



Evidence-Based Policy Solutions for the Early Years

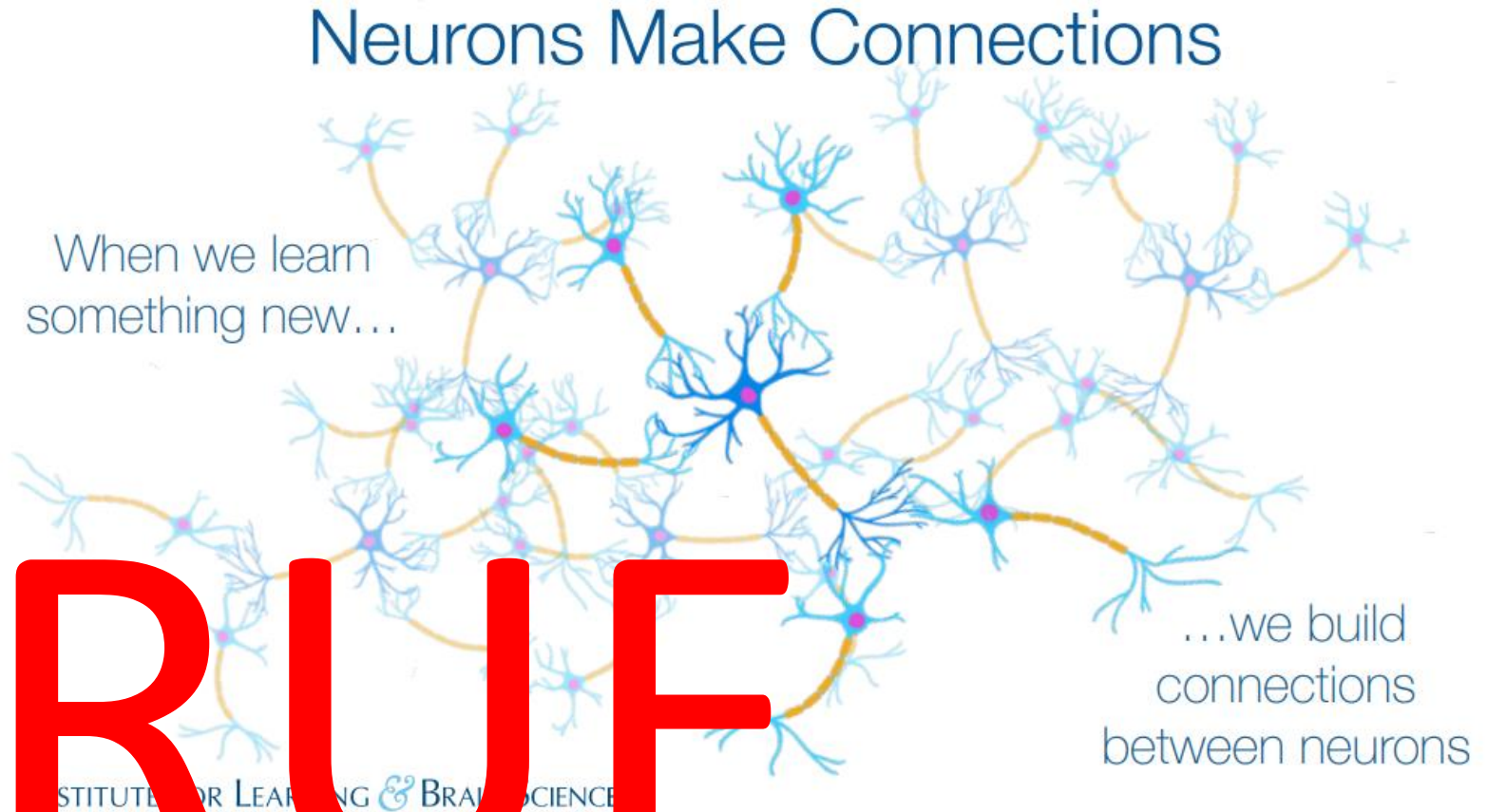
Alison May, Policy Specialist

June 5, 2022

Test Your Knowledge | True or False

In the first few years of life, **more than 1 million new neural connections are formed every second.**

TRUE

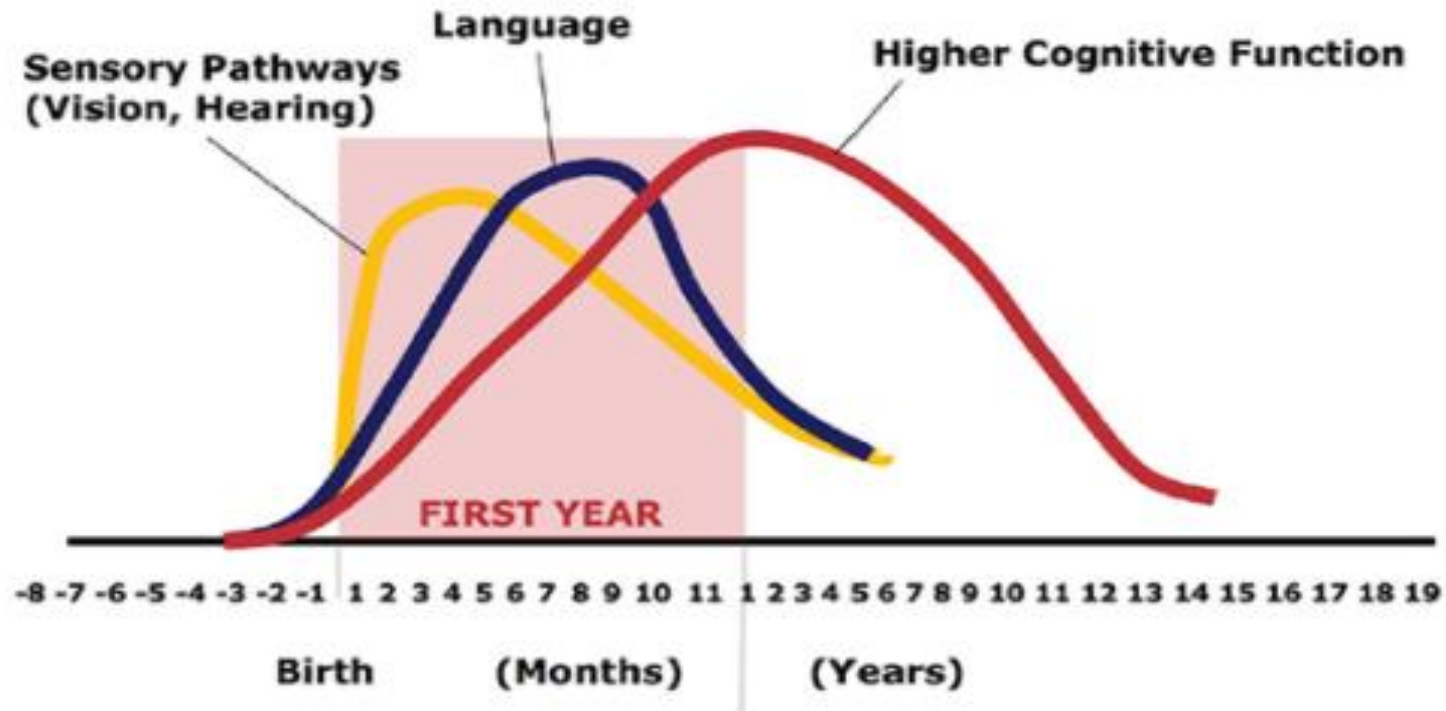


The Early Years Matter



Human Brain Development

Neural Connections for Different Functions Develop Sequentially



The Business and Economic Case

For early childhood programs and policies

“High-quality child care, especially for infants and toddlers, helps parents today and improves the workforce of tomorrow.”

— **William Canary**
President and CEO, Business Council
of Alabama (2003-2018)



The infant-toddler child care crisis could cost Arkansas **\$348 million** each year in lost earnings, productivity, and revenue.

Louisiana: A Case Study on Business Advocates for Childcare

There are over 418,000 children under age six in Louisiana, 67% of whom have working parents. Yet, as in many states, the number of affordable, high-quality childcare options does not meet this demand, forcing many Louisiana families to choose between leaving the workforce or placing their children in unregulated care.

Across the state, chambers of commerce, business alliances, companies, and nonprofits have recognized this problem and now view high-quality childcare as a two-generation solution to solving some of the state's most pressing challenges: school readiness and the skills gap. Together, these groups have played a critical role in catalyzing improvements to the childcare system, garnering increased public attention and investment.

With a childcare challenge that threatens the strength and productivity of the workforce of today and tomorrow, the stakes for finding solutions are high. This case study looks at how business leaders became advocates and joined forces with policymakers, educators, and others in the community to improve the childcare system.

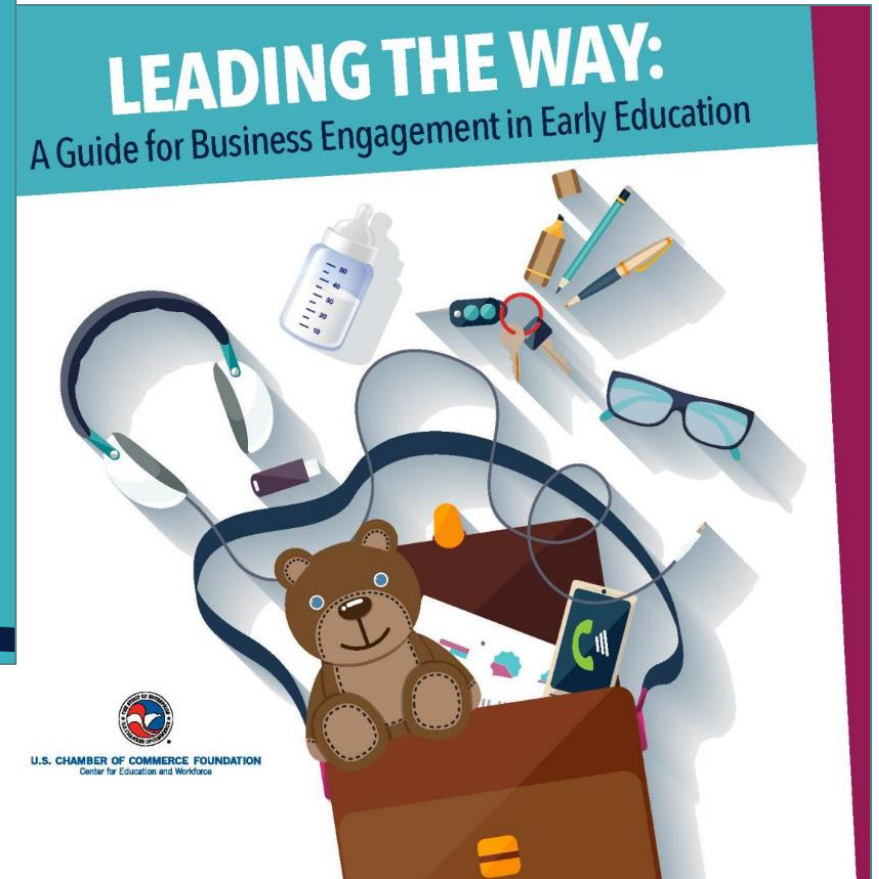
LOUISIANA: THE STATE OF PLAY

Businesses and companies across the country understand that breakdowns in childcare affect the bottom line. Breakdowns in care occur for a number of reasons, including when a child is sick and cannot attend school or a care facility, when an employee has a nanny who is taking vacation or sick time, when an employee must travel for work and have childcare, or when there are school closures (e.g. inclement weather or holidays). In Louisiana, the costs of these breakdowns have been quantified. According to the 2017 report Losing Ground, employers stand to lose \$816 million each year owing to these breakdowns.¹

¹ Louisiana Policy Institute for Children 'Losing Ground Report: How Child Care Impacts Louisiana's Workforce Productivity and the State Economy', May 2017.

CASE STUDY

Chambers of commerce, business alliances, companies, and nonprofits view high-quality childcare as a two-generation solution to solving some of the state's most pressing challenges: school readiness and the skills gap.







Legislative Areas of Focus

Child care subsidy and quality

Home visitation

Early childhood financing

Pre-kindergarten and school readiness

Early childhood governance

Prenatal, infants and toddlers

Equity in early childhood

Teachers and workforce

In which area do we see the most legislative action annually?



Legislative Trends

Prenatal through prekindergarten



Child Care



Home Visiting



Early Childhood
Workforce



Paid Family and
Medical Leave



Latest research

Evidence-based solutions

Policy examples and innovations

Emerging funding and financing

Bold ideas

NCSL + Results-Driven Governing Program



The ABCs of Evidence-Informed Policymaking

Principles and Strategies for State Policymakers

State leaders make policy and budget decisions that directly impact important outcomes for residents—such as public safety, health and well-being, transportation and educational attainment. Using the best available research and data to guide those decisions is the key to evidence-informed policymaking. Evidence can help officials from all branches of government strategically target resources to programs and policies that are effective, promote innovation, improve transparency in budgeting, and build and sustain a culture of continuous learning and improvement.

Always important, the role of data- and research-driven decision-making is particularly crucial in times of lower revenues and budget deficits, such as those states are facing as the result of the

global coronavirus pandemic. These circumstances make it even more critical for policymakers to use reliable information and target limited resources to the most effective programs and policies.

The following principles were developed by a working group of state legislators, senior legislative and executive branch staff, researchers and NCSL leaders who are dedicated to advancing the use of evidence in their states. These principles, listed in the form of ABCs, identify and address common challenges to evidence-informed policymaking and offer steps policymakers can take to implement and sustain an evidence-informed approach to governance. State approaches for each principle are featured in the appendix.



Governing for Results Network

NATIONAL CONFERENCE OF STATE LEGISLATURES

THE COUNCIL OF STATE GOVERNMENTS

THE POLICY LAB AT BROWN UNIVERSITY

Here to Support You!

- **Resources**

- Early Childhood Policy Overview [Webpage](#)
Early Care and Education Legislative [Database](#)
- 2021 Enacted Legislation on Early Care and Education [Report](#)
- Born in a Pandemic, Part I: States Respond to Decline in Maternal Well-Being [Article](#)

- **Questions?**

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Pamela Buckley, Ph.D.

Principal Investigator

Expertise includes:

- Statistics
- Intervention research
- Evaluation methodology
- Policy analysis

Former school psychologist

Worked for Blueprints since
2016



Table Discussion

- What stands out to you looking at the registry?
- Are you familiar with these programs?
 - Are they in your state?
- What programs are implemented, or in the implementation process, in your state that target 0-4 (infant and early childhood)?
- Who from your state and network will you share this registry?
 - Or who do you think might like to know about it (such as policymakers or staff, executive branch, program implementors or others)?



<https://www.blueprintsprograms.org>

