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### **Early Childhood**

1. **The Hurried Infant** "In 1981 a book called The Hurried Child [by David Elkind] warned us that children were being pushed too far, too fast... Today it seems the process has only intensified. There are pre-natal stimulation kits to induce fetal learning. Baby Einstein toys. There is also

much discussion of how to smart-wire baby's brain to expand cognitive powers, foster language abilities and improve sleep patterns." This new "terrain of Super Babies" is explored on a CBC audio broadcast which can be accessed on the PLUK newsfeed at:

[http://pluk.mt.typepad.com/pluk\\_news\\_feed/2009/03/cbc-audio-the-hurried-infant.html](http://pluk.mt.typepad.com/pluk_news_feed/2009/03/cbc-audio-the-hurried-infant.html)

2. **America's Youngest Outcasts** This new report from the National Center on Family Homelessness found that one in fifty children in America are homeless every year, based on statistics that were gathered prior to the current economic downturn. It includes a report card for each state based on the following four domains: extent of child homelessness, child well-being, risk for child homelessness, and state policy and planning efforts. Montana's rank is 33. Read the report at: <http://www.homelesschildrenamerica.org/>.
3. **Home Visiting Programs: A Brief Overview of Selected Models** This is a short summary of home visiting models that includes short descriptions of target populations, service intensity and duration, estimates of the cost to provide services to a family, and research references. Read it at: [http://www.friendsnrc.org/download/home\\_visit.pdf](http://www.friendsnrc.org/download/home_visit.pdf)
4. **Childhood Poverty, Chronic Stress, and Adult Working Memory** This study from Cornell University found that "childhood poverty is inversely related to working memory in young adults. Furthermore, this prospective relationship is mediated by elevated chronic stress during childhood." Read the article which was published in the Proceedings for the National Academy of Sciences journal at: <http://www.pnas.org/content/early/2009/03/27/0811910106.full.pdf+html>

## Early Education

5. **Early Care and Education Quality and Child Outcomes** "While research to date is quite consistent in showing that measures of quality in early care and education settings and measures of children's development are linked when examined in individual research studies, there has not been a systematic examination of the strength of these relationships across multiple studies. This research brief [from Child Trends] summarizes 97 findings from 20 research projects." Find it at: [http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child\\_Trends-2009\\_5\\_21\\_RB\\_earlycare.pdf](http://www.childtrends.org/Files//Child_Trends-2009_5_21_RB_earlycare.pdf)
6. **State of Preschool 2008** This Yearbook was recently released by the National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) and "shows impressive expansion in enrollment and spending" for preschool. Read it at: <http://nieer.org/yearbook/> An article in NIEER's *Preschool Matters* journal, "Can State Preschool be Saved?", notes that these gains may be short-lived without more federal aid. Read the follow-up article at: <http://nieer.org/psm/index.php?article=285>
7. **Math and Science in Preschool: Policy and Practice** The National Institute for Early Education Research (NIEER) recently released this policy brief which notes that "preschool educators tend not to support mathematics and science learning" and that "little is known about effective teaching of mathematics in preschool and even less is known about science." Policy implications are then explored. Read the brief at: <http://nieer.org/resources/policybriefs/20.pdf>
8. **Crisis in the Kindergarten: A New Report on the Disappearance of Play** Creative play is crucial for children's development of social and learning skills and their long-term success in school. However, the Alliance for Childhood has found that "many kindergartens spend 2 to 3 hours per day instructing and testing children in literacy and math-with only 30 minutes per day or less for play." Find this report at: [http://www.allianceforchildhood.org/sites/allianceforchildhood.org/files/file/kindergarten\\_report.pdf](http://www.allianceforchildhood.org/sites/allianceforchildhood.org/files/file/kindergarten_report.pdf)

## Early Learning

9. **Talking Math to Kids** Two Wilfrid Laurier University professors have found that "when parents play with their young children, they hardly spend any time teaching them about amounts and numbers. Yet if parents knew how to talk about math concepts, they'd give their children an advantage that would last all through their school years." Read the full article about their research in the Guelph Mercury newspaper: <http://www.guelphmercury.com/pdfs/2009May7/A05.PDF>
10. **Peer Effects on Children's Language Achievement during Pre-Kindergarten** This study from the University of Virginia found that children's ability to speak and understand language developed more quickly when other children in the program had more advanced language skills.

The abstract from Child Development can be found at:  
<http://www3.interscience.wiley.com/journal/122385998/abstract>

11. **Environmental Stimulation, Parental Nurture and Cognitive Development in Humans** Two cognitive skills—language and memory—are essential to children’s learning and success in school. This study from the University of Pennsylvania found that environmental stimulation determines language development and parental nurturing determines memory development. Read more at <http://www.psych.upenn.edu/~mfarah/envlstim.pdf>.

## Health

12. **Sensory Food Aversions in Infants and Toddlers** “Sensory Food Aversions is one of the most common feeding disorders during the first three years of life, when young children are transitioned to self-feeding, and when issues of autonomy and dependency have to be negotiated between parents and child. In this article, the author discusses "picky eaters" and the importance of distinguishing between children who experience minor food aversions and those for whom their reluctance to eat may become a serious feeding problem.” Read this article from Zero to Three written by Irene Chatoor: [http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/29-3\\_Chatoorv.pdf?docID=7961](http://www.zerotothree.org/site/DocServer/29-3_Chatoorv.pdf?docID=7961)
13. **Overweight Preschoolers Show Early Signs of Heart Trouble** A researcher who analyzed data from the National Health and Nutrition Examination Survey found that children ages 3-6 who had large waist circumferences and high body mass indices also had lower levels of “good” HDL cholesterol and higher levels of C-reactive protein, an indicator for heart disease. The results underscore the importance of obesity prevention in early childhood. Read the article in the Miami Herald at: <http://www.miamiherald.com/519/story/945624.html>.
14. **The Problem with Doctor Bob’s Alternative Vaccine Schedule** “In October 2007, Dr Robert Sears, in response to growing parental concerns about the safety of vaccines, published *The Vaccine Book: Making the Right Decision for Your Child...* At the back of the book, Sears includes "Dr Bob's Alternative Vaccine Schedule," a formula by which parents can delay, withhold, separate, or space out vaccines... This article examines the reasons for the popularity of Sears' book, deconstructs the logic and rationale behind its recommendations, and describes how Sears' misrepresentation of vaccine science misinforms parents trying to make the right decisions for their children.” Read the full article in Pediatrics that was written by Paul Offit and Charlotte Moser: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/123/1/e164>.

## Media

15. **Parents of Preschoolers: Expert Media Recommendations and Ratings Knowledge, Media-Effects Beliefs, and Monitoring Practices** In this Pediatrics article, researchers examined “preschooler parents’ knowledge about expert recommendations for young children's screen media experience, their knowledge of specific screen media ratings, their beliefs about screen media effects, and actual monitoring practices.” They found that parents’ knowledge of recommendations and ratings were poor, and that young children view an average of 12 hours of television every week, which is higher than the recommended amount. Many parents also thought that television is potentially beneficial to the very young.” Find the article at: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/123/3/981>
16. **Six, Going on Sixteen** A “K-1 teacher [writes about her struggle] to cope with the impact of commercial culture on her classroom community. Overwhelmed at first by her five- and six-year-old students’ obsession with sexualized media, {she} sought out resources... ‘to get a better handle on what felt to me like a crisis in the early childhood realm.’” (from Campaign for a Commercial Free Childhood) She describes her efforts to ‘bring back childhood’ to her classroom in this article on Rethinking Schools Online: [http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/23\\_03/six233.shtml](http://www.rethinkingschools.org/archive/23_03/six233.shtml).

## Social-Emotional and Mental Health

17. **Unwanted or Mistimed Pregnancies** This study from Child Trends finds that “unwanted or mistimed pregnancy is associated with higher levels of depression among fathers and with lower mother-father relationship happiness.” Find an abstract of the study and its implications in *Parenting: Science and Practice* at: <http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a908548017~db=all~order=page>.
18. **Mothers of Multiples at Increased Risk for Postpartum Depression** Compared to mothers who give birth to one baby, mothers of twins or multiples are 43% more likely to experience moderate to severe depressive symptoms within nine months after the births. However, “few mothers seek professional help.” Read the full article from the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health at: [http://www.jhsph.edu/publichealthnews/press\\_releases/2009/choi\\_multiple\\_births.html](http://www.jhsph.edu/publichealthnews/press_releases/2009/choi_multiple_births.html).
19. **Autism Spectrum Disorders Knowledge Path** “The Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Library has released a new edition of its knowledge path on autism spectrum disorders (ASD), an electronic guide to resources about screening for ASD, diagnosis, treatment and intervention, communication, education, vocational challenges, and impact on family life. It contains separate sections on early identification, early intervention and education, concerns about vaccines, and environmental health research. It will be updated periodically and is available at:” [http://www.mchlibrary.info/KnowledgePaths/kp\\_autism.html](http://www.mchlibrary.info/KnowledgePaths/kp_autism.html).

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

20. **Child Abuse and Neglect (CAN) Prevention: Reports from the Field and Ideas for the Future** This report from the Rand Corporation summarizes thinking and priorities of the CAN Prevention field as well as new and innovative ideas. Read it at: [http://www.rand.org/pubs/working\\_papers/WR632/](http://www.rand.org/pubs/working_papers/WR632/)
21. **Promoting Healthy Parenting Practices Across Cultural Groups:** This CDC research brief summarizes the results from a series of focus groups that was held with parents of different cultural backgrounds: African-Americans, American Indians (both urban and rural), Asian-Americans, Hispanic-Americans, and non-Hispanic Whites. Parenting programs can use the information to be more sensitive to cultural norms while teaching basic parenting practices that are accepted across cultures. The brief also suggests that programs explore ways to reframe parenting strategies so that they are more culturally appropriate and relevant. Find the brief at: [http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/images/DVP/Healthy\\_Parenting\\_RIB\\_a.pdf](http://www.cdc.gov/ncipc/images/DVP/Healthy_Parenting_RIB_a.pdf)
22. **Preventing Head Trauma from Abuse in Infants** This study, published in the *Canadian Medical Association Journal*, looked at the effects of using the Period of PURPLE Crying materials with families after the birth of a baby. The study’s results indicated that the PURPLE materials increased knowledge about infant crying and the dangers of shaking. Using the materials also resulted in mothers walking away more often from an infant who was crying inconsolably. Read an abstract of the article at: <http://www.cmaj.ca/cgi/content/abstract/180/7/727?maxtoshow=&HITS=10&hits=10&RESULTFORMAT=&fulltext=head+trauma&searchid=1&FIRSTINDEX=0&volume=180&issue=7&resourcetype=HWCIT>.

### **Advocacy and Policy**

23. **The Role of Preschool Home-Visiting Programs in Improving Children's Developmental and Health Outcomes** The American Academy of Pediatrics has revised its policy on home visiting. The new policy, released in February, “reviews the history of home visiting in the United States and reaffirms the support of the American Academy of Pediatrics for home-based parenting education and support.” Find it at: <http://aappolicy.aappublications.org/cgi/content/full/pediatrics;123/2/598>
24. **Initiative for New Mothers Has a Healthy Outlook on Hill** “A proposal from President Obama to create a nurse home-visitation program for first-time mothers has won bipartisan support in Congress, and proponents are optimistic that it could receive funding this year. Under the program, nurses would provide home care to low-income mothers-to-be and to the new mothers and their infants, at a cost of \$8.6 billion over 10 years.” Read more from Congressional Quarterly Politics at: [http://www.cqpolitics.com/wmspage.cfm?parm1=2&docID=news-000003096828&mp=Most\\_Emailed](http://www.cqpolitics.com/wmspage.cfm?parm1=2&docID=news-000003096828&mp=Most_Emailed).

25. **The Family Tax Relief Act** has been introduced in Congress by Senators Lincoln (D-AR) and Snowe (R-ME). It would address the problem of high costs for child care and would extend more child care tax credits to low-income families. Read the bill and find out its status at: <http://thomas.loc.gov/cgi-bin/query/z?c111:H.R.436>.
26. “The **Early Experiences Matter Policy Guide** is a set of tools for taking action and improving public policies that impact the lives of infants, toddlers, and their families. It offers options and strategies to use in efforts to affect policy change. Each section (e.g., good health, strong families, positive early learning experiences, systems) includes mini-policy briefs, practical tools, in-depth policy papers and more.” Find it at: [www.zerotothree.org/policyguide](http://www.zerotothree.org/policyguide).

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