Early Brain and Child Development Advocacy: An Opportunity to Change Childhood Outcomes
Objectives

• What determines health?
  – Understand the importance of early childhood influences on life course trajectories and current theories of change

• What are we building?

• How can you improve a child’s life course through advocacy?
What determines health?

Building Adult Capabilities to Improve Child Outcomes: A Theory of Change


From the Center on The Developing Child at Harvard University
The Roots of Children’s Health and Well-being
What determines health?

Health Outcomes
- Mortality (length of life) 50%
- Morbidity (quality of life) 50%

Health Factors
- Health behaviors (30%)
- Clinical care (20%)
- Social and economic factors (40%)
- Physical environment (10%)

Policies and Programs
- Tobacco use
- Diet & exercise
- Alcohol use
- Sexual activity
- Access to care
- Quality of care
- Education
- Employment
- Income
- Family & social support
- Community safety
- Environmental quality
- Built environment

Source: http://www.countyhealthrankings.org/resources/county-health-rankings-model
Shaping the Capacity of the Brain

• The interactive influences of genes and experiences shape the architecture of the developing brain
• Brains are built from the bottom up
Early Childhood Programs and Services

• Home visiting programs, WIC, Medicaid, quality early education and intervention programs

• Key role in helping to create better health outcomes
How Early Experience Gets Into the Body: A Biodevelopmental Framework

Foundations of Healthy Development and Sources of Early Adversity

Environment of Relationships
Physical, Chemical & Built Environments
Nutrition

Gene-Environment Interaction

Physiological Adaptations & Disruptions

Cumulative Effects Over Time

Biological Embedding During Sensitive Periods

Lifelong Outcomes

Health-Related Behaviors
Educational Achievement & Economic Productivity
Physical & Mental Health

Center on the Developing Child
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
What are we building?

We’re in the “building health and developmental assurance” business.....

• Physical health
• Developmental health
• Relational health
Current Conceptual Framework Guiding Early Childhood Policy and Practice

Significant Adversity

Healthy Developmental Trajectory

Impaired Health and Development

Supportive Relationships, Stimulating Experiences, and Health-Promoting Environments
Returns on Dollars Invested in Early Childhood

Source: Heckman (2008)
For each of the following people or groups, please tell me how much you would trust their opinion on issues facing children and families? (Read Item) How much would you trust their opinion on issues facing children and families – a great deal, a fair amount, not too much, or not at all? [ROTATE]

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<th>Sorted by “Total Agree”</th>
<th>Great Deal/Fair Amount</th>
<th>A Great Deal</th>
<th>A Fair Amount</th>
<th>Not too Much</th>
<th>Not at All</th>
<th>Don’t Know</th>
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How can you improve a child’s life? 
Be an advocate!

- Advocacy means speaking out on your patient's behalf, whether for one child or many
- It involves many of the skills you use every day and putting a human face on an issue

How can you improve a child’s life by advocating for EBCCD?

• Share your stories

• Spread the message that investing in early childhood is more effective and less costly than addressing programs later in life
Spread the Word About These 5 Key Numbers:

• 700 new neural connections per second
• 18 months: age at which disparities in vocabulary begin to appear
• 90-100% change of developmental delays when children experience 6-7 risk factors
• 3:1 odds of adult heart disease after 7-8 adverse childhood experiences
• $4-$9 in return for every dollar invested in early childhood programs

Source: Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University
2 Key Ingredients For Being an Advocate

• Your Message

• How To Deliver Your Message

Source: AAP Advocacy Training Modules
How to Deliver Your Message

1. Combine your message with personal stories to illustrate the importance of and to put a human face on the issue

2. Connect your message to what is happening locally

3. Highlight solutions and inform others about how they can help bring about a solution

Source: AAP Advocacy Training Modules
How can you improve a child’s life through advocacy?

- Minimize toxic stress
- Promote positive parenting and supportive relationships for families
- Provide an environment for healthy development
- Development enhancing activities
- EC coordination with medical homes
- Screen for families at risk
Advocating for EBCD Does Not Have to Take a Lot of Time:

In 5 – 15 minutes you can:

• Check with your AAP chapter to see if they have a state advocacy email update
• Watch for AAP Federal Advocacy Action Network (FAAN) alerts to weigh-in on federal bills affecting children
• Talk to parents about the importance of groups or organizations that advocate on behalf of children’s health

In 30 – 60 minutes you can:

• Do a Google search for local advocacy organizations and read about ways to get involved
• Visit the AAP Member Center and read the latest State Government Affairs issue brief
• Set up a table outside of grand rounds with information on EBCD

Source: AAP Advocacy Training Modules
Promote the Five R’s of Early Childhood Education

• **Reading** together – daily
• **Rhyming**, playing and cuddling
• **Routines** – help children know what to expect of us and what is expected of them
• **Rewards** for everyday successes – praise is a powerful reward
• **Relationships** – reciprocal and nurturing are the foundation of healthy child development
Other Advocacy Opportunities

- Carry the urgent message of EBCD
- Advocate for either level or expanded state
- Advocate for and participate in local efforts to mitigate or treat the consequences of toxic stress
- Join, develop or lead
What are We Building?

Strong Communities

Healthy Economy

Successful Parenting of Next Generation

Educational Achievement
Economic Productivity
Responsible Citizenship
Lifelong Health

HEALTHY CHILD DEVELOPMENT