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Wisconsin Legislative Council
Steering Committee For Symposia Series On
Supporting Healthy Early Brain Development

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National Conference of State Legislatures



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Outline

- State interest in Early Childhood
- Science of Early Childhood Development
- Science in Legislation
- Washington State Example
- Colorado State Example
- State Legislative Policy Examples





Why State Interest in Early Childhood

- Brain research and the impact of young children's early environments;
- Concerns about "school readiness";
- Impact of poverty;
- Economic interest in the future workforce;
- Compelling economic (cost-benefit) and return on investment data.



Science of Early Childhood

What happens in early childhood can matter for a lifetime

- Early experiences influence the developing brain;
- Stable, caring relationships are essential for healthy development;
- Chronic stress can be toxic to developing brains;
- Significant early adversity can lead to lifelong problems;
- Early intervention can prevent the consequences of early adversity.



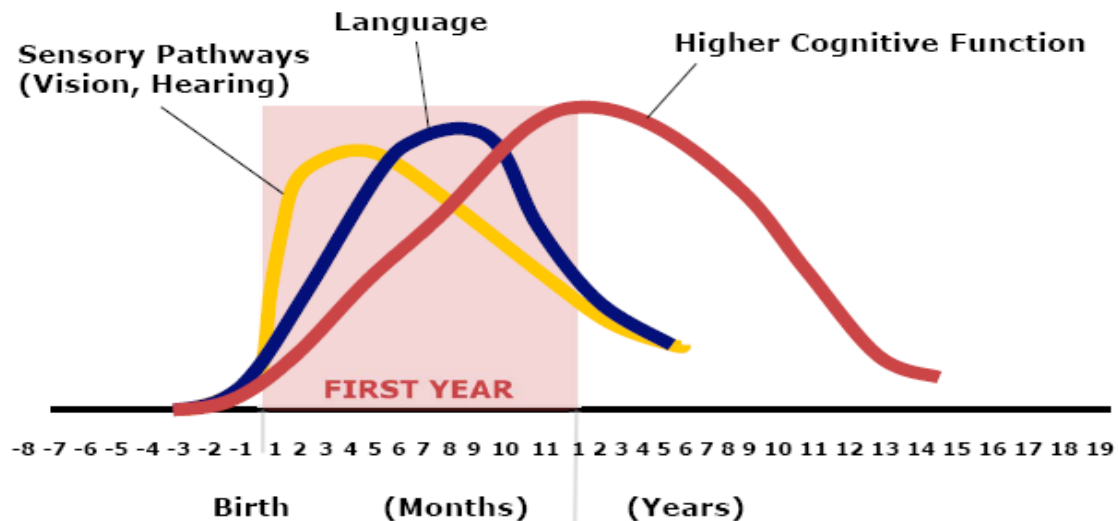
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Center on the Developing Child
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Human Brain Development Synapse Formation Dependent on Early Experiences (700 per second in the early years)



Source: C. Nelson (2000)



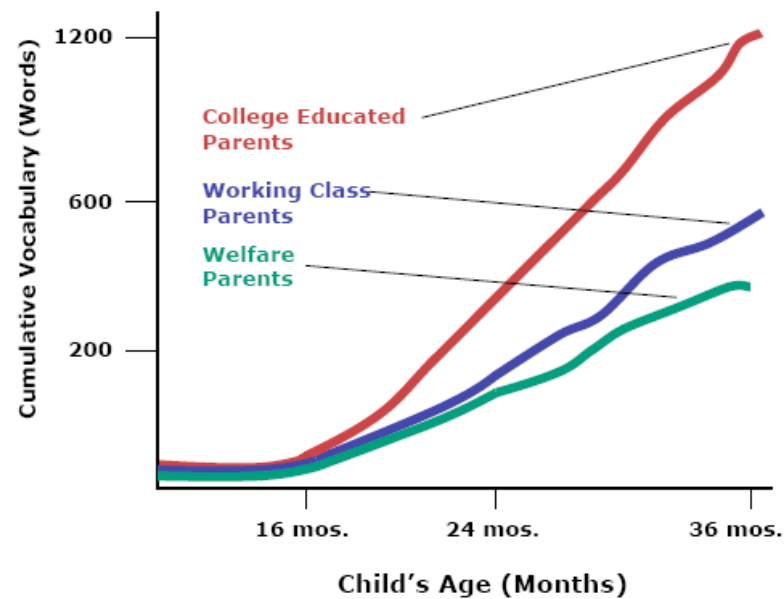
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 Center on the Developing Child
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Barriers to Educational Achievement Emerge at a Very Young Age



Source: Hart & Risley (1995)



What We Know

- The basic principles of neuroscience indicate that **early preventive intervention** will be more efficient and produce more favorable outcomes than remediation later in life.
- **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.
- **A balanced approach** to emotional, social, cognitive, and language development will best prepare all children for success in school and later in the workplace and community.



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Washington Legislative Examples

- Washington State passed two pieces of legislation that specifically address toxic stress and adverse early childhood experiences.





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State Legislative Examples

- **Hawaii**
- **Minnesota**
- **Vermont**





Washington State “One Science”

- Coordinate efforts across multiple state agencies to use the science to inform service delivery.
- The “One Science” refers to the science of early childhood development.
 - Cross-disciplinary professional development module focusing on:
 - Science of early childhood development (including toxic stress),
 - Adverse childhood experiences,
 - Complex trauma, and
 - Executive function.

<http://www.del.wa.gov/partnerships/foi/module1/index.html>



Policy Strategies

- States can promote children's development of executive function through:
 - **Standards:** Incorporate executive function skills in state early childhood and early elementary learning standards;
 - **Assessments:** Include measures of executive function in state assessment tools used to inform instruction;
 - **Workforce preparation and training:** Ensure that training and credential programs help teachers to foster these skills in the classroom and with families.



EF in Early Learning Standards

- Working memory
 - “Remember and follow directions in one or two steps.” (WA State Early Learning/Development Guidelines, 3-4 years olds)
- Inhibitory control
 - Enjoy turn-taking games with caregivers and may direct adult in his or her role. (WA, 16-36 months)
- Cognitive Mental Flexibility
 - “Continues to become more cognitively flexible and is able to draw on varied resources in solving problems (i.e. tries to build a large structure with blocks but the building keeps falling down). After several failed attempts, he/she tries making a larger base. May also look at how other children have made their buildings.” (MD draft, end of P4)



Washington State Department of Early Learning

- **Early Learning Guidelines**
 - Introductory text on executive function
 - Expanded development indicators with focus on EF
 - Strategies for caregivers and parents
- **Professional Development**
 - Online Module on EF ages 0-8
 - Incorporates video of experts, caregivers, and children in ECE centers
 - QRIS Coaches, Trainers of ECE teachers



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Consortium for High Quality Infant & Toddler Care

Consortium for High Quality Infant & Toddler Care

Sharing resources and supports, including:

- Training & Professional Development, specialization/certification in I/T care
 - EHS-CC partnership support
- Child care subsidy contracts and integrated policies
 - Future – shared fundraising

State organizations

Contribute resources, policy supports, and prioritized services

Program Members

- Commit to common state quality standards (Early Achievers), outcome measures (share data); Contribute to statewide learning
- Represent needs of special populations: Teen parents; Tribal programs; Dual language learners
- Determine future consortium fees and services



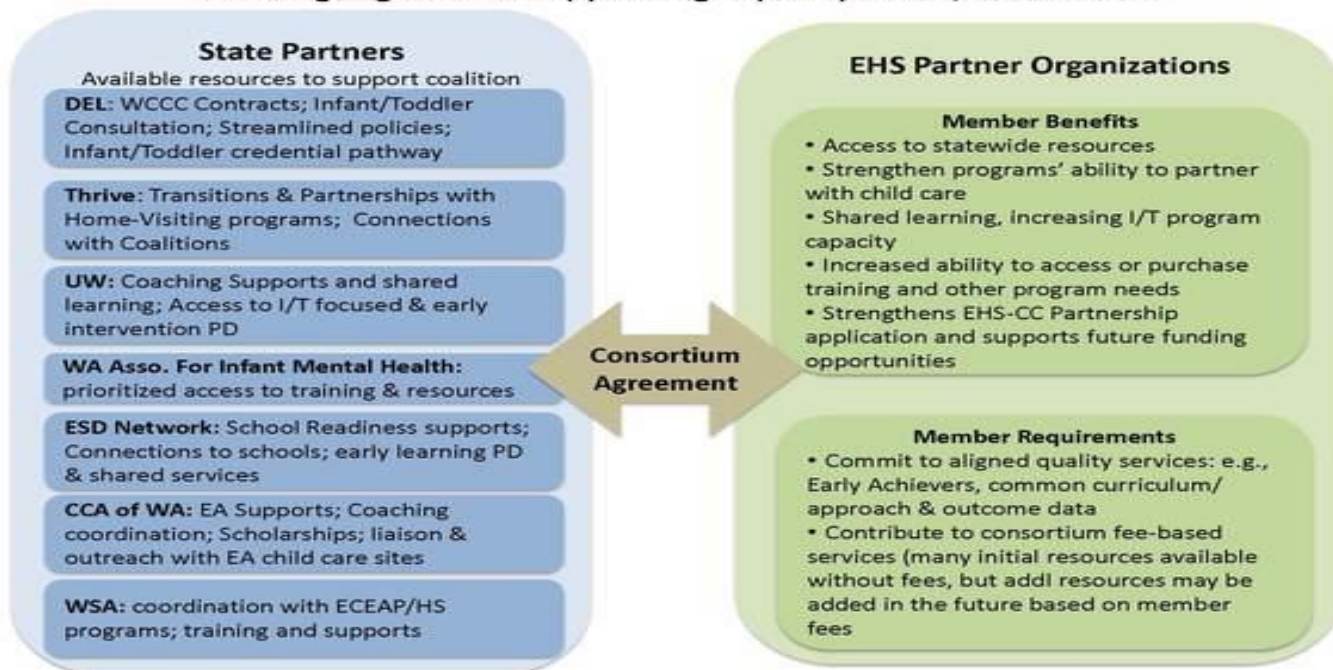
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Washington Consortium Members

The Washington Statewide Consortium for High Quality Infant/Toddler Care Working together to support high-quality infant/toddler care





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Colorado Child Care Reform Measures

- Universal Application
- Continuity of Care
- “Cliff Effect”
- Access to & Affordability of Quality Care





Infant/Toddler

- **Colorado** passed a bill creating the Infant and Toddler Quality Grant Program.
- **Oregon** passed legislation that requires the Early Learning Council and the Oregon Health Authority to:
 - develop prenatal and infant care guidelines,
 - align health and early learning objectives, and
 - expand screening, assessment and referral services for children from birth to age three and their families.



Social/Emotional

- **Florida** designated the Office of Early Learning to administer the CCDF and requires the office to align child care performance standards to early learning domains of the VPK, such as self-regulation.
- **Missouri** lawmakers passed legislation that will provide for a higher child care reimbursement rate for providers who meet the social and emotional standards of child development best practice.
- **Minnesota** creates a provider rate differential for providers (family & center) that hold a current early childhood development credential or is accredited and must demonstrate the use of standards that promote the physical, social, emotional, and cognitive development of children including positive interactions between adults and children.



Early Childhood Workforce

- **Connecticut** created the early childhood educator development scholarship program to award stipends for early childhood educators to offset the costs incurred in obtaining an AA or BA in early childhood education.
- **Washington** requires implementation of a statewide early childhood professional competencies and standards in quality rating, infant and toddler care, and child care licensing.
- **California** requires at least 50 percent of teachers in infant, toddler, and preschool programs to have an endorsement in early childhood education by 2015 and 100 percent by 2020.
- **Arkansas** created the birth-pre-kindergarten teaching credential.



Home Visiting

- In 2013, **Arkansas** and **Texas** passed legislation to establish the voluntary home visiting programs for pregnant women or families with young children.
- Other states with comprehensive home visiting legislation include:
 - Iowa, Maine, Maryland, Michigan, New Mexico, Tennessee, Vermont, Washington



Other Legislative Examples

- **Louisiana** Childcare Assistance to Homeless Families (H 249)
- **Connecticut** Care 4 Kids Program (S 887)
- **Arkansas** Child Care Services (S 963)
- **Washington** Early Learning (H 2867)





Other Legislative Examples

- **Washington** Child Welfare System (H 2519) requires:
 - child care services referred by the Family Assessment Response (FAR) program (child welfare services) and subsidized by the state must be enrolled in the state quality rating and improvement program at level 3 or higher.
 - the state to authorize continuous, 12-month child care eligibility for families participating in FAR, regardless of changes in family circumstance.
 - the FAR program to work with families and the Department of Early Learning to ensure access to quality early care and learning settings that meet the developmental needs of children on its caseload.
 - the Children's Administration to collaborate with the Department of Early Learning to conduct a study on the child care and early learning needs of children in the child welfare system and report to the legislature in 2015 and 2016.



Two Generation Strategies

- **Connecticut** passed legislation requiring the CT Commission on Children to develop a two-generation learning plan.
- **Colorado** Department of Human Services is implementing a two-generation strategy through various state programs.



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www.ncsl.org/research/human-services/early-care-and-education.aspx