

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

BRAIN SCIENCE

Getting children ready for school means more than packing their lunches, filling their backpacks, and getting them to the bus on time. In fact, the job of helping children succeed in school starts the day they're born.

Ninety Percent of a Child's Brain Development Happens Between Birth and Age 5.

The experiences of children in their first days, weeks, months, and years determine whether their brain develops in ways that promote positive future learning, behavior and health.

For children to be successful in school and beyond, they must start out on the right path. Early childhood programs give children a solid start in life and a foundation upon which they can build.

Quality Counts

Studies show that children exposed to high-quality early childhood education:

- Have better language, math and social skills, and better relationships with classmates.
- Have better cognitive and sensory skills and experience less anxiety.
- Score higher in school-readiness tests
- Are less likely to need special education or be held back a grade

Kids Who Start Out Behind, Stay Behind

The vast majority (88%) of kids who have trouble reading in first grade still have trouble reading in fourth grade.

- Children who cannot read by fourth grade are more likely to drop out of school.
- High school dropouts are more likely to be involved in the criminal justice system and to be dependent on social welfare programs.



Combining Science with Common Sense

All Arizonans have a shared responsibility in helping Arizona children grow up healthy and ready to succeed.

The better start in life children get, the more likely they are to succeed in school, less likely to receive failing grades or be retained/left back, more likely to advance into college and successful careers. They also tend to be healthier and demand less from the public service system.

Through First Things First, Arizona voters have made a commitment to our youngest kids: that they would have the tools they need to start school healthy and ready to succeed. To learn more about how FTF is fulfilling Arizona's commitment to our youngest kids, visit azfff.gov.

Additional resources on infant brain development:

- Harvard Center on the Developing Child developingchild.harvard.edu
- Zero to Three zerotothree.org
- New Directions Institute newdirectionsinstitute.org