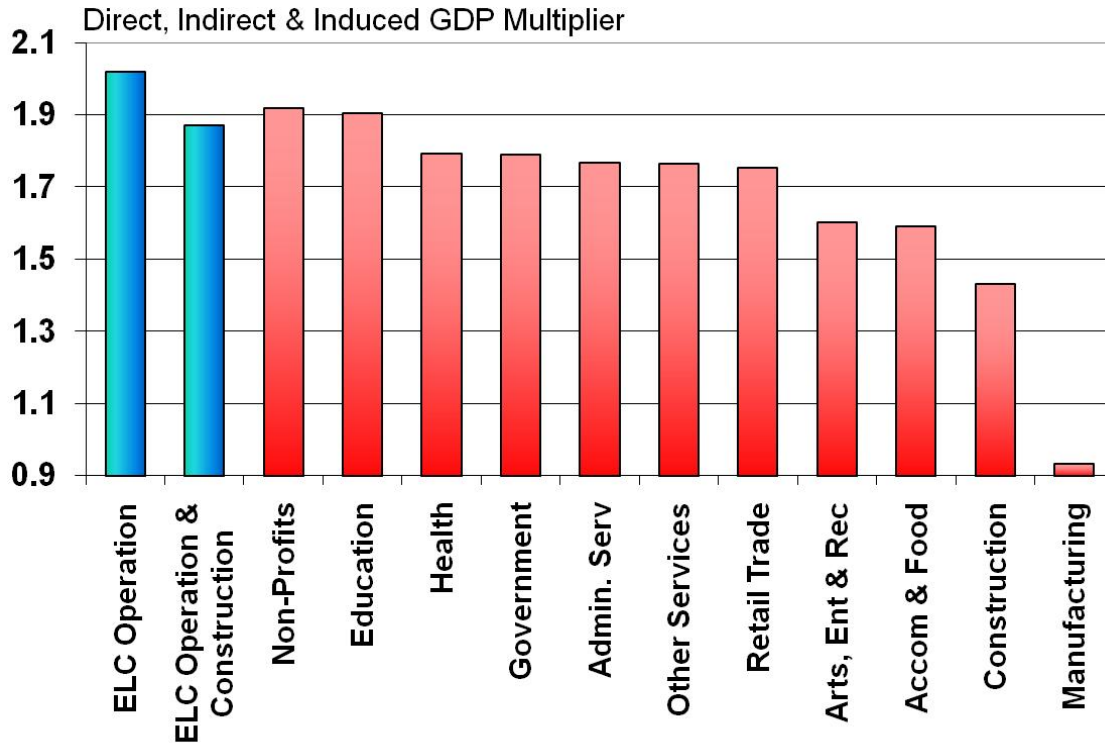
The study, led by well-respected economist Robert Fairholm of the Centre for Spatial Economics and sponsored by the Atkinson Charitable Foundation, also analyzed the impact of spending on early learning and child care in the City of Toronto and GTA and found similar benefits.

Other findings included:

- Early learning and care is associated with improved academic achievement and higher future employment earnings.

- Children enrolled in quality early childhood programs were less likely to smoke as teenagers and adults.
- Higher tax revenue is generated by the enhanced employment earning of parents today and the future earnings of their children.

Source: Fairholm



The complete study is available at www.oise.utoronto.ca/atkinson.

For more information: Kerry McCuaig, email: kmccuaig@rogers.com