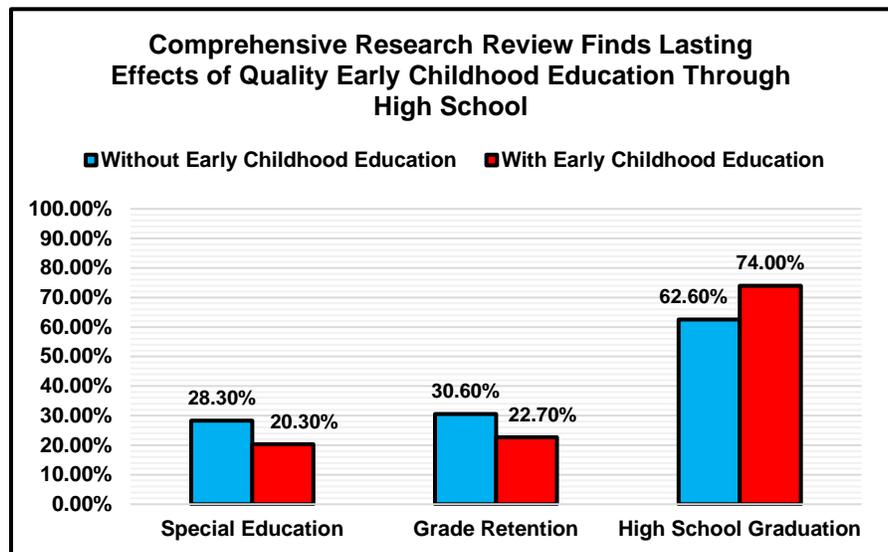


## HB 2449 – More Access to Quality Child Care

- Federal child care funds help some of our states most vulnerable children-including children in foster care, children of teen parents, and children of low-income working families- access safe, reliable child care. Families who count on this assistance have few options for high quality care and education.
- Federal law requires states to spend a certain percentage of their total Child Care funds (federal funds plus state funds) on services that improve quality in child care.
- The percentage of funds required for this purpose is increasing over several years.
- This bill would require that at least 33% of the quality dollars we spend go to a tiered system of reimbursement that provides higher payments to child care services that meet higher quality standards.
- For the current federal fiscal year, that would total \$4.9 million. Currently the Department of Economic Security allocates approximately \$2 million a year on a limited tiered reimbursement program. This bill would increase that investment so that more children can benefit from higher quality early education.
- These funds MUST be spent on Child Care Assistance and on quality improvement under federal law. They cannot be redirected to other programs or services.
- No children currently being served by the program would lose their services because of this bill. Rather, this would ensure that the increased cost of quality child care is not passed along to foster parents, teen parents and working families and bring us closer to compliance with the federal requirements on reimbursement rates for providers.

### Why Is Quality Childcare Important?

- When young children have healthy and enriching experiences they are more likely to be ready for kindergarten, and beyond.<sup>1</sup> This means one on one attention from teachers, parents and caregivers.
- Children with access to high quality early learning are less likely to need special education services or be held back a grade and more likely to graduate high school.



*American Educational Research Association, 2017*

<sup>1</sup> National Center for Education Statistics, ECLS, 2011