



Business leaders support workforce & economic development through investments in kids' learning & well-being

What is ReadyNation Illinois?

We are a nonpartisan membership organization of business executives, helping to build a skilled workforce by promoting solutions that prepare children to succeed in education, work, and life.

Who are ReadyNation's members?

Our more than 270 members include business owners, managers, and other executives from the fields of finance, health care, manufacturing, technology, local chambers of commerce, and many other sectors. They work in communities ranging from Rockford to Marion and Quincy to Effingham.

What do they do?

These business leaders help educate the public and policymakers about the significance of effective, research-driven investments in children's learning and development — priorities such as high-quality child care, preschool, and birth-to-3 services. These investments strengthen our current workforce by stabilizing the lives of working parents, and they lay a foundation of skills among children, our workforce of the future. ReadyNation runs no children's programs or services of its own, but works to help those supported by local schools and community-based providers.

How does ReadyNation pursue this work?

Our members are leaders in their communities and speak-up in a variety of ways, often in local news media, events, and outreach to policymakers. They share a core belief that investing wisely in kids is a fundamental way of bolstering our economy — one that's often overlooked and undervalued.

Why is this so important?

Businesses desperately need good workers, and workers need good skills. Yet in Illinois:

- Only three out of 10 kindergarteners are entering school fully prepared for success.
- Less than 30% of 8th-graders are proficient in math and English/language arts.
- Nearly one-fifth of students from low-income households fail to graduate within four years.

Deficits in basic skills cost our nation billions of dollars each year in remedial education costs and reduced earnings potential. The child care crisis, alone, drains nearly \$5 billion from our state's economy each year, costs that are borne by working families and their employers, alike. Moreover, those figures relate only to inadequate care for infants and toddlers, alone — a figure that would soar higher if it also reflected inadequate care for school-aged kids.

How can we fill those needs?

We can protect and invest in such research-proven priorities as:

- Early childhood education and care programs
- "Parent-coaching" programs, for new parents in struggling families of infants and toddlers
- After-school programs that further strengthen youths' skills

For more information, contact Sean Noble (snoble@readynation.org) or Sally Puleo (spuleo@readynation.org)

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