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Economist Robert Lynch Report Measures Benefits of Quality Early Education *State by State Analysis of Costs and Benefits of Universal and Targeted Programs*

Madison – A Robert Lynch study released today shows that the benefits of investing in high quality early education in Wisconsin would be more than 9 times the cost of the program in 2050. Total benefits - budgetary, earning, and crime prevention - would exceed \$13 billion, more than nine times the cost to the state for universal 3 and 4 year-old programs.

“Governments can realize huge savings in areas such as remedial education, law enforcement and child welfare, and will experience increases in tax revenues. Add to that the benefits of less crime and a more highly skilled workforce that is more likely to be employed and better paid – and that makes pre-K spending one of the smartest moves governments can make,” said Robert G. Lynch, whose new study measures the economic, crime, and budgetary benefits of high quality pre-K against its costs.

Enriching Children, Enriching the Nation, by economist Robert G. Lynch, adds a new dimension to research that documents the positive effects of high quality early education and learning for children. Agreeing with other economists like James Heckman at the University of Chicago, Lynch reports that investing in early education may bring the highest yields of any economic development. He points to research measuring return on investment in preschool education at 16 percent annually, outperforming the stock market yearly average gains of 6 percent.

“We know from research and experience that high quality early care and education improves outcomes for children in school and later in life. These positive outcomes are particularly dramatic for children from disadvantaged backgrounds who are at-risk,” said Charity Eleson, executive director of Wisconsin Council on Children and Families. “The Lynch report gives us a picture of the measurable economic benefits for Wisconsin if we choose to create opportunities for children from Tigerton to West Allis.”

The Economic Policy Institute report by Lynch measures investments in both universal and targeted early education investments for 3 and 4 year-olds. Targeted investments for the 25 percent of the children in Wisconsin with the most need would exceed \$5 billion in 2050 – a benefit 13 times that of our annual investment that year.

“This report shows again that investing early in kids can pay-off for the state in the long run. The returns on the investment shown here would appeal to any investor,” said Laura Dresser the Associate Director of the Center on Wisconsin Strategy. “Investing in kids is one of the most powerful economic development investments we can make in Wisconsin.”

To achieve the gains the Lynch report projects, Wisconsin would have to expand current state investments for quality early care and education.

To view the full *Enriching Children, Enriching the Nation* visit: www.epi.org/content.cfm/book_enriching
For more information on early care and education visit: www.wccf.org
For more on economic development and the Wisconsin economy visit: www.cows.org