

# THE 7 IMPORTANT CONCEPTS YOU NEED TO KNOW

## about child development

Taken from the 2007 report by *The National Scientific Council on the Developing Child* entitled: "The Science of Early Childhood Development: Closing the gap between what we know and what we do."

Can be retrieved from <http://www.developingchild.harvard.edu/>

### CHILD DEVELOPMENT

...is a foundation for community development and economic development, as capable children become the foundation of a prosperous and sustainable society.

### BRAINS

...are built over time. The basic architecture of the brain is constructed through an ongoing process that begins before birth and continues into adulthood.

### THE INTERACTIVE

...influences of genes and experience literally shape the architecture of the developing brain, and the active ingredient is the "serve and return" nature of children's engagement in relationships with their parents and other caregivers in their family or community.

### BOTH BRAIN ARCHITECTURE

...and developing abilities are built "from the bottom up," with simple circuits and skills providing the scaffolding for more advanced circuits and skills over time.

### COGNITIVE, EMOTIONAL

...and social capabilities are inextricably intertwined throughout the life course.

### TOXIC STRESS

...in early childhood is associated with persistent effects on the nervous system and stress hormone systems that can damage developing brain architecture and lead to lifelong problems in learning, behavior, and both physical and mental health.

### CREATING

...the right conditions for early childhood development is likely to be more effective and less costly than addressing problems at a later age. As the maturing brain becomes more specialized to assume more complex functions, it is less capable of reorganizing and adapting to new or unexpected challenges.