

The Telluride Standards

Long-term US economic strength and fiscal sustainability depends on our future workforce. Investing in children is a vital economic growth strategy and a priority of business, government and philanthropy. Private and public resources are limited and should be allocated based on evidence of effectiveness. To provide a framework for understanding and discussing how to allocate resources for investing in children, the Telluride Summit proposes the following principles.

1. **Maximizing the life success of every child in America is our highest priority.**
 - a. Every child has an equal right to achieve his or her full potential.
 - b. The earliest investments in a child's development appear to have the highest returns and have the greatest effect if support continues through adolescence.
 - c. Achieving full potential requires attending to a child's physical, emotional, cognitive and social capabilities; cultural diversity, and unique needs.
2. **Involvement of parents, family and other loving adults is crucial to a child's life success.**
 - a. For best development of the whole child, parents, families and other loving adults need to be involved, wherever possible, at every step.
 - b. There should be a variety of good options for obtaining high quality child development services.
 - c. Ending generational cycles of ineffective parenting is vitally important.
3. **Children are helped most and the economy is made strongest when resources are allocated on the best evidence of what will lead to positive child outcomes.**
 - a. Public and private funders should allocate resources (for children and for other purposes) based on rigorous evidence of effectiveness in improving outcomes whenever possible.
 - b. Policy officials, service providers, and parents should be accountable to each other and to the children and families they serve.
4. **Sound performance evaluations can ensure goals are attained.**
 - a. High quality child development programs need to have clear goals, rigorous evidence of likely success and draw on best practices -- when possible, proven practices should be relied upon to ensure benefits.
 - b. Ongoing performance evaluation, flexibility and continuing quality improvement should be built in at the beginning of program operation and funding design and continue throughout.
 - c. Evaluations should never be used to penalize children.
5. **Child development programs that use private and public incentives and are scalable will be stronger.**
 - a. Parent and family aspirations, and the incentives of for-profit, non-profit, and government health, nurturing and education providers, are powerful forces that can benefit every child and make the economy stronger.
 - b. Programs that can be replicated in other communities and expanded regionally or nationally are more desirable.
 - c. As programs are scaled up, they must not be watered down.