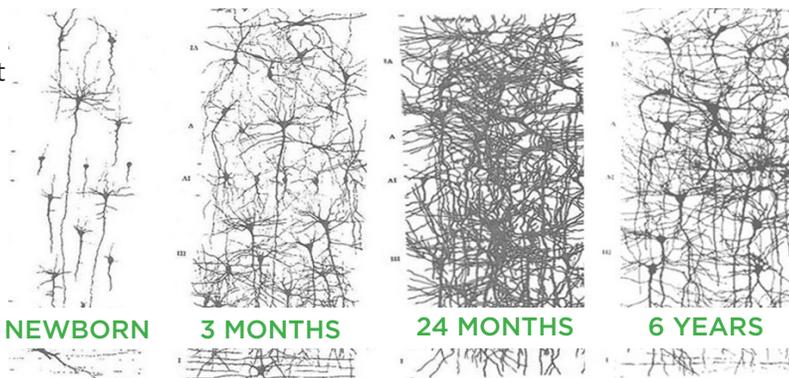


EARLY LEARNING FAQs

BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

WHY ARE THE FIRST FIVE YEARS OF A CHILD'S LIFE SO IMPORTANT FOR BRAIN DEVELOPMENT?

Babies are born learning. Years of scientific study prove that the single most important period of brain development occurs before children reach age 5. The average child is born with about 100 billion brain cells (or neurons). In the first few years of life, one million neural connections form every second, far more than any other period in life. That is why high-quality early educational opportunities are so critical.



CAN A CHILD MAKE UP LOSSES LATER IN LIFE?

No, brain development is literally a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. In the years before kindergarten, the developing brain is in a "use it or lose it" phase, and early experiences with family and caregivers are critical. In healthy environments with as many positive interactions as possible, children's brains continue to grow stronger and healthier, opening the doors to a lifetime of success.

WHAT ARE THE LONG-TERM BENEFITS OF EARLY BRAIN DEVELOPMENT?

While early education is expensive for most families, especially low-income families, the short- and long-term benefits are great. It provides children, regardless of their home life, with safe and healthy interactions that nurture brain growth on a daily basis. Even if these interactions are limited to the time that children are in care, they help children develop necessary cognitive, language and social-emotional skills.

Sadly, not all children are born into families that are stable or healthy - making the positive impact of early education even more important. While it is not the "silver bullet" that will cure all of society's ills, study after study show its long-term, positive impact. A 2009 study of Perry Preschool, a high-quality program for 3- to 5-year-olds developed in Michigan in the 1960s, estimated a return to society in savings of between about \$7 and \$12 for each \$1 invested - on remediation in schools, reduced crime and social services needs, and increased productivity.

Investments in early education not only save Hoosier taxpayers over the long haul, they help working parents maintain employment, boost economic performance and bolster the healthy development of our youngest children - regardless of the challenges they face growing up. It is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that ALL Hoosier children need and deserve.

INFORMATION IN THIS DOCUMENT WAS RETRIEVED FROM THE FOLLOWING SOURCES:

Harvard Center for the Developing Child

American Academy of Pediatrics Early Brain Childhood Development Initiative

The Urban Child Institute

Zero to Three

Heckman, James J. & Moon, Seong Hyeok & Pinto, Rodrigo & Savelyev, Peter A. & Yavitz, Adam, 2010. "The rate of return to the HighScope Perry Preschool Program," *Journal of Public Economics, Elsevier*, vol. 94(1-2), pages 114-128, February.

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