

The Impact and Promise of Early Childhood Science: A Federal Policy Perspective

Joan Lombardi, Ph.D.
Administration for Children and Families
U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

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- Looking back- the policy context and policy changes
 - Recent policy developments
 - Emerging research questions and initiatives
 - Elements of the unfinished policy agenda

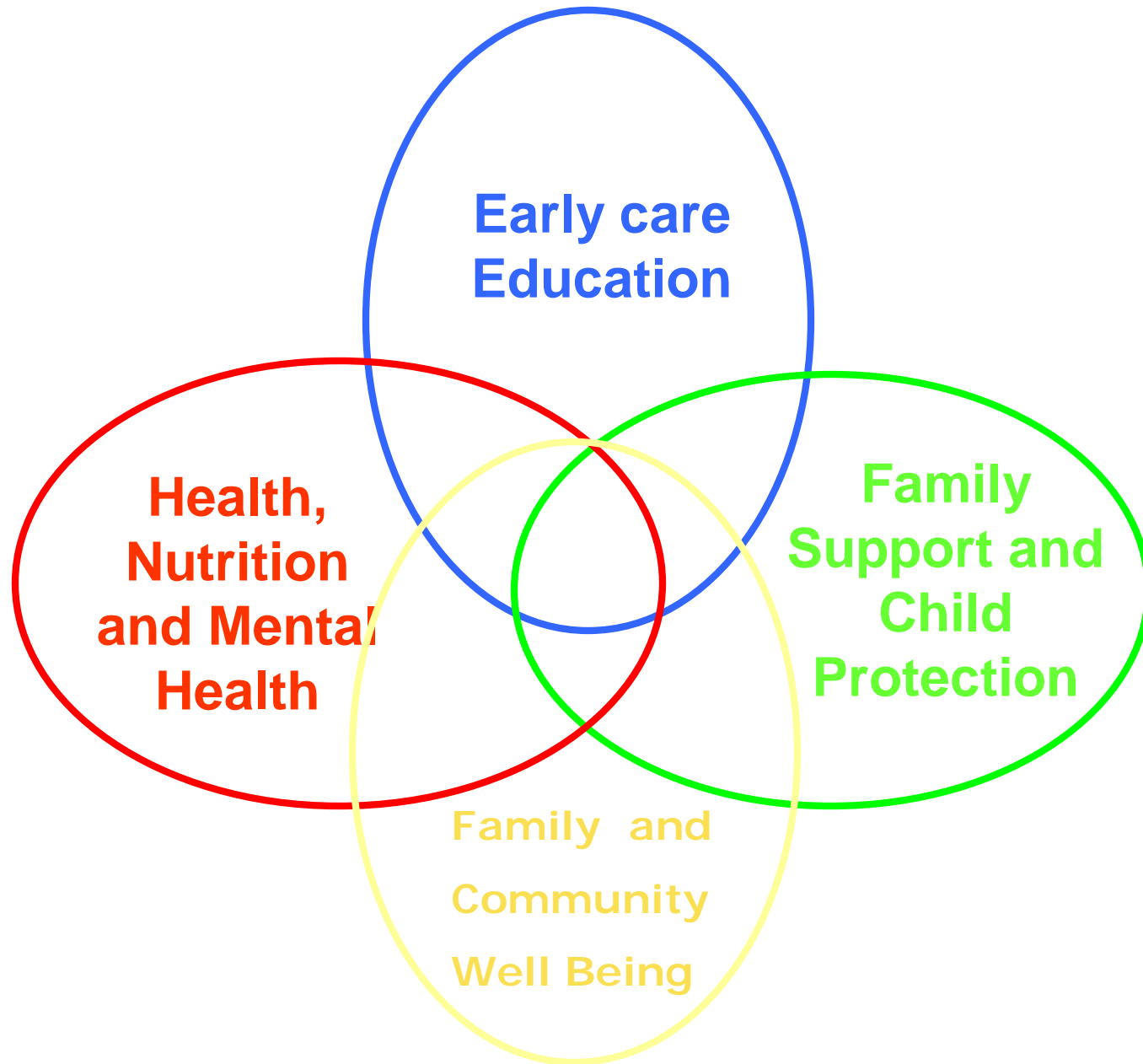
The staying power of the core concepts *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*

- | Biology **and** experience, nature **and** nurture
- | Cultural influences
- | The growth of self regulation as a cornerstone of early childhood development across domains of behavior
- | Relationships as the building blocks of human development
- | Vulnerability and resilience, risk and protective factors
- | The course of development can be altered in early childhood by effective interventions.....

Reflecting back: social transformation for families with young children noted by the committee

- Changes in nature, schedule and amount of work engaged in by parents of young children
- More children spending time in child care, starting at a young age, quality varies
- Continuing high levels of economic hardships among families even in strong economy
- Increasing cultural diversity and the persistence of disparities
- Greater awareness of effects of stress on young children, family and community conditions

Policies and Early Childhood Development



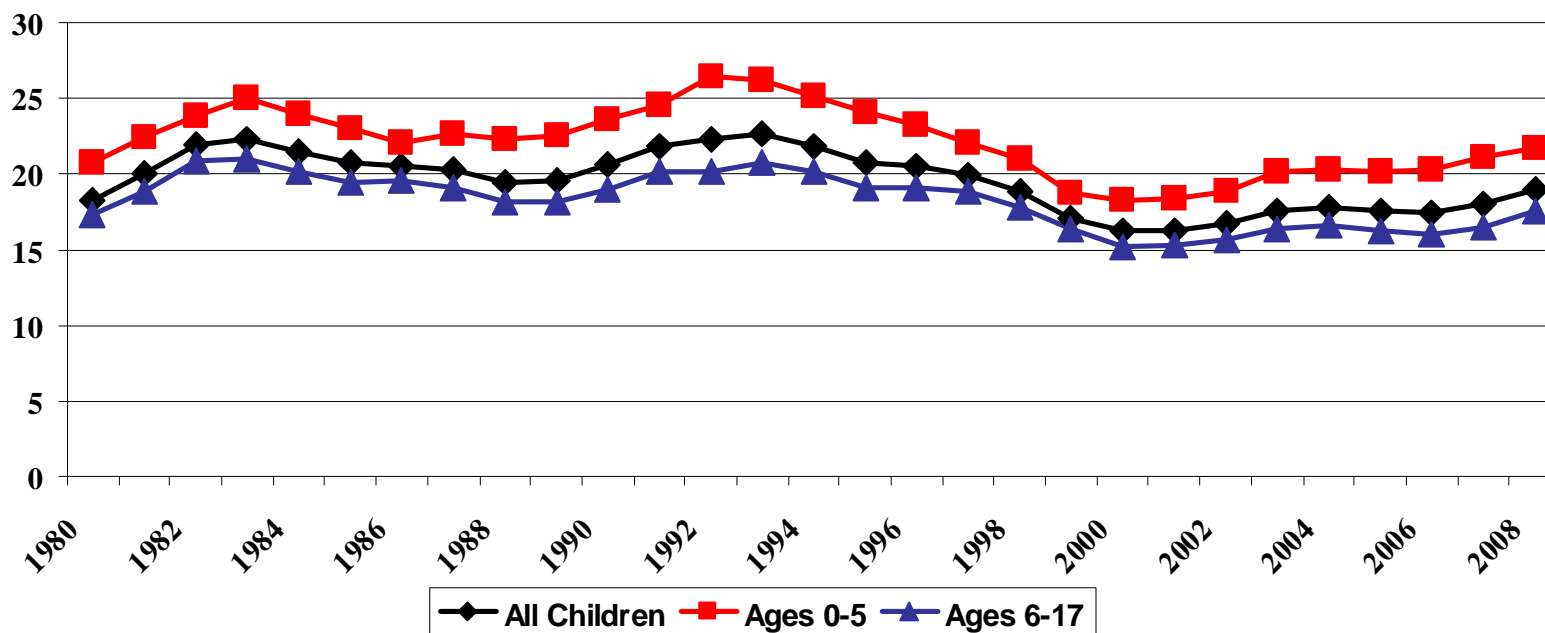
Looking back: policy changes in the 1990s

- Child Care and Development Block Grant
- Family and Medical Leave
- Early Head Start
- Welfare reform
- Child Support and Fatherhood
- Children's Health Insurance Program
- Family Preservation and Support

Policies over the past decade

- States as laboratories for innovation
- Expansion of state pre-k
- Expanded focus on literacy and assessment
- Welfare and family structure
- American Recovery and Reinvestment
- Affordable Care Act

Child Poverty



SOURCE: U.S. Census Bureau, Current Population Survey, Annual Social and Economic Supplements

Recent federal policies: a renewed focus on the early years

- | Health and Education
- | Prenatal to age eight
- | Evidence based policies
- | Place based strategies
- | Prevention and health access
- | Expansion and quality improvements in child care, Head Start and Early Head Start
- | Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program
- | New research initiatives

Moving from diverse programs to more systems approach

- Governance
- Program standards
- Early learning standards
- Professional development
- Family engagement
- Health promotion
- Data systems

The search for evidence

- What are the key elements that lead to improved child outcomes in early childhood programs?
- How can the gains be sustained over time/ how does one program build on another?
- How do we evaluate the impact of community wide strategies?
- What is the impact of media and technology on young children and family relationships?

Elements of the unfinished: filling the gap between what we know and what we do

“..the child’s primary caregivers- be they parents, grandparents or foster parents- structure the experiences and shape the environments within which early development unfolds...”

p. 226 From Neurons to Neighborhoods

- Time, information and social networks of support for parents
- Child welfare linkages to the early childhood system
- Early childhood mental health, from demonstration to scale

“Second only to the immediate family, child care is the context in which early development unfolds, starting in infancy and continuing through school entry for the vast majority of young children in the United States”

p. 297 From Neurons to Neighborhoods

- Quality across child care and other early childhood programs with a focus on supports for the caregivers/teachers
- Access to quality services for children of low income families

Closing thoughts

- Continue to assure accountability and integrity
- Focus on the life cycle from child development to youth development to adult development
- Learn and share with the global community

“In the final analysis, healthy child development is dependent on a combination of individual responsibility, informal social supports, and formalized structures that evolve within a society.”

p. 337 From Neurons to Neighborhoods



From Neurons to Neighborhoods

Anniversary Workshop



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