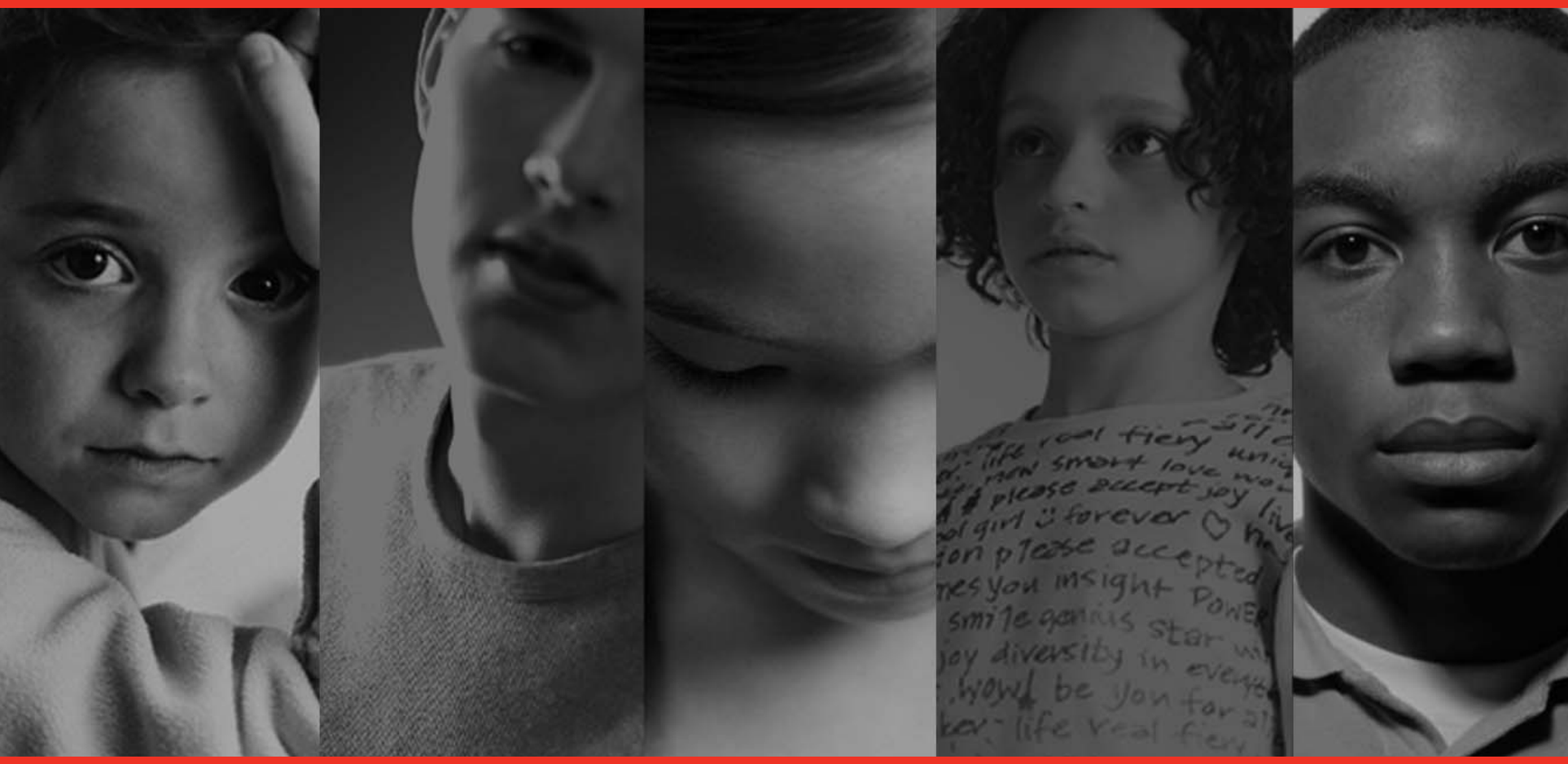


A REPORT FROM AMERICA'S PROMISE ALLIANCE

Every Child Every Promise

TURNING FAILURE INTO ACTION

The America's Promise Alliance is grateful for State Farm's generous support of *Every Child, Every Promise: Turning Failure Into Action.*

ALMA J. POWELL AND GENERAL COLIN L. POWELL, USA (RET)

Ten years ago, at the President's Summit for America's Future, America's Promise — the Alliance for Youth was born of two simple propositions. First, all children deserve the fundamental resources they need to grow into healthy, independent, responsible adults. Second, all Americans have a responsibility to help provide those resources.

The America's Promise Alliance has engaged, over the past decade, organizations, individuals and communities across the nation in this critical work for our common future. Alliance partners have helped build consensus around a research-based framework for youth development: the Five Promises of caring adults, safe places, healthy start, effective education and opportunities to help others.

Now, as a nation, we are moving away from looking only at deficits, such as low test scores, to focusing on the success-building assets children need.

The national call to action issued at the Summit in Philadelphia is being answered every day in neighborhoods, businesses, faith communities, workplaces, homes, schools, colleges and universities. Young people and older Americans are vitally involved together. Partners from every sector have stepped forward to help keep the Five Promises.

Yet, this report makes clear, much more hard work remains.

We learn from *Every Child, Every Promise* that less than one in three of our young people are receiving enough of the Five Promises to be confident of success. Millions don't yet have even one of these essential resources.

But this report also offers a way forward: strategies, priorities and results-oriented, practical solutions. It shows us that, when every child receives every Promise, we will see real change in America. We will see higher high school graduation rates, more college enrollment, fewer teen pregnancies, fewer young lives destroyed by drugs, and fewer young people involved in and victimized by crime. We will see the promise of America kept for the future.

We can think of no more appropriate time than this 10th Anniversary year of our Alliance for all Americans to renew their commitments to young people and embark upon new ones. Our ultimate goal must be nothing less than to ensure that every child has every promise fulfilled.

Alma J. Powell
Chair
America's Promise - The Alliance for Youth

General Colin L. Powell, USA (Ret)
Founding Chairman
America's Promise

"Part of being 'a good neighbor' is to look after the young people of our communities. At State Farm®, we are proud to sponsor this inaugural report on the well-being of America's youth. We are committed to taking up the challenge of *Every Child, Every Promise* and look forward to working with our neighbors all across America to ensure that our children are equipped to succeed. We know that such an effort is critical if we are to ensure a strong future for our nation."

EDWARD B. RUST JR.
CHAIRMAN AND CEO
STATE FARM INSURANCE COMPANIES

1 in 12

high school students has

attempted suicide

Upwards of 70% of fourth- and eighth-graders are not proficient in math or reading

42%

of young people

wish they had more

caring adults

to whom they could turn for help

CONTENTS

Executive Summary 1

Introduction 13

How This Report Was Developed 16

Keeping the Promise:
Five Resources Children Need to Succeed 18

How The Five Promises Correlate with Success 20

How We Are Failing America's Young People 24

Promise 1: Caring Adults 26

Promise 2: Safe Places and Constructive Use of Time 29

Promise 3: Healthy Start and Healthy Development 32

Promise 4: Effective Education for
Marketable Skills and Lifelong Learning 35

Promise 5: Opportunities to
Make a Difference Through Helping Others 38

Dividing Lines: Haves and Have-Nots 41

Looking for Help, Losing Hope 43

The Economic Case for Investing in Young People 45

The Way Forward: Six Key Implications
of Every Child, Every Promise 53

Conclusion 55

The Five Promises

- Caring adults
- Safe places and constructive use of time
- Healthy start and healthy development
- Effective education for marketable skills and lifelong learning
- Opportunities to make a difference through helping others

Executive Summary

Our children are our future. Though this statement is often repeated, few truly understand its significance in today's world. Our national security depends on the wisdom and will of the next generation. Our economic vitality depends on the capabilities of tomorrow's workforce. Our American values depend on the responsibility and integrity of our young people, who will become the parents and community leaders of the future.

Yet we now know millions of America's young people are not receiving nearly enough of the resources they need to become successful adults — or to ensure America's continued prosperity in the years ahead. We also know a significant proportion of young people do not believe that they will achieve their goals and aspirations.

In fact, we estimate that more than two-thirds of our children and youth — 34 million Americans between ages 6 and 17 — are not receiving sufficient developmental resources that put them on a path to success in adulthood.

More than 10 million of our young people are receiving none or only one of these life-changing, developmental resources, putting them at a great disadvantage as they seek to become successful, productive and engaged citizens.

Although this shortage of the key developmental resources that build human capital cuts across lines of race and income, children from lower-income backgrounds are much less likely to enjoy these resources than are those from more affluent families. African-American and Hispanic children are half as likely as whites to receive them. The consequences of this national failure to prepare our children are all too familiar and troubling:

> Approximately 25% of all public high school students fail to graduate on time, if at all. Researchers have estimated that for African Americans and Hispanics, the graduation rate could be as low as 50%.[i]

> Among 15-year-olds from 39 nations who took standardized math tests, American students finished a dismal 24th.[ii]

More than two-thirds of our children and youth — 34 million Americans between ages 6 and 17 — are not receiving sufficient developmental resources that put them on a path to success in adulthood.

- Upwards of 70% of fourth- and eighth-graders score below proficient in math and reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.[iii]
- Approximately one in six American children between ages 6 and 19 are overweight.[iv]
- One in 12 high school students has attempted suicide.[v]
- Nearly 1.6 million 12- to 19-year-olds are victims of violent crime.[vi]

There is another equally troubling consequence: Because we as a nation are failing to prepare them for the future, many young people are beginning to lose hope. More than 40% of our young people say they doubt they can ever achieve their goals and 70% wish they had more opportunities to help them fulfill their dreams.

It is not our children who are failing.

It is we who are failing our children.

Where This Report Breaks New Ground

Instead of focusing on statistics that suggest the symptoms of a larger problem, this report sheds new light on root causes. *Every Child, Every Promise: Turning Failure Into Action* reveals how our nation is dangerously under-equipping the majority of our children and youth for the future, especially those who are disadvantaged. It probes the causes of this failure — what lies behind the troubling statistics.

Other reports — such as the Federal government's *America's Children*[vii] and the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Kids Count*[viii] — have provided critical pictures of the state of children and youth in America according to specific indicators such as high school dropout rates, drug use and teen births.

Every Child, Every Promise takes a different view. This report is the first that attempts to measure comprehensively the presence in the lives of our young people of the five key resources — the "Five Promises" — that correlate with success in both youth and adulthood:

- Caring adults;
- Safe places and constructive use of time;
- Healthy start and healthy development;
- Effective education for marketable skills and lifelong learning; and
- Opportunities to make a difference through helping others.

Three innovative studies inform this report with distinct, yet complementary, perspectives:

- The *National Promises Study*[ix] — conducted by Search Institute, Child Trends and Gallup — takes a scientifically rigorous approach to determining the presence of the Five Promises in the lives of young people in America. The report is based on more than 6,000 interviews, including three nationally representative surveys (with oversamples of African Americans and Hispanics) of: 2,000 12- to 17-year-olds; parents of the 2,000 12- to 17-year-olds; and 2,000 parents of 6- to 11-year-olds.
- The *Voices Study*[x] — conducted by Just Kid, Inc. and Harris Interactive — offers a detailed look at the perspectives of young people concerning their own needs and well-being. The study included a quantitative online survey of over 4,000 8- to 21-year-olds and a set of focus groups conducted in Connecticut, Kentucky, New Mexico and Washington, D.C.
- *Investing in Our Young People*[xi] — involves an econometric analysis by University of Chicago economists Dr. James Heckman, a Nobel Laureate, and Flavio Cunha. Investing in Our Young People analyzes data from the landmark National Longitudinal Study of Youth, 1979 (NLSY79) to determine the most effective way to invest in our young people.[xii] Heckman and Cunha identified low-achieving white girls from the 1979 study who later became mothers of boys. Then they examined in detail the "investments" in cognitive and non-cognitive skills that the mothers' children had received, particularly family investments. Drawing on data from the landmark study of the Perry Preschool Program, Heckman and Cunha simulated the effects of investments in young people that were balanced throughout childhood instead of concentrated into one stage of life.

The Five Promises and How They Change Lives

Research demonstrates that chances of success are greatly increased (and the risks of failure greatly mitigated) when a child receives a critical mass of developmental resources. Moreover, children need the compounded effect of these developmental resources in their lives to thrive and be successful.[xiii]

We find in our research that children who enjoy the sustained and cumulative benefit of having at least four of the Five Promises across various contexts of their lives are much more likely to be academically successful, civically engaged and socially competent, regardless of their race or family income. For example:

> **Academic Achievement:** Teens and younger children with four or more of these five developmental resources are more than twice as likely to work up to their abilities and to get mostly A's in school, as compared to teens and younger children with one or fewer of the developmental resources in their lives.

> **Volunteering:** Young people with four or all five of the Promises are 40% more likely to volunteer in their communities than those with just one or none of the Promises.

> **Avoiding Violence:** Teens who receive four or more of the Five Promises are nearly twice as likely to refrain from using violence compared to teens with only one or fewer core resources.

> **Social Competence:** Teens who receive four or more of the Promises are nearly two-thirds more likely than those with zero or one Promise to be generous, respectful and empathetic and resolve conflicts calmly. Younger children with four or more Promises are twice as likely to be socially competent than their peers with one or zero Promises.

We also find that having enough of the Five Promises helps to mitigate the disparities among our nation's young people, for instance those based on race/ethnicity or family income. Though we find that access to these resources remains deeply unequal in America, their presence in critical mass can be a great equalizer. Regardless of race, gender or family income level, children who enjoy at least four of these five core resources are more likely to thrive.

> **Overall Health:** While 6- to 17-year-old white children are more likely to be in better overall health than African Americans and Hispanics, the presence of four or more of the Five Promises significantly reduces this disparity among 6- to 11-year-olds and eliminates the disparity among 12- to 17-year-olds.

Providing these five fundamental resources should be, at a minimum, our promise to America's young people.

- **Grades and School Attendance:** Nationally, white students tend to perform better than racial and ethnic minority students in school. However, we found that when African-American and Hispanic students receive four or five Promises, the disparity between whites and these minority students was reduced for 12- to 17-year-olds and eliminated for 6- to 11-year-olds. The presence of the Promises also eliminated disparities in school attendance between white and African-American and Hispanic 12- to 17-year-olds, as well as between 12- to 17-year-olds from higher-and lower-income families.

- **Drug Use:** Receiving four or five of the Promises eliminated disparities among 12- to 17-year-old African Americans, whites and Hispanics when it came to avoiding drug use.

- **Social Competence:** Having four or five of the Promises significantly reduced the disparities in social skills between 12- to 17-year-old whites and their African-American and Hispanic counterparts. Similar disparities by income were also eliminated for 6- to 17-year-olds.

In all of these ways, both research and experience have shown that the Five Promises are necessary foundations upon which successful futures can be built.

Providing these five fundamental resources should be, at a minimum, our promise to America's young people.

How We Are Failing Our Young People

According to the *National Promises Study* — one of the major components of this report — only 31% of our young people today are receiving enough of the developmental resources that will give them genuine reason for confidence about their success as adults. The *National Promises Study* also found that 21% — or over 10 million 6- to-17-year-olds — have a very low chance of success.

More encouragingly, the new research behind this report gives us critical insights into courses of action for advancing the delivery of each of the key resources of success to every child in America.

PROMISES NOT KEPT: An Overview

	NUMBER OF US CHILDREN, 6-17	PERCENT OF US CHILDREN, 6-17	
With 5 Promises	4,400,000	9%	31%
With 4 Promises	10,900,000	22%	
With 3 Promises	13,100,000	26.5%	48%
With 2 Promises	10,600,000	21.5%	
With 1 Promise	7,700,000	15.5%	21%
With 0 Promises	2,700,000	5.5%	
TOTAL	**49,400,000**	**100%**	

CARING ADULTS

- Roughly 20% of our young people do not have caring adults in their lives. This number is higher for the disadvantaged. We know parents, teachers, counselors and other formal and informal mentors can serve as the foundational resource that is the gateway to the other four Promises.

- Unfortunately, 8.5 million young people go without these key relationships. Therefore, to fill this need, we need to start by increasing the number of formal mentors in this country, especially for our more disadvantaged young people, and professionally support and train them to play greater roles in delivering the other Promises.

- One-third of teenagers (more than 8 million 12- to 17-year-olds) and one-fifth of younger children (5 million 6- to 11-year-olds) are reported not to have high-quality relationships with their parents.

- Only 8% of young people have a strong relationship with a formal mentor.

- According to the *Voices Study*, 42% of young people wish they had more caring adults to whom they could turn for help.

SAFE PLACES AND CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME

- Thirty-seven percent of 6- to 17-year-olds experience this Promise.
- Whereas nearly 75% of young people participate in after-school activities, only 40% of young people participate in high-quality after-school activities.
- More than half of younger children do not always feel safe in their schools.

HEALTHY START AND HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT

- Thirty-four percent of teenagers (nearly 8.5 million 12- to 17-year-olds) do not have health insurance coupled with annual check-ups with a doctor and dentist. Twenty-three percent of younger children (nearly 5.75 million 6- to 11-year-olds) fall into this category.
- Nearly half of young people are not receiving the proper nutrition in their daily diets.
- Forty percent of teenagers have not taken a comprehensive health education class.

EFFECTIVE EDUCATION FOR MARKETABLE SKILLS AND LIFELONG LEARNING

- Nearly 50% of school-age young people do not attend schools that emphasize academic achievement, according to parent and child reports.
- Forty percent of teenagers report that their parents are not involved in their education.

OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE THROUGH HELPING OTHERS

- Half of 6- to 17-year-olds experience the civic roles and connections that enable them to make a difference in their communities.
- Twenty percent of teens are not given useful roles in their schools or communities.
- One-third of parents and other adults are not setting good civic examples, whether through volunteering, voting, or conversing with their children about current events.

The research findings from the *National Promises Study* were reinforced by young people themselves in a separate survey, the *Voices Study*, the second major component of this report. In the *Voices Study*, children and adolescents revealed deep concerns about whether they are prepared to succeed. In this way, the *Voices Study* adds meaningfully to our picture of young people.

Not only does the research behind *Every Child, Every Promise* reveal how the majority of our children have been shortchanged, young people themselves also recognize that they are under-equipped for an increasingly competitive world.

We found encouraging news about the attitudes of young people: The stereotype of children and teens as slackers with a weak work ethic is a myth. Young people are looking for more help from adults, but not a handout. They are willing to work hard to reach their goals:

> In spite of the challenges they face, the overwhelming majority of young people say they have aspirations and goals and are willing to invest the effort it takes to realize them.

> More than 90% say they have ambitions for the future and have set goals for themselves.

> Young people say they value and want more guidance from adults, more challenges and higher expectations from their schools, and more opportunities to contribute to their communities.

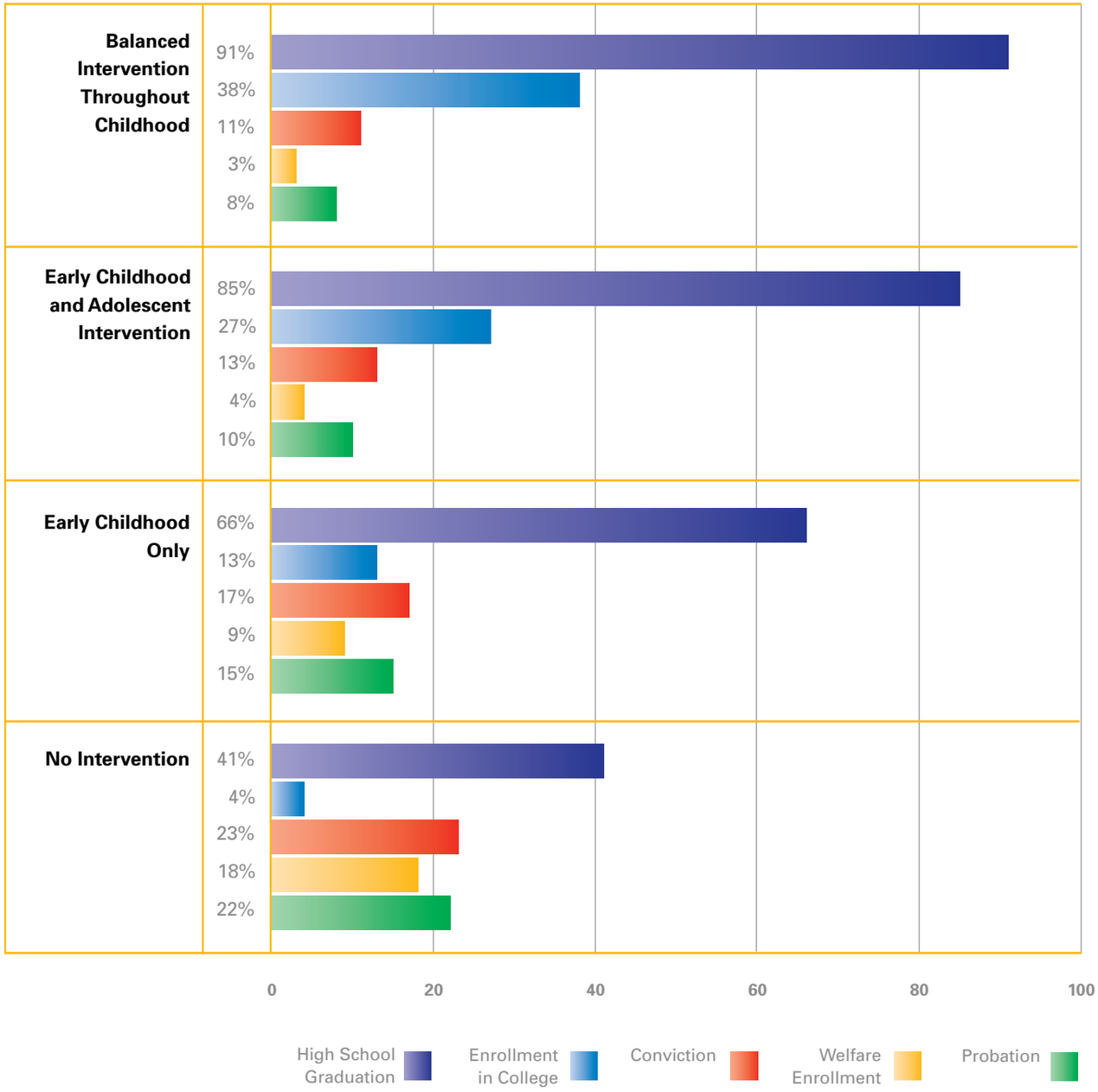
The data in this report also suggest strategies that offer a way forward. The third major research component of this report, *Investing in Our Young People,* finds that consistent investments in our young people from early childhood through the teen years make a dramatic impact when it comes to long-term success indicators.

Heckman and Cunha find that the greatest returns to society result from a balanced investment strategy throughout childhood, not just in early childhood. The biggest economic benefits result from targeting interventions toward underserved youth. These returns take the form of increased high school graduation rates and college enrollment, reduced involvement with the criminal justice system and reduced welfare dependency, which in turn provide direct and indirect economic benefits to our nation.

Investing in our young people is more than an education issue or a matter of seeing that all children have health insurance coverage. Our research affirms that children need inputs that must come from a variety of sources, beginning with parents, and that take a variety of forms. More effective programs and schools alone will not ensure that every child receives every Promise. At the same time, cost-effective, targeted programs may offer the best strategy for mitigating the risk factors otherwise working against children placed at major disadvantages. The bottom-line implication from this research is clear: For maximum return, start investing in young people at an early age — and don't stop.

CHANGING THE ODDS OF SUCCESS: AN ECONOMETRIC MODEL

Drawing from available data, Heckman and Cunha simulated the effects of compounding the benefits of investments (interventions) in young people throughout their preschool, middle childhood and adolescent years. They found dramatic improvements in high school graduation and college enrollment among young people considered most "at risk," along with corresponding declines in convictions, probations and welfare enrollment.



Because the development of children does not occur in compartments — schools alone, for example, do not produce successful young people — the research behind *Every Child, Every Promise* strongly suggests that all sectors of society have roles to play in ensuring that our children receive the Five Promises. What we need are integrated solutions.

While we do not claim to have all the answers, we feel strongly that America must:

- Commit to collaboration;
- Strengthen families and support their economic success;
- See that every child has caring adults in his or her life;
- Prepare all young people with a 21st century education, which includes quality early education and service-learning;
- Ensure that young people are safe in their schools and communities;
- Provide all young people with access to quality and affordable health care; and
- Engage young people in America's civic life.

Accompanying this report are specific action steps that groups and individuals from each sector can take.

Parents, communities, educators, businesses, faith leaders, policy-makers, funders, youth-serving organizations and young people themselves all must contribute if we are to equip each new generation with the resources that give them a chance to claim their dreams.

It is up to all of us to keep America's Promise, for our children and for our nation.

It is up to all of us to keep America's Promise, for our children and for our nation.

Because we as a nation are failing to prepare them for the future, many young people are beginning to lose hope. More than four in 10 say they do not believe they will be able to realize their goals.

8%
of young people
ages 6 to 17
have access to a
formal mentor

Approximately 25% of all public high school students fail to graduate on time, if at all. Researchers have estimated that for African Americans and Hispanics, the graduation rate could be as low as 50%.

More than 40% of parents of younger children and 66% of adolescents say their schools do not emphasize academic achievement

By a
31% to 23%
margin, girls were more likely than boys to say they experienced daily stress

Introduction

Our young people are at risk — and not just those youth often described as disadvantaged. More than two-thirds of our school-age children and youth are not adequately equipped for success.

As a result, the future well-being of our nation is also at risk.

Our country is in jeopardy as demonstrated by these troubling statistics:

- Approximately 25% of all public high school students fail to graduate on time, if at all. Researchers have estimated that for African Americans and Hispanics, the graduation rate could be as low as 50%.[xiv]
- Among 15-year-olds from 39 nations who took standardized math tests, American students finished a dismal 24th.[xv]
- Upwards of 70% of fourth- and eighth-graders scored below proficient in math and reading on the National Assessment of Educational Progress.[xvi]
- Approximately one in six American children between ages 6 and 19 are overweight.[xvii]
- Nearly 1.6 million 12- to 19-year-olds are victims of violent crime.[xviii]

Now, in ways that research can measure, we know the reasons behind these discouraging numbers.

More than two-thirds of our school-age children are not receiving enough of the key developmental resources they need to be confident of success.

More than 10 million children ages 6 to 17 are receiving so few of these resources that their chances of success are very slim.

What's more, because we as a nation are failing to prepare them for the future, many young people are beginning to lose hope. More than four in 10 say they do not believe they will be able to realize their goals.

It is not our children who are failing. Rather, it is we as a nation who are failing them.

These are among the key findings in *Every Child, Every Promise: Turning Failure Into Action.*

Other reports — such as the Federal government's *America's Children* [xix] and the Annie E. Casey Foundation's *Kids Count* [xx] — have provided critical pictures of the state of children and youth in America, according to specific indicators such as high school dropout rates, drug use and teen births. *Every Child, Every Promise* takes a different view, examining the presence of five essential developmental resources children need to succeed in life. *Every Child, Every Promise* is the first research report that attempts to measure comprehensively the presence in the lives of our young people of five key resources — which we call the "Five Promises" — that correlate with success in both youth and adulthood: caring adults; safe places; healthy start; effective education; and opportunities to help others.

Research affirms that the odds of success, regardless of race or family income, strongly favor children who enjoy the sustained and cumulative benefit of having at least four of the Five Promises across various contexts of their lives. [xxi]

Children who receive a critical mass of these resources are much more likely to achieve academic success, be socially competent and become involved in their communities. The Five Promises also greatly mitigate the risk of failure, as measured by academic success, social skills, drug use and health.

Unfortunately, only 31% of our school-age children are experiencing four or five of the Promises. More than 20% are experiencing none or only one.

Although this shortage of the key resources that build human capital cuts across lines of race and income, children from lower-income backgrounds are much less likely to enjoy these resources than are those from more affluent families. African-American and Hispanic children are half as likely as whites to receive them.

This research has critical implications for America's future. In the faster, "flatter" global economy of this new century, America's competitiveness, prosperity and leadership link directly to how well we equip our young people. Clearly, we have much work to do.

Unfortunately, only 31% of our school-age children are experiencing four or five of the Promises. More than 20% are experiencing none or only one.

There is Much to Do

An opportunity for the future will be to encourage and empower caring adults to play greater roles in delivering the other four Promises. We know that caring adults, such as parents, grandparents, teachers, coaches and formal mentors, can serve as the foundational Promise, the gateway to the other four Promises, but nearly 20% of young people do not experience this Promise. Only 8% have a formal relationship with a mentor. We need to increase the number of formal and informal mentors in the lives of children and youth, especially for our more underserved young people, as we know the presence of the Five Promises can mitigate the circumstances of the disadvantaged.

What is good news is that young people want to be involved in the solution. More than 90% say they have set goals for themselves and are willing to work hard to reach them. The stereotype of young people as lazy slackers is a myth.

The data in this report also suggest strategies that offer a way forward. According to new research by University of Chicago economists James Heckman, a Nobel Laureate, and Flavio Cunha, our society reaps the greatest return when we invest in young people consistently from preschool through adolescence, instead of concentrating on particular stages of development. These returns take the form of increased high school graduation rates and college enrollment, reduced involvement with the criminal justice system and reduced welfare dependency, which in turn provide direct and indirect economic benefits to our nation.

The message is clear: Start investing in young people at an early age and don't stop.

This research also finds that young people who are most at a disadvantage — and most at risk of failure — show the greatest improvements when we invest in them consistently throughout childhood.

We need integrated solutions. Because the development of children does not occur in silos, the research suggests that all sectors of society must play roles if we are to ensure that every child receives a critical mass of each Promise across the contexts of their lives. Accompanying this report are specific action steps that groups and individuals from each sector — including parents, businesses, school leaders, policy-makers, faith leaders, community leaders, youth-serving organizations, foundations and young people themselves — can take to help our nation reach this goal.

While the research indicates that we are now failing the majority of our youth, it also provides a strategic direction for turning that failure into action. Now it is up to all of us to keep America's Promise.

How This Report Was Developed

***Every Child, Every Promise* will be a biennial report. This is the first in the series. Building on these initial studies, subsequent reports will track our nation's progress against the benchmarks established in this document for measuring the well-being of America's young people.**

Every Child, Every Promise takes a comprehensive view of the needs and current state of young people in America as well as an integrated view of approaches to our society's investments in youth development. Instead of offering a series of isolated snapshots, this report attempts to create a panoramic picture.

Three studies inform this report with distinct, yet complementary, perspectives that provide a unique picture of the state of our nation's young people.

The *National Promises Study* [xxii] — conducted in partnership with Search Institute, Child Trends and the Gallup Organization— benchmarks the extent to which our children and youth are receiving five critical resources — the Five Promises — that are linked with success in life.

It measures not only the presence of these resources, but how much they are reinforced in all aspects of children's lives, from homes and school to local communities. The report is based on more than 6,000 interviews nationwide. It included three nationally representative telephone surveys (with oversamples of African Americans and Hispanics) of: (1) more than 2,000 young people ages 12 to 17; (2) the parents of these 12- to 17-year-olds; and (3) the parents of more than 2,000 children ages 6 to 11.

The *Voices Study,*[xxiii] conducted by Just Kid, Inc. and Harris Interactive, offers the most detailed, complete look to date at the perspectives of young people concerning their own needs and well-being. As such, it provides an important complement to the *National Promises Study*. In their own "voices," children and youth tell us how they're doing and where they believe they need the most assistance. Based on surveys involving more than 4,000 young people ages 8 to 21 (with oversamples of African Americans and Hispanics), *Voices* is an in-depth analysis of how children and youth perceive their futures, the challenges they face, and the solutions to overcoming those challenges. The quantitative portion of the study was supplemented by a series of focus groups held in Connecticut, Kentucky, New Mexico and Washington, D.C.

The third component of this report — *Investing in Our Young People* [xxiv] — involves an econometric analysis by University of Chicago economists Dr. James Heckman, a Nobel Laureate, and Flavio Cunha. *Investing in Our Young People* builds on data from the landmark National Longitudinal Study of Youth, 1979 (NLSY79).[xxv] Heckman and Cunha identified low-achieving white girls from the 1979 study who later became mothers of boys. Then they examined in detail the "investments" in cognitive and non-cognitive skills that their children had received, in particular from the family. Drawing on data from the landmark study of the Perry Preschool Program, Heckman and Cunha simulated the effects of investments in young people that were balanced throughout childhood instead of concentrated into one stage of life. *Investing in Our Young People* is the first in a line of research that will explore investments leading to productive and economically efficient child and youth development across diverse groups.

Keeping the Promise: Five Resources Children Need to Succeed

Research affirms what generations of Americans have regarded as common sense wisdom: To become successful adults who contribute to society, children need the compounded effect of basic, essential resources in their lives. Parents are the first and most important providers of these developmental resources. But they are far from the only ones. Other adults, schools and communities (among others) all have key roles to play.

Drawing on the collective weight of this previous research, America's Promise in 1997 developed descriptors of five essential resources in children's lives that most directly correlate with success. We call them the "Five Promises." For our young people to thrive — and, by extension, for America to continue to thrive — we believe that providing these basic resources must be nothing less than a promise we keep to every child.

As General Colin L. Powell, USA (Ret), the founding chairman of America's Promise, has described our mission, all Americans have a "solemn obligation" to ensure that every child has a chance to succeed.

For the National Promises Study, a set of indicators was developed for each of the Five Promises consistent with the definitions of each of the Five Promises. To be scored as "having" or "experiencing" a given Promise, a young person had to experience 75% of the indicators. This procedure was developed by Search Institute, Child Trends and America's Promise's research division, with input from Alliance partners and members of the esteemed Alliance Research Council.

These five research-driven and experience-proven essentials that all children need in their lives are:

1. **CARING ADULTS**
   Every child and youth needs and deserves support and guidance from caring adults in their families, schools and communities, including ongoing, secure relationships with parents and other family adults, as well as multiple and consistent formal and informal positive relationships with teachers, mentors, coaches, youth volunteers and neighbors.

2. **SAFE PLACES AND CONSTRUCTIVE USE OF TIME**
   Every child and youth needs and deserves to be physically and emotionally safe everywhere they are — from the actual places of families, schools, neighborhoods and communities to the virtual places of media — and to have an appropriate balance of structured, supervised activities and unstructured, unscheduled time.

3. **A HEALTHY START AND HEALTHY DEVELOPMENT**
   Every child and youth needs and deserves the healthy bodies, healthy minds and healthful habits and choices resulting from regular health care and needed treatment, good nutrition and exercise, comprehensive knowledge and skills and role models of physical and psychological health.

4. **EFFECTIVE EDUCATION FOR MARKETABLE SKILLS AND LIFELONG LEARNING**
   Every child and youth needs and deserves the intellectual development, motivation and personal, social-emotional and cultural skills needed for successful work and lifelong learning in a diverse nation, as a result of having quality learning environments, challenging expectations and consistent formal and informal guidance and mentoring.

5. **OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE THROUGH HELPING OTHERS**
   Every child and youth needs and deserves the chance to make a difference — in their families, schools, communities, nation and world — through having models of caring behavior, awareness of the needs of others, a sense of personal responsibility to contribute to larger society, and opportunities for volunteering, leadership and service.

Some children experience circumstances that create barriers that even the presence of all of these resources cannot surmount. However, it is clear that having at least four of the Five Promises in a child's life changes the odds of success in children's favor.

As this report will detail, it is even clearer that America is failing to equip 34 million young people with enough of these foundational resources.

How the Five Promises Correlate with Success

What makes these resources so powerful? Previous research suggests a link between the presence of the Five Promises in children's lives and their likelihood of success both as they are growing up and as adults. *Every Child, Every Promise* affirms this very strong correlation suggested by other, highly regarded research.

Among these are:

- Search Institute's studies of 40 developmental assets among youth in over 2,000 cities in the United States; [xxvi]
- University-based research on the experiences that protect youth from risk and enhance resiliency; [xxvii]
- More than 1,000 research studies on youth summarized in Child Trend's *American Teens Series;* [xxviii] and
- The National Academy of Science's report on *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development.* [xxix]

The research also shows that, to make a meaningful difference, these developmental resources should be sufficiently present in multiple contexts of a child's life. For example, having a healthy start and a safe place in the home are not sufficient by themselves to change the odds of success in a child's favor.

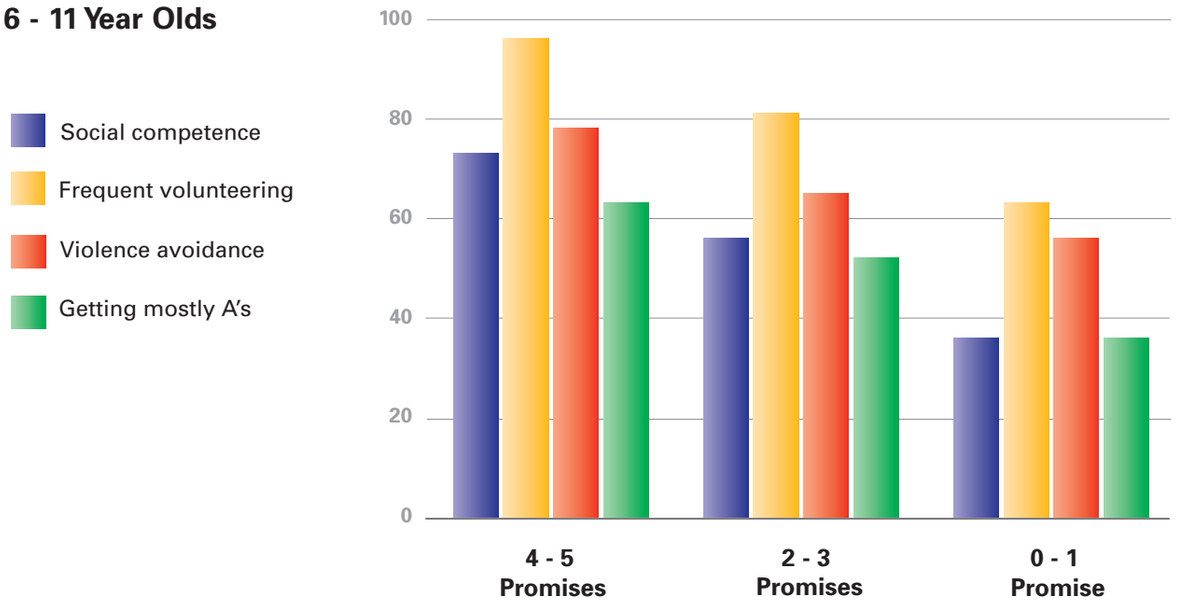
In this regard, the research behind *Every Child, Every Promise* dovetails with the earlier findings of others: Unless they have a critical mass of key developmental resources in their lives — four or five Promises — children are far less likely to achieve academic success, avoid violence and become involved in their communities. [xxx]

Those who enjoy fewer than two of the Five Promises are at a disadvantage compared to their better-equipped peers as they move through childhood and into adulthood.

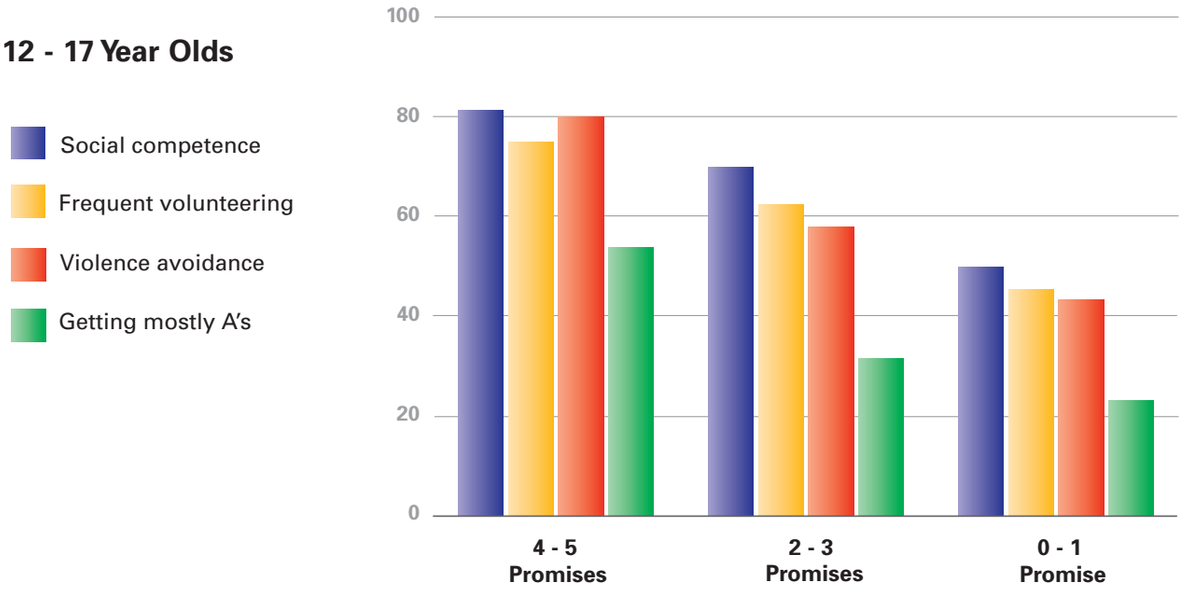
THE POWER OF THE FIVE PROMISES

Children who experience at least four of the Five Promises are significantly more likely to be successful, as measured by four indicators: social competence, frequency of volunteering, avoiding violence and earning mostly A's in school.

6 - 11 Year Olds



12 - 17 Year Olds



Just as the Five Promises have cumulative, mutually reinforcing effects, so does the lack of them.

How do these developmental resources change lives and futures? According to some findings from the *National Promises Study*:

> **Academic Achievement:** Teens and younger children with four or more of these five developmental resources are more than twice as likely to work up to their abilities and to get mostly A's in school, as compared to teens and younger children with one or fewer of the developmental resources in their lives.

> **Volunteering:** Young people with four or more of the Promises are 40% more likely to volunteer in their communities than those with just one or none of the Promises.

> **Avoiding Violence:** Teens who receive four or more of the Promises are nearly twice as likely to refrain from using violence compared to teens with zero or one of the core resources.

> **Social Competence:** Teens who receive four or more of the Promises are nearly two-thirds more likely than those with zero or one Promise to be generous, respectful and empathetic, and resolve conflicts calmly. Younger children with four or more Promises are twice as likely to be socially competent than their peers with zero or one Promise.

Just as the Five Promises have cumulative, mutually reinforcing effects, so does the lack of them. The combined effects of low-income, poor-quality housing, high crime and discrimination of all kinds are not easy to overcome. Simply having more caring adults or better after-school activities — as critical as these resources are — by themselves may not enable our most deeply disadvantaged young people to surmount the obstacles to success. But we have seen that when these resources are sufficiently present in a young person's life, they have a profound effect on changing the chance of that young person's success.

Closing Disparities

We also find that having enough of the Five Promises helps to mitigate the disparities among our nation's young people, for instance those based on race/ethnicity or family income. Though we find that access to these resources remains deeply unequal in America, their presence in critical mass can be a great equalizer. Regardless of race, gender or family income level, children who enjoy at least four of these five core resources are more likely to thrive.

For example:

- **Overall Health**: While 6- to 17-year-old white children are more likely to be reported to be in better overall health than African Americans and Hispanics, the presence of four or more of the Five Promises significantly reduces this disparity among 6- to 11-year-olds and eliminates the disparity among 12- to 17-year-olds.

- **Grades and School Attendance**: Nationally, white students tend to perform better than racial and ethnic minority students in school. However, we found that when African-American and Hispanic students receive four or five Promises, the disparity between whites and these minority students was reduced for 12- to 17-year-olds and eliminated for 6- to 11-year-olds. The presence of the Promises also eliminated disparities in school attendance between white and African-American and Hispanic 12- to 17-year-olds. Disparities regarding school attendance were also eliminated between 12- to 17-year-olds from higher- and lower-income families.

- **Drug Use:** Receiving four or five of the Promises eliminated disparities among 12- to 17-year-old African Americans, whites and Hispanics when it came to avoiding drug use.

- **Social Competence:** Having four or five of the Promises significantly reduced the disparities in social skills between 12- to 17-year-old whites and their African-American and Hispanic counterparts. Similar disparities by income were also eliminated for 6- to 17-year-olds.

How We Are Failing America's Young People

The *National Promises Study* reveals not just a familiar dichotomy between haves and have-nots, but three distinct segments of young people.

Among the 49 million children in America ages 6 to 17, only 31% are receiving at least four of the five essential, human capital-building resources that predict likely success. For them, the future looks bright.

At the other end of the spectrum, over 10 million young people — more than one in five — have one or none of these key developmental resources in their lives. For this bottom 21%, the future appears bleak.

Meanwhile, almost half of our young people have only two or three of the five critical resources in their lives. For them, the future appears clouded. We might classify them as the "need mores." They are in the middle with some, but not enough, of the Five Promises.

Less than one-third of our young people are receiving enough of the developmental resources they need to be confident of success. One in five are experiencing so few of the critical Five Promises that the odds are overwhelmingly stacked against them.

Young people themselves echo these findings from the *National Promises Study*. In the *Voices Study*, which involved an entirely different set of responders, a significant number of American children and youth expressed anxiety about their futures. In fact, more than 40% say they doubt whether they will be able to achieve their goals.

The bottom line is simple and troubling: We are failing to keep America's Promise to two-thirds of our children. Instead, we are preparing them for an uncertain or unpromising future.

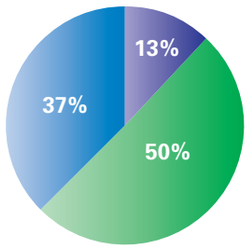
PROMISES NOT KEPT: An Overview

	NUMBER OF US CHILDREN, 6-17	PERCENT OF US CHILDREN, 6-17	
With 5 Promises	4,400,000	9%	31%
With 4 Promises	10,900,000	22%	
With 3 Promises	13,100,000	26.5%	48%
With 2 Promises	10,600,000	21.5%	
With 1 Promise	7,700,000	15.5%	21%
With 0 Promises	2,700,000	5.5%	
TOTAL	**49,400,000**	**100%**	

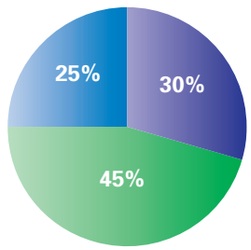
In the subsections that follow, we'll examine how we measure up as a nation against each of the five key developmental resource areas. We will also examine the views of young people themselves about their own well-being as they relate to these specific resources. We will particularly examine how many young people experience each Promise. While our research supports the cumulative power of the Five Promises, the depth (or lack thereof) of each of these developmental resources in children's lives offers insights that should inform our actions.

PROMISES BY AGE

6 - 11 Year Olds



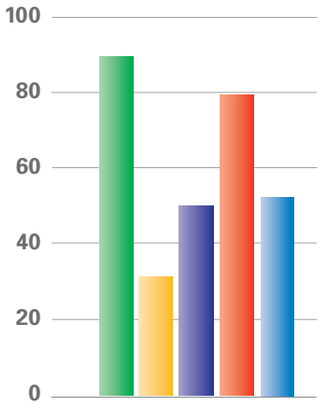
12 - 17 Year Olds



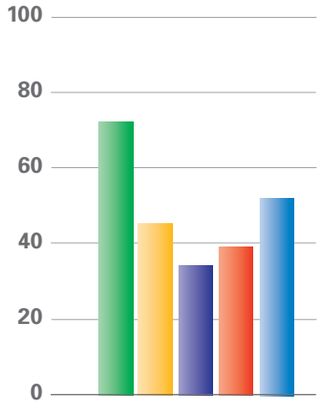
0 -1 Promise
2 - 3 Promises
4 - 5 Promises

DISTRIBUTION OF PROMISES

6 - 11 Year Olds



12 - 17 Year Olds



Caring Adults
Safe Places
Healthy Start
Effective Education
Opportunities to Help Others

PROMISE 1:

Caring Adults

Caring adults are the cornerstone of a child's development — and for the other four critical developmental resources that make for young people's success, both as children and as adults.

Parents come first. But children also need other caring adults across the broader contexts of their lives, in their schools and communities, as well. They need a support network of caring relationships with adults among their extended families, neighbors, teachers and coaches. They need adults involved in their lives to whom they can turn for help and from whom they can receive formal and informal mentoring. For this reason, we measure "caring adults" not only by good relationships between parents and their children, but also by the involvement of others across these various contexts.[xxxi]

What's more, young people actively want this developmental resource. More than one-half of young people in the *Voices Study* said that they look for advice and help from adults on doing well in school, relationships with friends, jobs and careers, and college. And more than 40% of the young people ages 8 through 21 who participated in the *Voices Study* say they want more adults in their lives to whom they can turn for help.

The *National Promises Study* reveals a number of troubling gaps in the distribution of this cornerstone Promise:

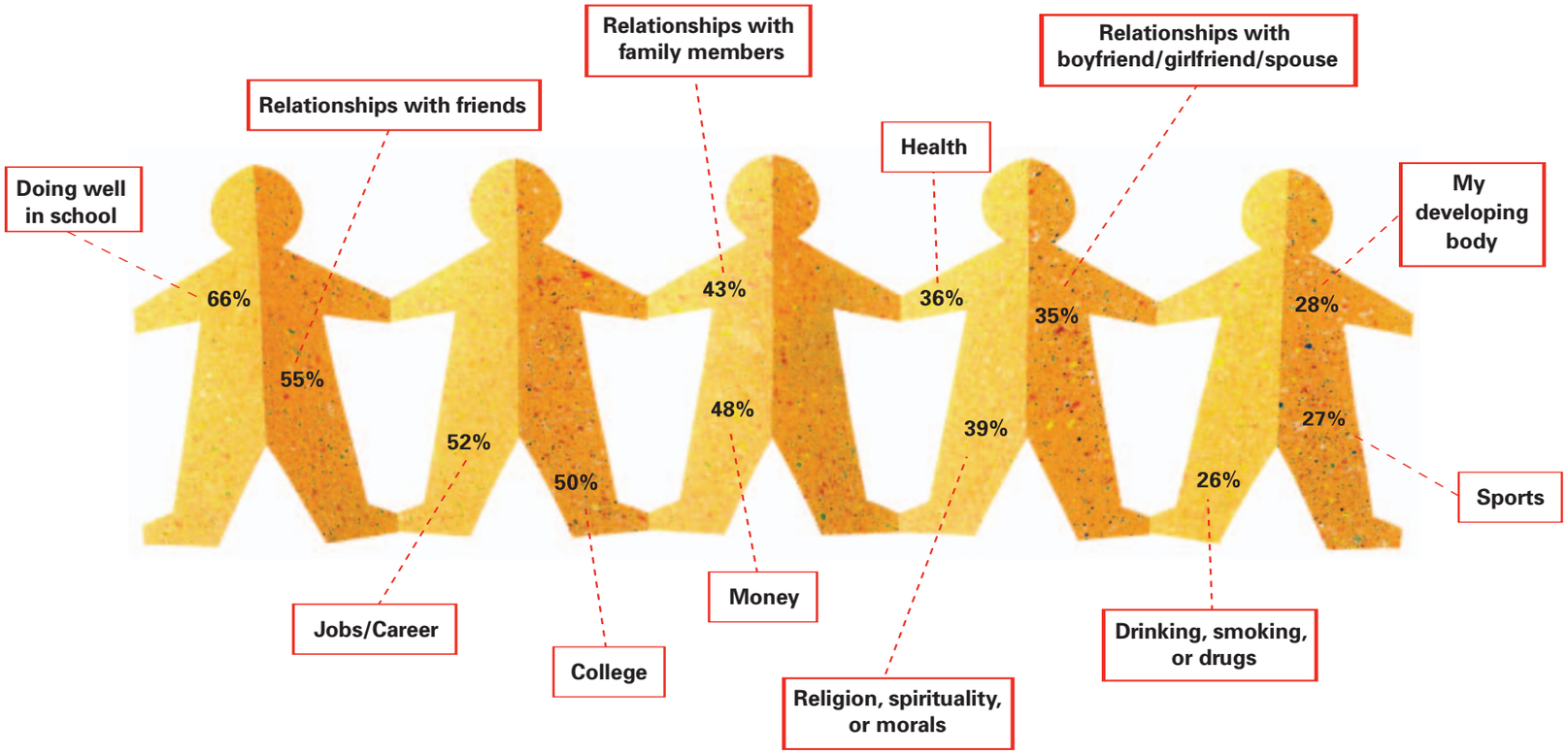
> One-third of teens and 20% of younger children do not have quality relationships with their parents.

> More than 55% of adolescents and 40% of younger children do not have caring adults in all areas of their lives; that is, in their homes, schools and communities.[xxxii]

KEY INDICATORS | CARING ADULTS	
For this Promise to be kept, young people should have a critical mass of caring adults across multiple contexts of their lives.	• **Caring relationships with parents/primary caregivers** • **Caring relationships with extended family adults** • **Caring relationships with adults at school** • **Caring relationships with adults in the neighborhood/community, including:** > **formal mentors in school- and community-based settings**

VOICES OF YOUNG PEOPLE: CARING ADULTS

Researchers asked 10- to 21-year-olds: "What types of advice/help do you look for from adults you like and trust?"



A necessary next step must be to engage these caring adults in becoming the gateways to the rest of the Five Promises: to see that young people also have safe places, good health care, encouragement in their schoolwork and chances to volunteer.

> Just 8% of young people ages 6 to 17 have access to a formal mentor. Children from low-income households report fewer caring adults than do their peers from higher-income households.

We know parents, teachers, counselors and other mentors do serve as caring adults for the majority of our children and youth, but for 8.5 million young people, particularly the disadvantaged, this fundamental resource is lacking.

A necessary next step must be to engage these caring adults in becoming the gateways to the rest of the Five Promises: to see that young people also have safe places, good health care, encouragement in their schoolwork and chances to volunteer. Another critical step is to increase the number of formal mentors in this country, especially for our more disadvantaged young people, as research has shown that formal mentors can help improve the strength and quality of a young person's relationship with parents and other caring adults in their lives.

PROMISE 2:

Safe Places and Constructive Use of Time

Only 37% of children and youth experience safe places that offer opportunities to make constructive use of their time. Both of these attributes, safety and constructive use of time, are integral to any meaningful definition of this developmental resource. It's important for children to be safe at home, at school and in their neighborhoods. But it is equally important for children's development that these places engage them constructively and actively.

Here, we found both good and bad news. The majority of young people have safe families, schools and neighborhoods, but significant minorities of young people do not. For example, in the *National Promises Study*, parents of 6- to 11-year-olds report that bullying at school is so common that less than half of their children can be said to experience a safe school environment. We also found that America too often ignores its children and leaves them unsupervised.

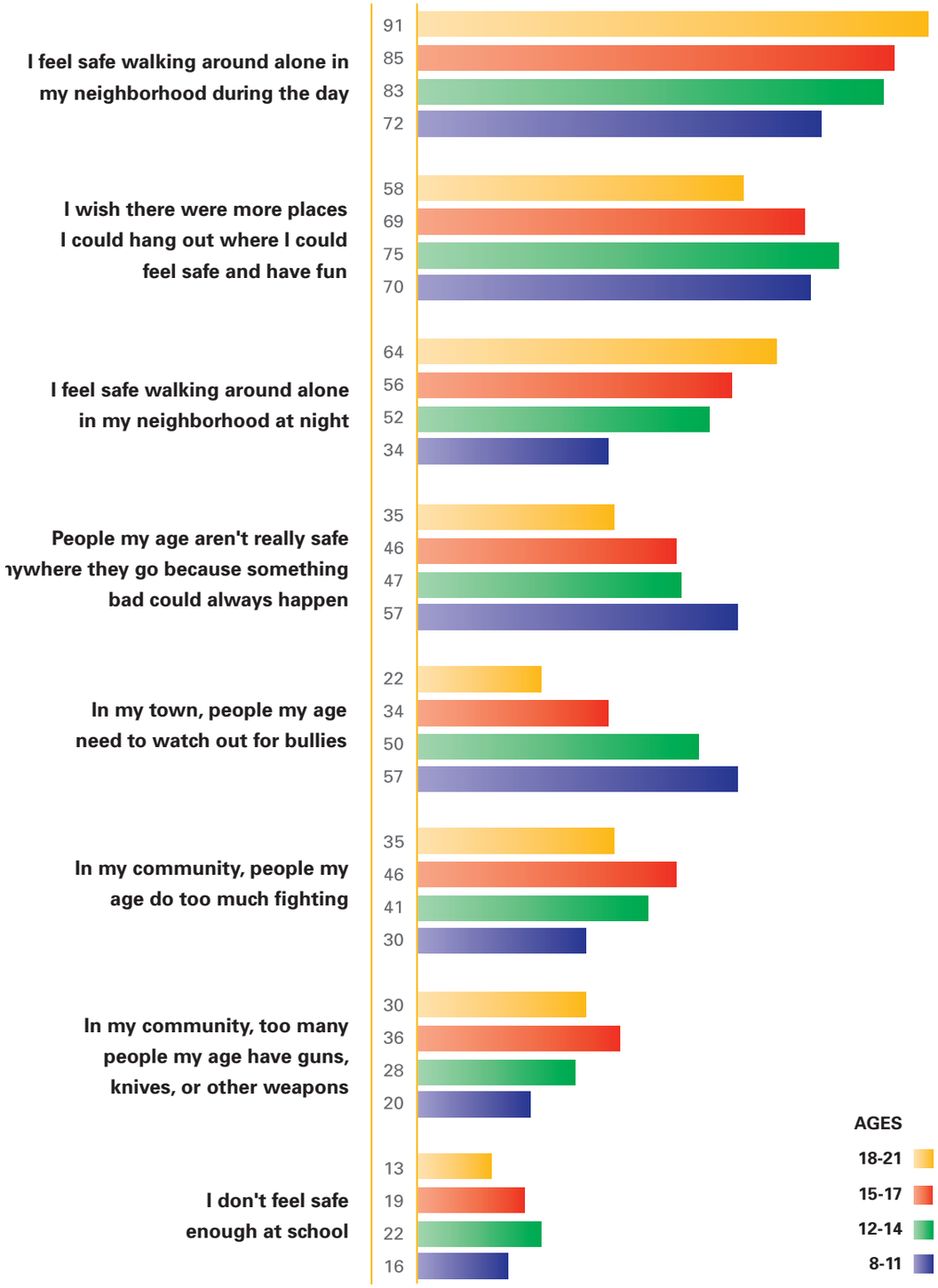
> In the *National Promises Study*, between one-fourth and one-third of all young people "never" or only "sometimes" feel safe at school and in their communities.

> To reduce the violence in their schools, more than 40% of young people in the *Voices Study* say they would like to see teachers and administrators discipline students who misbehave.

KEY INDICATORS | SAFE PLACES	
Young people need safe places at home, school and in their communities.	• **Safe family** • **Parental monitoring** • **Safe school** • **Safe neighborhood/community** • **Safe outdoor play spaces (only 6- to11-year-olds surveyed)** • **Opportunity for involvement in high-quality structured activities** • **Frequency participates in high-quality structured activities**

VOICES OF YOUNG PEOPLE: SAFE PLACES

The chart below reveals the percentages of young people who "strongly agreed" or "somewhat agreed" with the following statements:



Creating Safe, Constructive Places After School

The media and policy communities have focused much attention on the needs and reasons to provide affordable, quality child care for preschool children. While this care is vitally important, our nation has neglected to devote enough attention to the equally pressing need for affordable, high-quality after-school and weekend activities for school-age children. According to the *National Promises Study*:

> Eighty percent of teenagers and 70% of parents of young children say they have the opportunity to participate in an after-school activity of some kind.

> However, only four in 10 young people participate in high-quality activities that teach them needed skills, how to form lasting relationships with others, and how to make big decisions, according to parent and adolescent reports.

"No one is safe these days."

16-year-old girl from the Voices Study

> Less than half of the parents of the 6- to 17-year-olds surveyed say that affordable, high-quality after-school activities are available in their communities.

Through the *Voices Study*, young people themselves noted this need and identified a related one. More than two-thirds of the young people wish there were more places they could hang out "where [they] could feel safe and have fun," suggesting that developers of after-school and summer programs should seek more input from young people.

"[I] don't think anyplace is safe, because anything can happen."

10-year-old-girl from the Voices Study

PROMISE 3:

A Healthy Start and Healthy Development

With increased attention in recent years on such issues as increasing the number of children covered by health insurance and the upsurges in childhood obesity and juvenile diabetes, Americans have a raised awareness of the importance of a healthy start as a critical developmental resource for children and youth.

Nevertheless, our research found that, as a nation, we still fall well short of keeping this Promise to all of our young people. In fact, according to the *National Promises Study*, only 43% of our young people ages 6 through 17 are experiencing a healthy start and healthy development.

In addition to the dimensions of this problem that already have gained more public attention, the research for this report revealed several other causes for concern. According to the *National Promises Study*:

> More than one-third of teens and nearly one-fourth of younger children do not have the following critical components of good health care: health insurance coverage and annual visits to a doctor and a dentist.

> Although 80% to 90% of young people live in families with rules about eating healthy foods, nearly half still do not eat fruits and vegetables twice or more in a typical day.

KEY INDICATORS | HEALTHY START	
Young people who experience these eight key indicators have a healthy start.	• **Regular checkups and health insurance** • **Good nutrition** • **Daily physical activity (only 12- to17-year-olds surveyed)** • **Recommended amount of restful sleep** • **Health education classes with comprehensive content (12-17)** • **Positive adult role models** • **Peer influence (12-17)** • **Emotional safety**

More than 90% of young people say it's important for people their age to pay attention to their health

Contrary to popular perception, young people would welcome more opportunities to make healthy food choices. However, the offerings available to them frequently make it difficult to eat healthy food. According to the *Voices Study*:

> Sixty-five percent of young people wish they knew of "more stores and restaurants [that] sold more healthy foods and drinks."

> Forty-nine percent say their "school cafeteria sells too much unhealthy food."

Beyond unhealthy offerings at school and in stores, the *National Promises Study* also identified another significant impediment to a healthy start for many young people: the influence of parents and peers.

> Among the parents of 6- to 17-year-olds, one-fourth are smokers; they not only expose their children to the effects of second-hand smoke, but also act as negative role models.

> Only half of the teens indicated that their peers have a positive effect on their health. Between 25% and 30% say that at least some of their close friends use alcohol, drugs, or cigarettes.

The Stress Factor

Our research from the *Voices Study* identified another impediment to a healthy start for millions of children: stress.

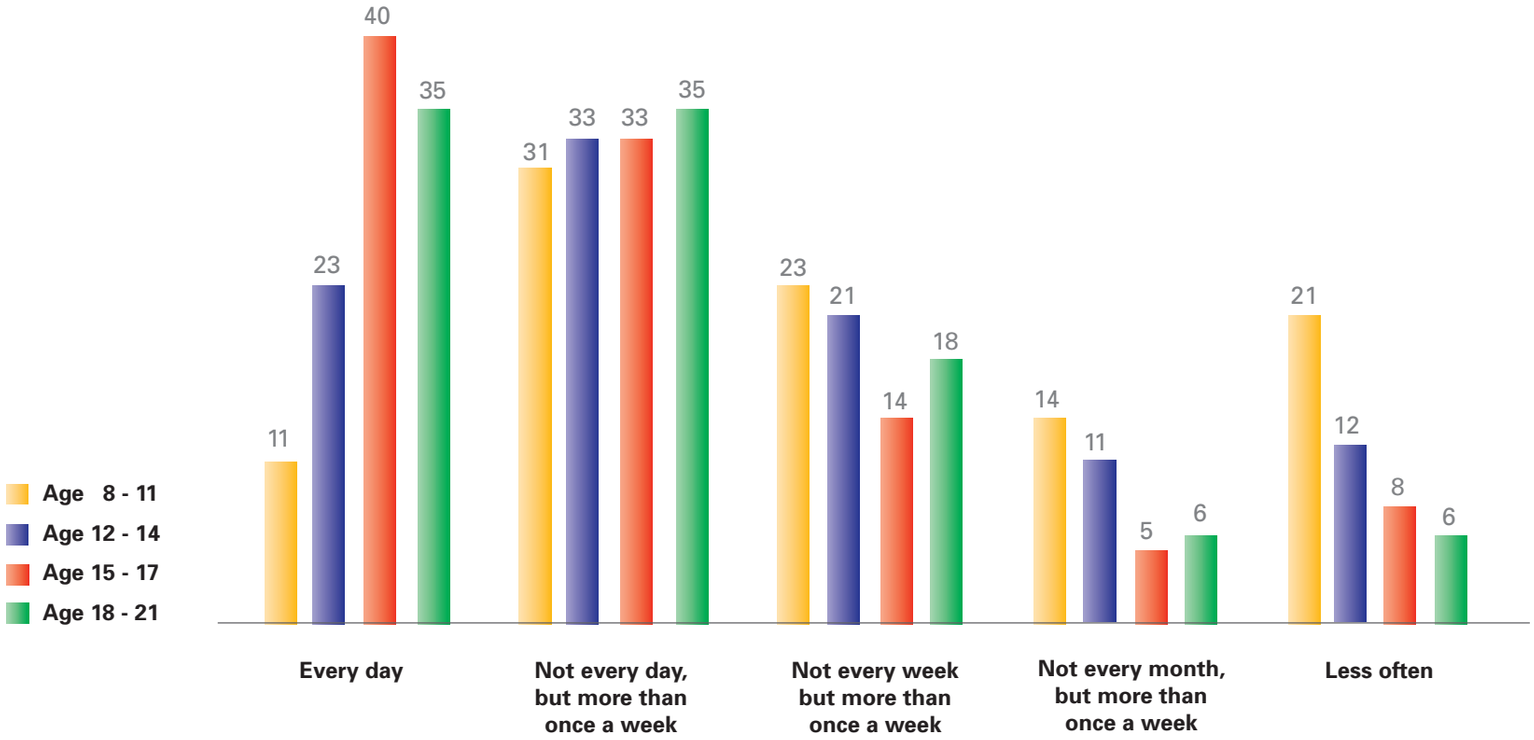
We usually think of stress as a "grown-up" problem. In fact, it occurs at an alarmingly high rate among young people. Almost eight out of every 10 children surveyed in the *Voices Study* say they feel stressed each month. One in four report feeling stressed at least once each day. By a 31% to 23% margin, girls were more likely than boys to say they experienced daily stress.

School — cited by 79% of 10- to 21-year-olds — is the biggest single source of stress among young people. Perhaps that's not surprising, given the pressures in an increasingly competitive marketplace for students to earn good grades, find good jobs and gain admission to good colleges.

But school is far from being the only culprit. Better than four in 10 young people also say they stress over money and feel a more general anxiety when thinking about their futures.

VOICES OF YOUNG PEOPLE: STRESS

Researchers asked young people how often they feel about stress.



PROMISE 4:

Effective Education for Marketable Skills and Lifelong Learning

Along with a healthy start, an effective education that builds skills for the 21st century job market is the core resource that has received a great deal of public attention in recent years.

That America is failing to keep this Promise to millions of its young people — as evidenced by high dropout rates and low academic test scores relative to students in other countries — is also widely recognized. The *National Promises Study* finds that only 39% of teens are receiving what we consider to be an effective education. Approximately 80% of younger children receive this resource. In a competitive global economy in which a high school degree is no longer a reliable ticket to a good job, a nation that fails to graduate approximately one-fourth of its young people even from high school is clearly a nation at risk.

The *National Promises Study* finds some bright spots. For example, 81% of teenagers and 91% of 6- to 11-year-olds are learning to use technology effectively in school. Two-thirds of teenagers find their schoolwork to be relevant and motivating. Unfortunately, large numbers of young people are not receiving the preparation they need and want:

KEY INDICATORS | EFFECTIVE EDUCATION	
These nine indicators provide a gauge as to whether young people are experiencing an effective education for marketable skills and lifelong learning.	• **Positive school climate (only 12- to 17-year-olds surveyed)** • **School culture emphasizes academic achievement** • **Learning to use technology effectively** • **Youth/child reading for pleasure** • **Friends value being a good student (12-17)** • **School perceived as relevant and motivating (12-17)** • **Parents actively involved with child's education** • **Adult sources of guidance about schooling and careers (12-17)** • **Opportunities to learn social/emotional skills (12-17)**

> More than 40% of parents of younger children and 66% of adolescents say their schools do not emphasize academic achievement.

> Less than half of adolescents read for pleasure.

> Almost 40% of adolescents do not have parents involved in their education.

The bottom line is simple and troubling: We are failing to keep America's Promise to our children. Instead, we are setting them up for an uncertain or unpromising future.

By and large, children say they want to attend schools that challenge them to succeed academically and achieve their potential. The *Voices Study* found that young people want:

- more preparation for the real world;
- more opportunities to see people work in the real world;
- more choices about the classes they can take;
- smaller classes;
- more adults taking a personal interest in students; and
- more interesting subjects.

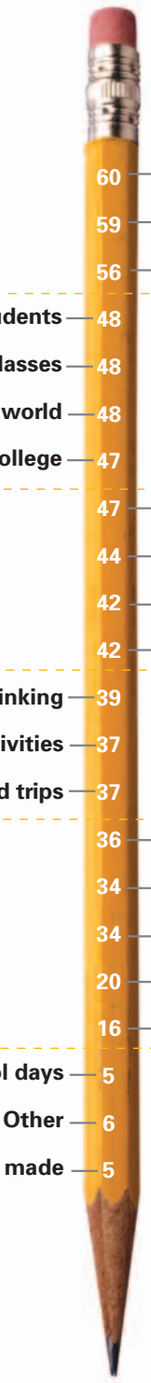
It would be a mistake to focus only on the performance of our schools and teachers. As with all of the Five Promises, effective education must occur across a broad range of contexts in children's lives, not just their schools, such as:

- having more caring adults as mentors and tutors;
- having more safe places to engage them after school; and
- receiving the health guidance and knowledge that help them avoid drugs or become parents while in school.

Addressing dropout rates and low educational achievement means addressing the whole child.

VOICES OF YOUNG PEOPLE: EFFECTIVE EDUCATION

Researchers asked 10- to 21-year-olds: "What are the most important changes you think should be made to schools to give students what they need to succeed in life?" The chart below shows the percentages for each response.



More preparation for the real world	60
More choices about classes they can take	59
More interesting subjects	56
More adults taking a personal interest in students	48
Smaller classes	48
More opportunities to see people work in real world	48
Better information on getting into college	47
Better teachers	47
More discipline of students who misbehave	44
Less fighting and violence	42
Help paying for school clubs, teams and activities	42
Fewer drugs and drinking	39
More clubs and activities	37
More field trips	37
More interactions with adults (outside of class)	36
More challenging subjects	34
More ability to choose a school	34
Shorter school days	20
More classes taught online	16
Longer school days	5
Other	6
Nothing, no changes need to be made	5

PROMISE 5:

Opportunities to Make a Difference Through Helping Others

The overwhelming number of young people (94%) surveyed for the *Voices Study* said they want to be involved in making the world a better place.

However, far too many American young people lack adequate access to such opportunities. According to the *National Promises Study*, nearly half of our children ages 6 to 17 lack the activities and role models that we regard as opportunities to make a difference through helping others.

KEY INDICATORS | OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP OTHERS	
These five indicators provide a gauge as to whether young people are experiencing opportunities to make a difference through helping others.	• **Adult models of volunteering, including parents** • **Peer models of volunteering (only 12- to 17-year-olds surveyed)** • **Parent civic engagement** • **Family conversations about current events** • **Youth given useful roles in schools and communities**

The findings of the *National Promises Study* suggest that leadership by example on the part of adults, particularly parents, could pay dividends in the form of youth with stronger civic engagement:

> One-third of young people say they lack adult role models who volunteer and help others.

> Forty percent of parents of children ages 6 to 17 say they vote only some of the time.

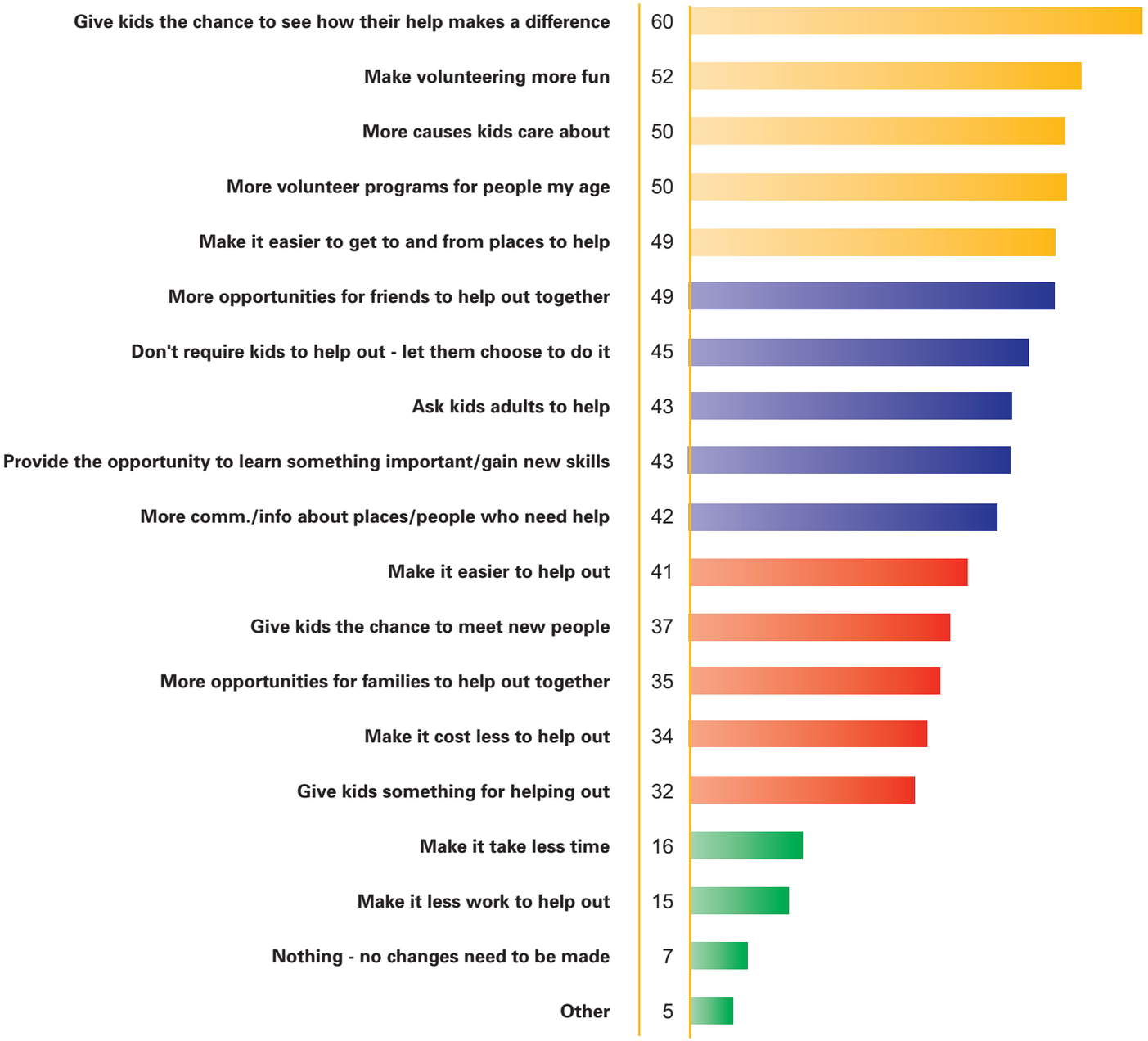
> Half of the parents of young people ages 6 to 17 report that they rarely discuss current events with their children.

> Young people may be getting more support for volunteering from friends, schools and religious congregations; 80% of teenagers say that they have friends who volunteer and that they have been asked to perform some community service by their schools or congregations.

> More than 80% of 6- to 17-year-olds are given useful roles and responsibilities in their communities.

VOICES OF YOUNG PEOPLE: OPPORTUNITIES TO HELP OTHERS

Researchers asked 10- to 21-year-olds: "What are the most important changes that should be made to society to make helping out more appealing to you and people your age?" The chart below shows the percentages for each response.



Half of the parents of young people ages 6 to 17 report that they rarely discuss current events with their children.

While this last finding is positive news, experiencing one or two indicators is not enough to meet the standards for having this Promise. The bottom line is that barely half of 6- to 17-year-olds have sufficient opportunities to make a difference by helping others.

Through the *Voices Study*, young people themselves provided valuable insight into this shortcoming, along with suggestions on how to increase their involvement in community service and other forms of civic engagement.

For example:

- More than 50% say that volunteer opportunities should be designed to offer more fun.
- Almost half would like more opportunities to be involved in volunteer work alongside their friends.
- Sixty percent would like to be shown more concretely how their volunteer efforts better the lives of others.

Dividing Lines: Haves and Have-Nots

All too often, the circumstances into which children are born define their access to resources, including the Five Promises that are the foundational blocks of success. The widely unequal distribution of these resources in our society produces an all-too-familiar picture of haves and have-nots. These differences also separate many young people along the all-too-familiar lines of income and race.

Income/Education

- Six- to 17-year-olds from high-income families (earning more than $100,000 per year) are twice as likely to have four or more of the Five Promises than children from low-income families (earning less than $30,000 per year).

- Twelve- to 17-year-olds whose mothers are college graduates are approximately 60% more likely than those whose mothers have less education to experience four or five of the Promises. In addition, 6- to 11-year-olds whose mothers are college graduates are nearly 75% more likely to experience four or five of the Promises.

- Almost 80% of 12- to 17-year-olds from high-income families have caring adults in their lives. That's almost 10 percentage points higher than children from low-income households.

- Less than 30% of teenagers and 20% of younger children in low-income families have safe places that engage them in constructive use of time. But, among those from higher-income families, half of teenagers and 46% of younger children experience this Promise.

- More than half of children from high-income families receive a healthy start and healthy development. But only 40% of children from lower-income homes experience this critical developmental resource.

The widely unequal distribution of the Five Promises in our society produces an all-too-familiar picture of haves and have-nots.

> Nearly half of adolescents from high-income families receive an effective education, compared to only one-third of those from low-income families.

> Approximately two-thirds of children in high-income families or families in which the mother has a college degree have opportunities to make a difference, compared to about two-fifths of those from low-income families or those in families in which the mother has a high school education or less.

Race

> On average, white children have an almost 50% greater chance of receiving four or more of the key developmental resources than Hispanic and African-American children.

> Whereas two-fifths of white 6- to 17-year-olds experience safe places, less than one-fourth of African Americans and just over one-fourth of Hispanics experience this Promise.

> The percentage of young people from the *Voices Study* who say they "wish they had more adults they could turn to when they need help" is significantly higher among African Americans (53%) than among whites (38%). Hispanic youth (45%) felt least comfortable seeking advice from adults.

> Nearly 60% of white 6- to 17-year-olds experience opportunities to make a difference by helping others, compared to over two-fifths of Hispanics and half of African Americans.

> Among 6- to 11-year-olds, approximately 80% of white and Hispanic children experience an effective education, compared to 70% of African-American children. Among 12- to 17-year-olds, white children (42%) experience this Promise at a higher rate than African-American (34%) and Hispanic (35%) children.

> Among 6- to 11-year-olds, whites (52%) are more likely than African-American (48%) and Hispanic children (42%) to receive what qualifies as a healthy start and healthy development.

Looking for Help, Losing Hope

In contrast to the common stereotype of young people as slackers and XBox-obsessed couch potatoes, our research found that the can-do spirit is alive and well in this country.

Despite the pressures and challenges they face, young people overwhelmingly say they believe in the dream of success through hard work.

Ninety-three percent of the 8- to 21-year-olds we surveyed said they have goals and dreams. Their primary definition of success is "having a good job." They recognize that hard work is a prerequisite for realizing their aspirations.

The willingness to work hard in pursuit of their goals was reflected in the responses of young people throughout the *Voices Study*. They indicated that they want more academic rigor, not less. They want more opportunities to experience the world of work before they enter it as adults. They want more opportunities to make healthy food choices. And they want more and better-designed service opportunities.

In all of these areas, they are asking for more support that only adults can provide. Unfortunately, in one of the most significant findings of the *Voices Study*, young people recognize what the research from the *National Promises Study* bears out: They are not receiving enough of the Five Promises they need to feel confident of future success.

Almost 70% of young people surveyed in the *Voices Study* say they wish they had more opportunities to reach their goals. More than 40% do not expect to achieve them.

Clearly, this loss of hopes and dreams has broad and profound policy implications for a nation that aspires to leave no child behind. Their dreams remain strong. But young people, especially teens, are asking for more help to make them a reality.

Despite the pressures and challenges they face, young people overwhelmingly say they believe in the dream of success through hard work.

VOICES OF YOUNG PEOPLE: WHAT DOES SUCCESS MEAN?

Researchers asked 10- to 21-year-olds: "What does success mean to you?" The chart below shows the percentages for each response.

The Economic Case for Investing in Young People

The third major research component of *Every Child, Every Promise* is *Investing in Our Young People* by Nobel Prize-winning economist James Heckman and his University of Chicago colleague Flavio Cunha.

The bottom-line conclusion: Invest early in children — and don't stop.

Heckman and Cunha found that, when investments are balanced throughout a young person's childhood — instead of concentrated only on a particular stage, such as preschool or adolescence — society reaps the greatest return:

- High school graduation and college attendance rates rise dramatically among those young people generally regarded as most "at risk."
- Welfare dependency and involvement with the criminal justice system decrease dramatically.
- Economic benefits to society grow. Economic costs to society decrease.

Just as compounded interest over time makes for exponentially larger returns on monetary investments, the research by Heckman and Cunha suggests that steady human capital investments in young people pay the greatest dividends. Learning begets learning. Skills beget more skills. The cumulative result becomes greater than the sum of the individual investments.

WHAT "INVESTING" IN CHILDREN MEANS

Heckman and Cunha define "investments" in children much more broadly than expenditures of dollars in schools and learning programs. To be sure, say Heckman and Cunha, providing cost-effective programs — especially to the most underserved and under-equipped among our young people — are important components of an overall strategy. But for all children, the most basic and crucial investments are those contributed by families: reading to young children; encouragement and help with schoolwork; involvement with activities; and setting good examples through civic engagement and healthy lifestyle choices. Heckman and Cunha's analyses consider this full range of such investments in young people.

WHY CUMULATIVE INVESTMENTS YIELD COMPOUNDED RETURNS

Recent research (including work by Heckman, Cunha and others) shows that both cognitive and non-cognitive abilities (such as persistence, reliability and self-discipline) make important contributions to success in school and later in life.[xxxiii] Both genes and environment — nature and nurture — are involved, with nonschool environments, such as the family, playing an especially important role.

While we know that the skills associated with cognitive learning form in early childhood, non-cognitive skills blossom in children when they reach their early teens.[xxxiv] These skills are as critical as their cognitive counterparts to success in school and the working world. Because cognitive and non-cognitive skills contribute to higher achievement, the research suggests that investments during both times of life are important.

Investments also accumulate over time. Thus, skills at a later stage build on the skills of a previous stage, which leads to more productive overall investments.

From the literature on childhood development, we also know, as Heckman and Cunha argue in their study, that building cognitive and non-cognitive skills is a process that occurs throughout a child's development. Investing at each stage of a child's development (such as during early childhood, middle childhood and adolescence) helps build skills at that particular stage. The skills developed at a particular stage will then persist into future stages of development.

Investments also accumulate over time. Thus, skills at a later stage build on the skills of a previous stage, which leads to more productive overall investments. Heckman and Cunha refer to these phenomena as self-productivity (skills persisting into future stages) and complementarity (skills building off of previous skills and thus investments being more productive if they are preceded by investments).

Because later skills build off of previous skills, Heckman and Cunha theorize that continued investments at all stages of a child's development will pay greater dividends than those that are concentrated on discrete periods; for example, investments made only during early childhood will be less productive than investments started in early childhood and continued throughout middle childhood and adolescence.

What should be a moral imperative for Americans is now also an economic necessity

WHAT'S AT STAKE FOR AMERICA

Beyond informing our approaches to equipping young people with the essential resources to succeed, this new research also holds important implications for American competitiveness in a global economy. Given the returns to society, the research suggests that the compounded effects of consistent, cost-effective investments in children and youth pay for themselves and are a necessary strategy to keep America strong in a competitive world where human capital is at a premium.

As Thomas Friedman has observed in *The World is Flat*,[xxxv] we live in a world that has, indeed, gone "flat." One characteristic of this new, wired world is that companies with the requisite human capital resources can do business from almost anywhere. Many highly educated, Western-trained, foreign-born workers who once would have remained in the United States after completing their educations are returning to their home countries. As a consequence, Friedman says, America can no longer count on importing the talent it needs to maintain a dominant position in the global economy. As the number of jobs requiring only a high school education shrinks, we must cultivate more 21st century workforce skills domestically. In such an environment, we can ill afford to allow any of our young people to reach adulthood without all of the resources they need to compete.

In this we find an alignment of purposes: What should be a moral imperative for Americans is now also an economic necessity.

Why Early Childhood Investment Is Not Enough

An impressive body of earlier research has shown that early investments in children ages 0 to 5 can make a big difference.

> According *to From Neurons to Neighborhoods*, providing safe, nurturing environments for children from birth to age 5 is critical to their development.[xxxvi]

> The well-known study of the Perry Preschool Program in Ypsilanti, Mich., followed children from disadvantaged backgrounds. Those who participated in that program earned higher incomes and committed fewer crimes as adults than others from similar backgrounds who were not enrolled in the program. The 40-year follow-up study calculated that the Perry Program yielded a return to society of $13 for every dollar spent.[xxxvii]

> Dr. Art Rolnick, vice president for research at the Minneapolis Federal Reserve Bank, used the Perry Preschool data to show that such programs benefit not only individual children, but also are sound business investments. He calculated that these investments earn a 16% long-term return on each dollar invested in children — compared to a 7% return on the stock market.[xxxviii]

> A 2006 Brookings Institution study, led by senior scholars Isabel Sawhill and William Dickens, estimated that high-quality universal preschool for all children, modeled after the comprehensive Carolina Abcederian Project, could contribute as much as $2 trillion to the nation's annual GDP by 2080.[xxxix]

> Research by Dr. David Olds of the University of Colorado supports the power of investing even before a child is born. Olds found that prenatal care and home-based early child care aimed at influencing parents' behavior, such as his Nurse-Family Partnership program, lead to better outcomes for their children.[xl]

> The Chicago Child-Parent Study suggested that cost-effective intervention in early childhood through age 9 leads to higher high school graduation rates, more years of education, and fewer dropouts, violent crimes and arrests.[xli]

As important as investments in early childhood are in laying the foundation for intellectual and social development, they do not yield optimal returns by themselves.

"Early investments … not followed up by later investments are not productive," state Heckman and Cunha.

Their conclusion builds on some of the findings of other research showing the impact of later investments:

- According to an evaluation of the Head Start program by UCLA's Janet Currie and her colleagues, children who went on to attend low-performing schools lost much of what they had gained from participating in Head Start.[xlii]

- Dr. William Brown and colleagues at Claremont McKenna College found that investing in substantive, comprehensive after-school activities for first- to ninth-graders in California not only strengthened the children's academic and social skills, it was also economically efficient.[xliii]

- A study by Dr. Steven Aos from the Washington State Public Policy Institute reinforces the above findings. Aos concluded that various programs aimed at younger children and older youth are economically efficient and effective at promoting the cognitive and social skills that children need in order to become productive citizens.[xliv]

Building on all of this earlier work, Heckman and Cunha set out to extend research into this area much further. They broke new ground by calculating the benefits of sustained investment across a variety of points along the arc of the childhood years. Then they compared those measurements with investments in skill-building that involve less continuity.

"Early investments ... not followed up by later investments are not productive," state Heckman and Cunha.

How Sustained Investment Yields Better Results for Children and the U.S. Economy

Recognizing that investments in disadvantaged populations offer the opportunities for the most dramatic improvements, Heckman and Cunha examined a population of boys — children of disadvantaged girls who were part of a federal longitudinal study begun in 1979.

The researchers simulated the effects of different investment strategies to project developmental outcomes for these children. The investment strategies included:

1 | early childhood investments similar to those in the Perry Preschool study;

2 | early childhood investment combined with investment during adolescence; and

3 | a balanced investment strategy throughout childhood, including early childhood, middle childhood and adolescence.

The results were striking.

With no additional investments, Heckman and Cunha estimated an unpromising future for these children:

> Only 41% would graduate from high school;

> Less than 5% would enroll in college;

> More than 40% would wind up convicted of crimes or on probation; and

> Nearly 20% would receive welfare benefits.

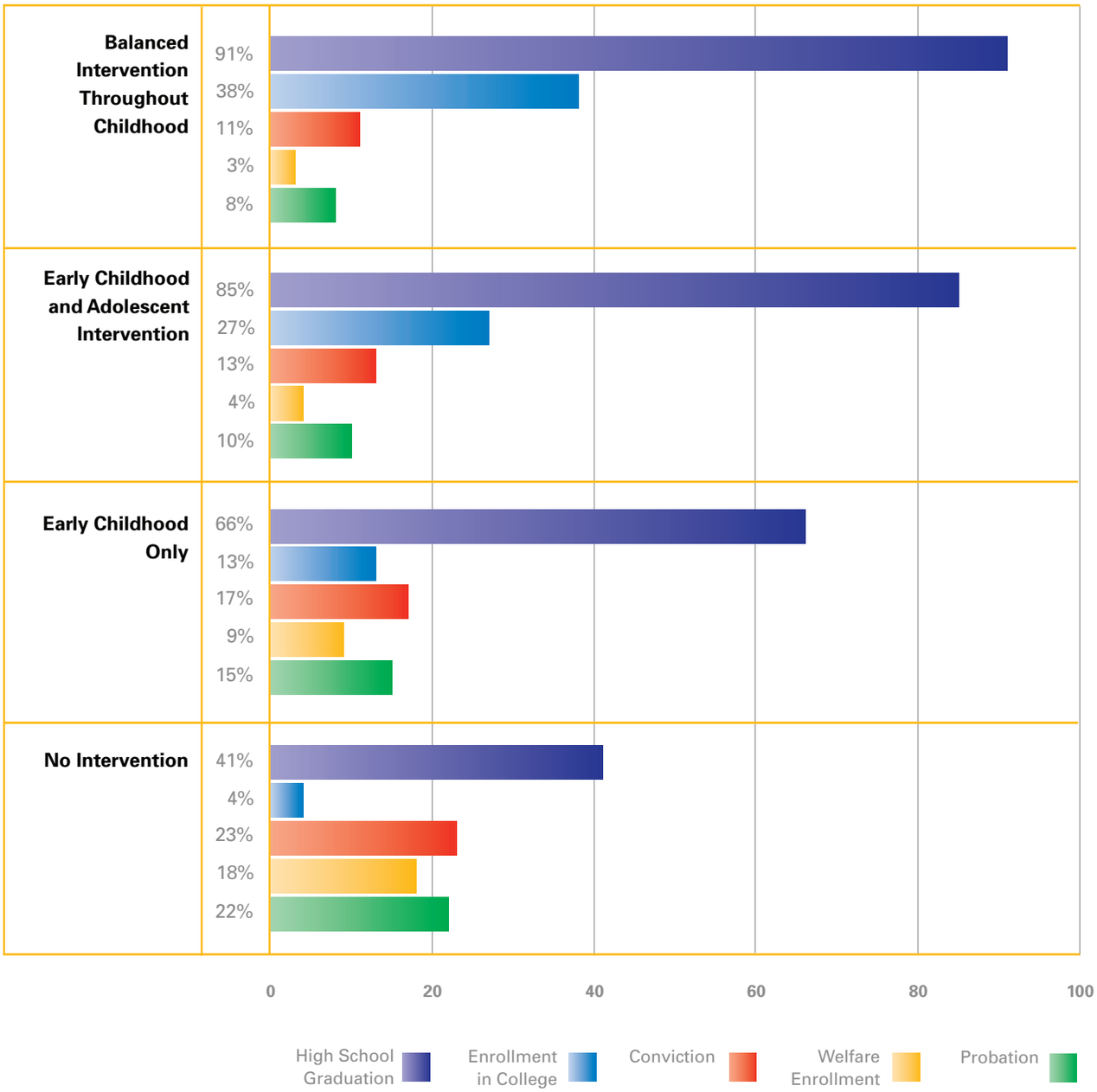
When Heckman and Cunha simulated the effects of receiving a comprehensive preschool program, high school graduation rates for this population of boys jumped to 66%. College enrollment nearly tripled. Welfare dependency fell by almost half. Convictions and probations declined markedly.

When these children received skill-building investments during their adolescent years on top of the preschool investments, graduation rates rose to nearly 85%, and college enrollment shot up to more than 27%. Welfare dependency again fell by half.

When Heckman and Cunha simulated the effects of receiving balanced investments throughout childhood, high school graduation rates for this population of boys jumped to 91%.

CHANGING THE ODDS OF SUCCESS: AN ECONOMETRIC MODEL

Drawing from available data, Heckman and Cunha simulated the effects of compounding the benefits of investments (interventions) in young people throughout their preschool, middle childhood and adolescent years. They found dramatic improvements in high school graduation and college enrollment among young people considered most "at risk," along with corresponding declines in convictions, probations and welfare enrollment.



Finally, Heckman and Cunha examined outcomes when these young people enjoyed balanced investments throughout their childhoods. They found that:

- More than 90% would graduate from high school;
- Nearly 40% would attend college;
- Only 10% would be convicted of crimes;
- Just over 8% would receive probations; and
- Only 2% would be on welfare.

When considered in conjunction with other research, the benefits of investing in young people — and the costs of failing to invest adequately — have enormous implications for our national economy:

- According to an analysis by Princeton economist Cecilia Rouse, the reduced earnings caused by high school dropouts who are now between 20 and 67 years old mean the U.S. Treasury and state governments take in $50 billion less in income taxes each year than they would otherwise.[xlv]
- Dr. Rouse also found that households headed by 20- to 67-year-old high school dropouts paid $3 billion less in property taxes than did the homes headed by high school graduates.[xlvi]
- According to one estimate by Dr. Jane Waldfogel and colleagues at Columbia University, if all single mothers who did not finish high school had the opportunity to go back and earn their degrees, government would pay $7.9 billion to $10.8 billion less each year in public assistance programs.[xlvii]
- Each young person who fails to finish high school and goes on to a life of crime costs the nation between $1.7 and $2.3 million.[xlviii]
- A 1% increase in high school graduation rates would yield $1.8 billion in social benefits and reduce the number of crimes nationwide by 94,000.[xlix]

The Way Forward: Six Key Implications of Every Child, Every Promise

1. **CONSIDER THE WHOLE CHILD.**
   As the *National Promises Study* suggests, we can't afford to view children's lives in silos. Children are the products of all of the environments — homes, schools, neighborhoods, communities — in which they live. Each of these influences is mutually reinforcing; that's why the Five Promises must work in concert to stack the odds in favor of success. Children need inputs from a variety of sources. Therefore, addressing their multiple needs does not mean improving schools alone, nor does it mean only investing in supports that help parents prepare their children more effectively. For example, education reform must involve more than schools. We need "whole child reform" involving the whole of childhood.

2. **INVOLVE ALL SECTORS OF SOCIETY.**
   Because children need positive influences from a variety of people and situations, many more adults besides parents and teachers have important roles to play in equipping young people for success. The most effective way to ensure that children receive all of the Five Promises is to engage multiple sectors — business, nonprofits, communities, policy-makers, the faith community, educators, parents and young people themselves. Moreover, the research suggests that these groups should work collaboratively so that each "investment" in a child is reinforced and compounded.

3. **INVEST EARLY AND DON'T STOP.**
   Spreading our investments in children over time produces the biggest dividends. Sustained investments build on previous ones in ways that compound their benefits and lead to young people who are better prepared for the challenges of a global economy, whereas people with only a high school education or less have increasingly limited opportunities. Early investment is more effective and less expensive than remedial efforts in adolescence or adulthood. More effective still are investments across the entire arc of childhood and adolescence.

Put another way, if you had $1 million to invest in the future of children, you would diminish your return if you concentrated your investment entirely on preschool programs. Similarly, saving your money to devote later to after-school activities or initiatives focused on teens would prevent you from reaping the compounded benefits of steady investing. Only a sustained investment across the first two decades of life gives us the most bang for our buck when it comes to young people.

4. **STRENGTHEN OUR ECONOMY THROUGH OUR YOUNG PEOPLE.**
Heckman and Cunha build a case that balanced investment in young people delivers strong returns in the form of higher rates of high school graduation and college attendance and lower rates of crime. Those improvements, as other research demonstrates, in turn add more dollars and productive citizens to our economy, while reducing costs to taxpayers in other areas.

5. **VIEW INVESTMENTS AS MORE THAN PROGRAMS — WITHOUT MINIMIZING THEIR ROLE.**
Investing in our young people is more than an education issue or a matter of seeing that all children have health insurance coverage. Our research affirms that children need inputs that must come from a variety of sources, beginning with parents, and that take a variety of forms. More effective programs and schools alone will not ensure that every child receives every Promise. At the same time, cost-effective, targeted programs may offer the best strategy for mitigating the risk factors otherwise working against children placed at major disadvantages.

6. **FOCUS ATTENTION ON THE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO ARE MOST UNDERSERVED.**
Heckman and Cunha conclude that disadvantaged children who are considered most at risk are also those who show the greatest gains when they receive investments that build skills for success. As a result, investments in these children produce the greatest return for our society, in the form of higher tax contributions and reductions of the direct and indirect costs associated with school dropouts, crime, drug abuse and public assistance programs.

Conclusion

During the depth of the Great Depression, Franklin Roosevelt declared that it was unacceptable for one-third of a nation to be out of work and losing hope.

Today, two-thirds of our nation's young people risk losing hope because they do not have enough of the essential resources they need to be confident of succeeding in life. That, too, is unacceptable.

Forty percent of young people themselves say they doubt they will be able to realize their dreams. And 70% say they need more help.

In America today, almost seven decades after the end of the Great Depression, 34 million school-age children go to bed each night with little hope for a bright future. They are increasingly pessimistic about their chances of success — and the overall shortage of developmental resources in their lives suggests that their pessimism is not misplaced. Close to one-fifth of them have received so few of these resources that their chances of success are slim.

Children who have been most at risk in the past — whether because of their skin color, family income or family education — remain most at risk today. Disparities in resources based on these factors are thwarting the chances of millions of young people to realize their dreams — and preventing America from living up to the promise of equal opportunity.

As it was during the Depression, we as a nation must declare that it is unacceptable for so many of our people — young people, in this case — to lack so many foundational resources needed to succeed.

This failure to adequately equip enough young people carries great risks for all Americans in a world that has gone "flat" and become increasingly competitive. We owe it not only to children and youth to keep America's Promise, we owe it to ourselves.

Fortunately, we know what works.

We know that addressing children's needs holistically — providing not only effective education, but also caring adults, safe places, a healthy start and development, and opportunities to make a difference by helping others — is essential to broad, lasting improvement.

We know that sustained investments in skill building by parents, schools and communities throughout childhood deliver the largest return to society.

We know that we will achieve the greatest gains by targeting the youth who are most underserved today.

We know that when young people experience roughly equal levels of these resources in their lives, they enjoy similar levels of success, regardless of race, gender, income, or the educational background of their parents.

We know that providing the resources children and youth need will require the efforts of all sectors of our nation: business, government, communities, nonprofits, educators and parents. Young people themselves, who strongly indicate they want to be part of the solution, may be the most underutilized resource we can energize.

Finally, we know we can do far better as a nation. The 15 million young people who are today well-equipped with the Five Promises are proof. Now it is time to ensure that their good fortune is not simply the luck of some, but the inheritance for all of America's young people. Providing that inheritance will pay dividends in the form of children who are fully prepared for life and who are equipped to lead a stronger America at home and in the world.

Having the will and the wisdom to keep the promise to our young people is up to us.

NOTES

[i] U.S. Department of Education. (2006). *The Averaged Freshman Graduation Rate for Public High Schools from the Common Core of Data.* NCES 2006–601. Washington, DC: National Center for Education Statistics. Accessed at: http://nces.ed.gov; Greene, Jay P. and Marcus Winters (2005). *Public High School Graduation and College-Readiness Rates: 1991-2002.* New York: Manhattan Institute for Policy Research; Editorial Projects in Education Research Center (2006). *Diplomas Count.* Bethesda, MD: Editorial Projects in Education. Note: The reader should note the above references provide rough estimates of the on-time graduation rate in America; that is, those incoming freshmen who graduate four years later. A precise estimate of the nation's graduation rate is currently not available. For a comprehensive discussion of this issue, we refer the reader to the U.S. Department of Education's National Center of Education Statistics' *User's Guide to Computing High School Graduation Rates, Volume 2: Technical Evaluation of Proxy Graduation Indicators.* Available online at: http://nces.ed.gov/pubsearch/pubsinfo.asp?pubid=2006605.

[ii] Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). *2003 Math Exam Series for 15-Year-Old Students.* Sponsored by the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). Data available online at: http://www.pisa.oecd.org.

[iii] Perie, M.; W. Grigg, and G. Dion, (2005). *The Nation's Report Card: Mathematics 2005* (NCES 2006–453). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Available online at: http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/main2005/2006453.pdf; Perie, M.; W. Grigg and P. Donahue (2005). *The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2005* (NCES 2006–451). U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Available online at: http://nces.ed.gov/nationsreportcard/pdf/main2005/2006451.pdf.

[iv] National Center for Health Statistics (2005). *Health United States, 2005 with Chartbook on Trends in the Health of Americans.* Hyattsville, MD: National Center for Health Statistics. Table 69. See http://www.cdc.gov/nchs/data/hus/tables/2005/05hus069.pdf. Data for 1999-2002 from Hedley, Allison; Cynthia Ogden; Clifford Johnson; Margaret Carroll; Lester Curtin and Katherine Flegal. Prevalence of Overweight and Obesity Among US Children, Adolescents, and Adults, 1999-2002. *Journal of the American Medical Association 291* (23): 2847-2850.

[v] Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report: Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance – United States, 2005.* Surveillance Summaries, June 9, 2006. MMWR 2006; 55 (No. SS-5), 10. Available online at: http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/SS/SS5505.pdf.

[vi] Catalano, Shannon M. (2004). *Criminal Victimization, 2004* (NCJ 210674). Washington, DC: U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics, Table 6. Accessed at: http://www.ojp.usdoj.gov/bjs/abstract/cv04.htm.

[vii] Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2006.* Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics, Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office. Available online at: http://www.childstats.gov. This annual report provides information on 25 Federal indicators on important aspects of children's lives.

[viii] Annie E. Casey Foundation (2006). *Kids Count Data Book.* Baltimore, MD: Annie E. Casey Foundation. Available online at: http://www.kidscount.org. *Kids Count* provides national and state-level data on 10 key indicators of child well-being to assess how states have advanced or regressed over time.

[ix] Scales, Peter C.; Peter L. Benson; Karen Bartig; Katherine Streit; Kristin A. Moore; Laura Lippman; Brett Brown and Christina Theokas (2006). *Keeping America's Promises to Children and Youth: A Search Institute-Child Trends Report on the Results of the America's Promise National Telephone Polls of Children, Teenagers, and Parents.* Minneapolis, MN: Search Institute. The full report is available at: http://www.americaspromise.org.

[x] Poris, Michelle and George Carey (2006). *The America's Promise Report to the Nation Voices Study: Research Findings.* Stamford, CT: Just Kid, Inc. The full report is available at: http://www.americaspromise.org.

[xi] Cunha, Flavio and James J. Heckman (2006). *Investing in Our Young People.* Report prepared for America's Promise – The Alliance for Youth. Chicago: University of Chicago. The full report is available at: http://www.americaspromise.org.

[xii] For more information about the NLSY79, visit http://www.bls.gov/nls/nlsy79.htm.

[xiii] For example, see: Benson, P.L.; P.C. Scales; S.F. Hamilton and A. Sesma, Jr. (2006). Positive Youth Development: Theory, Research, and Applications. In W. Damon and R.M. Learner (Eds.), *Handbook of Child Psychology* (6th ed., Vol 1, Theoretical Models of Human Development) (pp. 894-941). New York: John Wiley; Hawkins, J.D.; R.F. Catalano and J.Y. Miller (1992). Risk and Protective Factors for Alcohol and Other Drug Problems in Adolescence and Early Adulthood: Implications for Substance Abuse Prevention. *Psychological Bulletin*, 112, 64-105; Masten, A.S. (2001). Ordinary Magic: Resilience Processes in Development. *American Psychologist*, 56: 227-238; Moore, K.A. and J.F. Zaff (2003). Building a Better Teenager: A Summary of "What Works" in Adolescent Development. In Child Trends, *American Teens: A Special Look at "What Works" in Adolescent Development* (pp. 9-13). Washington, DC: Child Trends; National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002). *Community Programs to Promote Youth Development.* Committee on Community-Level Programs for Youth. Jacquelynne Eccles and Jennifer A. Gootman, eds. Board on Children, Youth, and Families, Division of Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education. Washington, DC: National Academy Press; Werner, E.E. (1993). Risk, Resilience, and Recovery - Perspectives from the Kauai Longitudinal Study. *Development and Psychopathology*, Fall, 5: 503-515.

[xiv] U.S. Department of Education. (2006); Greene, Jay P. and Marcus Winters (2005); Editorial Projects in Education Research Center (2006). For more information, see note i above.

[xv] Program for International Student Assessment (PISA). *2003 Math Exam Series for 15-Year-Old Students.*

[xvi] Perie, M.; W. Grigg and G. Dion. (2005). *The Nation's Report Card: Mathematics 2005* (NCES 2006–453); Perie, M.; W. Grigg and P. Donahue (2005). *The Nation's Report Card: Reading 2005* (NCES 2006–451).

[xvii] National Center for Health Statistics (2003), Table 69.

[xviii] Catalano, Shannon M. (2004), Table 6.

[xix] Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics. *America's Children: Key National Indicators of Well-Being, 2006.*

[xx] Annie E. Casey Foundation (2006).

[xxi] For a review, see National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002).

[xxii] Scales, Peter C. et al. (2006).

[xxiii] Poris, Michelle and George Carey (2006).

[xxiv] Cunha, Flavio and James J. Heckman (2006).

[xxv] For more information about the NLSY79, visit http://www.bls.gov/nls/nlsy79.htm.

[xxvi] Benson, P.L.; P.C. Scales; S.F. Hamilton and A. Sesma, Jr. (2006).

[xxvii] Hawkins, J.; R. Catalano and J. Miller (1992), 64-105; Masten, A.S. (2001); Werner, E.E. (1993).

[xxviii] Moore, K.A. and J.F. Zaff (2003).

[xxix] National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002).

[xxx] According to Search Institute, young people with 31 or more out of 40 developmental assets consistently engage in fewer risk behaviors and have more indicators of thriving (such as doing well in school, helping others and overcoming adversity) than young people with fewer assets.

[xxxi] National Research Council and Institute of Medicine (2002).

[xxxii] Other studies have shown that, when adults are present in children's lives, the relationships all too often lack the depth to have a meaningful effect. For examples, see Scales, Peter C.; Peter L. Benson; Marc Mannes; Nicole R. Hintz; Eugene C. Roehlkepartain and Theresa K. Sullivan (2003). *Other People's Kids: Social Expectations and American Adults' Involvement with Children and Adolescents.* New York: Kluwer/Plenum.

[xxxiii] For a review, see National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine (2000). *From Neurons to Neighborhoods: The Science of Early Childhood Development.* Washington, DC: National Academy Press.

[xxxiv] Ibid.

[xxxv] Friedman, Thomas. (2005) *The World is Flat: A Brief History of the Twenty-First Century.* New York: Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

[xxxvi] National Research Council and the Institute of Medicine (2000).

[xxxvii] Schweinhart, L.J.; J. Montie; Z. Xiang; W.S. Barnett; C.R. Belfield and M. Nores (2006). *Lifetime Effects: The High/Scope Perry Preschool Study Through Age 40.* Ypsilanti, MI: High/Scope Educational Research Foundation.

[xxxviii] Rolnick, A., and R. Grunewald (2003). Early Childhood Development: Economic Development With a High Public Return. *The Fed Gazette.* Minneapolis Federal Reserve. For the report, go to: http://www.minneapolisfed.org/pubs/fedgaz/03-03/earlychild.cfm.

[xxxix] Dickens, William T.; Isabel V. Sawhill and Jeffrey Tebbs (2006) *The Effects of Investing in Early Education on Economic Growth.* Abstract, The Brookings Institution.

[xl] Olds, D.L.; C.R. Henderson, Jr.; H.J. Klitzman; J.J. Eckenrode; R.E. Cole and R.C. Tatelbaum (1999). Prenatal & Infancy Home Visitation by Nurses: Recent Findings, *The Future of Children, Home Visiting: Recent Program Evaluations*, Vol. 9, No. 1. Available online at: http://www.futureofchildren.org/usr_doc/vol9no1Art3.pdf.

[xli] Reynolds, A.J.; J.A. Temple; D.L. Robertson and E.A. Mann (2001). Long-term Effects of an Early Childhood Intervention on Educational Achievement and Juvenile Arrest: A 15-Year Follow-up of Low-Income Children in Public Schools. *Journal of the American Medical Association, 285*: 2339-2346.

[xlii] Currie, J., and D. Thomas (2000). School Quality and the Longer-Term Effects of Head Start. *Journal of Human Resources 35*: 755-774.

[xliii] Brown, W.O.; S.B. Frates; I.S. Rudge and R.L. Tradewell (2002). *The Costs and Benefits of After School Programs: The Estimated Effects of the After School Education and Safety Program Act of 2002.* Claremont, CA: The Rose Institute, Claremont McKenna College.

[xliv] Aos, Steven (2004). *Benefits and Costs of Prevention of Prevention and Early Intervention Programs for Youth.* Washington State Public Policy Institute. Available online at: http://www.wsipp.wa.gov/rptfiles/04-07-3901.pdf.

[xlv] Levin, H.M., ed. (2005). *The Social Costs of Inadequate Education.* The First Annual Teachers College Symposium on Educational Equity. The Campaign for Educational Equity. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University.

[xlvi] Ibid.

[xlvii] Ibid.

[xlviii] Cohen, M.A. (1998). The Monetary Value of Saving a High Risk Youth. *Journal of Quantitative Criminology, 14*: 5-33.

[xlix] Lochner, L.J. and E. Moretti (2004). The Effect of Education on Crime: Evidence from Prison Inmates, Arrests and Self-Reports. *American Economic Review,* Issue 1: 155-189.

AMERICA'S PROMISE ALLIANCE PARTNERS

Afterschool Alliance

American Association of School Administrators

American Society of Association Executives

Aspen Institute

Big Brothers Big Sisters of America

Boys & Girls Clubs of America

Brookings Institution

Business Roundtable

City Year

Civic Enterprises

Committee for Economic Development

Communities In Schools Inc.

ConnectMichigan Alliance

Corporation for National and Community Service

Ford Motor Company Fund

Forum for Youth Investment

Girl Scouts of the USA

Hands On Network

ING Foundation

Jobs for America's Graduates (JAG)

Junior Achievement Worldwide

MENTOR

National 4-H Council

National Association of Community Health Centers

National Association of Manufacturers

National Children's Museum

National Collaboration for Youth

National Governors Association

National Restaurant Association

Points of Light Foundation

Teach for America

The U.S. Conference of Mayors

U.S. Chamber of Commerce

United Way of America

Work, Achievement, Values & Education (WAVE)

YMCA of the USA

YouthBuild USA

Youth Service America

AMERICA'S PROMISE

THE ALLIANCE FOR YOUTH

www.americaspromise.org