INDIANA ROUNDTABLE ON
MENTAL HEALTH SUMMIT
#IRMHSUMMIT2023

Infant & Early Childhood Mental Health: An Investment for Our Future

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WELCOME

We are so happy to be here to talk about the babies!

How much time can we have???

Discussion Points for Today

- What are the links between early childhood experiences and adult outcomes/functioning?
- Intervention Points: What can parents and other caregivers do to help young children have positive outcomes and become productive adults?
- Big Opportunities: What innovative, sustainable steps and investments can we make to ensure the well-being of Indiana's babies and young children?

What are the links between early childhood and adult functioning?

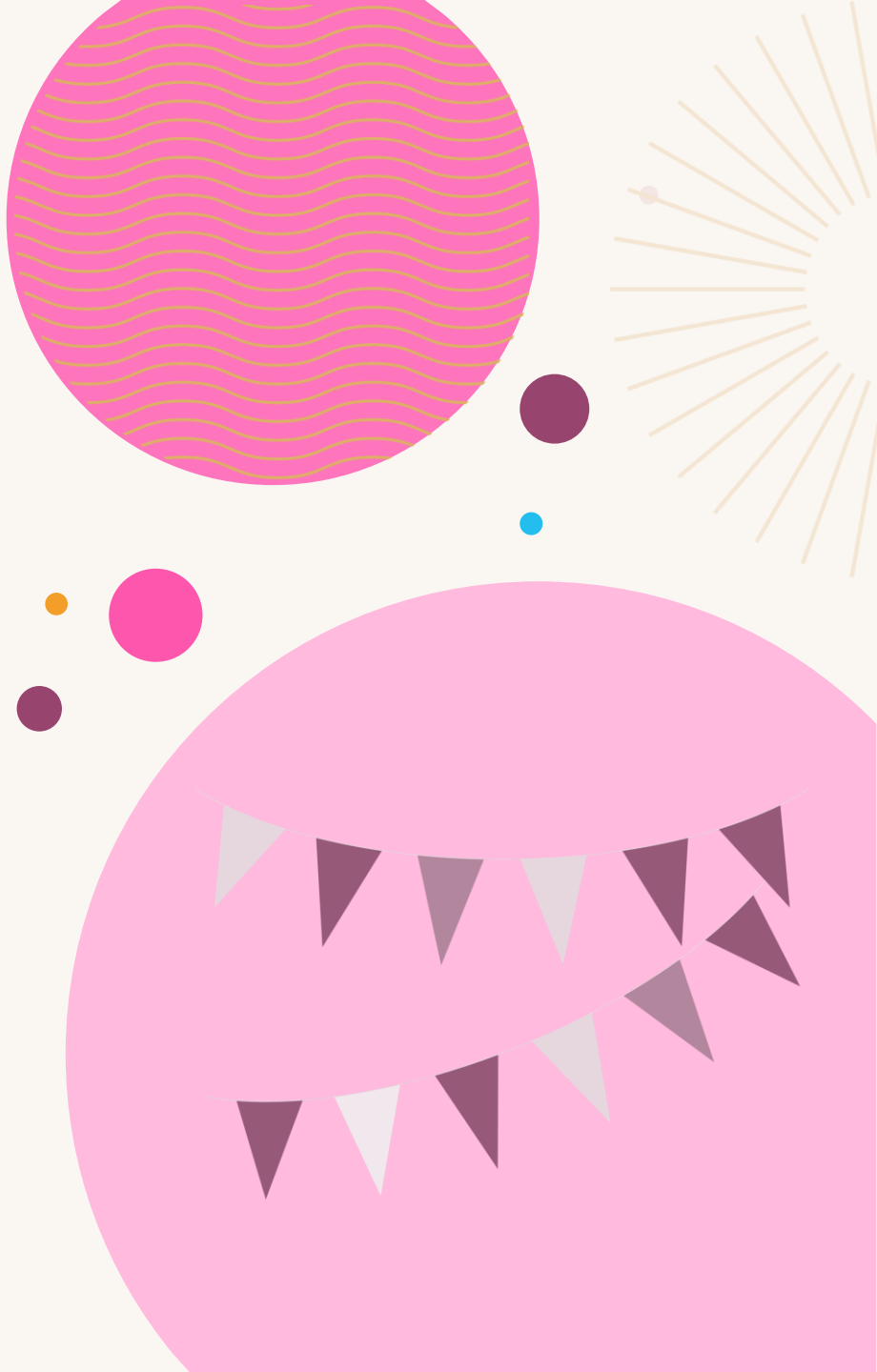
- Nature
  - Genetics
  - Physiology
- Nurture
  - Early relationships and social experiences
  - Early experiences of stress and trauma
- Environmental
  - Culture & Contextual

Nature, nurture, and environmental context interact

- Many animal studies have shown that some genes can be turned on or off by experiences
- Trauma experiences can interfere with development and can lead to physical and behavioral problems that may persist into adulthood
- Babies' brains require certain social experiences for development to occur optimally
- Challenging social contexts, such living in poverty or with systemic racism, can interfere with healthy development

What can caregivers do to help young children have positive outcomes?

- ***Ensure access to responsive caregiving and positive caregiving environments***



Infant/Early Childhood Mental Health Definition ZERO TO THREE (2002)

The child's developing capacity to:

- Form close and secure interpersonal relationships
- Experience, regulate and express emotions
- Explore the environment and learn
- All within the context of family, community, and cultural expectations

I/ECMH

"Directs our attention to the well-being of all infants and toddlers within the context of secure and nurturing relationships"

(Fitzgerald, Weatherston & Mann, 2011)

Attachment

Definition:

- A strong emotional tie
- To a specific person
- Who supports that child's need for safety and security

Relevance:

- Forming an attachment is the primary developmental task of the first year of life AND it can have lifelong ramifications

Attachment Basics

Human babies are wired to attach to an adult

- An adult that provides sensitive, responsive, and consistent caregiving is optimal
- Caregiving practices often look different across cultures
- But the function of helping the child feel psychologically and physically safe is felt to be universal

Serve and Return

- Attachment develops over time
- Through repeated interactions between the caregiver and the infant (serve and return)
- In which the caregiver attends to the baby's needs (co-regulation)
- Resulting in the baby's growing sense of physical and psychological safety (and later, self-regulation)

What kind of experiences or family circumstances are barriers to serve and return?

Attachment Relationships: Organized

- Secure
- Insecure
  - Ambivalent
  - Resistant

Attachment Relationship: Disorganized

- Disorganized
- Attachment Disorders

Attachment, Development, and Trauma

Selective attachment develops during the first years of life

As such, attachment relationships are seen as the vehicle for which all important learning occurs

When trauma experiences occur during this early period, we can see derailment of development in addition to distortions to relationship

Trauma and relationship are connected…

Positive and healthy interpersonal relationships can protect or buffer in the face of trauma

Interpersonal trauma can interfere with relationship (current and future)

The long reach of early childhood

- Attachment status is relatively stable over time
- Secure attachments are associated with many positive outcomes in adults including skills for school and work success
- Secure attachment is a buffer against trauma

INDIANA
A State that Works

Centering relationships

There is no such thing as a baby;

There is always a baby and someone else.

Donald Winnicott, MD, 1960

Young children’s well-being
depends on
caregiver well-being

What innovative, sustainable steps and investments can we make to ensure the well-being of Indiana's babies and young children?

Consider a range of 2-generation solutions!

- **Prevention:** Supports to all families
- **Promotion:** Support for families at risk
- **Intervention:** Help when the child or caregiver has additional needs

Existing resources for Hoosier families

- Prevention
  - Help Me Grow – pilot
  - LTSAE
- Promotion
  - Home Visiting (Nurse Family Partnership, Healthy Families Indiana)
- Intervention
  - Pregnancy Promise
  - First Steps

Critical Needs

- Promotion
  - Affordable early care/education for all children/families
  - Relationship supports where families are: Early Relational Care models in primary care
- Prevention
  - IECMH Consultation in childcare to prevent expulsion
  - Continue to develop the HV workforce
- Intervention
  - More evidence-based treatments that are widely accessible
    - Integrated in primary care
    - Increased service for EC in CMHC

Our big dream!

- Young children and families can readily access mental health support in their own back yards--no matter where they live in Indiana!

Opportunities

- Initiatives that support the workforce
  - GROW the Workforce
    - Development Initiatives
    - Thinking outside the box—who else can help?
  - MAINTAIN the Workforce
    - Attend to worker wellness
    - Compensation, workplace culture, reflective practices

Growing the Workforce

- Who can help?
  - Anyone who cares about/interacts with young children has a role to play
- What training is needed?
  - Infant/toddler development
  - Adult learning styles
  - Relationship based practice
- How do we retain this workforce?

Workforce Wellness Matters!

What we may not be prepared for is the emotional journey, what is awakened in response to what we see, what we hear, and what we feel as we enter into helping relationships with families and/or staff on behalf of babies, very young children and parents who courageously allow us into their lives.

(http://preventchildabuse.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/10/The-heART-of-Reflective-Supervision-Weatherston.pdf)

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Develop, Maintain and Support the I/EC Workforce

- Address the SDOH of the Workforce
  - Adequate compensation
  - Ensure positive work environments
  - Attend to worker wellness

- Professional development and advancement
  - Career ladders
  - Endorsement
  - Reflective Supervision/ Consultation

Community Leadership in Workforce Development

- FSSA - Office of Early Childhood and Out-of-School Learning
  - Infancy Onward – Mental Health America of Indiana
  - SPARK Learning Lab
- Early Years Initiative supported by Lilly Endowment, Inc.
  - Ivy Tech curriculum work for EC
  - Grants available this summer
- ECHO SUD – Riley/IU Psychiatry in collaboration with Pregnancy Promise
- Riley/IUH Pediatric Behavioral Health Initiative with support from state sources and the Riley Children's Foundation
  - Integrated care model for all ages
  - 2 pilots selected; will increase up to 20 sites
  - Birth to 5 years, prevention focus includes parent training for caregivers to begin this summer
  - Training Center of Excellence
- 2022 Infant Mental Health Summit in partnership with Riley Children’s Foundation
- 2023 Infant Mental Health Summit planning is happening now!

But what about the cost?

Return on investment

$1

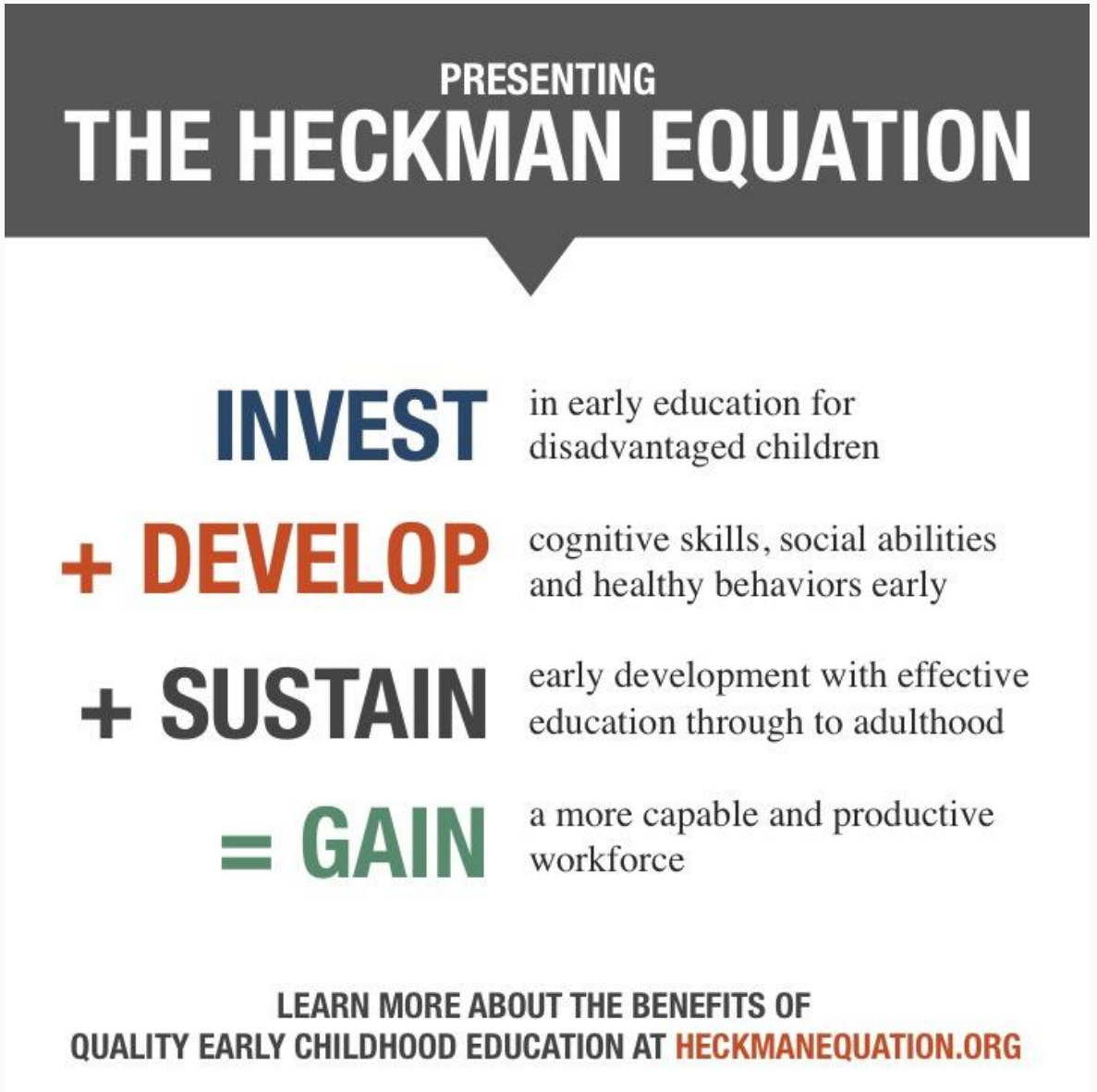
For every $1 spent on early childhood services…

$4 to $16

…we save as much as $16 on future services (such as special education, welfare, healthcare, prisons)…

=

…resulting in better outcomes in education, health, social behavior and employment.


PRESENTING
THE HECKMAN EQUATION
INVEST
in early education for disadvantaged children
+ DEVELOP
cognitive skills, social abilities and healthy behaviors early
+ SUSTAIN
early development with effective education through to adulthood
= GAIN
a more capable and productive workforce
LEARN MORE ABOUT THE BENEFITS OF
QUALITY EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION AT HECKMANEQUATION.ORG

What will you take from this session?

Take home points!

- Links between infancy and adult functioning are complicated and require attention to nature, nurture, environments, and how these interact
- Positive and consistent caregiving is foundational to optimal development and protects against trauma
- Interventions that support all caregivers of young children - *primary caregivers and the professional workforce* - are most effective

Learn More!

- Learn about IECMH in Indiana
  - Infancy Onward – www.infancyonward.org
- Learn about IECMH nationally
  - Zero to Three - www.zerotothree.org
  - The Alliance for the Advancement of IMH - www.allianceaimh.org
- Learn about ECMH Consultation
  - Center for Excellence at Georgetown - www.iecmhc.org/about/
- Learn about supporting the EC workforce
  - ReadyNation - www.strongnation.org/readynation
  - Home Visitor Professional Well-Being - www.jbassoc.com/resource/home-visitor-professional-well-being-what-it-is-and-why-it-matters/
- Learn about the return on investment – The Heckman Equation
  - https://heckmanequation.org/resource/the-heckman-equation/

Speak for the baby...

Thank You!

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