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Early Start

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Published by University of Michigan Press

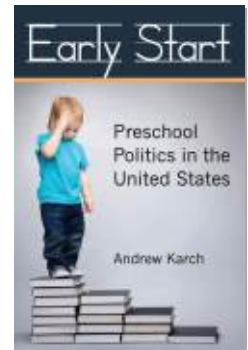
Karch, Andrew.

Early Start: Preschool Politics in the United States.

University of Michigan Press, 2013.

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Acknowledgments

During my first semester in graduate school, I took a course on education policy and a course on the politics of the welfare state. These courses piqued my interest in early childhood education and the potential insight it offered into the politics of social policy in the United States. Surprised by how little the courses overlapped, I set that interest aside. That turned out to be a temporary decision. As state lawmakers, national officials, and (eventually) political scientists devoted considerable attention to preschool education in the early 2000s, I decided to embark on a project investigating the political origins of early childhood policy in the United States.

Many individuals provided helpful comments and suggestions at various stages of the project. This book evolved out of several conference papers, chapter drafts, and presentations, and I would like to thank Jal Mehta, Elizabeth Rigby, Shanna Rose, Ken Wong, Marty West, Sandy Schneider, Jim Guthrie, Jill Clark, Stephanie Rubin, Dick Winters, Nancy Martorano Miller, Scott Abernathy, and seminar participants at the University of Texas at Austin and Southern Methodist University for their valuable feedback. I would also like to thank Barbara Beatty, Jane Gingrich, and Maris Vinovskis, all of whom graciously read the entire manuscript and provided constructive suggestions that enhanced its historical and theoretical richness. I am also grateful to the many reference librarians who helped me navigate the archival materials on which I relied: Jennie A. Levine at the University of Maryland, Jim Lavisher at the National Library of Medicine, Alan Walker at the National Archives, Katie Senft at the New York University Archives, Kathy Christie at the Education Commission of the States, Steve Nielsen at the Minnesota Historical Society, and Carolyn Hanneman at the Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center. This project would not have come to fruition without the generous guidance, support, and encouragement I received from everyone mentioned

here, though, of course, none of them should be held responsible for any shortcomings that remain in the final product.

Several institutions provided support that made this project possible. I wish to thank the University of Texas at Austin, the University of Minnesota, and the Carl Albert Congressional Research and Studies Center for providing research funds. I am also grateful for my ongoing association with the University of Michigan Press. Melody Herr provided a perfect combination of enthusiasm and extraordinary patience at every stage of the publishing process, and Susan Cronin provided useful assistance as I worked on the final manuscript. I would also like to acknowledge permission to use material that appeared in two previously published articles: “Policy Feedback and Preschool Funding in the American States,” *Policy Studies Journal* 38, no. 2 (May 2010): 217–34; and “Venue Shopping, Policy Feedback, and American Preschool Education,” *Journal of Policy History* 21, no. 1 (2009): 38–60.

My family remains the most important source of support in my life. When I began this project, my wife, Kaori, and I were newly married and learning to appreciate our new surroundings in Austin. As I finally write these acknowledgments, a few years and one major change of climate later, we have our own personal stake in early childhood policy. With the arrival of our daughter, Dahlia, and our son, Jonah, our lives have changed in ways that we never could have imagined. We sleep less (sometimes much less) but smile and laugh more than ever, as we watch our wonderful preschoolers figure out the ways of the world. It is a trade-off we would make again and again without hesitation. This book is dedicated to Dahlia and Jonah. Their arrival did not facilitate its completion, but it did serve as a reminder of why I think the issues it addresses are so significant.