



ZERO TO THREE Policy Pocket Card Reference List

The brain develops rapidly in the first three years of life, forming 700 new neural connections *every second*.¹

For low-income babies, differences in word learning and development appear by 16 to 18 months of age, and patterns that suggest widening gaps are established by age 3.²

Almost 1 out of every 4 infants and toddlers is poor, and almost half of all children under age 3 live in low-income families.³

Poverty in the early years is associated with challenges in adulthood, including fewer years in school, less earnings, higher crime rates, greater dependency on public assistance, and increased teenage pregnancy.⁴

Cognitive development and social-emotional capabilities drive educational achievement, which ultimately results in economic strength for individuals and society.⁵

Trauma or other adverse experiences increase the likelihood of developmental delays and problems in children, as well as heart disease, diabetes, and depression in adulthood.⁶

We all benefit now and in the future⁷ when children get a good start in life.

Infants and toddlers comprise almost 1 out of every 3 children entering foster care.⁸

Two-thirds of infants and toddlers with a developmental delay or disability are not identified in a timely way.⁹

The origins of life-long illness and disability lie in early childhood.¹⁰

Only 16% of eligible infants and toddlers receive CCDF support.¹¹

Only 4% of eligible children receive Early Head Start services.¹²

Twelve percent of 2- and 3-year-olds experience social-emotional problems that negatively impact their functioning and readiness for school.¹³

Everyone gains when we invest in, develop, and sustain America's greatest natural resource – its people. The Heckman Equation:

INVEST in educational and developmental resources for disadvantaged families to provide equal access to successful early human development.

+ DEVELOP cognitive skills and social skills in children early, from birth to age five when it matters most.

+ SUSTAIN early development with effective education through adulthood.

= GAIN more capable, productive and valuable citizens that pay dividends to America for generations to come.¹⁴

¹ Center on the Developing Child, “Child Development Fact Sheet.” Harvard University, <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/>.

² Betty Hart and Todd R. Risley, *Meaningful Differences in the Everyday Experience of Young American Children*. Baltimore: Paul H. Brookes, 1995.

³ Michelle Chau, Kalyani Thampi, and Vanessa R. Wight, *Basic Facts About Low-Income Children, 2009: Children Under Age 3*. National Center for Children in Poverty, October 2010, www.nccp.org.

⁴ Greg Duncan, Ariel Kalil and Kathleen Ziol-Guest, Issue Brief #4, *Economic Costs of Early Childhood Poverty: Raising Young Children Out of Poverty Can Substantially Improve Their Odds of Economic and Life Success*. Partnership for America’s Economic Success, 2008, www.partnershipforsuccess.org.

⁵ James Heckman, Letter to the National Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Budget Reform, September 2010, www.heckmanequation.org.

⁶ Center on the Developing Child, “In Brief: The Impact of Early Adversity on Children’s Development.” Harvard University, <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/>.

⁷ Note: The benefits listed on the card are largely derived from research studies commissioned by, or posted by, the Partnership for America’s Economic Success. Visit www.partnershipforsuccess.org.

⁸ U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, *Child Maltreatment 2008*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2009, www.acf.hhs.gov.

⁹ L. Sices, *Developmental screening in primary care: the effectiveness of current practice and recommendations for improvement*. The Commonwealth Fund, December 2001, www.commonwealthfund.org. J. Danaher, S. Goode and A. Lazara (Eds.), *Part C updates* (11th ed.). Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina, FPG Child Development Institute, National Early Childhood Technical Assistance Center, 2010.

¹⁰ Center on the Developing Child, *The Foundations of Lifelong Health Are Built in Early Childhood*, Harvard University, 2010, <http://developingchild.edu/>.

¹¹ Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, “ASPE Issue Brief: Estimates of Child Care Eligibility and Receipt for Fiscal Year 2006.” Office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation, Office of Human Services Policy, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, April 2010, <http://aspe.hhs.gov/pic/>.

¹² 2009 is the most recent year of Census Bureau data available. Note that 133,217 is the exact number of children under 3 served by Early Head Start in Fiscal Year 2009. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Administration for Children and Families, Early Childhood Learning and Knowledge Center, *Head Start Program Information Report for the 2009-2010 Program Year, Early Head Start Programs Only*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Note that 3,122,000 children under 3 in the U.S. live below the federal poverty level. U.S. Census Bureau, “Table POV 34: Single Year of Age – Poverty Status: 2009. In *Current Population Survey, 2010 Annual Social and Economic Supplement*. U.S. Census Bureau, 2009, www.census.gov.

¹³ Janice L. Cooper, Rachel Masi, Jessica Vick, *Social-emotional Development in Early Childhood: What Every Policymaker Should Know*. National Center for Children in Poverty, August 2009, www.nccp.org.

¹⁴ James Heckman, *Heckman Equation Flyer*, The Heckman Equation Project, 2009, www.heckmanequation.org.