

Global Business Leaders Support Early Childhood Development in the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals Report



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Secretary General of the United Nations Ban Ki-Moon




Executive Director of UNICEF Anthony Lake

As more than 120 business leaders with a vested interest in a skilled workforce and thriving customer base, we commend the increasing international recognition that the first five years of life are crucial in creating the productive adults our world needs. **We particularly applaud the attention to early childhood in the United Nations report *Transforming our World: The 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, specifically the new Target in Goal 4—Education:**

4.2 By 2030, ensure that all girls and boys have access to quality early childhood development, care and pre-primary education so that they are ready for primary education.

We also strongly support the special attention to early childhood in **Goal 2—Nutrition** and **Goal 3—Health**, illustrating the multi-faceted nature of development in the early years.

Overwhelming evidence shows that investments in effective early childhood services, including health, nutrition, education and parental supports, pay off in the short- and long-term. Those investments are key to creating the productive global citizenry our world needs. Research released in just the past few months has shown that:

-  As much as 20 percent of the achievement gap between high- and low-income children may be explained by differences in brain development (*Journal of the American Medical Association Pediatrics*).
-  In Chile, early education was associated with higher achievement in reading, math and social sciences in fourth grade (*Early Childhood Research Quarterly*).
-  Children with better social skills in kindergarten—skills that can be taught and developed in the early years—were more likely to pursue higher education and hold full-time jobs nearly two decades later. Children who lacked those skills were more likely to have negative outcomes as young adults such as lack of employment, receipt of public assistance, and participation in crime (*American Journal of Public Health*).

We celebrate this important development. We also ask that the UN and all countries provide the leadership and resources necessary to lay the foundation for the successful lives that will help every country prosper.

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ReadyNation is the preeminent business membership organization whose 1,300 executives take action at the community, company or policy levels to promote a stronger economy and workforce, through effective investments in children and youth.

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