The first 1000 days matter: linking policy, practice and investment in the period from conception to 2 years to change children’s outcomes

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Presentation overview

• The emerging new evidence

• The response so far

• What else needs to happen

• A new partnership
Prenatal and postnatal development
Postnatal learning and development

Children come out of the womb primed to engage with their caregivers and parents are primed to engage with them.

Learning starts from birth and that learning and development are cumulative, with later development building upon earlier development.
Long term impacts of early childhood experience

Early experiences have life-long impacts including effects on the later achievements, social adjustments, mental health, physical health and longevity of individuals.

Processes identified:

• biological embedding
• accumulation processes, and
• developmental escalations of risk over time
Neurological development and plasticity
Neurobiology of interpersonal relationships
Social climate change
Economic analysis

Figure 1: Rate of return on investments by age

Returns per annum to a unit dollar invested

- 0-3 early years programs
- 4-5 preschool programs
- School
- Post-school
- Job training

Rate of return to investment in human capital

Source: Heckman (2008b)
Repeated measurement of key indicators

**Socio-economic status**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Developmentally vulnerable on at least one AEDI domain (%)</th>
<th>Developmentally vulnerable on at least two AEDI domains (%)</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Most disadvantaged SES communities</td>
<td>32.33</td>
<td>17.81</td>
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<tr>
<td>Most advantaged SES communities</td>
<td>16.30</td>
<td>7.18</td>
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What has the response been?
1,000 Days promotes action and investment in nutrition to build a strong foundation for children, their families and their nations to thrive.

State of the World’s mothers 2012

We support the importance of the first 1000 days in your baby’s life. We understand that health-related decisions you make during pregnancy and early childhood can influence your little one’s future health.

As your baby enters the second half of their first 1000 days, continued attention to nutrition is vital for health, both now and in the future.
| Programming for a healthy life — the first 1000 Days are important |
| 2015 CNRC Symposium 1000 days to make a difference: Preconception to toddler nutrition |
| The nutrition that your baby receives during their First 1000 Days of life (from pregnancy to two years) can have a positive influence on how they develop, grow and learn — not just now, but for his or her whole life. |
| The First 1000 days is the most critical |
The Australian First 1,000 Days

The First 1000 Days

To provide a coordinated, comprehensive intervention to address the needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children from conception to two years of age, markedly improving their future health and well-being.

To maximise the potential of all children, Australia has been developing the First 1000 Days Framework to focus attention on the nutrition, social, environmental, educational and family support services available for the developing infant and child. The strength of having an Australian model is that it can address the social and cultural values of education and nutrition needs of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander children, and is also consistent with the many levels of government and community partnerships.

Throughout 2019, our researchers are working to inform the development and implementation of the model, and to ensure that it is an informed process encompassing the values of spirit and integrity, responsibility, respect, equality, survival and prosperity, and responsibility. The result of the Symposium is to come up with a model that has a sound plan for action with a clear evidence-based strategy to support all vulnerable parents and their children in Australia, with a focus on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

To date, we have generated several resources - Symposium reports and programs, presentations and key - and media materials the First 1000 Days Australian Agenda. These can be accessed by clicking on the links below.
A key challenge

Experts

- Quality education and care
- Reciprocal interactions
- Commonalities
- Interact
- Can derail development
- Part of the solution
- Quality
- In the future

Key gaps

- Childcare
- Developmental process
- Developmental problems
- Genes and environment
- Stress
- Science
- Information
- Where solutions are found

Public

- Safety for workforce participation
- Passive absorption (sponges)
- Differences
- Separate influencers
- Not something children experience
- Part of the problem
- Quantity
- In the past

Commonalities

Differences

Interact

Passive absorption (sponges)

Can derail development

Not something children experience

Part of the solution

Part of the problem

Quality

Quantity

In the future

Where solutions are found
What needs to happen?

Continue to generate and translate convincing evidence

Raise public awareness

Raise awareness of government and service providers

Improve conditions under which families are raising kids

Join up local services at a place level – incl antenatal, universal, family support etc

Increase quality, access and affordability of universal services: MCH, ECEC

Co-design services with service users

Evidence informed information for parents
Our response - a new partnership
Our strategy

Technical paper
Investment mapping
Economic analysis
Policy round tables
Other relevant partner initiatives
Putting a value on early childhood education and care in Australia

Benefits of ECE:
- Improved cognitive skills
- Increased social skills
- Improved behavior

Benefits in 2012:
- $6.0 bn
- $10.3 bn
- $13.3 bn

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Tiered system of care

100%

Low need

2%-7%

10-15%

2-5%

Targeted: high intensity

High need

A research collaboration between the Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY), the Centre for Health Equity Training Research and Evaluation (CHETRE) and the Centre for Community Child Health (CCCH)
ONE IN FIVE

Think about when children are born developmentally vulnerable. This means they’re missing out on at least the things they need to be part of their lives.

THRIVING CHILDREN

Helping children have all the essentials they need. They are loved and safe. They are healthy, learning and growing. They are participating in community and their voices are heard. These children and their families also have access to positive, supportive systems and environments.

Missing out means some kids experience health, learning and developmental delays which will have a serious impact on their lives as they grow up.

If we can enable these kids to thrive, they’ll grow into thriving adults. That’s the best and simplest way to disrupt the cycle of social issues that affect all Australians.

The problems may be big and complicated. But we can’t accept that they are impossible. We just can’t solve them working on our own.

OUR PURPOSE

We want to change the reality of what’s possible, to deliver the vision that all of us have of Australia — as a country where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

OUR SHARED GOAL IS TO DRAMATICALLY IMPROVE THE LIVES OF 65,000 VULNERABLE CHILDREN IN AUSTRALIA.

How did we arrive at this number? According to the Australian Early Development Census (AEDC), 56,000 five-year-olds (one in five) in Australia were facing challenges in learning and life. This is not acceptable. Our first goal is to dramatically change this — because every child deserves the opportunity to thrive.
Reframing the early childhood development story

**Amplifier**
A metaphor to explain the function and importance of child care centres

**The story you’re telling:**
“Like an amplifier takes an incoming signal and makes it stronger and clearer, quality child development centres can help Australia’s children reach their full potential.”

**Strategic way to redirect thinking away from patterns such as:**
- Bubble Wrap
- Child Care = Babysitting
- Context is Key
- Environments = People
- Family Bubble
- Information is Everything
- Threat of Modernity
1. Child & family level

2. Community/system level

3. Policy/societal level

discussion/questions
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