Rationale & Efficacy for Early Intervention: The Unmet Needs and Untapped Potential of Young Children in America
Rationale

1. Most children in the U.S. are not entering school ready to learn.
2. The Achievement Gap is wide, begins early and deprives us all.
3. The earliest days and years of life is the most promising period for supporting and building the life-long capacities children need to succeed in life and when investments can matter the most, yet it is the time in which we invest the least.
4. There are pronounced and growing gaps in what children experience in their first five years in access to early development, learning and preschool education and the quality of much early education, which contribute to growing gaps in school readiness.
5. High-quality early childhood interventions to promote development and learning are a direct, effective, and necessary response to reduce achievement gaps to give all children a fair shot.
The Educational Achievement Gap by income is Large & Growing

Estimated Gaps in Reading Achievement Between High-Low Income (90/10 Ratio) and Black-White Students, by Birth Year, 1940-Present.

[Scores are drawn from 23 Studies of children from ages 3 to 18 in grades pre-K to 12th; see Table 5.A1 of online appendix]

The Gap spans a wide socio-economic gradient

Source: Reardon (2011)
Estimated Trends in Test Performance, by Family Income Level, Age 13
The Gap Begins Early

Income (90/10, 90/50, 50/10) School Readiness Gaps at Kindergarten Entry, first-time kindergartners

Reardon & Portilla (2015, in press) tabulations from ECLS-K 2010
Much of the gap measured across primary schooling are present at school-entry.
Early Learning provides developmental equity when educational investments have greatest benefit

- Public investments in children are lowest in developmental and learning period when they matter most: before children enter universal publicly supported schooling (birth to age 4) (Aber and Chaudry, 2010; Heckman, et. al. 2010, 2014)

Federal and State/Local Spending on Children in 2008, by age

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Federal Spending</th>
<th>State Spending</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>$1,277</td>
<td>$4,138</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>$4,579</td>
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<tr>
<td>6-11</td>
<td>$10,719</td>
<td>$3,922</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-18</td>
<td>$10,140</td>
<td>$3,523</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Edelstein et. al. 2013
Enrollment in Early Education, children under age five with employed mothers by income, selected years

Rates of center-based care

- Middle- to Higher-Income
- Moderate Income
- Low-Income
- Very Low-Income

Disparities in access to and use of early learning programs are large, especially for younger children.

Rates of center-based ECE for infants and toddlers, by income and age

Preschool Education is norm for families can afford it, widening gaps for children whose families cannot.

Rates of center-based care for 3 and 4 year olds by income level and age, 2011

Children Ages 3 and 4 in Public and Private Preschool, by income, 2011

Tabulations from CPS 2011
Growth in Preschool Expansions have slowed
Two Early Childhood Investments with Clear and Supportive Purposes

- Universal Early Education that starts at age three
- A Re-imagined Head Start that begins before/at birth and provides continuous early intervention and development services to the most vulnerable children until school entry.
High-Quality Early Education is a Basic Building Block for Children’s School Success and Reduces the Gap

- Average impact of 1 year of preschool at end of the 4 year old year is one-third of a year of additional learning beyond comparison groups (Yoshikawa et. al. 2013).
- At-scale, high quality universal public preschool programs in Tulsa & Boston show even more substantial impacts on early learning (Gormley et. al. 2008; Weiland and Yoshikawa 2013).
- Best known preschool programs (Perry Preschool, Chicago Parent-Child Centers, Abecedarian) studied over long-time show preschool investments have long-term benefits for participants and society. (Heckman; Karoly; Reynolds; Schweinhart).
- Early education benefits to all children, with larger benefits to more disadvantaged children (Magnuson et al., 2007)
Quality matters across Birth-to-Five Continuum

- Overall quality across Pre-K, Head Start, Child Care, Infant-Toddler programs ranges from low to moderate with only small share truly poor or very high quality
- Instructional quality is measured as particularly low
- Child outcomes are greater and more robust when quality is higher
- Responsive teacher-child interactions and intentional activities to foster learning are quality ingredients
- Stability, continuity, and “dosage” of early childhood services are important components of quality
Targeting services to the highest need communities

- More than 3 million American children (4%) live in areas of concentrated poverty.
- The majority of children in these communities live in families that live in poverty (often deep and persistent poverty), and most of the rest live in families with incomes near the poverty line.
- Approximately 900,000 of these children are under the age of five, and more than 150,000 newborns start life in one of these communities each year.
Targeting services to the highest need communities

- Disadvantage is highly concentrated in communities with high poverty:
  - Highly racially/ethnically segregated
  - Low educational attainment
  - Chronic joblessness
  - High teen pregnancy rates
  - High rates of disadvantaged family structure
Non-poor children in high-poverty neighborhoods average poorer math and reading scores than poor children in low-poverty neighborhoods.
Adults who lived in high-poverty neighborhoods during early childhood less likely to graduate high school and more likely to be unemployed.

Figure 1. High School Graduation by Family and Neighborhood Poverty between Age 1-5

Figure 2. Male Idleness by Family and Neighborhood Poverty between Age 1-5
Before entering kindergarten, young children are deeply affected by their experiences in **three principal domains**—home, health care, and early care and education.

To address these domains, align and rigorously test demonstration models for integrated services of evidence-based service components including Home Visiting & Parenting Interventions, Family-Centered Medical Homes, and high-quality Infant-Toddler Center-Based Care.
Challenges and Opportunities Moving Forward

- Starting Early Learning Services Early
- Targeting Needs within a Goal of Universality
- Addressing Access and Quality Gaps Together
- Establishing alignment/infrastructure across systems (both public and private)
- Incrementalism & Federalism
Extra Slides
Children Age 4 Enrolled in Pre School Programs by Year and Race and Ethnicity

62% 63% 63%
53%
69% 70% 71%
0%
10%
20%
30%
40%
50%
60%
70%
80%

All Non-Latino, White Non-Latino, Black Latino

Source: Tabulations from the Current Population Survey, October Supplement
Children Ages 3 & 4 in Public & Private Center-based Early Care and Education, by family income quintiles, 1999 & 2013
Percentage of 3 & 4 Year Olds Enrolled in Center-Based Preschool (ECE) programs in the U.S., 1964-2013
Number of Children Ages 3 and 4 Participating in Head Start, Child Care Subsidy Programs, and State Pre-Kindergarten Programs by Year (1,000s)

Source: Office of Head Start; HHS - ASPE estimations based on data from the Office of Child Care; National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER)
Children Ages 3 and 4 in Head Start by Race/Ethnicity and Year

Source: ASPE tabulations from the Current Population Survey, ASEC; FACES Technical Reports
Racial and Ethnic Distribution of Children by Poverty Status and Program Participation