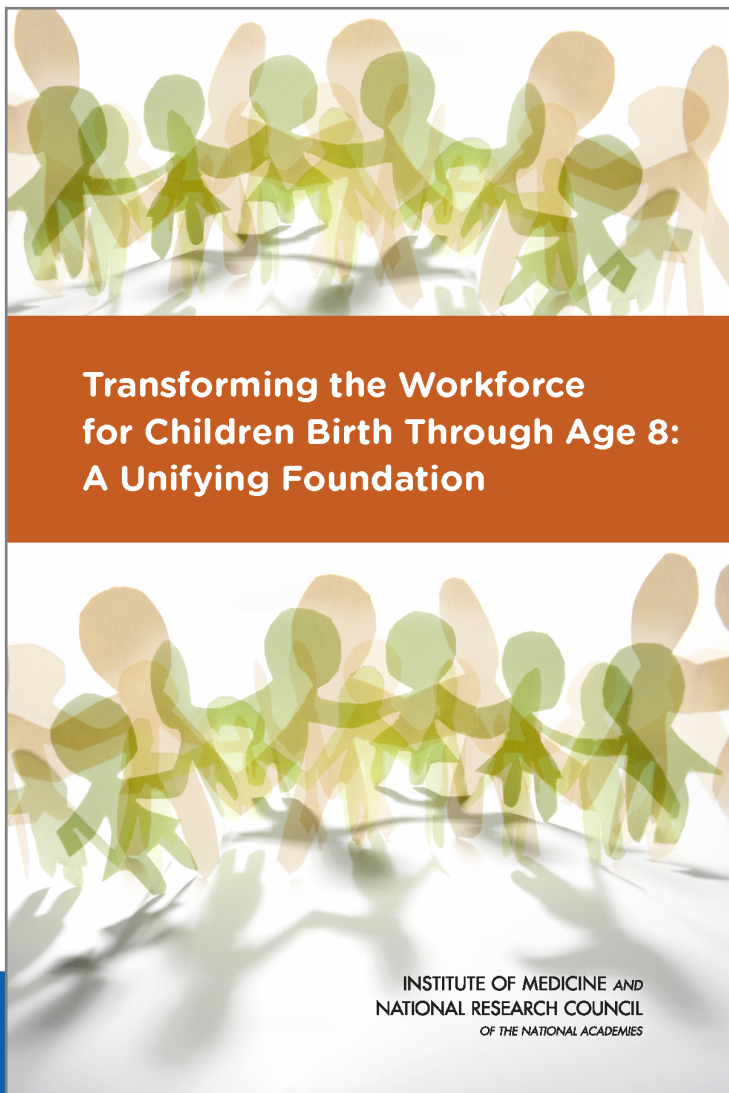


Origins and Impacts of Health Disparities in Early Childhood



Ross A. Thompson, PhD
Distinguished Professor of Psychology
University of California, Davis
Board President, ZERO TO THREE

How Do We Make Systems Better for Young Children?



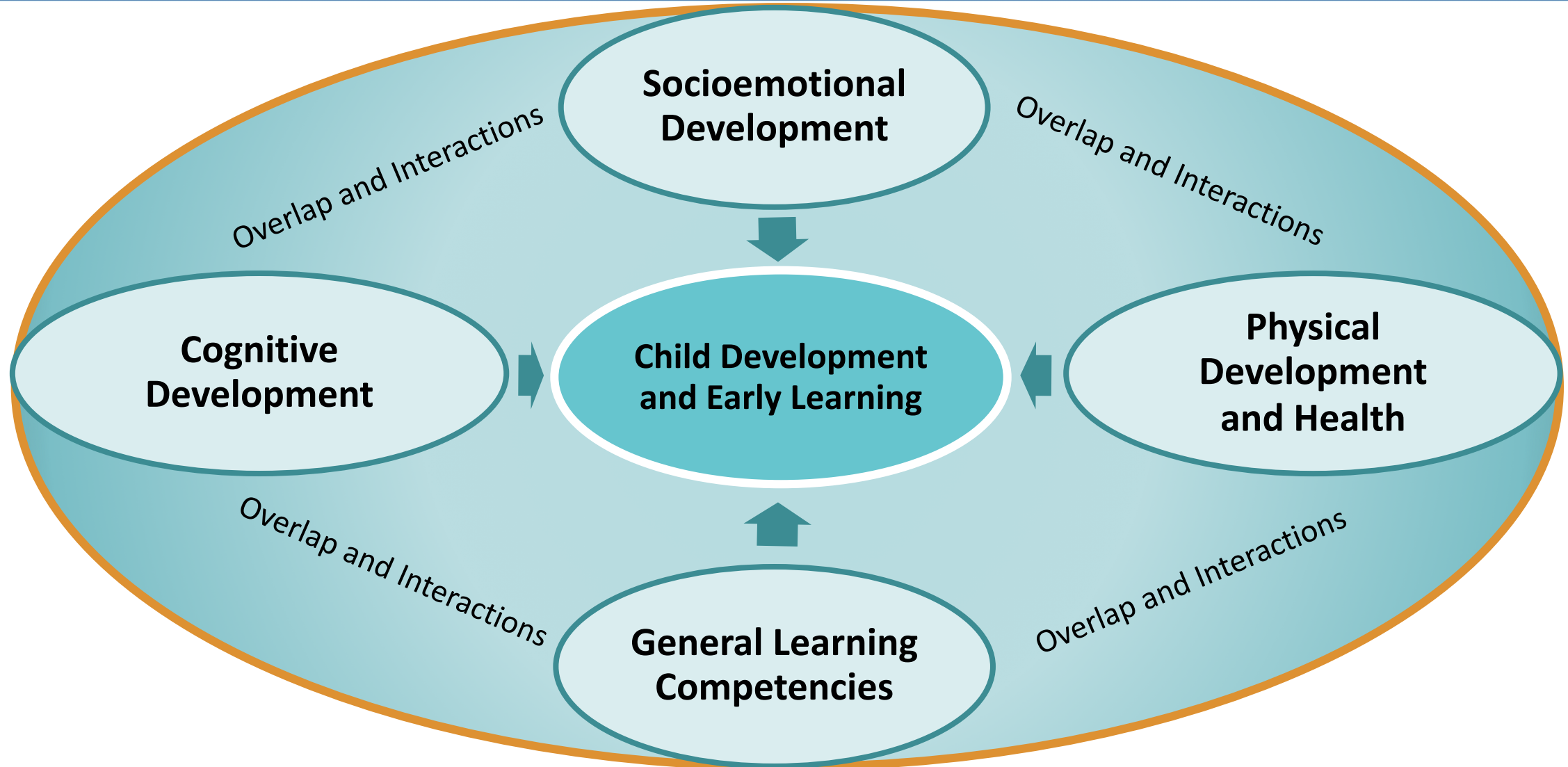
Transforming the Workforce
for Children Birth Through Age 8:
A Unifying Foundation

INSTITUTE OF MEDICINE AND
NATIONAL RESEARCH COUNCIL
OF THE NATIONAL ACADEMIES

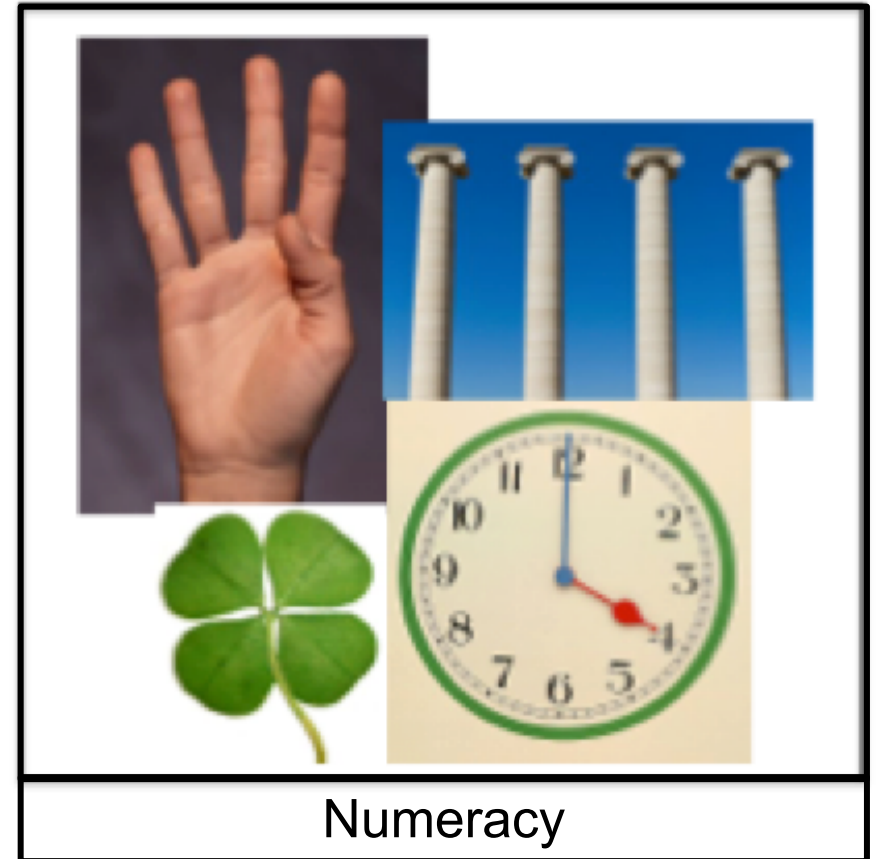
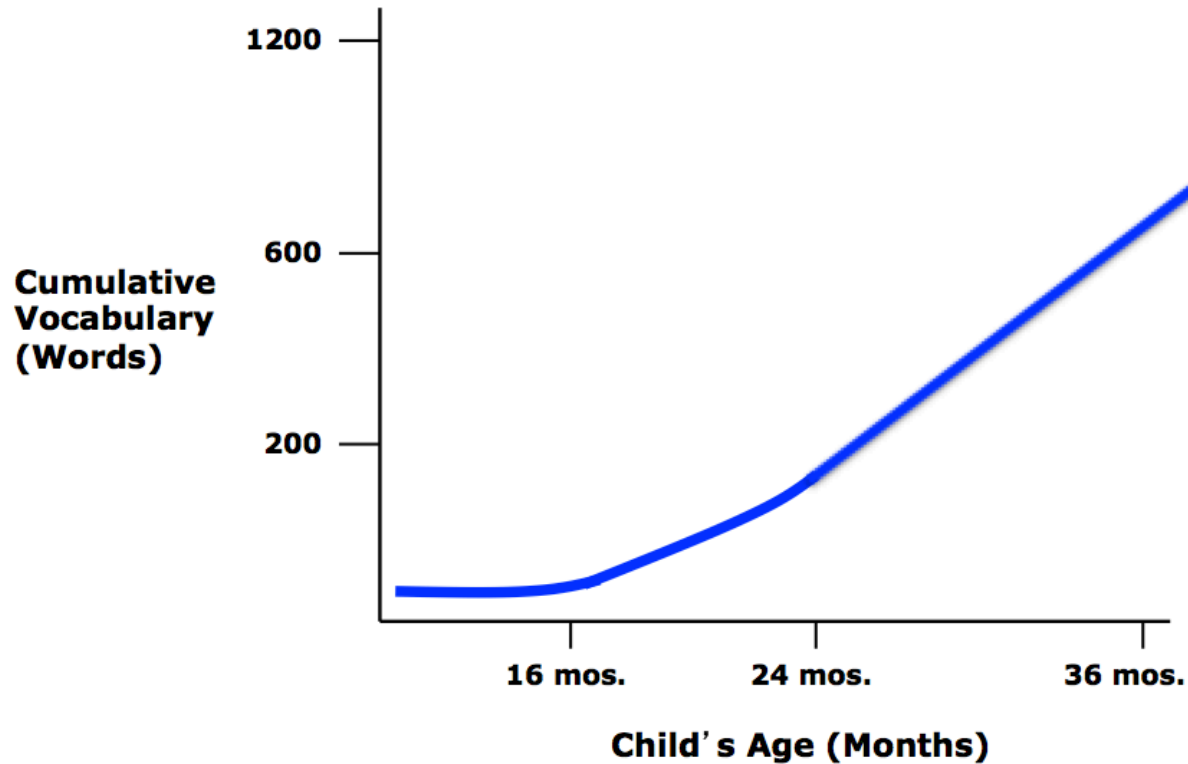
How do we provide young children with continuous, high-quality support for their development and learning from birth to age 8 by transforming the early childhood workforce and changing systems of early care and education?

2015 NRC / IOM Report on Young Children's Services
Transforming The Workforce For Children Birth To Age 8

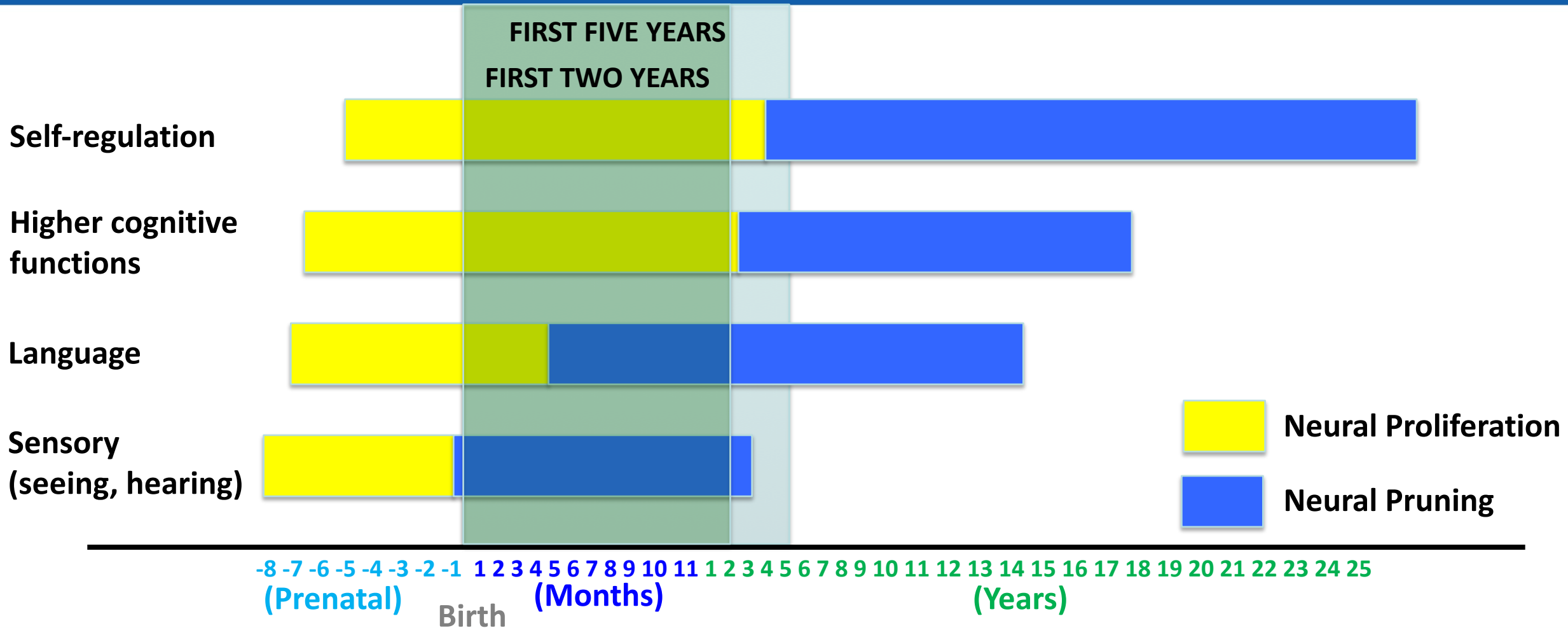
1. Young Children's Development Is Deeply Integrated



2. Individuals Working with Children Have Not Kept Pace with Rapidly Expanding Knowledge of Early Learning

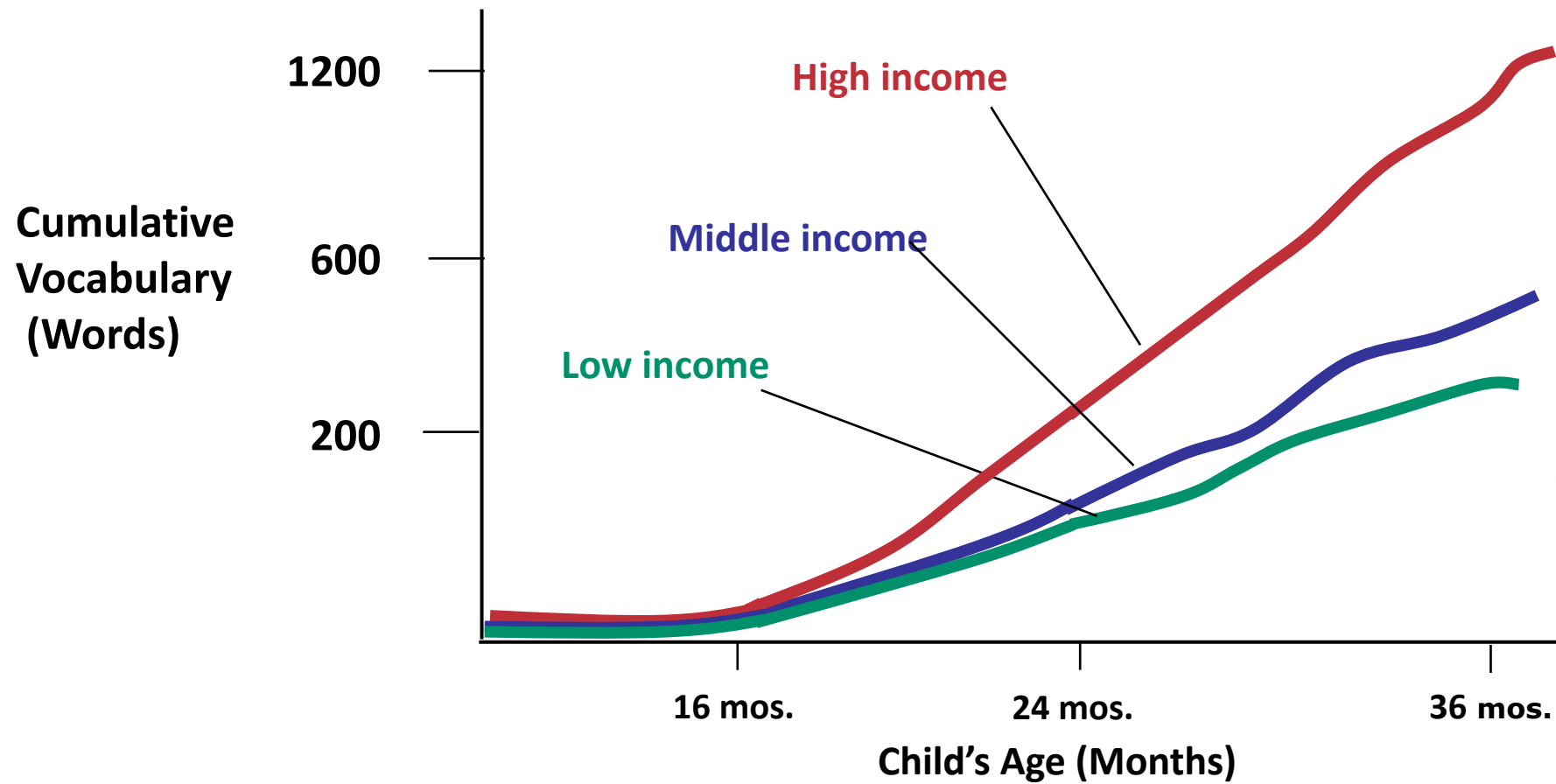


Brain Development in Selected Domains



Adapted from Thompson RA, Nelson CA. American Psychologist, 2001

The Effects of Early Experiences Are Important and Accumulate



Hart B, Risley TR. *Meaningful differences in the everyday experience of young American children*, 1995

Fernald A, Marchman VA, Weisleder A. *Dev Sci*. 2013

Weisleder A, Fernald A. *Psychol Sci*. 2013

The Effects Continue to Accumulate Throughout Childhood and Adolescence

**Vocabulary
at age 3**



**3rd grade
reading score**



**High school
graduation
rates**



Hart B, Risley TR. *Meaningful differences in the everyday experience of young American children*, 1995
Annie E. Casey Foundation, 2012; Lesnisk J, Goerge RM, Smithgall C, Gwynne J. 2010

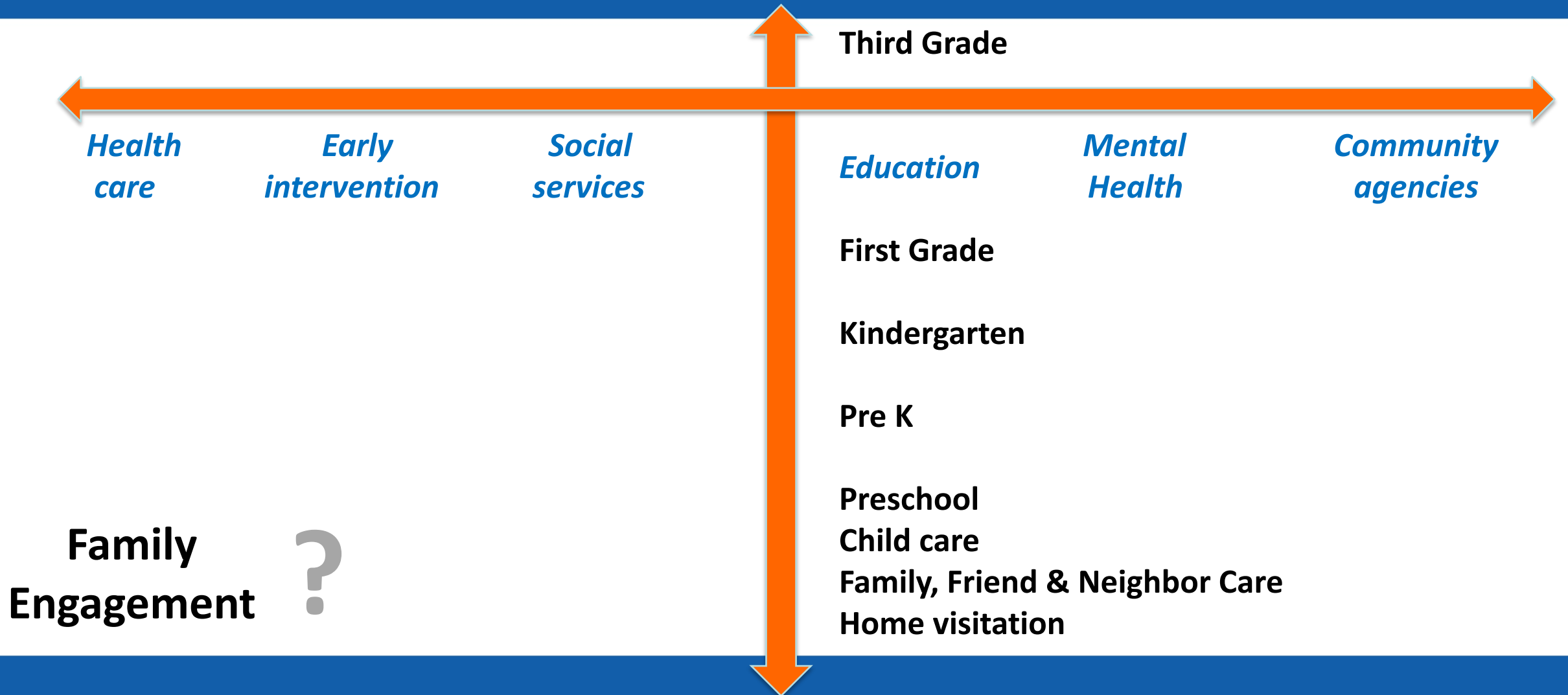
U.S. Adult Outcomes By Family Income Between The Prenatal Year and Age 5

	Low Income		Above Low Income
	Below FPL	100%-199% FPL	200% or more FPL
U.S. Adult Outcomes	Mean or %	Mean or %	Mean or %
Years of Schooling Completed	11.8 yr	12.7 yr	14.0 yr
Poor health	13%	13%	5%
Nonmarital births (women only)	50%	28%	9%
Earnings *	\$17,900	\$26,800	\$39,700
Annual work hours *	1,512	1,839	1,963

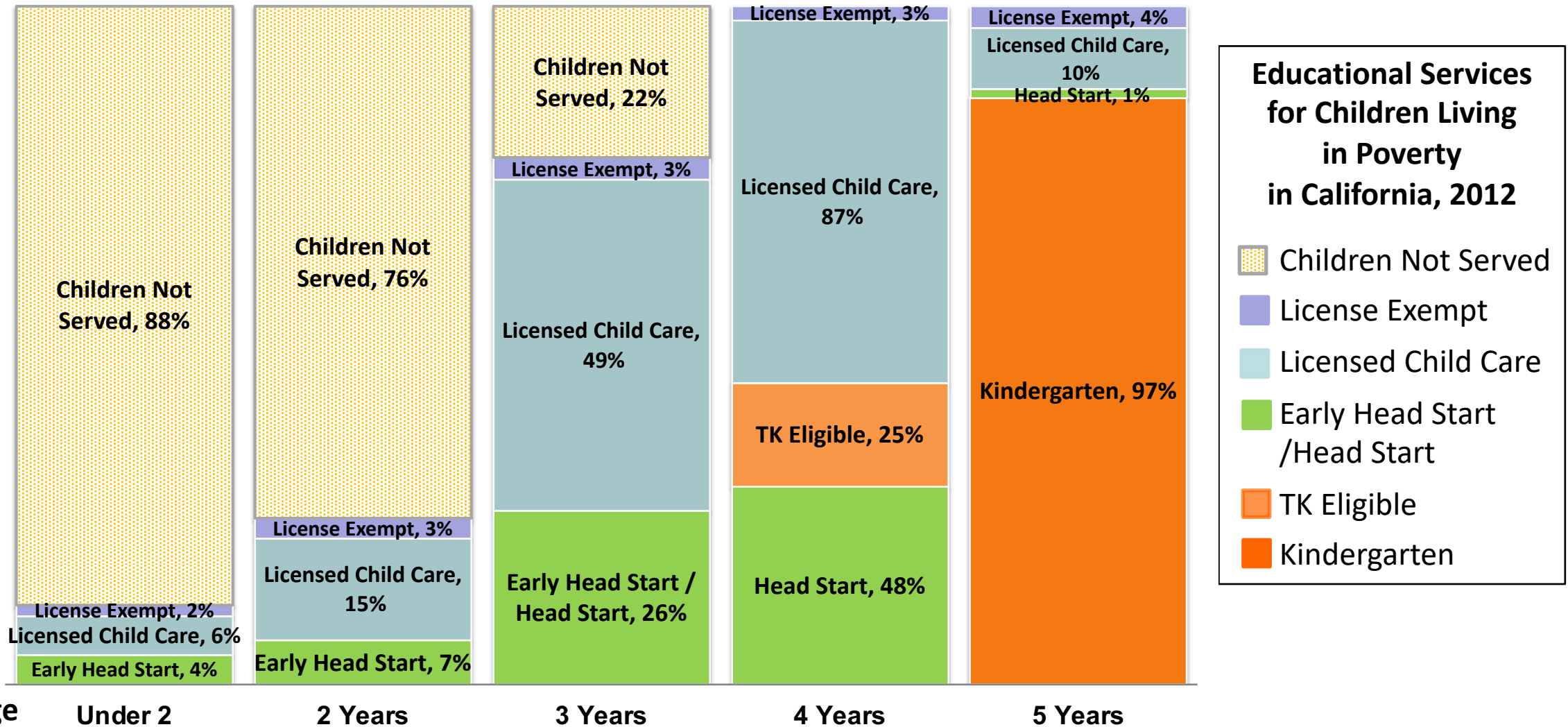
* Significantly greater effects of early childhood poverty than the effects of poverty for children at any older age, with the effects of older-age poverty controlled.

Duncan & Magnuson, 2011 from Duncan GJ, Ziol-Guest KM, and Kalil A. Child Development, 2010

3. The System of Early Childhood Services Is Fractionated



The System Is Especially Fractionated for The Youngest Children and Children Can Fall Through the Gaps



Young Children and Their Families Face Significant Challenges

- **Parents of young children are typically stressed and often overwhelmed**
- **High quality child care is expensive and inaccessible in many communities**
- **Formal and informal providers of care for infants and toddlers are often underprepared and poorly supported**

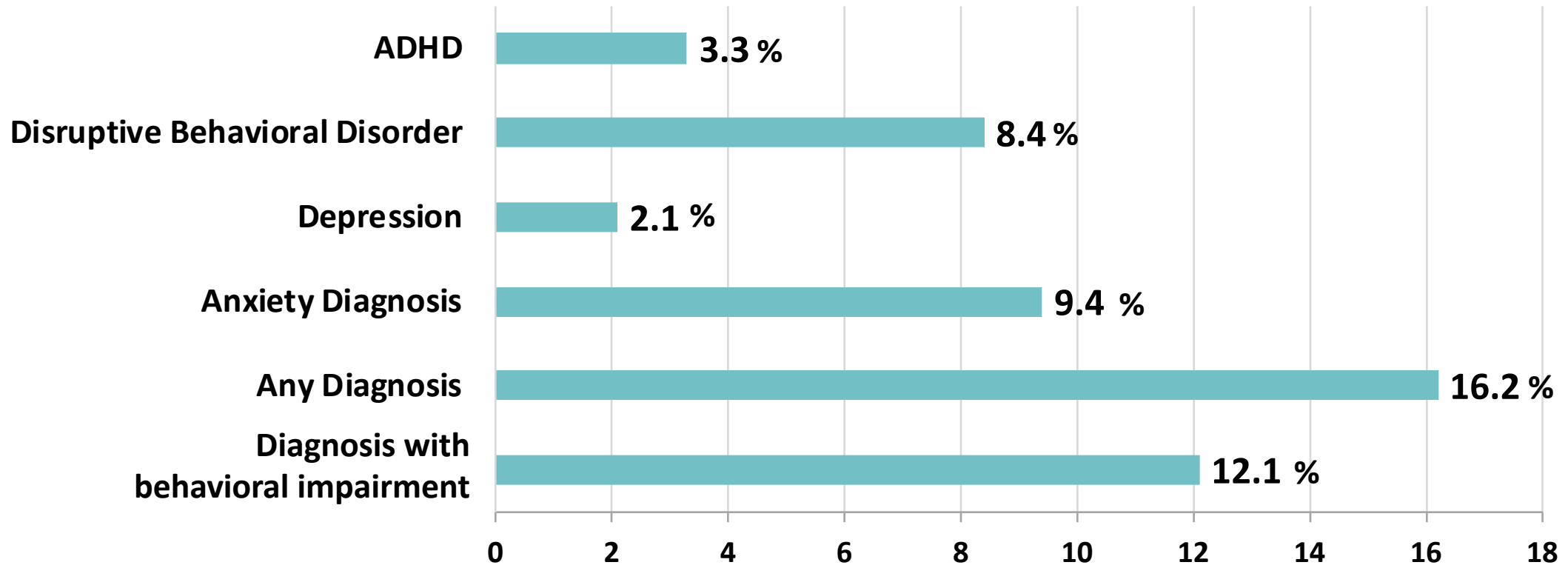


Young Children and Their Families Face Other Challenges

- **Families may lack a medical home, especially if they are living in rural areas or face language or cultural barriers to medical access**
- **Special health care needs present at a very young age but many young children do not receive services until they enter school**
- **Stress and trauma in early childhood manifest as behavior problems that may not be recognized as mental health needs in young children**

Rates of Preschool Psychiatric Disorders

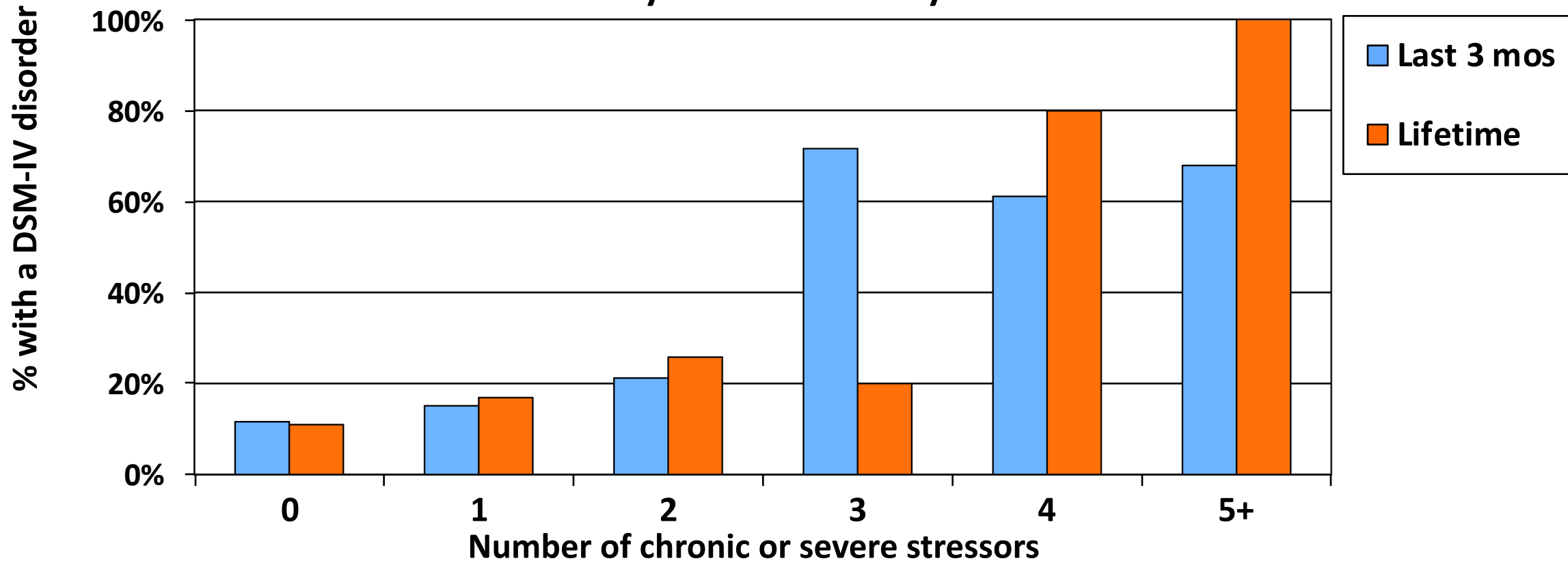
Percent of Psychiatric Disorders Among Preschoolers Ages 2-5



Data from Duke Early Childhood Study, courtesy Dr. Helen Egger, Duke University Medical Center

Association of Stress with Psychiatric Disorders in Childhood

Cumulative Stressors in Childhood and Psychiatric Disorders, Duke Early Childhood Study



Data from Duke Early Childhood Study, courtesy Dr. Helen Egger, Duke University Medical Center

What Can Public Health Systems Offer Young Children and Their Families?

- **Increase emphasis on birth to age 5 for prevention and health promotion**
- **Increase awareness of early physical and mental health issues and highlight gaps in knowledge**
- **Communicate prevention strategies to parents and practitioners**



What Can Public Health Systems Offer Young Children and Their Families?

- **Strengthen developmental and behavioral health screening and referral services**
 - Especially to hard-to-reach and underserved populations
- **Establish connections between physical and behavioral health of young children**
 - to the health of their parents
 - to community wellness
- **Provide avenues for the development of integrated service systems**
 - Connect pediatric, mental health, child welfare, and early care & education practitioners

Examples of Early Intervention Programs That Work

➤ **Nurse Family Partnership**

- Home visits by registered nurses to first-time mothers, particularly those in difficulty, beginning in pregnancy and continuing through child's second birthday
- Three RCTs have demonstrated benefits for maternal health practices, parenting competency, and child cognitive and behavioral outcomes through adolescence

➤ **Chicago Child-Parent Centers**

- Half-day preschool beginning at age 3 with small classes, well-trained teachers, and a required parental volunteer commitment; staff liaison provides family outreach
- Benefits to children include improved school readiness, higher reading and math achievement scores, improved high school graduation, reduced juvenile arrests

Early Investments Can Provide Remarkable Results

- **Cost-effectiveness studies show that *well-implemented* early interventions can show a significant long-term return on investment**
 - especially true for children at greatest risk
 - focus on quality, including adult-child interactions and social climate
 - subsequent experiences and influences maintain early gains
 - focus on the growth of multiple skills (e.g., cognitive and noncognitive)
- **Quality and quantity of evidence-based early interventions for young children (and their families) continues to grow**