



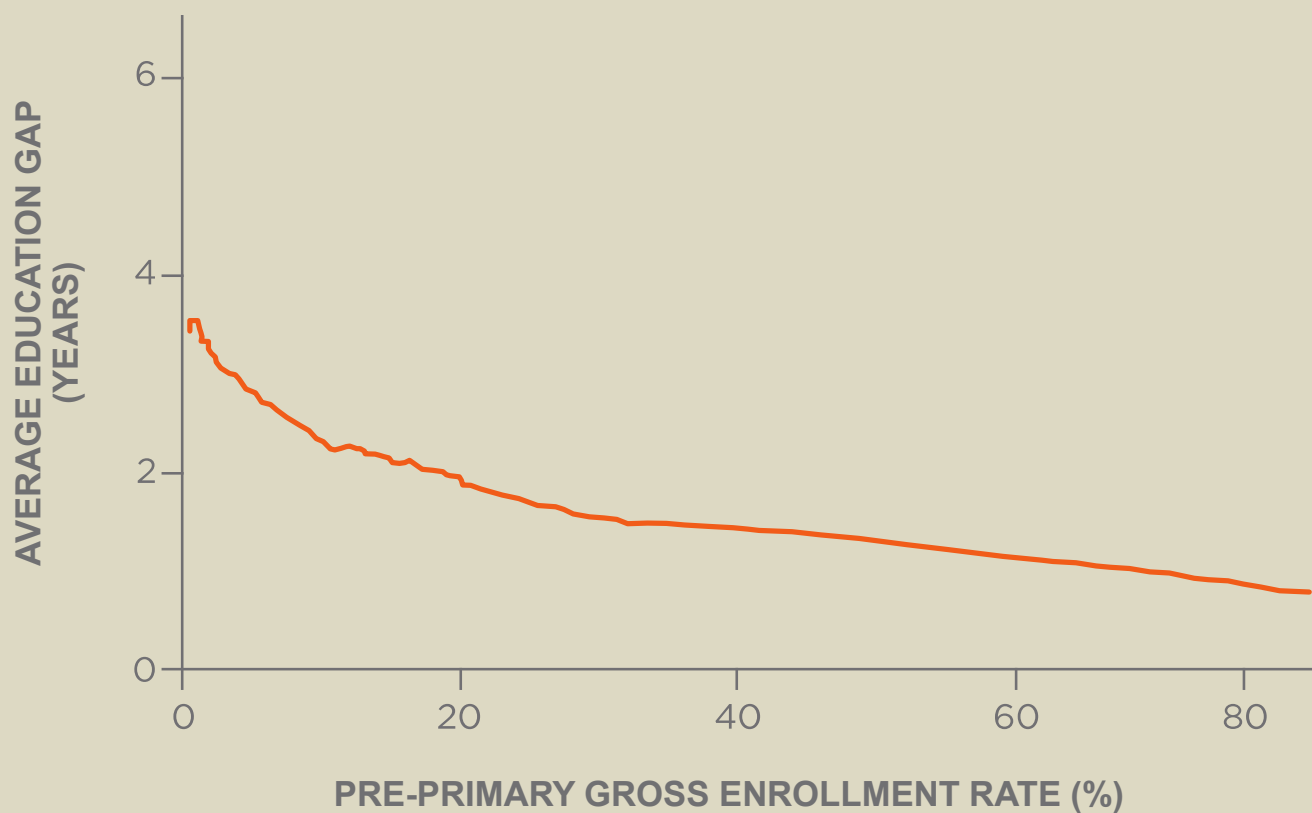
Why the Early Years of Life Matter

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Preschool Enrollment Reduces the Achievement Gap

(Data from 73 low- and middle-income countries)



Engle, P., Fernald, L., Alderman, H. et al., 2011



Early learning begets later learning

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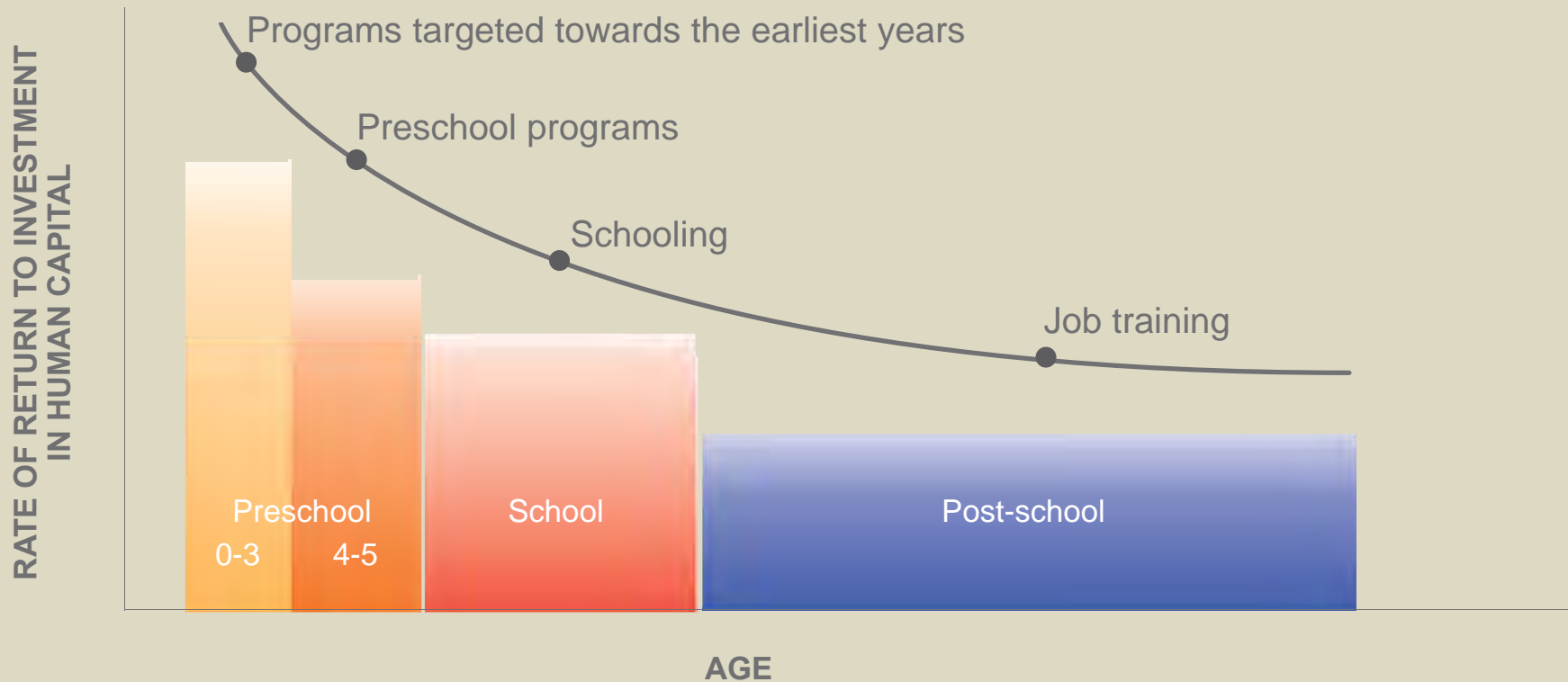


Early learning begets later learning and early success breeds later success...
Success or failure at this stage lays the foundation for success or failure in school...

James J. Heckman, 2000

Investment in human capital as a function of age

(Rates of Return to an Extra Dollar)



Source: Dr. James Heckman, University of Chicago

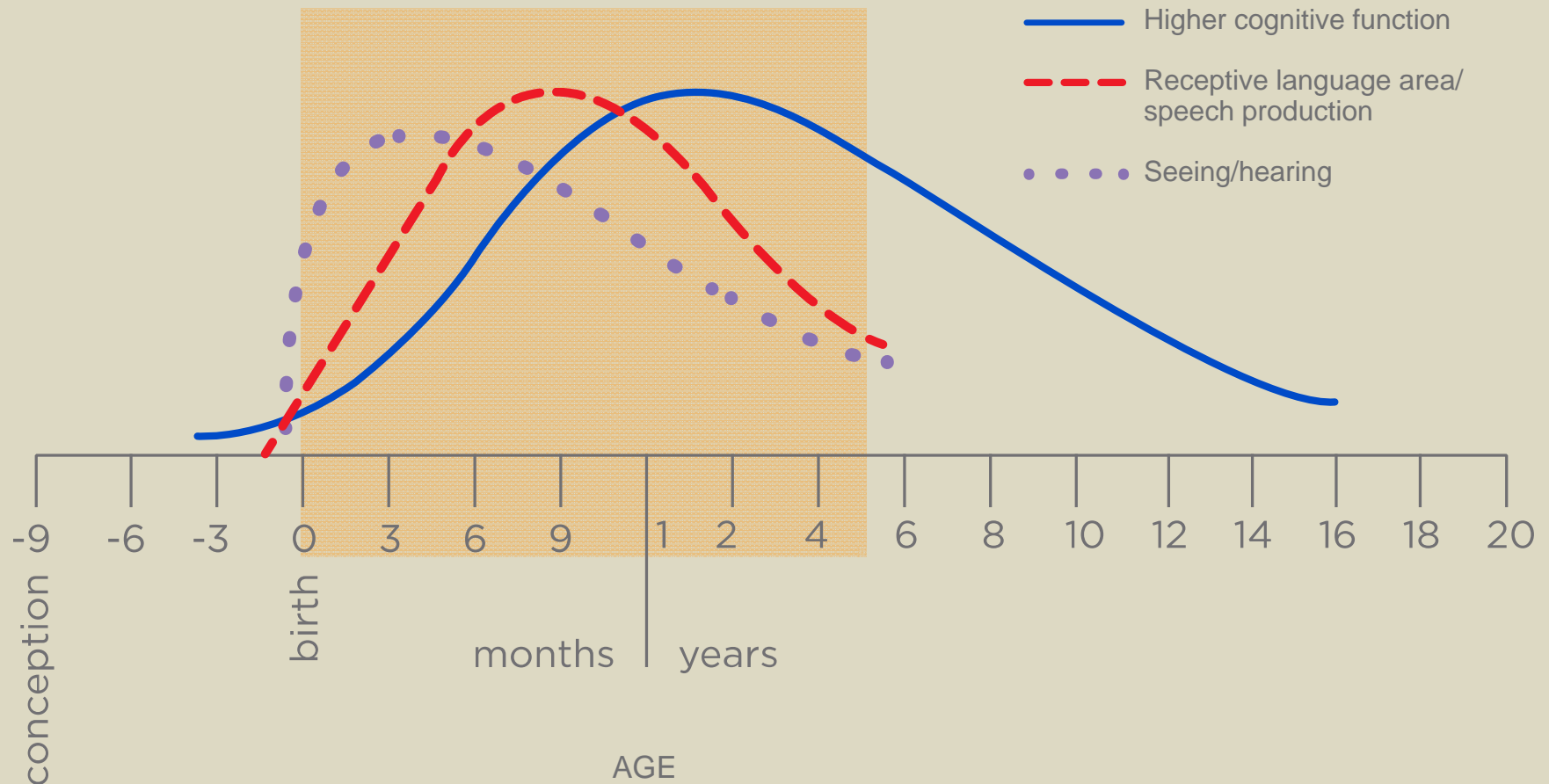
A close-up photograph of a baby's hand reaching towards several colorful wooden blocks. The blocks are in shades of blue, green, and yellow. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

The foundations of brain architecture are established early in life

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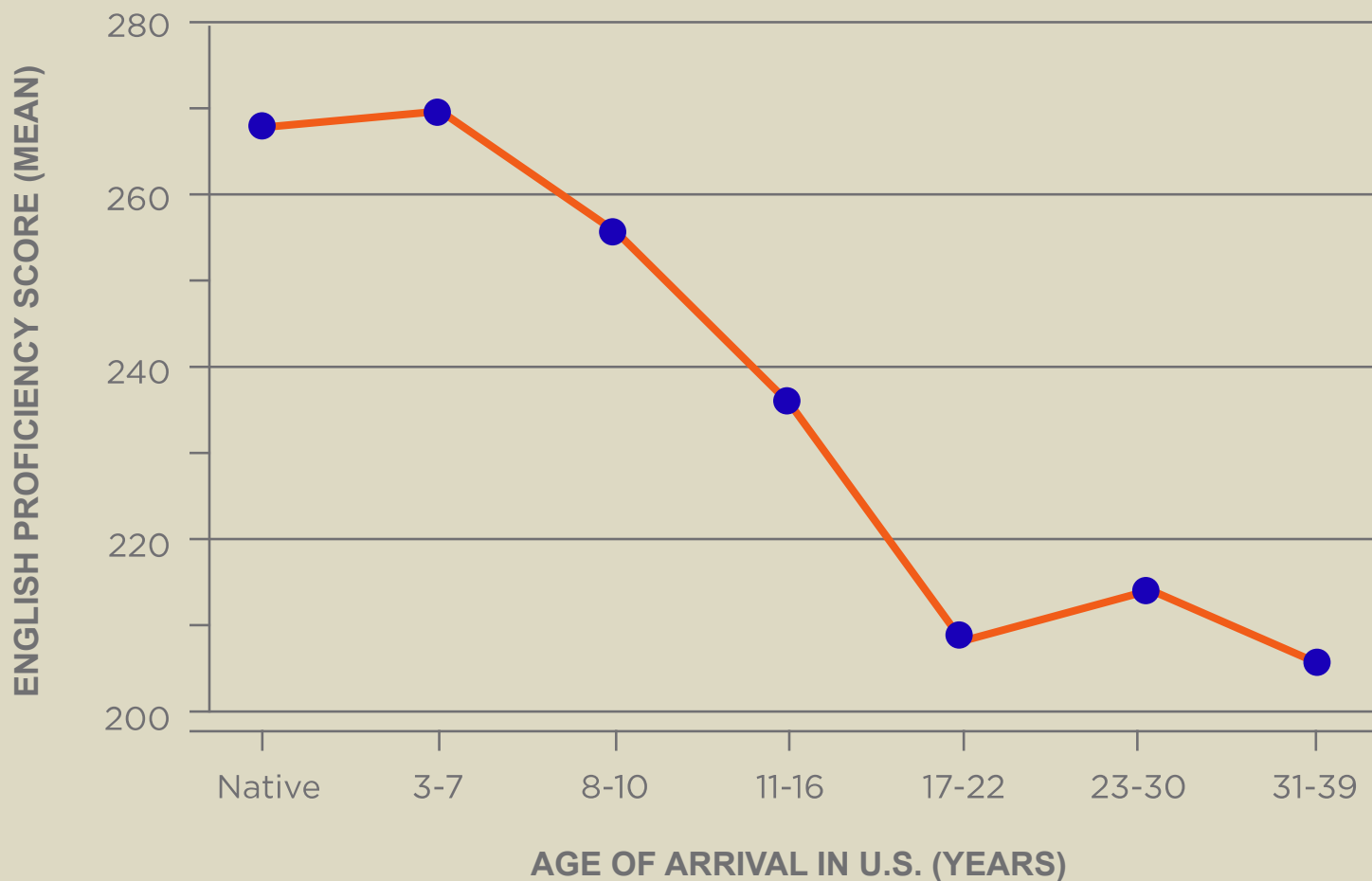
Synapse formation in the developing brain

BIRTH-5 YEARS




Source: Charles A. Nelson, *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*, 2000

Sensitive periods in the acquisition of language




From Johnson & Newport, 1989



Ability to alter learning and behavior decreases with age

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A young girl with curly hair, wearing a pink polo shirt, stands in front of a green wall with windows. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

**Although the window
of opportunity for
development remains
open for many years,
the costs of remediation
grow over time.**

National Scientific Council on the Developing Child



The engine of change in early childhood

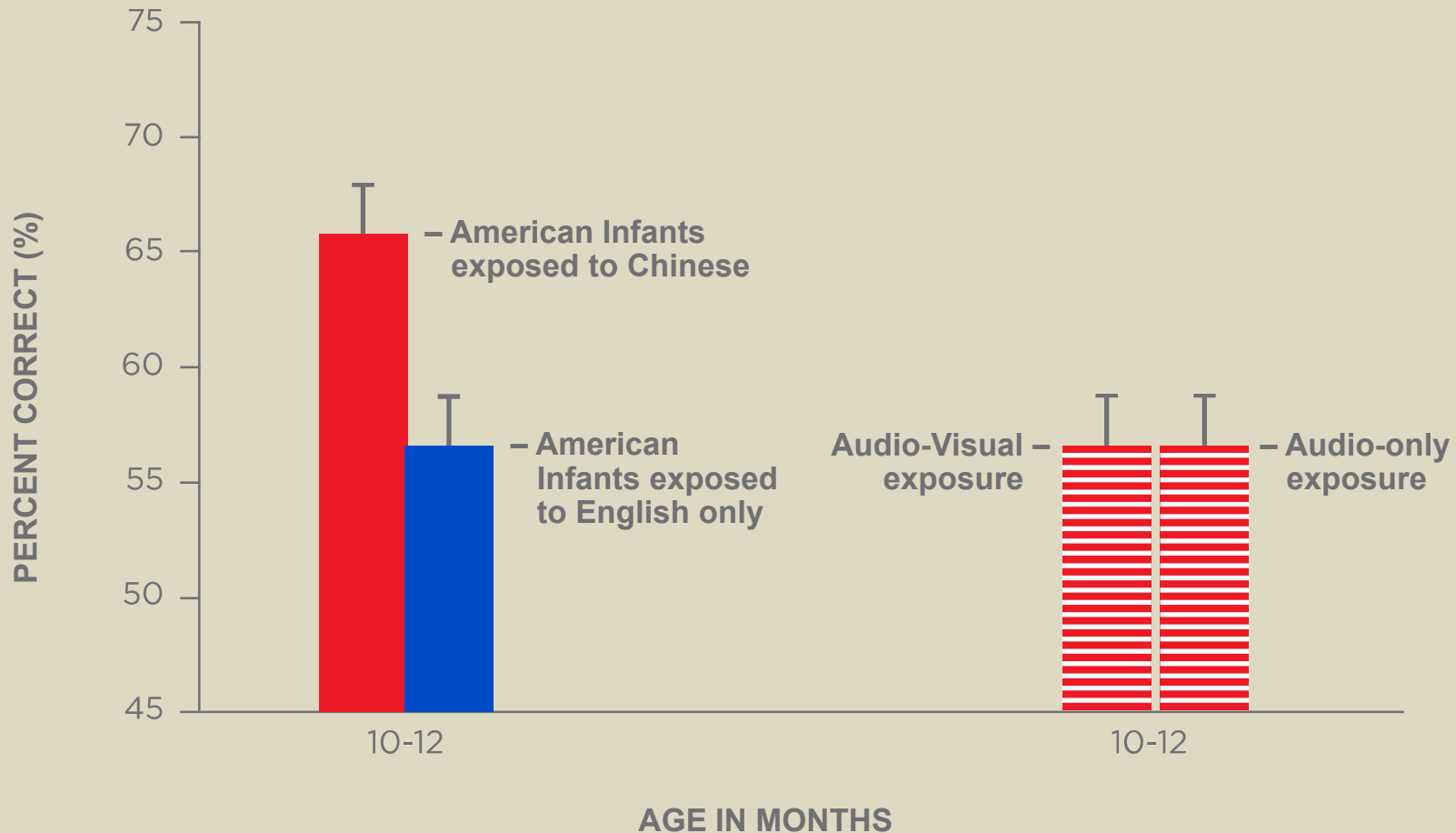
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Relationships

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Impact of relationships on the acquisition of phonetic skills in infancy



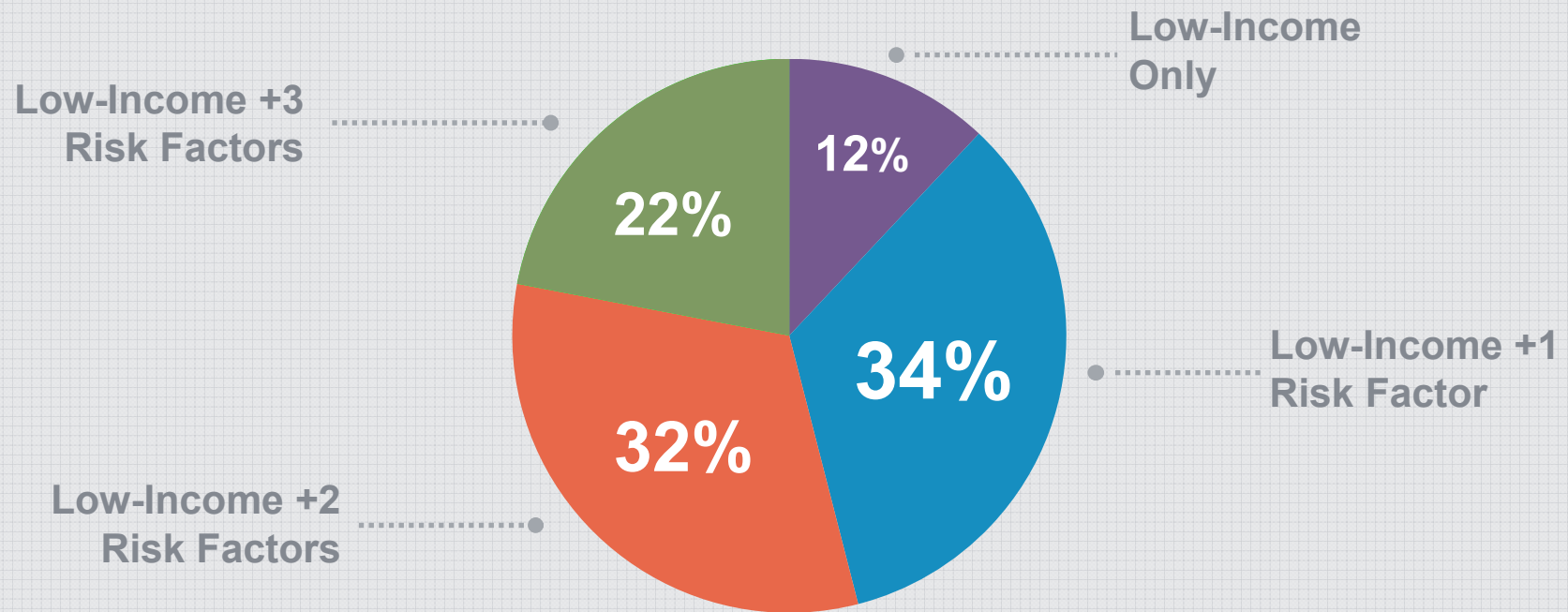
Kuhl P K et al. PNAS 2003; 100:9096-9101.



**Nurturing relationships
and responsive interactions
provide the strongest
foundation for later learning,
behavior, and health.**

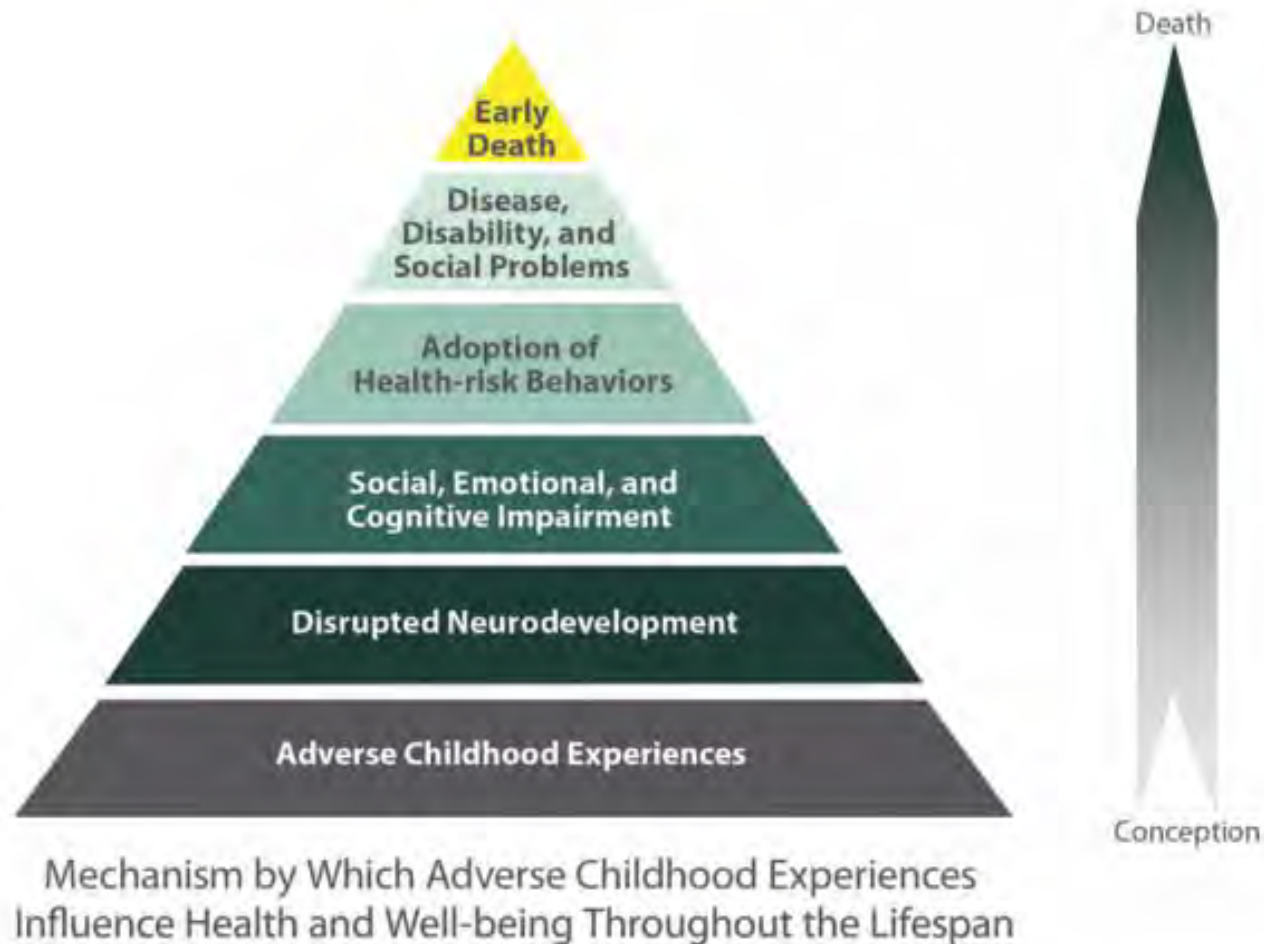
Why some children don't thrive

Interaction of Poverty and Risk Factors ($\geq 200\%$ poverty)

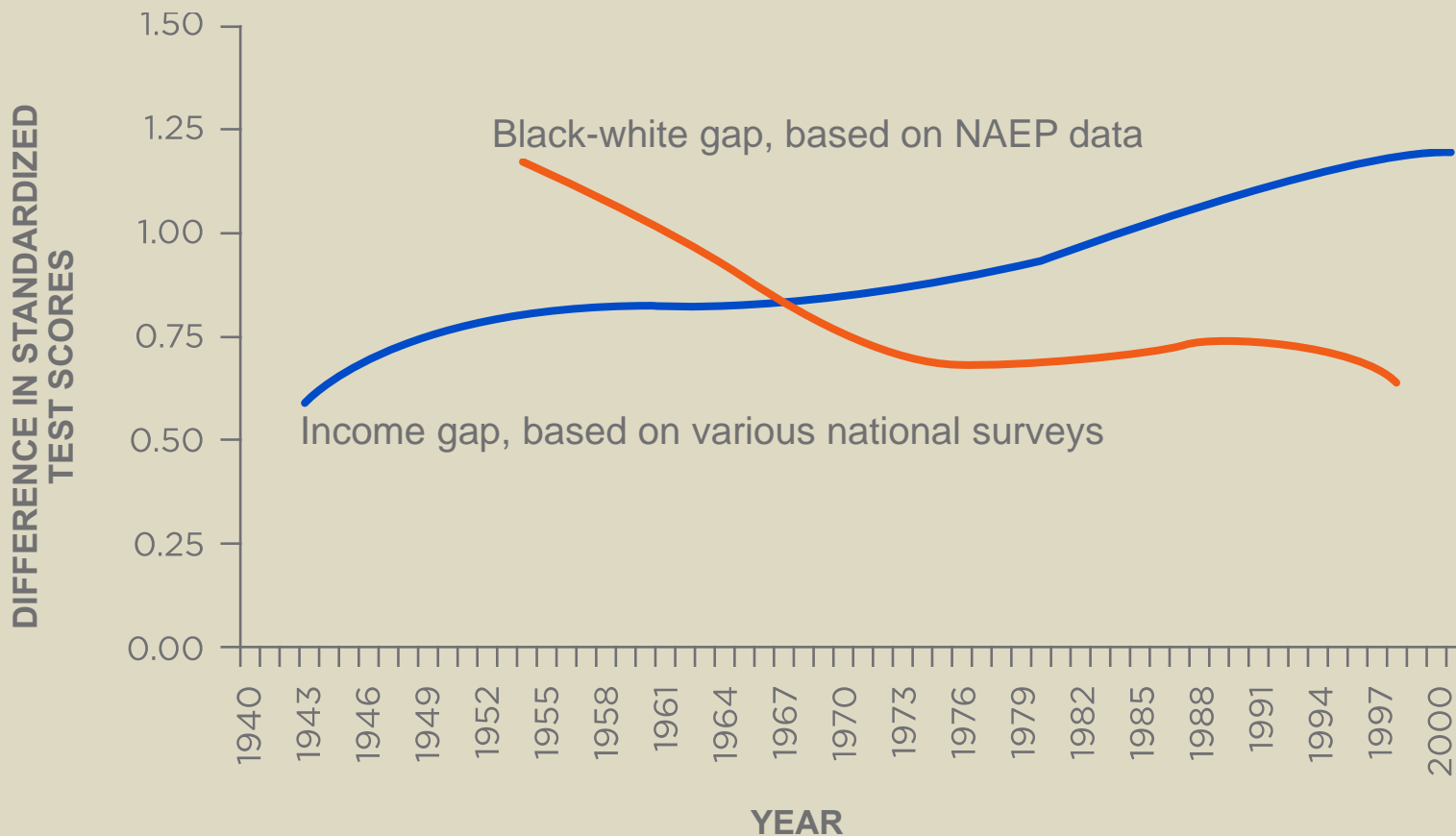


Source: Urban Institute (2008)

Impact of ACEs



Estimated gaps in reading achievement between black and white and high- and low-income students, by birth year



From: G.J. Duncan & R.J. Murnane (Eds.) (2012), *Whither opportunity? Rising inequality, schools, and children's life chances*. New York: Russell Sage Foundation. (Chapter 1)

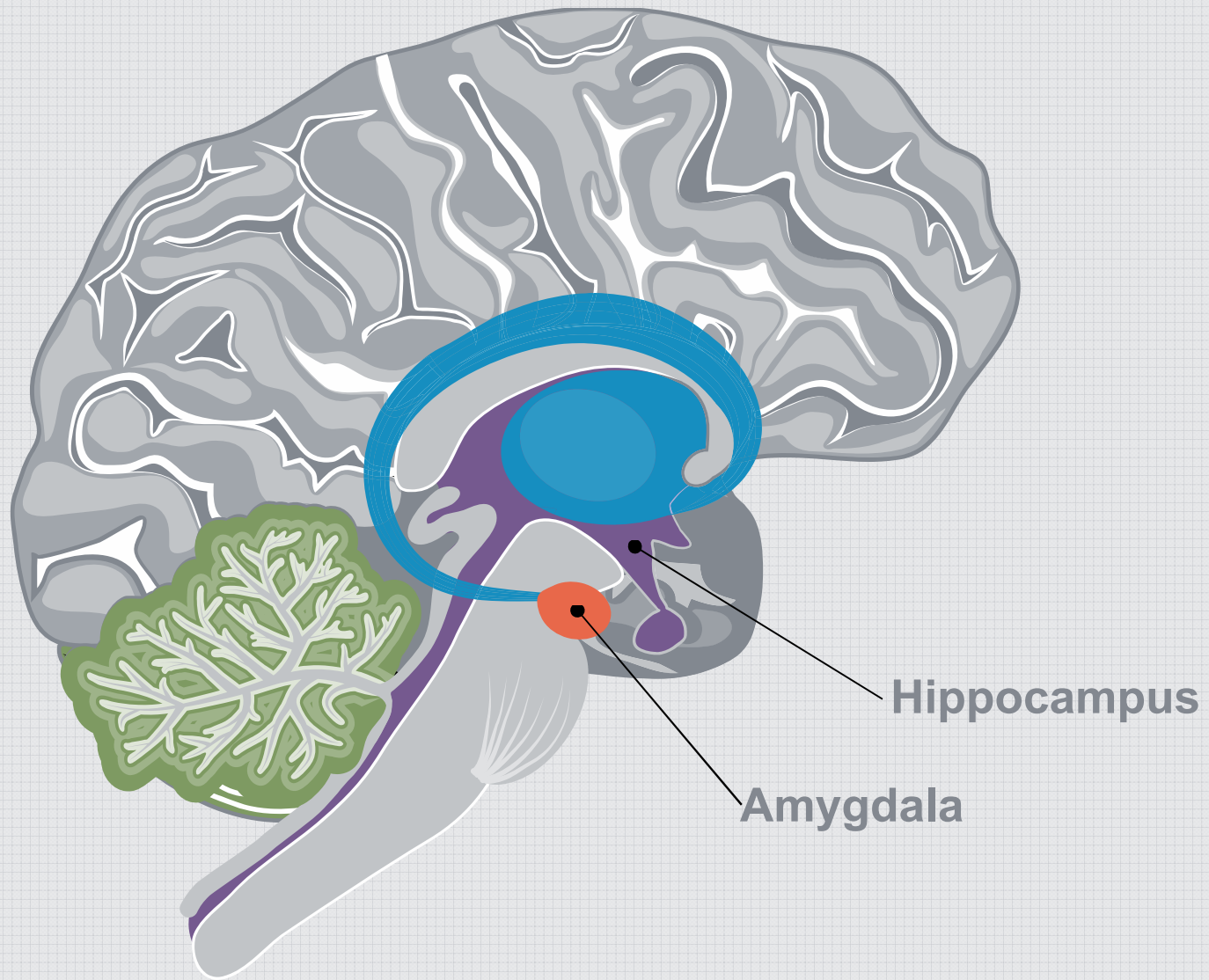


**Poverty can
shrink a child's
brain beginning
at birth**



Brains of children from families in the lowest income bracket are up to 6% smaller than those of children from affluent families

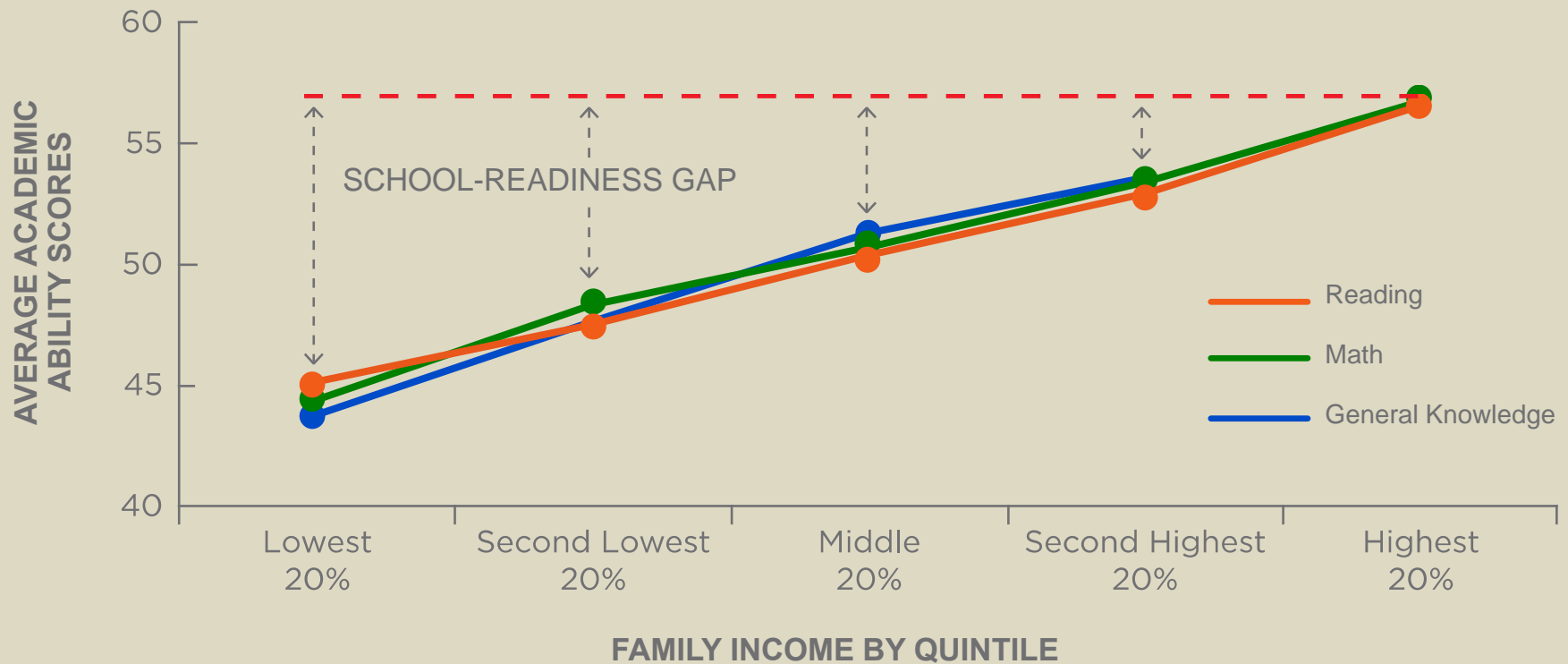
Noble et al. (2015)





**Economic
disparities
can have
long-term
effects**

Family income and the school-readiness gap



Source: Analysis of data from the Early Childhood Longitudinal Study, Kindergarten class of 1998-99. (See NCES.ED.GOV/ECLS/KINDERGARTEN.ASP) By W. Steven Barnett and Milagros Nores for The National Institute for Early Education Research.

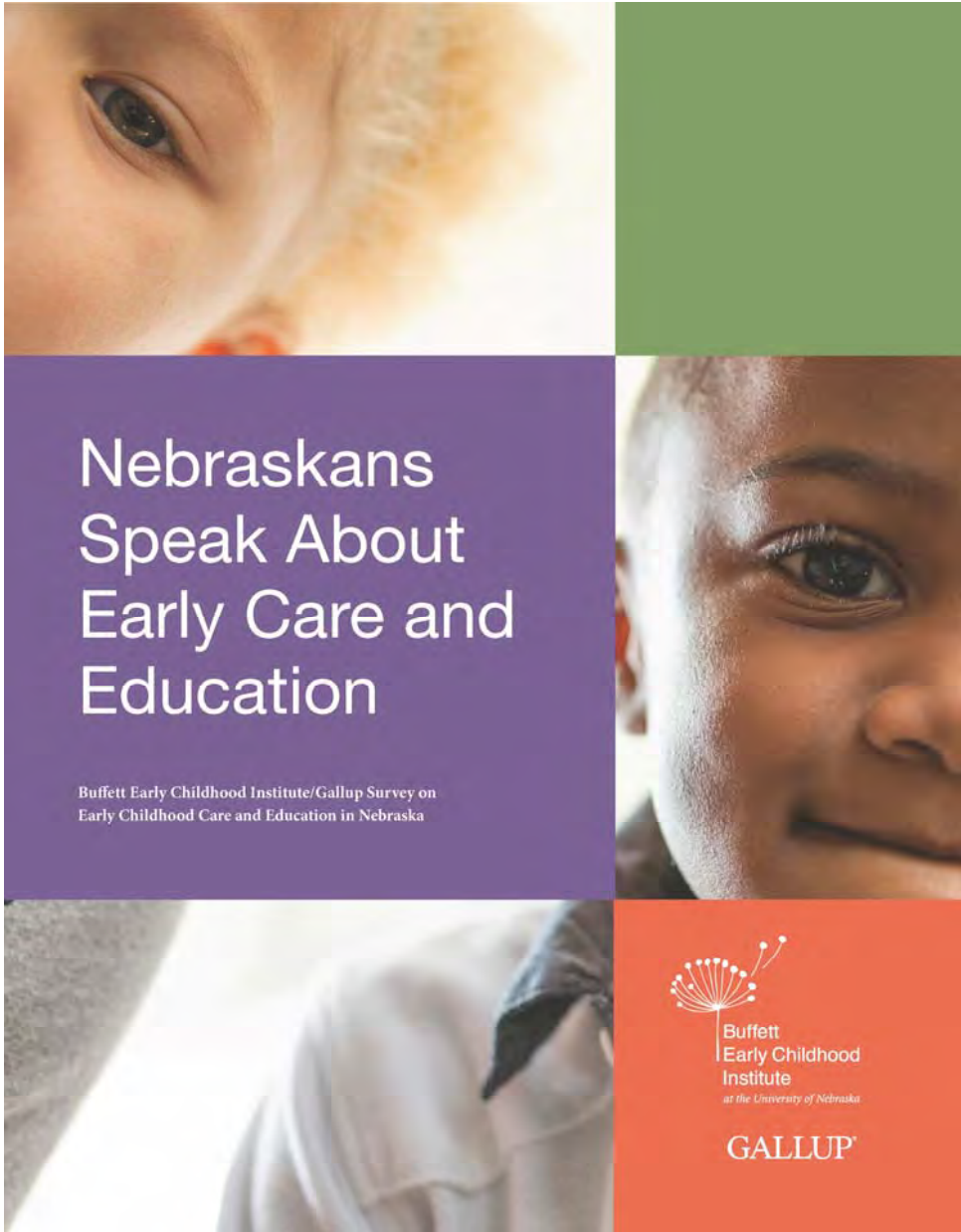
Closing the Gap By Changing Children's Early Life Experiences

Buffett Early Childhood Institute



Buffett
Early Childhood
Institute

at the University of Nebraska



Nebraskans Speak About Early Care and Education

Buffett Early Childhood Institute/Gallup Survey on
Early Childhood Care and Education in Nebraska



GALLUP

Buffett Institute/ Gallup Survey on Early Care and Education in Nebraska

Purpose of Survey



1. Understand Nebraskans' attitudes, beliefs, and knowledge about early childhood care and education.
2. Inform our investment in early care and education.
3. Gather opinions about the state's support for young children at greatest risk.

Main Report Takeaways

1. Early care and education is important to Nebraskans.
2. More affordable and available high-quality child care is needed.
3. Nebraskans believe the state should invest more in early care and education.
4. Nebraskans voice strong support for children in greatest need.



Concern for the Future



37% & 40%

OF NEBRASKANS WITH
YOUNG CHILDREN

OF NEBRASKANS WITH NO
CHILDREN

believe that children's lives will get better
10 years from now.



Superintendents' Early Childhood Plan

**Learning Community
Of Douglas &
Sarpy Counties**

The Goal

Increasing opportunity to learn and eliminating income- and race-based achievement gaps by the end of Grade 3



Three Levels of Support

1. Professional Development for all
2. Customized Assistance to selected school district, and community-based organizations
3. Full Implementation (Birth through Grade 3 at 12 school sites)



Achievement Gap Challenge: Big Ideas



Birth Through Grade 3



Parent and Family Support



School as Hub

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Developmental Change



Professional Learning and Support

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Persistence of Effort Yields Persistence of Effect

The “Ready Child” equation



Start early. Start well.



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