

CHILDREN READY FOR SCHOOL

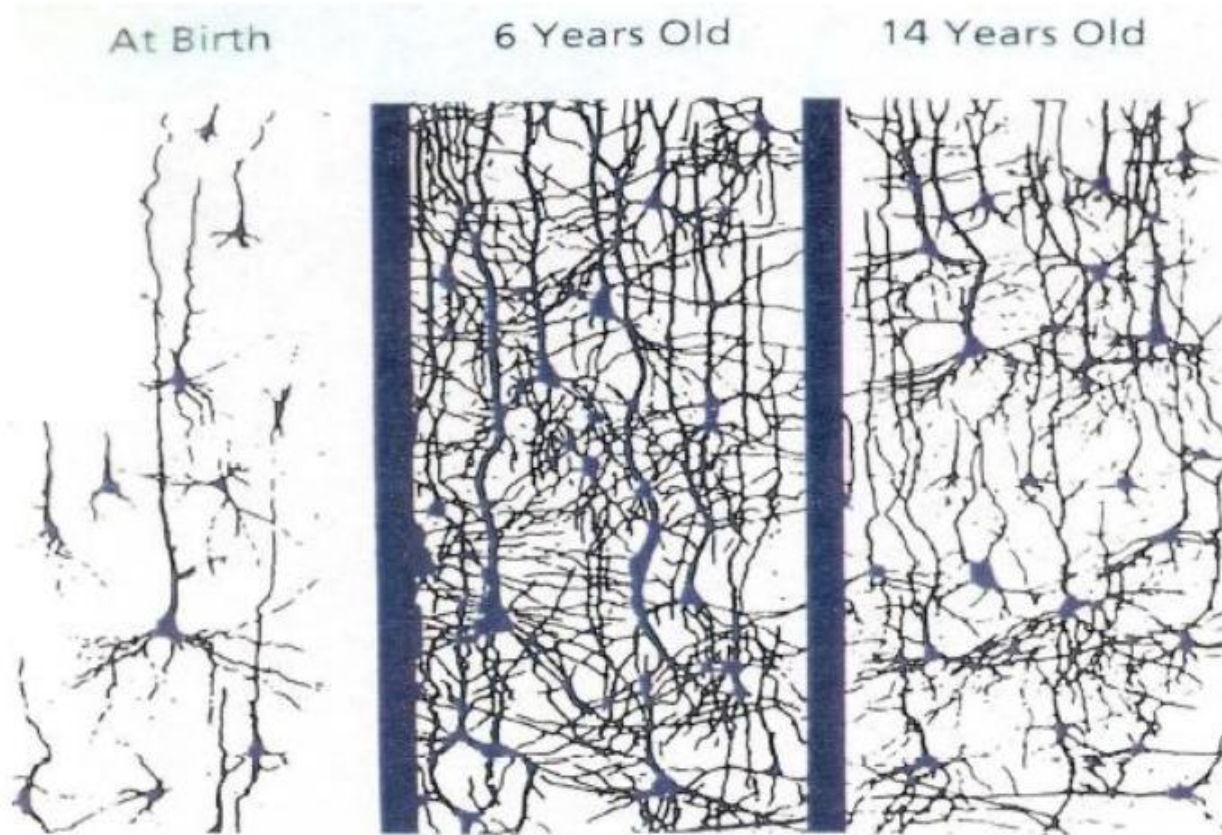


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BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Early Brain Development



SYNAPTIC DENSITY: Synapses are created with astonishing speed in the first three years of life. For the rest of the first decade, children's brains have twice as many synapses as adults' brains.

Drawings supplied by H.T. Chugani.

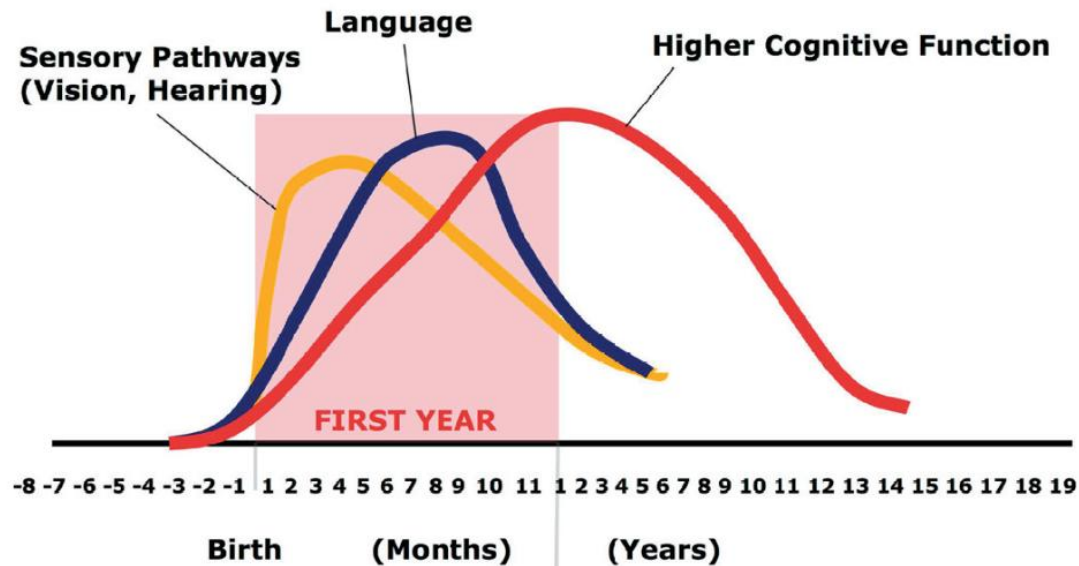
Early Years Lay Foundation for Future Learning, Behavior, Success



Center on the Developing Child
HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Human Brain Development

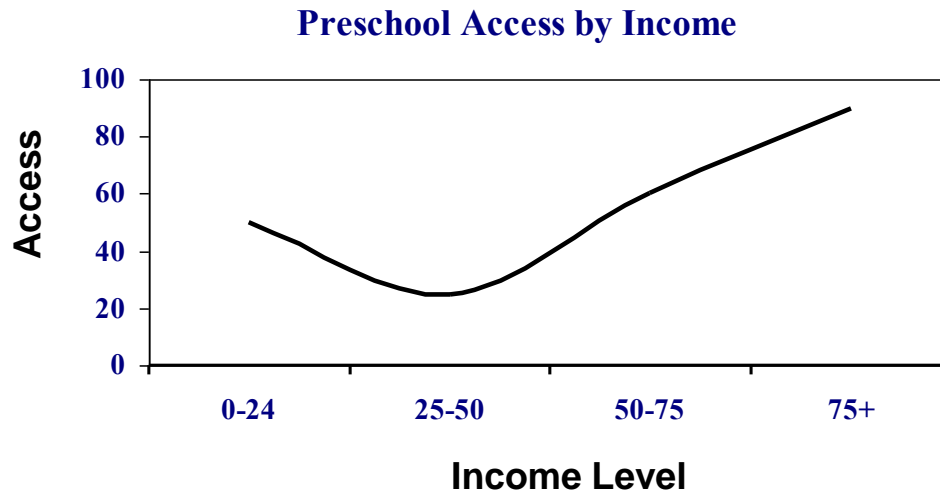
Neural Connections for Different Functions Develop Sequentially



Source: C. Nelson (2000)

Who attends preschool in California?

- 45% of all California families are eligible for state-funded preschool, but...



- Many ELIGIBLE children lack access to state-funded preschool programs

Kids Who Start Behind Stay Behind

- Studies show far too many children entering kindergarten unprepared
 - Wide gap exists between lower- and higher-income children even before they enter kindergarten
- By the time they are 4 years old, children growing up in poor families exposed to 32 million fewer spoken words than those whose parents are professionals

The Early Years Matter

Of 50 children who have trouble reading in first grade, 44 will still have trouble in fourth grade



First Graders



Fourth Graders

Source: Partnership for America's Economic Success

Research Shows: Quality Early Learning A Proven Investment in School Success

- Early childhood education gets kids ready to learn during their most formative years
- National research shows children who attend high-quality preschool programs:
 - Perform better on reading, math tests
 - Less likely to be placed in special education
 - Less likely to be held back a grade
 - More likely to graduate from high school and attend college

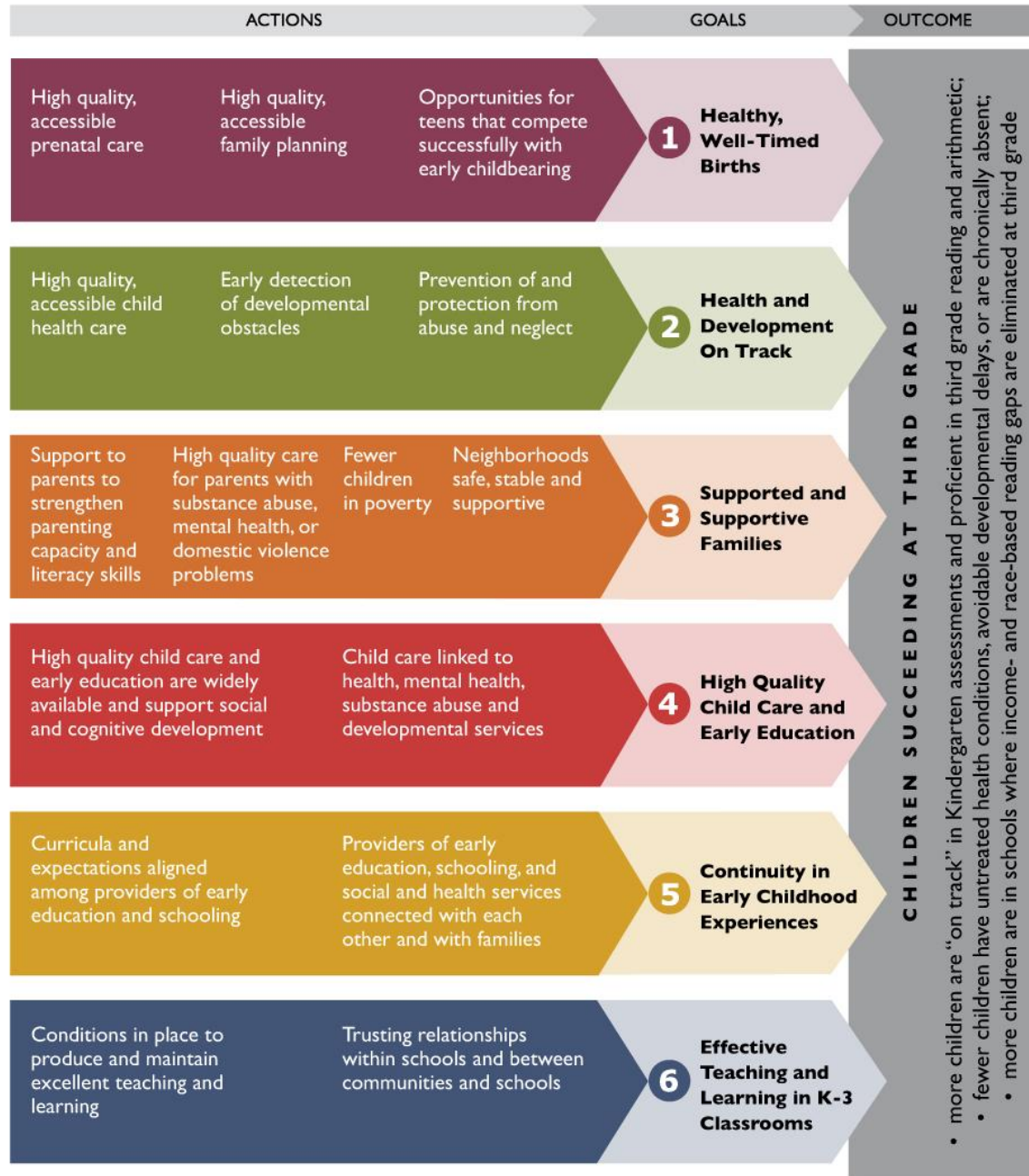
CURRENT STATUS

School Readiness Data by County

	Mothers receiving early prenatal care	Health Insurance Coverage 0-5	Children Ages 3 and 4	Children Ages 3 and 4 in Preschool	Preschool Enrollment	Adults completing less than high school	Statewide rank
Fresno	86%	95%	29,530	10,040	34%	32.5%	54
Kern	75%	90%	25,014	7,254	29%	31.5%	52
Kings	74%	99%	4,969	1,391	28%	31.2%	50
Madera	81%	96%	4,647	1,859	40%	34.6%	55
Merced	64%	92%	8,586	2,404	28%	36.2%	57
San Joaquin	70%	94%	21,915	6,136	28%	28.8%	47
Stanislaus	84%	98%	15,608	6,555	42%	29.6%	48
Tulare	81%	94%	15,725	3,617	23%	38.3%	58
Region	78%		125,994	39,058	31%	32.8%	
State	86%				42%	23.2%	

POLICY RECOMMENDATIONS

Actions Overview, Pathway To Children Ready for School and Succeeding at Third Grade



Priority Policy Objective [1]

Improve and increase access to high-quality infant and toddler care and services by providing more resources to support new parents and early care and education providers in creating safe and nurturing surroundings.

Priority Policy Objective [2]

Increase the number of 3- and 4-year-olds in high-quality preschools with well-trained teachers, and provide children and families support for seamless transitions to kindergarten.

Priority Policy Objective [3]

Improve kindergarten readiness by identifying and addressing the needs of struggling students earlier through developmentally-appropriate assessments in early learning settings and kindergarten, and adopt a statewide kindergarten readiness assessment.

Priority Policy Objective [4]

Implement a comprehensive and balanced package of K-12 reforms and investments that includes an equitable and transparent finance system for all schools; policies that support the recruitment, retention and equitable distribution of high-quality staff; and additional resources to ensure all students succeed and learn in safe, well-equipped instructional settings.

Priority Policy Objective [5]

Continue to develop a comprehensive (“cradle-to-career”), integrated, longitudinal information system that supports students, teachers, administrators and policymakers; enables more timely and comprehensive identification and response to children’s needs; and improves access to and use of data from the system.

Priority Policy Objective [6]

Provide parent resources including nutrition and adequate housing, that will strengthen parenting skills and support parents as a child's first teacher.

Priority Policy Objective [7]

Create a tool kit that will provide parents and early childhood education professionals with transition materials and activities that will support kindergarten readiness.

Priority Policy Objective [8]

Increase support for parents to seek opportunities to further his or her education of degree completion or adult education.

QUESTIONS?



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