

Early Care and Education Fast Facts

To provide you with the best science and to reduce review time, please find the following science-approved facts for use in your campaigns and materials. After each fact you will also find fast facts based on the science that can be cut and pasted word-for-word without need for additional science review. Please note that any change in wording will result in the need to run your documents through science review before release.

Importance of Early Childhood

FACT 1

According to the Harvard University Center on the Developing Child, the early years matter because in the first few years of life, more than 1 million new neural connections are formed every second. These are the connections that build brain architecture—the foundation upon which all later learning, behavior, and health depend.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ A child's brain develops so quickly in the first few years of life—making that time absolutely critical for a healthy future.
- ▶ In the first few years of life, a child's brain develops rapidly, building an important foundation for future learning, behavior, and health.
- ▶ The first few years of a child's life are important for a healthy future because of how rapidly the brain develops during that time—forming more than 1 million new neural connections every second according to the Harvard University Center on the Developing Child.

Source:

Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University. From Best Practices to Breakthrough Impacts: A Science-Based Approach to Building a More Promising Future for Young Children and Families. May 2016. http://developingchild.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/From_Best_Practices_to_Breakthrough_Impacts-4.pdf.

FACT 2

According to a 2016 report from the Nemours Children's Health System, from birth to age 5 children develop skills, knowledge, and habits that are carried into adulthood.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ Early childhood is a time when skills, knowledge, and habits are developed.
- ▶ Children develop skills, knowledge, and habits from birth to age 5 that are carried into adulthood.

Source:

Nemours Children's Health System. State Quality Rating and Improvement Systems: Strategies to Support Achievement of Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Practices in Early Care and Education Settings. June 2016. https://d3knp61p33sjvn.cloudfront.net/2016/07/State_QRIS_Strategies_to_Support_Achievement_of_Healthy_Eating_and_Physical_Activity_Practice_in_ECE_Settings-June2016.pdf.

FACT 3

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children who are overweight or obese as preschoolers are five times as likely as normal-weight children to be overweight or obese as adults. Overweight and obesity may increase the risk of many health problems, including stroke, heart disease, and certain cancers, while maintaining a healthy weight can help reduce risk of some conditions and is important for overall health.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ According to the CDC, children who are overweight or obese as preschoolers are five times more likely to be overweight or obese as adults. These children are at an increased risk of developing chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, and some cancers.
- ▶ According to the CDC, preschool-aged children who are overweight or obese are five times more likely to be overweight or obese later in life. These children are at an increased risk of developing chronic diseases, such as heart disease, stroke, and some cancers.
- ▶ Maintaining a healthy weight is important for overall health and can help prevent or control many conditions such as heart disease, stroke, and some cancers.

Source:

Progress on Childhood Obesity. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. 2013. <http://www.cdc.gov/vitalsigns/childhoodobesity/>.

Heart Disease and Stroke Statistics—2018 Update: A Report From the American Heart Association. <http://circ.ahajournals.org/content/early/2018/01/30/CIR.0000000000000558.long>.

Participation in Child Care

FACT 4

Every week in the United States, nearly 12.5 million children younger than age 5 are in some type of child care arrangement. Almost a quarter of those children are cared for in organized facilities.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ Every week in the United States, nearly 12.5 million children younger than age 5 are in some type of child care arrangement, making both early care and education programs and in-home child care settings important for helping kids build healthy habits.

Source:

Laughlin, L. Who's Minding the Kids? Child Care Arrangements: Spring 2011. U.S. Census Bureau. April 2013. <https://www.census.gov/prod/2013pubs/p70-135.pdf>.

FACT 5

Many children spend a significant part of their day in early care and education (ECE) programs, such as Head Start, child care, Early Head Start or pre-kindergarten. According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, over 6.8 million children are in center-based care alone, making ECE settings an optimal opportunity for interventions that help prevent obesity.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ Many children spend a significant part of their day in early care and education (ECE) programs, making these settings ideal for building habits that help children grow up healthy.
- ▶ According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, more than 6.8 million children are in early care and education (ECE) programs based in centers or schools, making these settings optimal for modeling habits that help children grow up healthy.

Source:

Nemours Children's Health System. State Quality Rating and Improvement Systems: Strategies to Support Achievement of Healthy Eating and Physical Activity Practices in Early Care and Education Settings. June 2016. https://d3knp61p33sjvn.cloudfront.net/2016/07/State_QRIS_Strategies_to_Support_Achievement_of_Healthy_Eating_and_Physical_Activity_Practice_in_ECE_Settings-June2016.pdf.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Office of Planning, Research and Evaluation, Administration for Children and Families. National Survey of Early Care and Education Fact Sheet: Characteristics of Center-based Early Care and Education Programs. OPRE Report No. 2014-73b. November 2014. https://www.acf.hhs.gov/sites/default/files/opre/characteristics_of_cb_fact_sheet_final_111014.pdf.

Importance of Healthy Eating, Active Play, and Limited TV Viewing

FACT 6

A 2017 publication from Healthy Eating Research reported that allowing infants and toddlers to become familiar with healthy food, such as vegetables, is key for the development of healthy food preferences. Evidence also shows that young children are more likely to try new and different foods when they observe their caregivers eating them enthusiastically.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ Repeated exposure to new and different types of healthy food is necessary so that infants and toddlers learn to like them.
- ▶ Exposing young children to healthy food, like vegetables, is important for the development of healthy food preferences.
- ▶ Infants and toddlers should be exposed repeatedly to healthy foods, including vegetables, which will help them develop preferences for those foods.
- ▶ Young children are more likely to try new foods when they observe their caregivers eating and enjoying the food.

Source:

Pérez-Escamilla R, Segura-Pérez S, Lott M, on behalf of the RWJF HER Expert Panel on Best Practices for Promoting Healthy Nutrition, Feeding Patterns, and Weight Status for Infants and Toddlers from Birth to 24 Months. Feeding Guidelines for Infants and Young Toddlers: A Responsive Parenting Approach. Guidelines for Health Professionals. February 2017. http://healthyeatingresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/her_feeding_guidelines_brief_021416.pdf.

FACT 7

A 2013 study of nearly 3,000 children showed an association between soda consumption and negative behavior, including aggression, attention problems, and withdrawal, among 5-year-old children.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ A 2013 study of nearly 3,000 children showed an association between soda consumption and negative behavior among 5-year-old children.
- ▶ A 2013 study of nearly 3,000 children showed that soda consumption among young children is associated with negative behavior, including aggression, attention problems, and withdrawal.

Source:

Suglia SF, Solnick S, and Hemenway D. Soft drinks consumption is associated with behavior problems in 5-year-olds. *J Pediatr.* 2013; 163: 1323-8, doi: 10.1016/j.jpeds.2013.06.023.

FACT 8

A 2017 publication from Healthy Eating Research reported that current evidence indicates that infancy is a time when movement and active play facilitate the motor, social, and cognitive development needed for healthy growth and wellbeing.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ A 2017 publication from Healthy Eating Research reported that movement and active play in early childhood facilitate the motor, social, and cognitive development needed for healthy growth and wellbeing.
- ▶ Movement and active play in early childhood are important for kids to grow up healthy.

Source:

Pérez-Escamilla R, Segura-Pérez S, Lott M, on behalf of the RWJF HER Expert Panel on Best Practices for Promoting Healthy Nutrition, Feeding Patterns, and Weight Status for Infants and Toddlers from Birth to 24 Months. Feeding Guidelines for Infants and Young Toddlers: A Responsive Parenting Approach. Guidelines for Health Professionals. February 2017. http://healthyeatingresearch.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/her_feeding_guidelines_brief_021416.pdf.

FACT 9

A 2016 systematic literature review concluded that physical activity and healthy diets in early childhood (six months to five years) are associated with better cognitive outcomes in young children.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ Research published in Preventive Medicine Reports found that physical activity and healthy eating are associated with improved learning outcomes in young children.
- ▶ According to research published in Preventive Medicine Reports, healthy eating and physical activity are associated with better learning in children ages six months to five years.
- ▶ Young children who are active and eat healthy learn better.

Source:

Tandon PS, Tovar A, Jayasuriya AT, et al. The relationship between physical activity and diet and young children's cognitive development: A systematic review. *Prev Med Rep.* 2016; 3: 279-90, doi: 10.1016/j.pmedr.2016.04.003.

FACT 10

A 2011 study in the *Journal of Pediatrics* reported that TV viewing in young children has been associated with cognitive and speech delays, aggressive behavior, decreased academic performance, and obesity. Screen time also potentially displaces other activities such as reading, physical activity, and imaginative play, all of which are beneficial to children's growth and development.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ A 2011 study in the *Journal of Pediatrics* reported that television viewing by young children has been associated with cognitive and speech delays, aggressive behavior, decreased academic performance, and obesity.
- ▶ The time that young children spend watching TV or using a computer or tablet has the potential to replace time spent on other activities like reading and active or imaginative play.
- ▶ The time that young children spend watching TV or using a computer or tablet has the potential to take away time from activities that are beneficial to children's growth and development.

Source:

Tandon, PS, Zhou C, Lozano P, Christakis DA. Preschoolers' total daily screen time at home and by type of child care. *J Pediatr.* 2011; 158: 297-300, doi: 10.1016/j.jpeds.2010.08.005.

Benefits of Early Childhood Programs

FACT 11

Research by James Heckman reported that high-quality birth-to-five programs for disadvantaged children can deliver a 13 percent per year return on investment. Significant gains are realized through better outcomes in education, health, social behaviors, and employment.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ Research by James Heckman reported that high-quality birth-to-five programs can deliver a 13 percent return on investment annually.
- ▶ Research by James Heckman reported that high-quality birth-to-five programs can yield a significant return on investment in the long run.
- ▶ Research by James Heckman reported high-quality birth-to-five programs can lead to better outcomes in education, health, social behaviors, and employment.

Source:

Heckman JJ; The Heckman Equation Project. Research Summary: The Lifecycle Benefits of an Influential Early Childhood Program. 2016. https://heckmanequation.org/assets/2017/01/F_Heckman_CBAOnePager_120516.pdf.

FACT 12

According to a report from The Pew Center, children who attend high-quality pre-K programs do better in school from the first day of kindergarten through their post-secondary years. Compared with peers who have not had pre-K, they have higher achievement test scores; they repeat grades far less often; they need less special education; they graduate from high school at substantially higher rates; and they are more likely to attend college.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ According to a report from The Pew Center, children who attend high-quality pre-K programs do better in school.
- ▶ According to a report from The Pew Center, participation in high-quality pre-K improves a child's chances of academic success.
- ▶ According to a report from The Pew Center, children who attend high-quality pre-K programs have higher test scores and are less likely to repeat a grade.
- ▶ According to a report from The Pew Center, children who attend high-quality pre-K programs are more likely to graduate from high school and attend college.

Source:

The Pew Center on the States. Transforming Public Education: Pathway to a Pre-K-12 Future. September 2011. http://www.pewtrusts.org/-/media/legacy/uploadedfiles/pcs_assets/2011/pewprektransformingpubliceducationpdf.pdf.

FACT 13

According to an issue brief from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, children who participate in early childhood programs are more likely to, as adults, be healthy and have higher earnings, and be less likely to commit crime and receive public assistance.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ According to an issue brief from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, children who participate in early childhood programs are more likely to grow up as healthy adults and have higher earnings.
- ▶ According to an issue brief from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, children who participate in early childhood programs are less likely to commit crime later in life.
- ▶ According to an issue brief from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, children who participate in early childhood programs are less likely to receive public assistance as adults.

Source:

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. Early Childhood Experiences Shape Health and Well-Being Throughout Life (Issue Brief). August 2014. http://www.rwjf.org/content/dam/farm/reports/issue_briefs/2014/rwjf414926.

FACT 14

A 2014 study published in *Science* found compelling biomedical evidence that participants in a high-quality early childhood program had significantly lower risks for cardiovascular and metabolic disease in adulthood, compared with otherwise similar individuals who were not in that program.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ According to a study in *Science*, children who participate in high-quality early childhood programs are less likely to have cardiovascular and metabolic disease as adults.
- ▶ According to a study in *Science*, participation in high-quality early childhood programs can lead to significantly lower risks for cardiovascular and metabolic disease later in life.

Source:

Campbell FA, Conti G, Heckman J, et al. Early Childhood Investments Substantially Boost Adult Health. *Science*, 2014; 343(6178): 1478-1485, 10.1126/science.1248429.

FACT 15

Research from the RAND Corporation found that out of 115 early childhood programs reviewed, nearly 90 percent had a positive effect on at least one childhood outcome, factors like behavior and emotion; cognitive achievement; child health; educational attainment; and outcomes in adulthood. Additionally, the study found that early childhood programs returned about \$2 to \$4 in benefits for every dollar invested.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ A review of 115 early childhood programs found that nearly 90 percent had a positive effect on at least one outcome for children, such as improved health, literacy, or social skills, higher school attendance, reduced crime, and increased employment as an adult.
- ▶ According to a review of 115 early childhood programs, it is relatively rare to find programs that don't have a noticeable impact on kids' outcomes among published evaluations.
- ▶ Early childhood programs can return about \$2 to \$4 in benefits to participants, the government, and other members of society for every dollar invested.
- ▶ Early childhood programs can return about \$2 to \$4 in benefits for every dollar invested. Benefits can be the result of higher earnings for the parent or child or savings from reductions in crime

Source:

Cannon JS, Kilburn MR, Karoly LA. Investing Early: Taking Stock of Outcomes and Economic Returns from Early Childhood Programs. Santa Monica, CA: RAND Corporation; 2017. https://www.rand.org/content/dam/rand/pubs/research_reports/RR1900/RR1993/RAND_RR1993.pdf.

FACT 16

A 2014 White House report on the Economics of Early Childhood Investments reported that access to high-quality care for young children can help parents increase their employment, which strengthens their attachment to the labor force and increases their earnings potential. Higher labor force participation and earnings has potential benefits for children, such as lower health care expenditures, higher education spending, more consistently nutritious food and reduced household budgeting stress.

Fast Facts:

- ▶ A 2014 White House report found that access to high-quality care for young children allows parents to work, which increases their earnings potential over time and enables them to provide for their families.
- ▶ A 2014 White House report found that parents who have high-quality child care can remain in the workforce and increase their chances of earning more money. This can benefit their children because they have more resources to spend on things like health care, education, and healthy food—all of which lead to less household stress.

Source:

Executive Office of the President of the United States. The Economics of Early Childhood Investments. December 2014. https://obamawhitehouse.archives.gov/sites/default/files/docs/the_economics_of_early_childhood_investments.pdf.