

Survey: How Will Universal Pre-K (UPK) Impact Early Educators Who Aren't Based in Schools?

The following are findings from a November 2017 survey of 309 of Minnesota's 2,200 high quality Parent Aware-rated early education and care providers. The survey was sponsored by the nonprofit Close Gaps By 5 (www.closegapsby5.org), and is a voluntary online survey, not a random sample survey. The survey is focused on a universal pre-k (UPK) proposal that provides free part-day pre-k services at public schools for all 4-year olds for 2- to 3-hours per day, and is closed in the summer. The surveyed early educators currently provide early education to 4-year olds, as well as younger children.

Overwhelming Majorities Say UPK Will Cause Great Harm

- **74% say moving children from their current full-time programs to 2- to 3-hour per day school-based programs would be harmful to children's learning progress** (50% say "extremely harmful, 24% "somewhat harmful").
- **70% say the financial impact from UPK would cause them to "invest less in maintaining and improving the quality of my program"** (37% "strongly agree," 33% "somewhat agree")
- **80% say the financial impact of UPK could cause them to "fire or lay-off staff"** (57% "strongly agree," 22% "somewhat agree")
- **92% say free pre-k at schools would be financially harmful to their program** (74% say "extremely harmful," 18% "somewhat harmful")
- **77% say the financial impact of UPK could cause them to "go out of business"** (43% "strongly agree," 35% "somewhat agree")

Overwhelming Majorities Oppose the UPK Approach

- **91% say school district officials will be unlikely to share their pre-k funding with them, as state law allows but does not require** (73% say "very unlikely," 18% say "somewhat unlikely")
- **95% say "school-based programs should be required to earn a Parent Aware Rating as a condition for receiving Early Learning Scholarships, just as programs based outside of schools are currently required to do"** (88% "strongly agree," 7% "somewhat agree")
- **93% agree that "parents with publicly funded assistance should be able to choose from a variety of quality programs based in centers, homes, schools churches and nonprofit organizations"** (Note: Early Learning Scholarships offer parents such choices. UPK doesn't.) (79% "strongly agree," 14% "somewhat agree")
- **85% oppose universal pre-k** (71% "strongly oppose," 14% "somewhat oppose")

Who Participated In The Survey?

- 48% in 7-county Twin Cities metro area, 52% outside the metro area
- Based in homes (54%), centers (34%), religious organizations (6%), and nonprofit organization (6%)