

Kindergarten readiness is more than knowing letters and numbers.

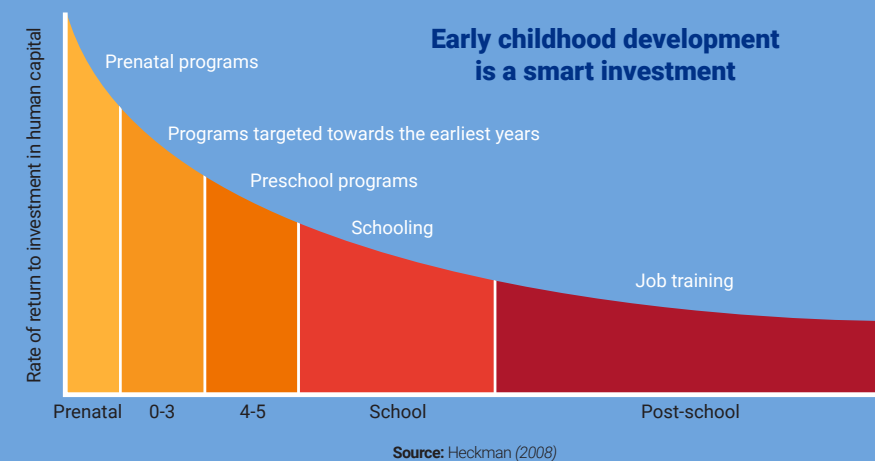
Both genes and experience shape children's brains. Supporting, caring and responsive relationships are central to lifelong health and learning, support brain development and buffer the effects of toxic stress and other risk factors.

Approximately 1,900 low-income children under five in Dane County are cared for by family, friends or neighbors, not in any type of accredited child care. These caregivers can benefit from information on brain development and their roles as a child's first teacher.

Children with multiple risk factors show greater developmental delays. Risk factors include low family income, low parental education, single parenthood, and teen parenthood. Disparities in child outcomes are present as early as nine months and grow larger by 24 months across cognitive, social, behavioral and health outcomes. Chronic stress, such as that from extreme poverty, abuse or neglect, can be "toxic" to developing brains.

Our Strategies:

1. Parents are engaged, informed and supported in how to be their child's first teacher to help their children be developmentally ready for school.
2. Holistic family supports are focused on 13 specific geographic areas.
3. Children are screened for developmental delays and families are provided appropriate supports for children who show potential delays.
4. A community of practice is created to support practitioners, case managers, and resource centers for those serving families with children under age five.
5. Healthcare professionals are knowledgeable of community supports and can easily link parents to such supports.



Why it matters

Education is a cornerstone for success in school, work and life. Ensuring the youngest children of Dane County are cared for and have fun as they become prepared for school benefits the whole community. The most formative years in a child's development are from birth to age five and United Way is there from the beginning, with Born Learning – an initiative that helps parents, grandparents and caregivers in their role as their child's first teacher.




- There are about 30,000 children under age 5 in Dane County – an astounding 15% of them live in poverty.
- Parents and caregivers are a child's first teachers.
- Brain research continues to demonstrate the importance of the first 5 years of life as a foundation for future success.
- Academic achievement gaps begin within the first year of life, and are measured at 18 months. Some children are already 2 years delayed by age 5.

Young children are our future and our future workforce. There are an additional 1,300 children who could benefit from home visiting if we had the resources to expand this work. **Will you join the fight today?**

Full mobilization plan is available at
www.unitedwaydanecounty.org/mobilization-plans



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Continue the conversation with us    



2014-2019 Executive Summary

Born Learning

Ensuring that children are cared for and have fun as they become prepared for school



The power of many. Working for all.

Children are born learning

Addressing the achievement gap in Dane County starts long before children enter school. Identifying and addressing issues early, during the most important and formative time of a child’s cognitive development, gives our children the opportunity to start school ready to learn. Children are Born Learning. We can’t afford to wait.

Read. Play. Talk. Learn. Across all socio-economic lines, many parents do not realize that learning starts at birth, that children’s brains are rapidly developing to build the foundation for future learning, and that children are learning all the time, even during routine day-to-day activities.

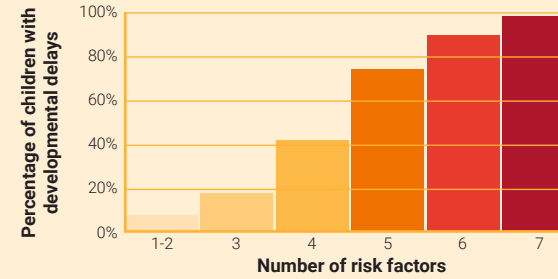
The most formative years in a child’s development are from birth to age five, when they are building a foundation for health and successful future learning.

Young children’s brains are quickly developing connections and creating a foundation of skills to help them throughout their lives. If children start behind, particularly in the first three years, or experience delays, **they may never have the opportunity to catch up.**

Investing in a child’s early education and development benefits our children’s futures and our community as a whole. Early intervention lowers the cost of later investment. Studies show \$4-17 returns for every dollar invested in early childhood programs.



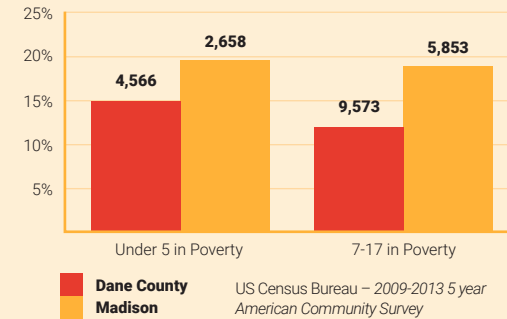
Significant adversity impairs development in the first three years



Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University. In Brief: The impact of early adversity on children’s development. Statistics from research from Barth, et al. (2008)

Significant adversity impairs development in the first three years of life—and the more adversity a child faces, the greater the odds of a developmental delay in their cognitive, language, or emotional development.

30,000 children under 5 in Dane County. 15% live in poverty. 20% under 5 in Madison live in poverty



Indicators of kindergarten readiness

Although all children develop in their own unique way, experts agree that the following are indicators of kindergarten readiness.

- Physical well-being and motor development** physical abilities, gross and fine motor skills
- Social and emotional development** ability to interact with others and capacity for self-control, interpret and express feelings
- Approaches to learning** uses skills and knowledge, enthusiasm, curiosity, persistence on tasks
- Language development** communication and developing literacy
- Cognition and general knowledge** thinking and problem-solving and knowledge of objects and the way the world works

Our plan

- Encourage play** (physical and mental) as a catalyst to learning
- Change the community conversation** about early childhood to reflect the importance of the first five years on the developing brain and future success
- Help the community connect the dots** between the relationship between early childhood and all other key issues such as the academic achievement gap, graduation, employment, and health
- Develop cultural competence** as a key part of successful early childhood practices where it is lacking and celebrate where it is done well
- Help the community play their role to offer environments that support early learning** and give parents and caregivers the information they need to provide the appropriate stimulating environment for their child.



Aspirational goal: 80% of our 4-year olds will be at age-expected development and ready to begin school by 2020



- Leopold
- Sun Prairie
- Verona
- North Side of Madison
- Hammersley/Theresa Terrace
- South and Southeast Madison (includes Owl Creek)
- Allied
- Balsam/ Russett
- Darbo
- Southwest Madison
- Middleton/Cross Plains
- Stoughton
- Marshall

