

# National Institute for Early Education Research

National Poll conducted by Peter D. Hart Research Associates/Market Strategies

November 29 - December 13, 2001

Interviews: 3,230 voters

(Main sample of 807 voters nationwide and oversamples of approximately 300 voters in each of 8 states: Georgia, Illinois, Maryland, Massachusetts, New Jersey, New York, North Carolina, and Oklahoma.)

**Q.1.** In your community, how many parents do you think have access to good preschool programs that they can afford for their three- and four-year-old would say that almost all parents have access to these programs, most parents, about half of parents, or fewer than half of parents have access to these programs for their young children?

Almost all parents.....	16%
Most parents.....	21%
About half of parents.....	21%
Fewer than half of parents.....	31%
Not sure.....	11%

**(ASK ONLY OF RESPONDENTS WHO SAY “MOST PARENTS” OR FEWER IN Q.8)**

**Q.2.** And which one or two of the following do you think are the biggest obstacles facing parents in finding preschool programs for their three- and four-year-old children? **(ACCEPT UP TO TWO RESPONSES.)**

Many of these programs are too expensive.....	42%
There is not enough information available to parents about how to find these programs.....	23%
There are not enough good programs to serve all the families who need them.....	21%
Many parents cannot find programs that are close to their homes or jobs	21%
The structure and schedule of many of these programs do not match the family's needs.....	17%
All.....	7%
None/other.....	3%
Not sure.....	3%

**Q.3** Overall, do you think that state government is doing too much, about the right amount, or too little to make sure that all parents have access to affordable preschool programs for their young children?

Doing too much.....	5%
Doing about the right amount	25%
Doing too little.....	58%
Not sure.....	12%

**Q.4.** I'd like to read you a list of things that state government could be doing with regard to preschool programs. For each item that I mention, please tell me whether you support or oppose state government getting involved in that specific area. **(IF "SUPPORT/OPPOSE," ASK:)** And do you strongly (support/oppose) or just somewhat (support/oppose) this action?

(THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE PERCENTAGE WHO SAY STRONGLY SUPPORT)

	<u>Strongly Support</u>	<u>Somewhat Support</u>	<u>Strongly Oppose</u>	<u>Somewhat Oppose</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
Ensuring the safety of preschool programs by establishing and enforcing licensing and inspection standard.....	71%	20%	3%	4%	2%
Providing funding and financial support for preschool programs so that all parents who want to can afford to enroll their children.....	64%	23%	5%	6%	2%
Ensuring the quality of preschool programs by setting standards for learning and for teacher training and education.....	59%	26%	7%	6%	2%
Working with parents and local school systems to operate preschool programs similar to the way locals school systems now run kindergarten through twelfth grade school programs.....	43%	32%	9%	11%	5%

	Strongly Support	Somewhat Support	Strongly Oppose	Somewhat Oppose	Not Sure
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Holding preschool programs accountable for the learning progress & skill development of young children by establishing evaluation standards.	34%	26%	16%	20%	4%
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**Q.5.** Now I'm going to describe an approach that some people have suggested for expanding opportunities for three- and four-year-old children to participate in preschool programs and then get your reaction.

State government would provide funding and financial support so that all parents in the state who want to send their children to a high-quality preschool program can afford to do so. Parents would be able to choose which program to send their child to depending on their needs and preferences--for example, parents could select a public or a private program, and parents could select a program that is part-time or one that is full-time, as long as the program meets state standards for teacher qualifications, class size, and safety.

How do you feel about this approach--do you strongly agree, somewhat agree, feel neutral, somewhat disagree, or strongly disagree with this approach?

Strongly agree.....	43%
Somewhat agree.....	32%
Feel neutral.....	10%
Somewhat disagree.....	7%
Strongly disagree.....	7%
Not sure.....	1%

**Q.6a.** Now I'd like to read you two statements about how preschool programs could be made available. Please listen to each statement and then tell me which one best represents your own feelings.

**Statement A:** These programs should be free to all children, regardless of their family's income, OR

**Statement B:** These programs should be free ONLY to children from poor and low-income families, with the parents of other children paying based on the family's income and ability to pay.

<b>Statement A</b> /These programs should be free to all children.....	55%
<b>Statement B</b> /These programs should be free ONLY to children from poor and low income families.....	39%
Neither/other (VOL).....	4%
Not sure.....	2%

**Q.6b.** And now I'd like to read you three statements about paying for preschool programs. Please listen to each statement and then tell me which one best represents your own feelings.

**Statement A:** I believe that these programs are a top priority and I would be willing to pay additional state taxes to pay for them

**Statement B:** I support these programs, but only if they can be funded within the existing state budget and without raising state taxes

**Statement C:** I do not believe that these programs are an important priority given all the other issues that state government needs to address

<b>Statement A:</b> I believe that these programs are a top priority...	34%
<b>Statement B:</b> I support these programs, but only if they can be funded within the existing state budget.....	51%
<b>Statement C:</b> I do not believe that these programs are an important priority.....	12%
Federal programs should pay for programs.....	1%
None/other.....	1%
Not sure.....	1%

**Q.7a** I'd like to list reasons that some people have given for why it is important to have preschool programs available for three- and four-year-old children. For each statement, please tell me whether you think it is extremely convincing, very convincing, fairly convincing, just somewhat convincing, or not really convincing.

Extrem. Very Fairly Somewt N. Really Not  
Convin. Convin. Convin. Convin. Convin. Sure

Many children who participate in preschool programs do better when they enter elementary school and score higher on basic skills tests.....	30%	33%	13%	14%	8%	2%
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Extrem. Very Fairly Somewt N. Really Not  
Convin. Convin. Convin. Convin. Convin. Sure

<p>Many children who participate in preschool programs are more self-confident, better adjusted, and less likely to be disruptive and cause problems that affect other children in the classroom when they enter elementary school .....</p>	28%	30%	17%	12%	12%	1%
<p>Good preschool programs help motivate young children to become problem-solvers who are more successful in school, work, and in their communities.....</p>	25%	32%	15%	15%	11%	2%
<p>Having children participate in preschool programs strengthens families by giving parents the resources and support they need to help their children get a good start.....</p>	25%	31%	15%	16%	12%	1%
<p>Good preschool programs cost a lot more than most working families can afford, leaving many parents with few alternatives.....</p>	23%	25%	13%	16%	19%	4%
<p>Children who participate in preschool programs are less likely to get involved with things like gangs and drugs as they get older and more likely to grow up and become productive, contributing members of the community</p>	19%	25%	11%	14%	27%	4%
<p>Good preschool programs benefit the economy and save taxpayers two dollars for every dollar invested, because these programs prevent school failure and crime and produce a better educated, more productive workforce.....</p>	19%	22%	14%	14%	25%	6%

Extrem. Very Fairly Somewt N. Really Not  
Convin. Convin. Convin. Convin. Convin. Sure

Children who do NOT participate in preschool programs are less self-confident, less adjusted, and more likely to be disruptive and cause problems that affect other children in the classroom when they enter elementary school ..... 18% 17% 13% 18% 32% 2%

Good preschool programs benefit the economy & save taxpayers two dollars for every dollar invested ... 13% 20% 13% 14% 26% 14%

Children who do NOT participate in preschool programs are more likely to have problems in school and to get involved with things like gangs & drugs as they get older.....14% 16% 9% 16% 42% 3%

**Q.7b.** Now I'd like to read you a list of concerns that some people have given about government's taking an active role in expanding preschool programs for young children. For each concern, please tell me whether you think it is extremely convincing, very convincing, fairly convincing, just somewhat convincing, or not really convincing.

THIS TABLE HAS BEEN RANKED BY THE PECENTAGE WHO SAY EXTREMELY OR VERY CONVINCING

Extrem. Very Fairly Somewt N. Really Not  
Convin. Convin. Convin. Convin. Convin. Sure

Often preschool programs are not effective because parents do not do their part in reinforcing learning skills by reading to their children and encouraging them to develop there curiosity ..... 24% 22% 14% 16% 23% 1%

Government should be using its resources to improve current education programs—including public schools--rather than creating new programs..... 18% 19% 15% 19% 26% 3%

Extrem. Very Fairly Somewt N. Really Not  
Convin. Convin. Convin. Convin. Convin. Sure

Helping young children develop academic and social skills is really parents' responsibility & government should not get more involved in this area than it already is	17%	13%	12%	16%	40%	2%
Government has other, more important, issues to address, like improving public schools and combating crime.....	12%	16%	16%	15%	39%	2%
Experts exaggerate the importance of preschool programs--lots of children get off to a slow start in school & go on to be very successful adults...	11%	14%	16%	17%	39%	3%
There are already too many kids in Childcare outside the home. Government should not subsidize these programs and encourage more parents to leave their children in someone else's care.....	12%	9%	9%	17%	49%	4%
There is already too much pressure on children to begin academic learning—such as reading--too early.....	10%	11%	10%	15%	52%	2%
Increasing government's role in preschool programs for young children will only make these programs wasteful and ineffective.....	7%	10%	9%	16%	54%	4%
Government has more important things to do with taxpayers' money than to pay for preschool programs.....	9%	7%	9%	13%	60%	2%

**Factuals: Now I am going to ask you a few questions for statistical purposes only.**

**F1.** How old are you? (IF "REFUSED," ASK:) Well, would you tell me which age group you belong to?

18-24.....	9%
25-29.....	10%
30-34.....	9%
35-39.....	10%
40-44.....	14%
45-49.....	9%
50-54.....	10%
55-59.....	6%
60-64.....	7%
65-69.....	5%
70-74.....	4%
75 and over.....	6%
Refused.....	1%

**F2.** Are you currently employed? (IF "CURRENTLY EMPLOYED," ASK:) What type of work do you do?

(IF "NOT CURRENTLY EMPLOYED," ASK:) Are you a student, a homemaker, retired, or unemployed and looking for work?

<u>Currently Employed</u>	
Professional, manager.....	25%
White-collar worker.....	20%
Blue-collar worker.....	18%
Farmer, rancher.....	-
<u>Not Currently Employed</u>	
Student.....	3%
Homemaker.....	8%
Retired.....	20%
Unemployed, looking for work.....	4%
Other.....	-
Not sure.....	2%

**F3.** What is the last grade that you completed in school?

Grade school.....	2%
Some high school.....	5%
High school graduate.....	28%
Some college, no degree.....	17%
Vocational training/ 2-year college.....	12%

4-year college/ bachelor's degree.....	20%
Some postgraduate work, no degree.....	4%
2 or 3 years' postgraduate work/ master's degree	9%
Doctoral/law degree.....	2%
Not sure/refused.....	1%

**F4.** Generally speaking, do you think of yourself as a Republican, a Democrat, an independent, or as something else? **(IF REPUBLICAN/DEMOCRAT, ASK:)** Would you call yourself a strong (Republican/Democrat) or a not very strong (Republican/Democrat)? **(IF NOT REPUBLICAN/DEMOCRAT, ASK:)** Do you think of yourself as closer to the Republican Party or closer to the Democratic Party?

Strong Republican.....	19%
Weak Republican.....	13%
Independent/lean Republican.....	9%
Strictly independent.....	14%
Independent/lean Democrat.....	9%
Weak Democrat.....	14%
Strong Democrat.....	19%
Not sure/refused.....	3%

**F5.** Thinking about your general approach to issues, do you consider yourself to be liberal, moderate, or conservative?

Liberal.....	22%
Moderate.....	38%
Conservative.....	33%
Not sure.....	7%

**F6.** Are you currently single and never married, married, separated, widowed, or divorced?

Single.....	19%
Married.....	61%
Separated.....	1%
Widowed.....	7%
Divorced.....	11%
Other (VOL).....	-
Not sure/refused.....	1%

**F7a.** Do you have any children under age 18 currently living in your household?

Yes, kids under 18 in household.....	40%	<b>Continue</b>
No, no kids under 18 in household.....	59%	
Not sure.....	1%	<b>Skip to F7c.</b>

**(ASK ONLY OF RESPONDENTS WHO SAY "YES", HAVE KIDS UNDER 18" IN F7a.)**  
**F7b.** How many children do you have in each of the following age categories?

	<u>One</u>	<u>Two</u>	<u>Three</u>	<u>Four</u>	<u>Five +</u>	<u>None</u>	<u>Not Sure</u>
Zero to five .....	31%	12%	4%	1%	2%	50%	-
Six to nine.....	29%	6%	1%	1%	1%	62%	-
Ten to fourteen.....	29%	8%	1%	-	-	62%	-
Fifteen to eighteen...	23%	5%	-	-	1%	71%	-

**F7c.** Have you yourself ever had a child under age five enrolled in a preschool program? (IF "YES," ASK:) Do you currently have a child under age five in a preschool program or was it in the past?

Yes, child is currently enrolled in a preschool program.....	9%
Yes, child was enrolled in a preschool program in the past, but not currently.....	31%
Yes, child enrolled in a preschool program in the past AND currently (VOL).....	2%
No, never had a child under age 5 in a preschool program.....	55%
Not sure/refused.....	3%

**F7d.** Have you ever had a child under age five in a child care arrangement outside the home--including with friends or relatives? (IF "YES," ASK:) Do you currently have a child under age five in a child care arrangement outside the home, or was it in the past?

Yes, child is currently in a child care arrangement.....	9%
Yes, child was in child care arrangement in the past, but not currently.....	27%
Yes, child was in child care arrangement in the past AND currently (VOL).....	2%
No, never had a child under age 5 a child care arrangement outside the home.....	59%
Not sure/refused.....	3%

**(ASK ONLY OF RESPONDENTS WHO SAY THEY ARE AGE 40 OR OVER IN F1.)**

**F7e.** Do you have any grandchildren under age twelve?

Yes, have grandchildren under 12.....	29%
No, do not have grandchildren under 12.....	31%
Not sure.....	2%

<b>F8a.</b>	In what religion were you brought up?		
	Protestant.....	46%	<b>CONTINUE</b>
	Catholic.....	31%	
	Jewish.....	2%	
	Other.....	13%	<b>Skip to F9.</b>
	None.....	4%	
	Not sure/refused.....	4%	

**(ASK ONLY OF PROTESTANTS IN F8a.)**

**F8b.** Would you describe yourself as either a fundamentalist or evangelical Christian, or would you not describe yourself that way? \*

Fundamentalist/ evangelical.....	15%
Neither fundamentalist nor evangelical.....	26%
Not sure.....	5%
Non-Protestant (Q.F8a).....	54%

**F9.** If you added together the yearly income of all the members of your family who were living at home last year, would the total be less than \$10,000, between \$10,000 and \$20,000, between \$20,000 and \$30,000, between \$30,000 and \$40,000, between \$40,000 and \$50,000, between \$50,000 and \$75,000, between \$75,000 and \$100,000, or would the total be more than that?

Less than \$10,000.....	4%
Between \$10,000 and \$20,000.....	9%
Between \$20,000 and \$30,000.....	12%
Between \$30,000 and \$40,000.....	12%
Between \$40,000 and \$50,000.....	10%
Between \$50,000 and \$75,000.....	16%
Between \$75,000 and \$100,000.....	10%
More than \$100,000.....	9%
Not sure/refused.....	18%

**F10.** Are you from a Hispanic or Spanish-speaking background? **(IF "NO," ASK:)** What is your race--white, black, Asian, or something else?

Hispanic.....	7%
White.....	77%
Black.....	10%
Asian.....	1%
Other.....	2%
Not sure/refused.....	3%

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