

EARLY
CHILDHOOD
OC

Partnering for Thriving Communities

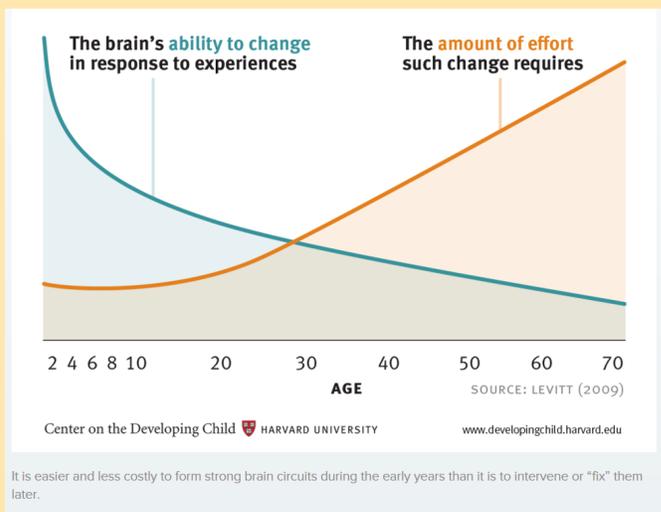
Why Early Childhood?

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Those of us in the Early Childhood space know and can passionately articulate to everyone we meet, 'the why'. Unfortunately, early childhood and the benefits of investing in this age is a well-kept secret to those outside our sector. Early Childhood OC is trying to change that. We are emphatic that the importance of the perinatal-through-eight age span **CANNOT** be kept a secret, and you will see why. Please share widely!

Reason #1: Healthy Brain Development

The early years are the foundation for educational achievement, economic productivity, and lifelong physical and mental health and wellness. In the first few years of life, there are one million neural connections being formed every second with approximately 95% of a child's brain developed by age eight. The neurological connections that are not used, accessed, or nurtured, 'die' off (are pruned away). Environments, experiences, and relationships with caregivers can either strengthen or disrupt neurological development in the first years of life, which has implications throughout a lifetime. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/>

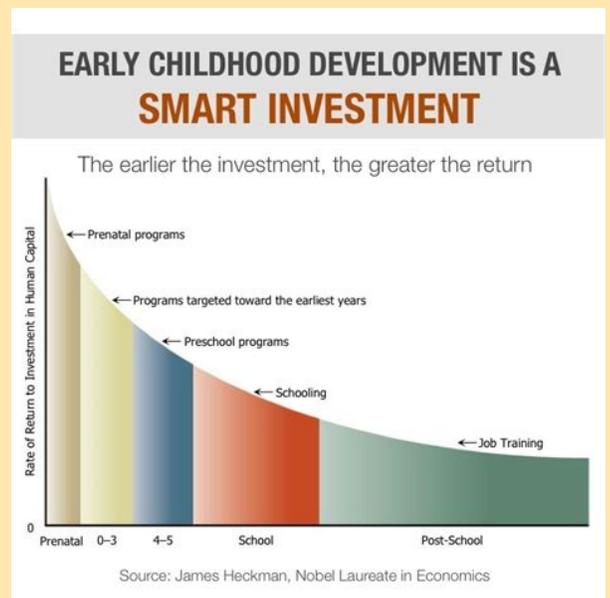


Reason #2: Brain Elasticity

The brain can change much easier and without as much effort in the early years. It is less costly to invest in programs and services during the early years, starting upstream, than it is to provide interventions later in life. The more we invest in the first three, five, and eight years of life, the better social, economic, and health outcomes we will see in generations to come. <https://developingchild.harvard.edu/>

Reason #3: High Rate of Return

According to James Heckman, Nobel Laureate in economics, for children who have access to a comprehensive birth-to-five early childhood education, the Return on Investments (ROI) is 13%. Programs and services in the first years of life set a positive trajectory for social, economic, and health outcomes. According to The Center for High Impact Philanthropy, for every \$1 spent in early childhood programs or services, the ROI is between \$4 and \$13 depending on the program. <https://heckmanequation.org/> & <https://www.impact.upenn.edu/early-childhood-toolkit/why-invest/what-is-the-return-on-investment/>



Reason #4: Social Determinants of Health

Healthy child development directly affects quality-of-life outcomes. Child development plays a critical role in the Social Determinant of Health (SDOH). Setting the foundation in the early years impacts the health of the community, including economic stability, education, health care, neighborhoods and environments, social and community context. If you want to know the health of a community, look at the health and development of the young children in that community. <https://health.gov/healthypeople/objectives-and-data/social-determinants-health/>



Reason #5: It's Everyone's Business

Prioritizing early childhood is essential in every sector. There is a vast amount of research that shows the benefit that prioritizing early childhood programs and services positively impacts all sectors: business, law enforcement, social services, health, community and cities, the economy, education. If everyone invests and prioritizes policies, programs, and services to support the first years of life, we will see positive outcomes across all sectors. <https://www.impact.upenn.edu/early-childhood-toolkit/why-invest/>

The Early Childhood Policy Framework, designed by over 40 cross-sector organizations in Orange County, outlines the best practices to promote resilient families, ensure high quality early learning opportunities, and promote a comprehensive health and development system of care. Incorporating the policies outlined in the Early Childhood Policy Framework is the foundation to ensuring Orange County attains positive economic, social, and health outcomes for all its citizens – regardless of race, zip code, or color of skin. Please join us in prioritizing policies, programs, and services that support prenatal to eight years of age – the age in which if we invest and prioritize, we can ensure a positive trajectory for all life outcomes.

Visit our website to learn more: <https://www.earlychildhoodoc.org/>