

Public Policy Memo

To: Washington State Legislature

From: Alison Smith

Subject: Lowering Compulsory Education Age from 8 to 5

Introduction

Washington State is the only state in the nation that does not require children to attend school until they are 8 years old. This policy is outdated and harmful to children's development. Studies have shown that children who start school later are more likely to drop out, have lower academic achievement, and earn lower incomes as adults. They are also more likely to engage in risky behaviors, such as substance abuse and crime.

Benefits of Changing the Compulsory Education Age

There are many benefits to changing the compulsory education age in Washington State from 8 to 5. These benefits include:

- Increased academic achievement: Studies have shown that children who start school earlier have higher academic achievement than those who start later. This is because they have more time to learn and develop the skills they need to succeed in school.
- Reduced dropout rates: Children who start school earlier are less likely to drop out. This is because they are more likely to be engaged in school and have a positive attitude towards learning.
- Higher future earnings: Adults who started school earlier earn higher incomes than those who started later.
- Reduced reliance on DSHS: Children who start school earlier are less likely to rely on DSHS services.
- Reduced incarceration rates: Adults who started school earlier are less likely to be incarcerated.

Conclusion

The evidence is clear that changing the compulsory education age in Washington State from 8 to 5 would have many benefits for children and the state as a whole. I urge you to pass legislation to make this change.

References

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