

Supporting Families Pays Off

***Address to Policy and Business Leaders
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**Professor James Heckman
Nobel Laureate in Economics
The University of Chicago:**

The accident of birth is the greatest source of inequality in American society. How do families produce advantage and disadvantage across the generations? Genes are important, but genes are hardly the whole story. And we also know that it's not simply access to financial resources.

An overwhelming body of evidence suggests that parenting plays a crucial role. What parents do and do not to. How they interact with and supplement the lives of their family. And so I think what we have to do and recognize in our public policy is that to foster the skills of American children, we have to help America's families.

**David Pope
President
Village of Oak Park:**

We need to be really serious about making investments in the environments that kids are experiencing from birth to age five. And supporting those families, not supplanting families, but doing what we can to be able to help provide structural supports to allow children to be able to really achieve their best level of potential.

**Bridget Gainer
Director of Government Affairs
Aon Corporation:**

One of the things that has changed over the last, say, 25 years is that the institutions that people used to rely on for a social service safety net; churches, other social service agencies, tight-knit neighborhood, the way people commute to work, family structure. Those things, to a large degree, have changed and they haven't necessarily changed in a way that strengthens families. Of course the government has to set the example. They have to create an infrastructure around which private entities can be successful participants, but they can't do it alone. And quite frankly, the private sector is the one that is going to require the talented work force and if we don't engage in them in the beginning, there is even less engagement as they move down the spectrum.



Diana Sands

Vice President of Financial Planning and Investor Relations

The Boeing Company:

I'm a mother of two children myself - that the timeframe that we have is literally *snaps fingers* a second. It feels like it's a very short period of time that we have to actually work with the Early Childhood population and it leaves us very quickly. So I think the sense of urgency is critical. The timeframe we have to work within is small and that means we all have to feel that sense of urgency and take charge of this effort.