



Telluride Principles for Investing in Young Children

On September 23, 2008, over 150 business and civic leaders participating in the second annual Telluride Economic Summit on Early Childhood Investment unanimously ratified the Telluride Principles for Investing in Young Children. These principles provide a framework for public and private funders to decide on making strategic investments in proven strategies for young children.

The Telluride Summit is a forum modeled on the World Economic Forum in Davos, Switzerland, on building human capital through research-based investments in early childhood. The forum is co-hosted by the Telluride Foundation and the Partnership for America's Economic Success. The Partnership for America's Economic Success is a collaborative venture established to document the economic benefits of investments in young children and make children's successful development the nation's top economic priority. It is funded by 13 organizations and managed by The Pew Charitable Trusts. For more information see www.PartnershipforSuccess.org.

The development of the Principles began at the first Telluride Summit, on September 9-11, 2007, when 125 business, finance and policy leaders reviewed new evidence of proven investments in young children, such as data released by the Partnership for America's Economic Success showing significant economic impacts of early education, health care, housing insecurity, and family income for young children.

During the 2007 summit discussions, the need became clear for a set of principles to help Telluride participants convey their thoughts to other business people and to guide policymakers, legislators, and program managers and funders. Using a table-discussion format, participants listed and prioritized the features they judged most vital to effective child development policies and programs.

These priorities were combined into five principles, each with several sub-principles, which were then reviewed by Telluride Summit participants and distributed for comment to the over 1400 members of the Invest in Kids Working Group of the Partnership for America's Economic Success. Based on their input, the proposed principles were redrafted several times and then ratified unanimously by the Telluride 2008 participants. Following the principles is the original summary of Telluride Summit table reports.

Telluride Principles --

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 are 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.

Proposed Telluride Principles

Summary of 2007 Table Report Recommendations

Initial Priority Idea Grouping	Combined Occurrences (Fourteen tables)
Every child, life success, equal opportunity, level playing field	14
Family engagement, parental choice, options	13
Rigorous evidence, best practices, flexible, appropriate change	12
Accountability, metrics, performance evaluation	11
Scalable, market processes, systems	11
Holistic, comprehensive	6
Adaptable, flexible, appropriate change	5
Universal with sliding scale, focus on most at risk	4
Earlier the better	4
Quality	3
Community, culture, diversity	3
Sustained through to age 18	3
System	1
Invest in leaders	1