



For Immediate Release

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Supervisor Heinz has issued the following statement about today's vote to allocate \$10 million for early childhood education in Pima County:

Today the Pima County Board of Supervisors took a bold step by directing the county to allocate \$10 million in the coming fiscal year budget to fund scholarships for low-income families in Pima County to enroll their 3-, 4- and 5-year old children in high-quality preschool and childcare programs.

With this commitment, we are joining cities and counties across the country that are expanding access to quality early childhood education for low-income families, with great success. This is a is an opportunity for us to address poverty head on, through a proven two-generation strategy. Quality early childhood education not only equips young kids with the tools they need to succeed in school, in relationships and in life, it also aids their families by enabling parents to return to work. Single mothers and families of color make up a disproportionate share of these low-income families in desperate need of quality childcare in order to be able to join or rejoin the workforce.

This is not just an education program – it's about jobs. It's about equity, economic development, community investment, and so much more.

It is estimated that every dollar invested in high-quality early childhood education for low-income children yields a long-term return on investment of \$13 to \$17 for the community. This is due to current and future reduced reliance on government assistance as folks build more self-sufficiency, reduced involvement in the criminal justice system, stronger, more stable relationships, improved employment opportunities and greater lifetime earnings. This program will make our community more equitable – and more prosperous.

Today's vote marks an important first step. \$10M in the FY22 Budget will allow us to meet about 19% - 25% of the current need among low-income families in Pima County. Now we look to our community partners across local jurisdictions, the school districts, First Things First, and the AZ Dept of Economic Security to join us in our effort to fully fund early childhood education for *all*, and set up our youngest community members for a lifetime of success.



PIMA COUNTY