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New Study Reveals a Suprising Investment Return

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If you gave somebody a dollar and they gave you four dollars back - that's a pretty good deal.

That's the essence of a study that was released today on early childhood education.

They are cute and delightful and we don't necessarily see them as an investment - but according to a new study, perhaps we should.

Liz Chun from the Good Beginnings Alliance explains that "it's an economic benefits study and it shows that for every dollar we invest here in Hawaii, we will actually benefit the state four point two dollars.

"Reduced department of education spending in retention, special education activities that can happen when a child is not prepared when they enter school" she says.

There is also increased tax revenue from a well-educated population, reduced cost in the criminal justice system and decreased health and welfare costs. Early learning does NOT mean all the children are in "programs."

"We're talking about center-based early childhood programs, we're talking about family-child interaction. That means the parent or the adult comes with the child, we also mean family child care and we also mean home based" says Chun.

Former teacher and principal , U.S. Rep. Lyla Berg would like to see the day when it's the schools that are challenged, not the children.

"When a child with an early learning experience comes into the school system, they're excited about learning and so part of our initiative is wanting to have schools be ready for children" comments Berg

For its part, the legislature has created an Early Learning Council - - and more.

"We put into statute the pre-plus program so that's facility building to build up more capacity for private providers to come in and offer their services - we also established a keiki trust fund."

There are nearly 100,000 children in the state under the age of five.

The study finds investing in their future now will mean millions of dollars later in terms of decreased social costs and increased productivity and quality of life.