

First Steps Business Alliance

SCHOOL READINESS IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS

The First Steps Business Alliance, an initiative of the Rochester Area Foundation, is our business leaders' commitment to economic growth through community-wide action and investment in early childhood.

Our members recognize that businesses must lay the foundation for long-term economic growth **by investing in children and families today**. In the face of a predicted worker shortage, proper education and development of our next generation of workers is the best way to set the stage for a thriving workforce and vibrant economy. The First Steps Business Alliance helps you ensure your employees' children and grandchildren enter school prepared to succeed both in kindergarten and throughout their academic careers.

GROWING TOMORROW'S WORKFORCE TODAY

Our workforce is getting older. Who is going to replace them as the largest percentage of American workers in the history of our country prepares to retire in the next decade? Studies show that children who lack the skills to succeed in school are more likely to drop out, which results in a poorly skilled workforce, unemployment, and dependence on public resources. With nearly **50% of Minnesota kids arriving at kindergarten unprepared to succeed** in school, business leaders must get to work and start investing in tomorrow's workforce by supporting early childhood development today.

IT'S IN YOUR BEST INTEREST TO INVEST

Businesses can't afford not to invest and your investment starts with your own employees. Strategic investment in early childcare and education can **yield a minimum return of 5% up to 16%** for every dollar spent. Bottom line benefits include:

- Reduced absenteeism, increased productivity
- Improved employee retention, which lowers turnover costs
- An attractive benefit for recruiting new employees
- A well-cultivated employee base
- A stronger, more attractive local economy

JOIN THE ALLIANCE!

As a member of the First Steps Business Alliance, you can provide your employees with access to the same valuable family-focused seminars and programs presented at some of Minnesota's leading corporations.

You'll have access to these programs, as well as many other educational resources, regardless of the size of your business or number of workers you employ. As a member of the First Steps Business Alliance, you're making a leadership-level contribution both to the future of your business and the health of the community.

LEARN MORE AT WWW.FIRSTSTEPS.US

"Real economic development comes from developing our workforce and the development of a high-quality workforce starts at birth. Investment in early childhood development, if it's high quality, yields extraordinary returns."

ART ROLNICK, RESEARCH DIRECTOR
AT THE FEDERAL RESERVE BANK
OF MINNEAPOLIS




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