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## Early Childhood

1. **The Changing Face of the United States: The Influence of Culture on Early Child Development** The cultural beliefs, values, and behaviors within a family all have an impact on early child development.” This brief from Zero to Three includes a “summary of the latest research dealing with the impact of culture on early childhood services.” Read it at: [http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/Culture\\_book.pdf?docID=6921](http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/Culture_book.pdf?docID=6921)
2. **Active Role during Pregnancy Predicts Later Paternal Involvement** The best way to keep fathers involved in their children’s lives is not marriage. Involvement during the prenatal period is the key, according to a recent study at the University of Maryland. Read about the study at: <http://www.newsdesk.umd.edu/sociss/release.cfm?ArticleID=1805>
3. **The Science of Early Childhood Development** This brief is a summary of scientific presentations at the National Symposium on Early Childhood Science and Policy. Five basic concepts of early childhood development are summarized, which “illustrate why child development, particularly from birth to five years, is a foundation for a prosperous and sustainable society.” The brief can be found at: <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/content/downloads/inbrief-ecd.pdf>

## Early Education

4. **The Child Care Transition** “Today’s rising generation is the first in which a majority are spending a large part of early childhood in some form of out-of-home child care... This Report Card [from UNICEF] discusses the opportunities and risks involved in the child care transition, and proposes internationally applicable benchmarks for early childhood care and education – a set of minimum standards for protecting the rights of children in their most vulnerable and formative years.” The United States has achieved three of the ten benchmarks. Read the Report Card at: [http://www.unicef.ca/portal/Secure/Community/502/WCM/HELP/take\\_action/Advocacy/rc8.pdf](http://www.unicef.ca/portal/Secure/Community/502/WCM/HELP/take_action/Advocacy/rc8.pdf)
5. **Preschool Curriculum: What’s in it for Children and Teachers?** “A recent report from the Albert Shanker Institute discusses the benefits of aligning preschool curriculum with new research about how children learn in the academic areas of oral language, pre-literacy, mathematics, and science. It provides guidance on developmentally appropriate accomplishments for pre-k children, effective instructional practices, components of a strong curriculum, and working with English language learners.” (wording from the National Institute for Early Education Research) Read the report at: <http://www.ashankerinst.org/Downloads/Early%20Childhood%2012-11-08.pdf>
6. **Developing Early Literacy** The National Early Literacy Panel reviewed over 3000 studies and identified key research-based early literacy skills, including: alphabet knowledge; awareness of individual sounds in words; rapid naming of letters, numbers, objects and colors; ability to write, including name; short-term memory of the individual sounds in words; and five other skills that are less important. Find this report at: <http://www.nifl.gov/nifl/publications/pdf/NELPReport09.pdf>
7. **Experts Eschew Narrow Reading of “Developing Early Literacy”** An article from Edweek notes that “while the report of the National Early Literacy Panel is earning praise for providing a needed tool for improving early-literacy instruction, it is also stirring concerns that skills-driven instruction could become a dominant focus for 3- and 4-year-olds...” Read more at: <http://www.edweek.org/ew/articles/2009/01/08/18read.h28.html?tmp=662843975> (You may have to register to read the article.) Other experts on early childhood literacy who were concerned that the study would be misunderstood offer guidance to interpret the findings on the website of the National Institute of Early Education Research: <http://nieer.org/pdf/CommentaryOnNELPReport.pdf> .

## Early Learning

8. **Involvement among Resident Fathers and Links to Infant Cognitive Outcomes** This study from Child Trends found that father involvement in activities with their infant children was positively correlated with cognitive development. The benefits to the baby were greater for boys and infants with disabilities. Read the abstract of the study in the Journal of Family Issues: <http://jfi.sagepub.com/cgi/content/abstract/29/9/1211>

9. **School Readiness and Later Achievement** Across six major longitudinal studies, the strongest predictors of later school achievement are school-entry math, language/literacy, and attention skills, in that order. This finding holds for both boys and girls and for children from high and low socioeconomic backgrounds. Read the study in *Developmental Psychology*: <http://www.apa.org/journals/releases/dev4361428.pdf>
10. **Listen to Your Mother** This study found that the number of *different* words a low-income child hears is the critical factor for language acquisition. Find the study at Harvard's Graduate School of Education: <http://www.uknow.gse.harvard.edu/learning/LD5-1.html>

## Health

11. **The National Children's Study** This comprehensive longitudinal study of children's health began in January with the recruitment of families. It will look at how "how the environment and other factors affect youngsters' health, especially development of such conditions as autism, asthma, learning disabilities, diabetes and obesity. Scientists will examine a range of factors, from the diets of pregnant women and young children to the effects of chemicals used in plastics." Read more about the study in the Seattle Times: [http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2008229139\\_kidstudy05.html](http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/nationworld/2008229139_kidstudy05.html)
12. **Social Cohesiveness of Neighborhood Can Influence Children's Physical Activity** This study published in the *American Journal of Public Health* found that "a favorable social environmental was more strongly related to physical activity than the physical environment... Interventions aimed at improving physical activity levels in children should involve ways to enhance social cohesion in neighborhoods." Read a summary of the study at: <http://www.healthinschools.org/News-Room/News-Alerts/January-2009/Social-Cohesiveness-of-Neighborhood-Can-Influence-Childrens-Physical-Activity.aspx>
13. **Newborn Screening Now Required Across US** Four years ago, only about one in three babies in the United States was born in a state that required newborns to be screened for a host of conditions. But by the end of 2008, all 50 states and the District of Columbia had either laws or rules requiring newborn screening for at least 21 disorders. Montana screens for 29 disorders. Read more at the March of Dimes: <http://marchofdimes.com/peristats/>

## Media

14. **Marketing Junk Food to Children in Quebec** In the Canadian Province of Quebec, it is illegal to advertise to children under 13. The law is a popular one, with 90% of Quebecers responding to a survey that such a law is necessary and 60% saying it should be more strictly enforced. Read more about this law and junk food advertisers at the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood: <http://www.commercialfreechildhood.org/news/2009/01/junkfoodwars.html>
15. **Consuming Kids: The Sexualization of Children and Other Commercial Calamities** Presentations from this event, sponsored by the Campaign for a Commercial-Free Childhood, can now be viewed on You Tube at: [http://www.youtube.com/view\\_play\\_list?p=9D3BCD07A6A7F2B7&page=1](http://www.youtube.com/view_play_list?p=9D3BCD07A6A7F2B7&page=1)
16. **TV Ratings for Kids' Shows Don't Reflect Aggressive Content** This study found "higher levels of physical aggression in designated children's programs (rated TV-Y and TV-Y7) than among programs for general audiences (rated TV-G, TV-PG, etc.)", indicating that ratings don't reflect what parents might think they do. Read more about this study at: <http://www.physorg.com/news154801488.html>

## Social-Emotional and Mental Health

17. **The Serious Need for Play** "Free, Imaginative play is crucial for normal social, emotional and cognitive development. It makes us better adjusted, smarter and less stressed." Read more in this article from *Scientific American*: <http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=the-serious-need-for-play>
18. **Tempering Toddler Tantrums Now May Prevent Aggression Later** Toddler temper tantrums are normal. However, extremely violent outbursts may be cause for concern. Read more at in

this article from Scientific American: <http://www.sciam.com/article.cfm?id=tempering-toddler-tantrums>

19. **Mental Health Problems in Early Childhood Can Impair Learning and Behavior for Life** “Significant mental health problems can and do occur in young children. In some cases, these problems can have serious consequences for early learning, social competence, and lifelong health. Furthermore, the foundations of many mental health problems that endure through adulthood are established early in life through the interaction of genetic predispositions and sustained, stress-inducing experiences.” Download the full article from the National Scientific Council on the Developing Child: [http://www.developingchild.net/pubs/wp/Mental\\_Health%20Problems\\_Early%20Childhood.pdf](http://www.developingchild.net/pubs/wp/Mental_Health%20Problems_Early%20Childhood.pdf)

## **Family Strengthening/Child Abuse and Neglect**

20. **Population-Based Prevention of Child Maltreatment: The U.S. Triple P System Population Trial** “A new study shows [that] when parents have access to proven parenting interventions designed to address problems all families face—from tantrums to encouraging good behavior — key measures of child maltreatment fall.” To read an abstract or the full article, go to: <http://www.springerlink.com/content/a737l8k76218j7k2/fulltext.pdf> For more information about Triple P (Positive Parenting Program), go to: <http://www5.triplep.net/>
21. **Child Maltreatment Leads to Long-Term Lower Quality of Life** “People who were maltreated as children can suffer from physical and emotional ramifications decades later,” according to a study from the University of Georgia. The researchers note that “highlighting the long-term damage associated with child maltreatment helps make the case for funding prevention efforts.” Read more at: [http://www.uga.edu/news/artman/publish/080528\\_maltreatment\\_victims.shtml](http://www.uga.edu/news/artman/publish/080528_maltreatment_victims.shtml)
22. **Importance of Early Neglect for Childhood Aggression** “This longitudinal study suggests that child neglect in the first 2 years of life may be a more-important precursor of childhood aggression than later neglect or physical abuse at any age.” <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/121/4/725>
23. **State Kinship Care Policies for Children that Come to the Attention of Child Welfare Agencies** “Increasingly... states are using relatives to care for abused and neglected children to avoid having to take children into custody.” However, “child welfare agencies offer significantly less financial and other assistance” to kith and kin. Read more in this Child Trends study at: [http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child\\_Trends-2009\\_02\\_24\\_FR\\_KinshipCare.pdf](http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child_Trends-2009_02_24_FR_KinshipCare.pdf)

## **Advocacy and Policy**

24. **Analysis of Early Care and Education Provisions in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009** Read this analysis from Zero to Three at: <http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/EconomicRecoveryPackagePrimer.pdf?docID=7181>
25. **Congressional Committees Addressing Infant and Toddler Issues** This list from Zero to Three has updated lists of Congressional Committee members and the issues each Committee deals with: [http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/Congressional\\_Committee\\_Members\\_2009.pdf?docID=7422](http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/Congressional_Committee_Members_2009.pdf?docID=7422)
26. **SCHIP Reauthorization and Cover the Uninsured Week** In early February, Obama signed a bill that will expand SCHIP (State Children’s Health Insurance Program) health insurance coverage to an additional four million children. Without this action, SCHIP would have expired on March 31<sup>st</sup>. Read more at the Kaiser Network: [http://www.kaisernetwork.org/daily\\_reports/rep\\_index.cfm?DR\\_ID=56827](http://www.kaisernetwork.org/daily_reports/rep_index.cfm?DR_ID=56827) Cover the Uninsured Week is a nationwide effort to enroll eligible children in CHIP and is scheduled for March 22-28 this year. For more information, go to: [www.covertheuninsured.org](http://www.covertheuninsured.org).
27. **The Montana Legislature Website** includes information on bills in the current session and ways to contact your legislator. Go to the website at: <http://leg.mt.gov/css/Sessions/61st/default.asp>