

Small investment, big dividends

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Child psychiatrist, Dr. Donald L. Rosenblitt's recent op-ed espousing support of North Carolina's Smart Start and More at Four program's is right on the mark (N&O March 3). Dr. Rosenblitt references the economic argument for high-quality early childhood education but defers details, indicating that he is "not an economist."

Well, neither am I. However, as a businessman, I can tell you that it is all about talent. We are fortunate to have some of the best and brightest talent located right here in the Triangle Region. In order to continue to grow that talent, we must ensure that each child receives a strong foundation for learning and development. This takes a deep commitment from both the private and public sector.

Like many of our area businesses, I feel fortunate to work for a company that believes in the importance of supporting education and backs that belief by investing millions. A small investment compared to the tremendous dividends it promises to yield. That's because a child's opportunities are limitless with a high-quality educational foundation. By cultivating success early with a solid educational foundation, we make our community stronger and our future work force stronger.

It is critical to get our youngest children off to the best start possible. Data shows that one of the most effective strategies for long-term economic growth is investing in the developmental growth of young children. Dr. James Heckman, Nobel Laureate from the University of Chicago, has said that investing in early childhood education is a cost-effective strategy - even during a budget crisis. By taking the necessary steps now, we can make wise and effective decisions for strategic economic growth that strengthens the community.

Our society is dependent upon its human capital. It is imperative that we, from the beginning, invest in our most valuable asset - our people. That requires high-quality early childhood education programs like Smart Start and More at Four!

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