



NOVEMBER 14, 2014

Rethinking Education Accountability to Encourage Early Learning Strategies

PRESENTED BY ELLIOT REGENSTEIN



It's amazing what they absorb before they're five.

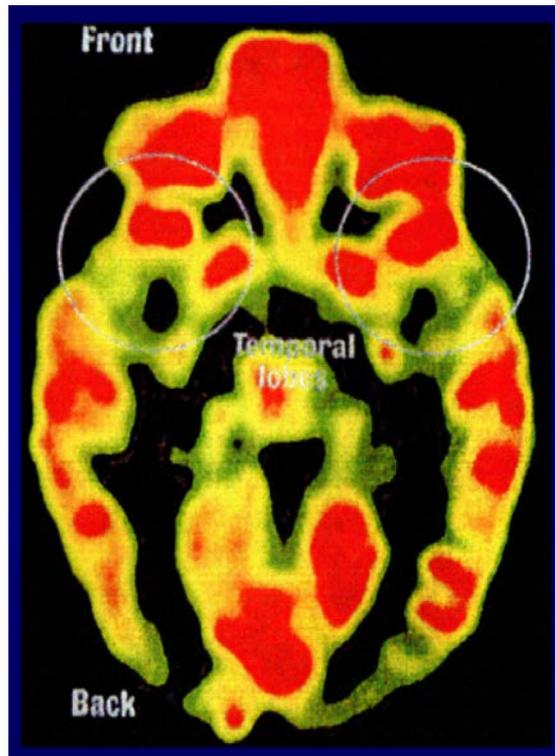




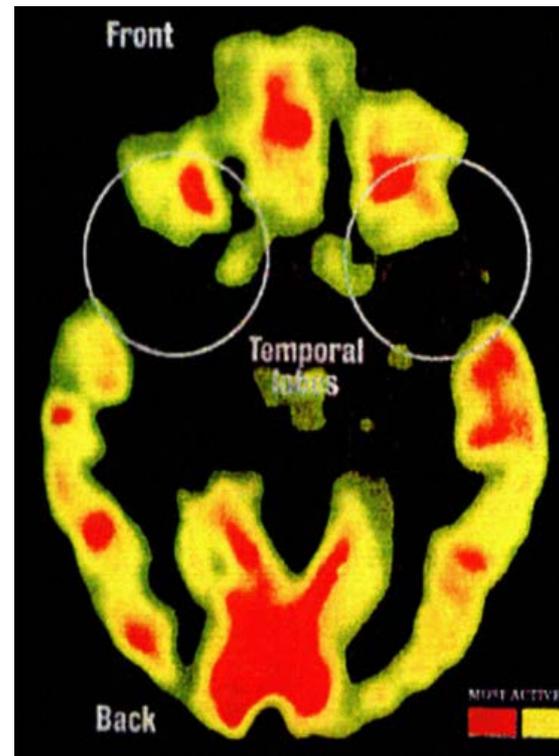
Lifelong Learning Starts Early

What happens early affects what happens after

Stress Inhibits Normal Brain Growth



Healthy Development



Development Affected by Environmental Stress



Lifelong Learning Starts Early

What happens early affects what happens after

Quality early learning environments help children:

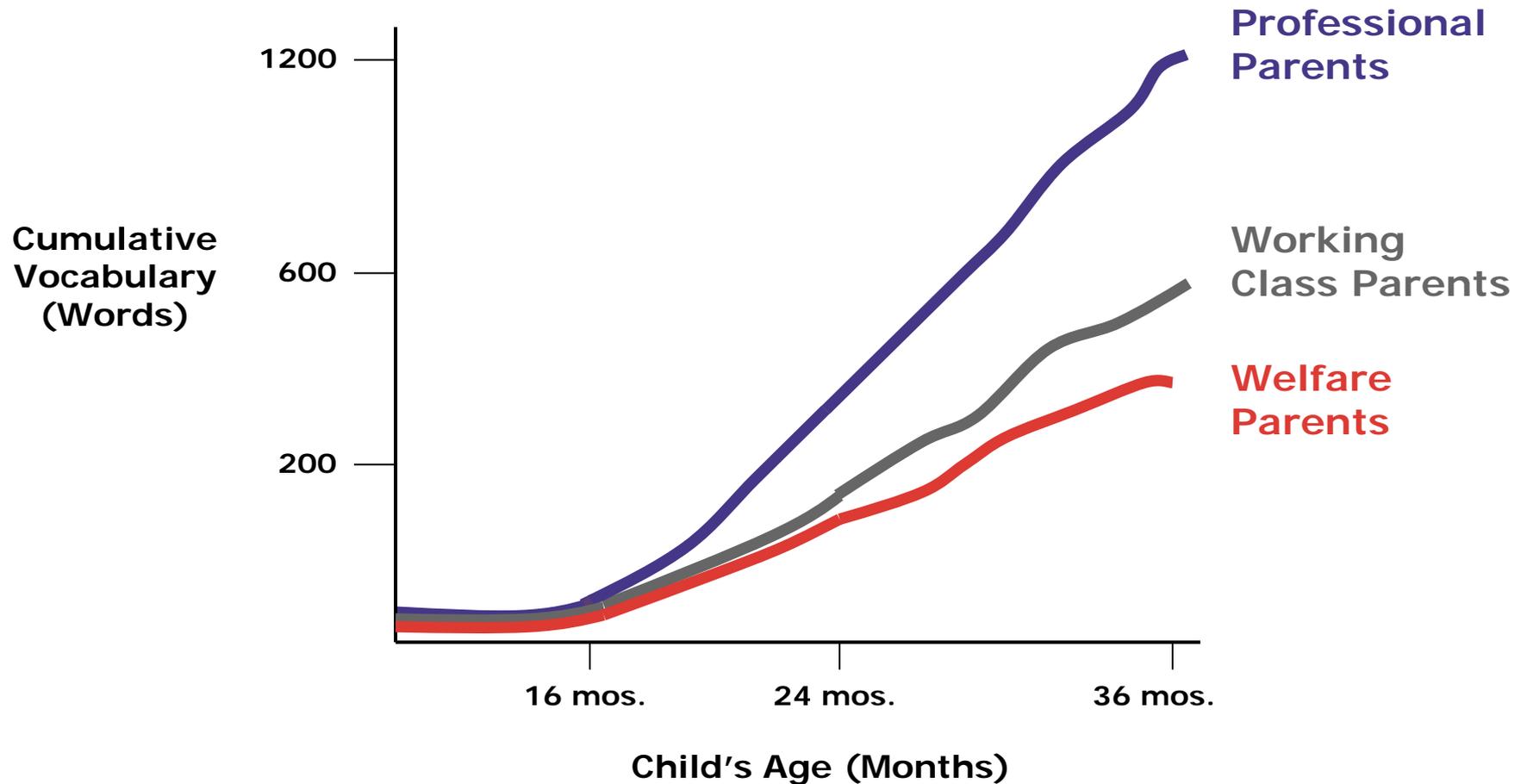
- Learn how to communicate
- Develop their self-confidence
- Grow their self-regulatory skills relating to stress and novelty
- Feel free to explore the world around them
- Foster, navigate and maintain relationships

A quality early learning environment lays the foundation children need for success in school and in life.



Lifelong Learning Starts Early

What happens early affects what happens after



Source: Hart & Risley (1995)



Lifelong Learning Starts Early

What happens early affects what happens after

Children who receive high-quality early learning are:

- Less likely to repeat a grade or need special education due to a lack of early intervention
- More likely to graduate from high school and attend college
- More likely to find a job
- More likely to earn more than peers who didn't receive early learning



What We Do

Every year, the Ounce of Prevention Fund...

SERVES

4,000 children and their families in Illinois through Head Start & Early Head Start

TRAINS

more than **2,500** early childhood professionals across the country

EDUCATES

3,000 program, community, and opinion leaders

ADVOCATES

for **400,000** young children in Illinois and **6,000,000** nationally

TEACHES

150 low-income children at Educare Chicago and nearly **3,000** through the Educare Learning Network

PARTNERS

with advocacy organizations in **17** states



Early Childhood on the Federal Front

In a fiscally-tough environment, early learning had sizeable FY14 victories

- Full restoration of more than \$500 million in sequester cuts to Head Start/Early Head Start and child care.
- Almost \$900 million in new money—\$500 million of that for Early Head Start infants and toddlers.
- Included in that new money was a new program—preschool development grants
 - Colorado applied for a Preschool Expansion Grant (eligible for up to \$15 million)
 - Winners will be announced at a White House Summit on Early Education December 10



Early Childhood in Colorado

Several ECE bills were recently passed, resulting in nearly **\$60 million in new funding.**

- **HB 14-1317** allows for contracting of slots, expands eligibility during 60-day job searches, and aligns the Colorado Child Care Assistance Program with other public benefit programs.
- The **School Finance Act** provides **5,000 new early learning slots** for preschool or full-day kindergarten for at-risk children.
- The **Student Success Act** includes **\$17M** in new funds for an early literacy initiative for K–3 struggling readers.



Rethinking K–12 Accountability to Encourage Early Learning Strategies



The Question with No Easy Answer

- You're a new school district superintendent.
- On average you're likely to have 3–4 years on the job.
- The most important metric of your success is test scores in 3rd grade and up.

Are you going to invest in early learning?



The Problems with the Current System

Three separate problems:

- Accountability in 3rd grade and up based too heavily on test scores
- Early learning accountability is a mishmash of different program requirements administered by different agencies, many of which aren't focused on educational quality
- K–2 has no real accountability at all



Rethinking the Current Theory of Action





The Solution: Measure Professional Practice Directly

- This is already being done in both early learning and K–12, just not as part of K–12 accountability
- Can be done at all ages—creating real accountability where it doesn't currently exist
- This gives diagnostic information that schools can act on
 - Moves away from thinking in broad categories and toward creative problem-solving



Potential Professional Practice Metrics

Incorporation of the **Five Essential (5E) Supports** for school improvement:

1. A coherent instructional guidance system
2. Professional capacity
3. Strong parent-community-school ties
4. Student-centered learning climate
5. Leadership to drive change



Child Outcome Metrics

Broaden our definition of child outcomes

- Assessments: beyond English and math
 - Colorado already is moving in this direction
- High school graduation
- New outcome measures that can be used earlier
 - NOT standardized assessments in early learning
 - Attendance?



Balancing Professional Practice and Child Outcomes

- Both are important
 - If you just measure professional practice, no idea how the kids are doing—and that's the goal
 - If you just measure child outcomes, no idea how the adults are doing—and adults need to change behavior to improve results
- Balance can change over time
 - In early years, professional practice should be the predominant measure



The New Accountability

- A mix of metrics balancing child outcomes with **professional practice** applicable to early learning through high school
 - Will require rethinking definitions of child outcomes and professional practices, and making dramatic shifts in metrics for all age spans
- Can still organize schools into performance tiers for public information purposes
- Supports to schools designed to address issues identified by the observation of professional practice
 - Will include a shift from relying on broad categories of activity to more **targeted and customized supports**



The Calls for a New Accountability

Since our proposed accountability framework was published in June:

- A group of leading reformers—led by the Center on Reinventing Public Education and the Thomas B. Fordham Institute—called for a new conversation about accountability.
- Leading education policy thinkers Linda Darling-Hammond and Gene Wilhoit have called for new accountability systems that include a focus on professional practice.
- A coalition of national education organizations—including teacher unions, school boards and superintendents, and others—have called for new accountability systems that include a focus on professional practice.



The Question That Now Has An Easy Answer

- You're a new school district superintendent.
- On average you're likely to have 3–4 years on the job.
- The most important metric of your success is the quality of the school experience and a broad range of outcomes for children, beginning no later than kindergarten.

Are you going to invest in early learning?



The Answer is Yes

- With real accountability birth through 2nd grade, the investment pays off immediately
- Build early learning into district goals
- Different models for delivering service
 - Providing it directly
 - Funding community providers
 - Partnering with community providers



*Questions or comments
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Thank you!