

Early Intervention “Talk” With Policymakers

The following points gleaned from Growing Up Well, The Harvard Center for the Developing Child and the First 2000 Days, along with other sources, offer potential jumping off point for engaging North Carolina policymakers in factual conversations about early childhood.

- 1) “Research shows that wise investments in children and families can lead to future savings, better health, and increased productivity. Health in the earliest years - beginning with a mother’s preconception health – provides the foundation upon which future development depends.”
 - *In 2012, 72.2% of North Carolina’s women report a well visit with a primary care provider within the previous year (Source: 2012 North Carolina BRFSS, (http://www.schs.state.nc.us/schs/data/preconception/brfss/2012/C3_2012.html))*
- 2) “Children need nurturing relationships, environments, and experiences during their earliest years to develop a foundation strong enough to support more advanced physical, cognitive and social-emotional skills.”
 - *In North Carolina, during 2013-2014, over 128,000 children were referred to local department of social services agencies for suspected abuse or neglect. Of these, over 36,000 children were recommended to receive additional services. In 2012, 28 children in North Carolina died as a result of abuse or neglect by a parent or caregiver. (NCIOM Task Force on Essentials for Childhood, 2014).*
 - *Child maltreatment has a significant financial impact on our medical and social services systems, with annual nationwide costs of child maltreatment estimated at approximately \$80 billion, and \$200,000 in total lifetime costs per victim. (NCIOM Task Force on Essentials for Childhood, 2014). (<http://www.nciom.org>)*
- 3) “Young children’s social-emotional development and mental health influence every critical developmental task of the first five years whether physical, cognitive, linguistic, or social-emotional. Positive social-emotional development and mental health provides the foundation for future development and learning.”
 - *Estimates of the incidence of mental health disturbance in childhood that rises to the level of clinical attention varies greatly. Conservative estimates drawn from an early childhood population suggest that an average 13% of infants, toddlers and preschoolers meet criteria for a diagnosable mental health condition. (Earls, Marian, M.D. “Developmental & Behavioral Screening: Working Together to Identify Mental Health Issues of Children in Child Care Settings.” PowerPoint; Campbell, Susan B., Ph.D. Behavior Problems in Preschool Children, Second Edition: Clinical and Developmental Perspectives. Guilford Press. NYC, 2002.).*
 - *Harvard Center for the Developing Child (<http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu>)*
 - *A 2006 research study by Egger and Angold found the prevalence of preschool behavioral and emotional disorders rates ranged from 14 – 26.4%*
 - *Kindergartener’s with strong social-emotional skills are 4 times more likely to graduate from college. (<http://www.rwjf.org>)*



- 4) “Significant adversity in early childhood including trauma, abuse, living with a parent with a substance abuse disorder, or being raised in persistent poverty, can cause toxic stress which disrupts a young child’s brain circuitry and other organ and metabolic systems. In the absence of protective factors such as a nurturing and responsive relationship with caregivers, these disruptions produce changes in the body and brain that lead to lifelong impairments in both physical and mental health.”
- *In 2014 28% of children under 5 in NC were living in poverty and 14% lived in “extreme poverty”*
 - *From 2009 – 2014 the early childhood population served by the Alamance Alliance for Children and Families shared the following indicators:*
 - *72% have lived with someone who was depressed*
 - *35% have lived with someone with a mental illness besides depression*
 - *43% have witnessed domestic violence*
 - *35% have lived with someone with a substance abuse problem*
 - *12% of NC parents meet the definition of substance abuser and 40% of foster children are removed due to their parents substance abuse (Durham County 2008)*
 - *In 2012 the cost of child abuse in NC in 2012 was estimated at 2.38 billion dollars (NCIOM: Growing Up Well: Supporting Young Children’s Social-Emotional Development and Mental Health in North Carolina.)*
 - *The Adverse Childhood Experiences Study (ACEs) links childhood trauma to long-term health and social consequences (Robert F. Anda, MD, Center for Disease Control and Vincent J. Felitti, MD, Kaiser Permanente. This study is ongoing: (<http://www.acestudy.org>)*
- 5) “The basic principles of neuroscience indicate that early prevention intervention will be more efficient and produce more favorable outcomes than remediation in later life.”
- *National estimates suggest that about 13% of children nationally have developmental delays significant enough to meet Part C early intervention eligibility requirements. (Steven A. Rosenberg, PhD; Duan Zhang, PhD; Cordelia C. Robinson, PhD, RN; Prevalence of Developmental Delays and Participation in Early Intervention Services for Young Children. Pediatrics Vol. 121 No. 6 June 1, 2008.*
 - *For FY 2013, [North Carolina] saw a .04 percentage point increase from 2.77% served in FY 2012 to 2.81% served in FY 2013 (NC 2013 Annual Performance Report to OSEP, (<http://www.beearly.nc.gov/index.php/resources/publications>).*
- 6) Supportive relationships and positive learning experiences begin at home but can also be provided through a range of services with proven effectiveness factors. Babies’ brains require stable, caring, interactive relationships with adults – any way or any place they can be provided will benefit healthy brain development.
- *Infants are able to sense a wide range of emotion including joy, fear and sadness as early as six months of age.*
 - *Research shows that most children are able to feel good or bad about themselves between the ages of 1-2.*
 - *Between the ages of 3 and 5 most children learn to control their emotions. (Parenting Children Today: Key Findings From A Zero To Three 2009 National Parent Survey. (http://www.zerotothree.org/about-us/funded-projects/parenting-resources/youngchildren_hr.pdf)*
- 7) “Science clearly demonstrates that, in situations where toxic stress is likely, intervening as early as possible is critical to achieving the best outcomes. For children experiencing toxic stress, specialized early interventions are needed to target the cause of the stress and protect the child from its consequences.”
- *17 – 27% of preschool children have social-emotional development problems and/or behavioral challenges (NIMH estimates)*
 - *Preschool expulsion rates are 13 times higher than kindergarten rates. North Carolina ranks 45th out of 50 states in Pre-K expulsion.*



- 8) Participants who experienced high quality early childhood programs have increased median earnings by as much as 36%, pay more taxes and depend less on welfare.”
- *Every dollar invested in early childhood education produces a 7-10% per annum return on investment.” (The Heckman Equation: James Heckman, Nobel Prize winning Economist, University of Chicago: <http://www.heckmanequation.org>)*
 - *Now in its 42nd year, the Abecedarian Project out of UNC-Chapel Hill has demonstrated that high-quality, enriched early education environments can help children surmount some of the disadvantages of poverty. For every dollar spent on the program, taxpayers saved \$2.50 as a result of higher incomes, less need for educational and government services, and reduced health care costs. (<http://www.abc.fpg.unc.edu>)*
- 9) “High quality early childhood programs increase graduation rates by as much as 44% in NC
- *North Carolina has a high-quality pre-kindergarten program, but only 6 percent of North Carolina’s 3-year-olds and 33 percent of 4-year-olds attend NC Pre-k or Head Start.*
- 10) “Enriched early childhood programs are the most cost-effective way to reduce crime. .*High Quality Early Care and Education: A Key to Reducing Crime in North Carolina. A Report By Fight Crime: Invest in Kids.*
- *A long-term study of Michigan’s Perry Preschool found that at-risk children left out of the high-quality program were five times more likely to be chronic offenders by age 27 than children who did attend. (<http://www.highscope.org/perrypreschoolstudy>)*
 - *At-risk kids who did not participate in Chicago’s Child-Parent Centers were 70 percent more likely to be arrested for a violent crime by age 18, according to a study published in the Journal of the American Medical Association.*
 - *North Carolina spends \$1.4 billion per year to house, feed and provide 24-hour supervision for its state criminals. In contrast, North Carolina spent only a fraction as much — \$250 million — on early childhood education.*

