

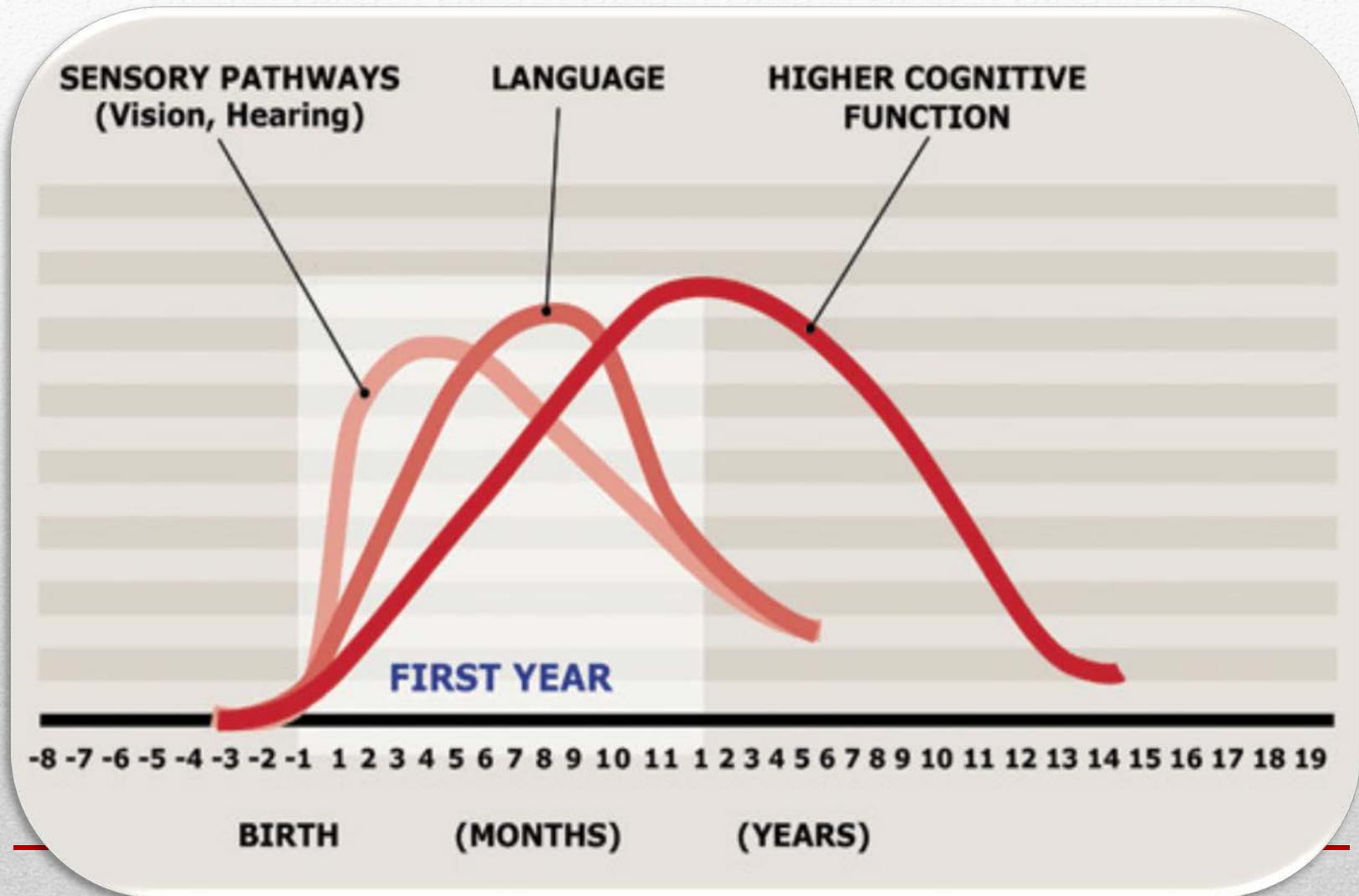
# Early Childhood Education in AR

AR Grantee and  
Community Roundtable

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May 29-30, 2013

# Brain Development



- 134,698 (58%) Arkansas children under age six live in families with incomes below 200% Federal Poverty Level (Family of four below \$44, 100 annually)
- 41,756 (31%) of these children live below 100% Federal Poverty Level (Family of four below \$22,050 annually)
  - National Center for Children in Poverty, 2013

## What We Know

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- Poverty impacts
  - Education/Student achievement
  - Health/Child and Adult
    - Child: infant mortality, higher rates of low birth weight and subsequent health and developmental problems, increased frequency and severity of chronic diseases such as asthma, greater food insecurity with poorer nutrition and growth, poorer access to quality health care, increased unintentional injury and mortality, poorer oral health, lower immunization rates, and increased rates of obesity and its complication
    - Adult: “associated with low birth weight and increased exposure to toxic stress (causing structural alterations in the brain, long-term epigenetic changes, and increased inflammatory markers).” NCCP, 2013

# What We Know

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- Poverty impacts
  - Economy: “The consequences of poverty for child and adolescent well-being are perhaps even more critical than those for health. These are the consequences that may change their life trajectories, lead to unproductive adult lives, and trap them in intergenerational poverty. Children growing up in poverty have poorer educational outcomes with poor academic achievement and lower rates of high school graduation; they have less positive social and emotional development which, in turn, often leads to life “trajectory altering events” such as early unprotected sex with increased teen pregnancy, drug and alcohol abuse, and increased criminal behavior as adolescents and adults; and they are more likely to be poor adults with low productivity and low earnings.”
    - NCCP, 2013

# What We Know

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- Arkansas Better Chance (200% FPL) serves 25,476 children
- Head Start (130% FPL) serves 9,315 children
- Early Head Start serves 1,252 children
- Access to quality early childhood education for 3 and 4 year old children significantly better than for infants and toddlers

## What We Know

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# What are we doing?

## Goals of AR Early Childhood Commission

1. To improve the overall quality of care in infant and toddler programs
2. To engage families in the child's education through research-based programs that enhance child outcomes and success in school
3. Support state policies that create an integrated system of professional development uniting the early childhood sectors-child care; Head Start; public school pre-k; early intervention and special education services (Adopted from Workforce Designs/National Association for the Education of Young Children)
4. To support restructuring, expanding, and growing Better Beginnings/Quality Rating Improvement System
5. Strengthen and expand local and state partnerships with other agencies and organizations for connected action
6. Create awareness of Health and Nutrition programs and educate parents, children and child care and early education providers on the benefits of a healthy lifestyle

- Adopted 2012-13
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1. To improve the overall quality of care in infant and toddler programs
  - Revising minimum licensing standards with attention to improving infant/toddler areas
  - Funding projects like the Zero to Three Court Team that focus on improving services to babies in foster care
  - Revising payment structure in CCDF to reward high quality programs serving infants/toddlers

# What are we doing?

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2. To engage families in the child's education through research-based programs that enhance child outcomes and success in school
    - New state legislation that requires funding only evidence or research based home visiting programs
    - Funding several innovative professional development opportunities including Conscious Discipline, Teaching Important Parenting Skills and Project Play
    - Included Strengthening Families component in QRIS

# What are we doing?

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4. To support restructuring, expanding, and growing Better Beginnings/Quality Rating Improvement System
    - Working with partners to evaluate implementation and make adjustments
    - Track progress-currently have 859 Better Beginnings programs as compared to 684 in July 2010
    - Communications plan includes family component

# What are we doing?

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5. Strengthen and expand local and state partnerships with other agencies and organizations for connected action
    - School Readiness
    - Statewide Early Childhood Assessment
    - Early Childhood Professional Development
    - Race to the Top-Early Learning Challenge

What are we doing?

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- <http://www.arkansas.gov/childcare/>
- <http://www.arbetterbeginnings.com/>
- <http://developingchild.harvard.edu/>
- <http://nieer.org/>
- <http://arheadstart.org/>

# Resources

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THANK YOU!

