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# **Policy Issues – The Big Picture**

## **Australian National Early Literacy Summit**

**Samantha Page, CEO**

**OUR VISION: EVERY YOUNG CHILD IS THRIVING AND LEARNING**



education best young issues  
understanding interaction responsible  
supporting wellbeing Facilitate address views  
Disseminate disadvantage information capacity  
childhood eight debate campaign society aged  
high further practice Build inclusive  
work early changes justice years Maintain  
equity action birth interest sector people  
rights more body ensure interests  
informed standards create publicly Advocate  
relating communication social associated  
knowledge development vulnerability  
Promote families groups  
policy among regarding  
all children care

WordItOut



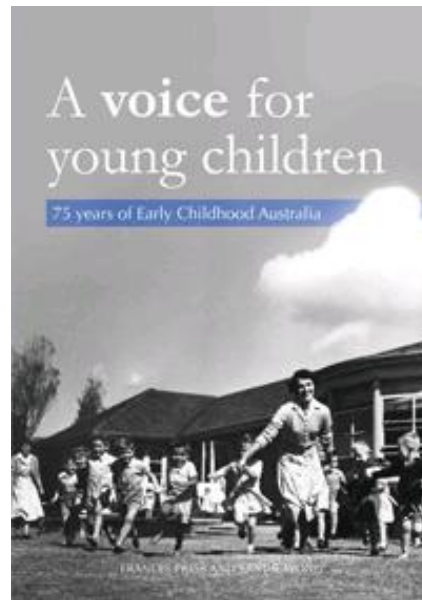
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# Early childhood ▶ getting up to speed

Digital  
Business  
Kit

## Kids Matter

Australian Early Childhood  
Mental Health Initiative



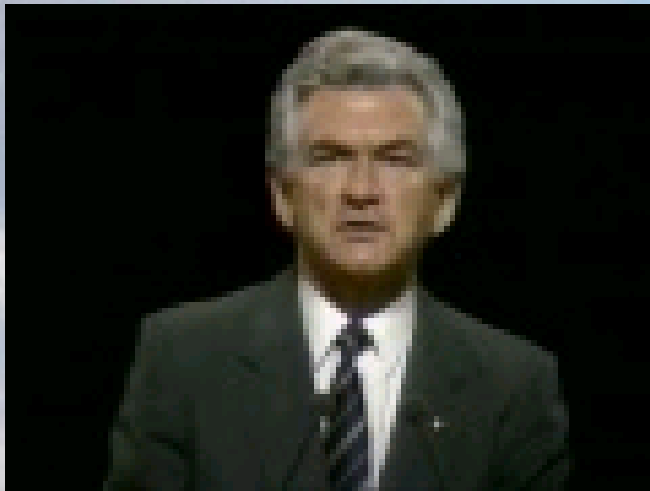


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## LEARNING HUB



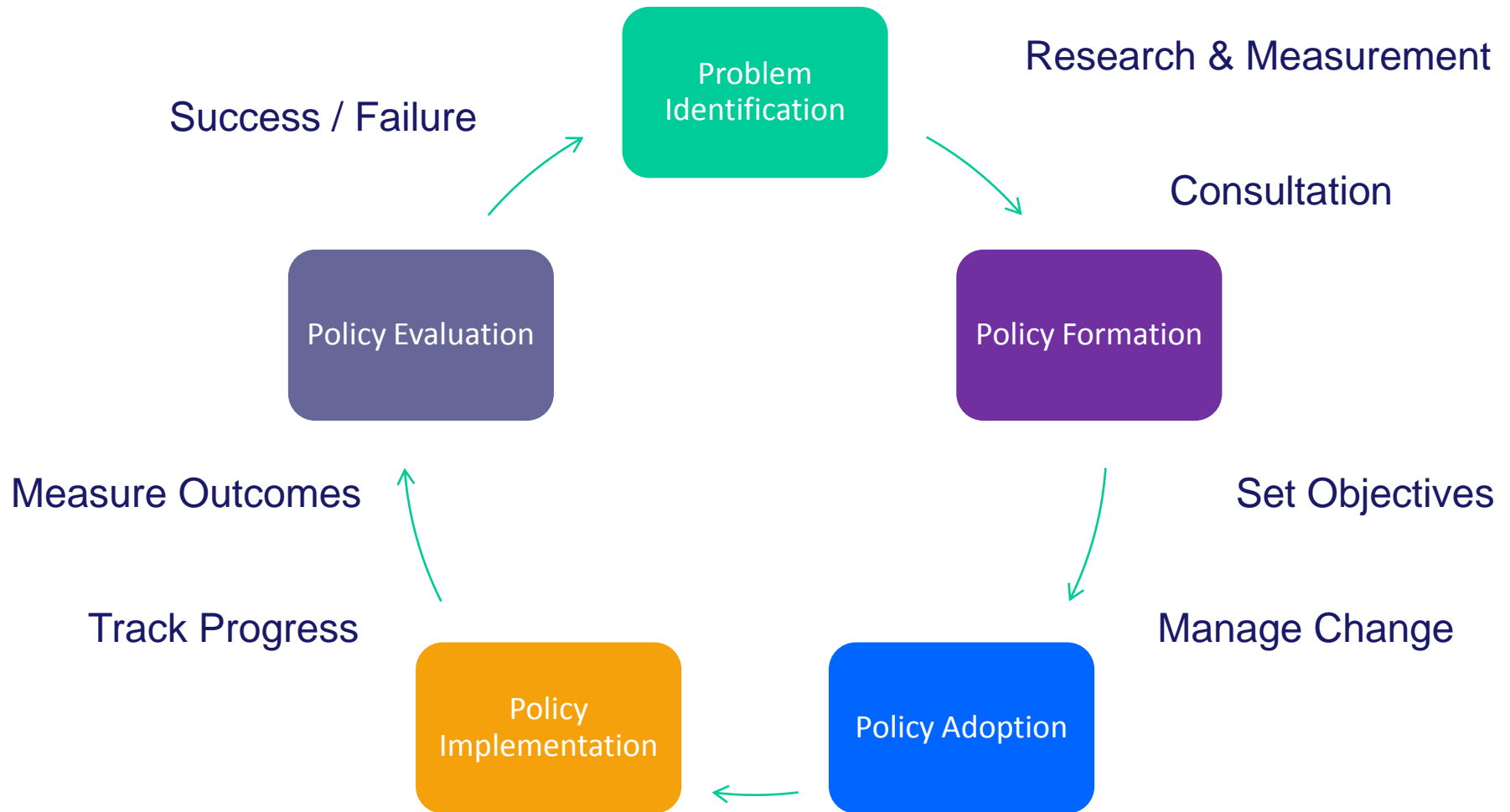
Your gateway to professional knowledge and networks



<https://youtu.be/bx0leQQ7Wjl>



# The Public Policy Process – In Theory



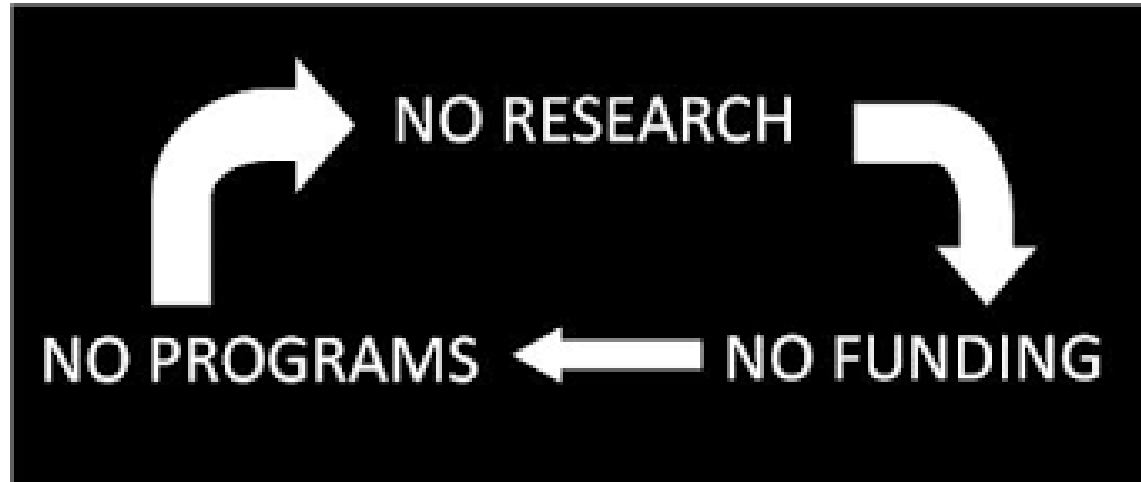


# The Public Policy Process – Too often

Politics & media

Lack of data

Perceived problems



Inadequate resources –  
failed programs

Short term investments

Kneejerk reactions



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- AMA
- Daily Telegraph
- Public support
- Swift decision
- Legislation passed
- No consultation

Will it work?



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The first few months  
of life are not a  
rehearsal.

This is the real show.  
- Irving Harris



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## The neuroscience of brain development

Children then go from perceiving sounds to understanding their connection to meaning and then being able to produce specific words themselves. At the biological level, the brain is developing more complex circuits that build on the more basic circuits that were created previously.

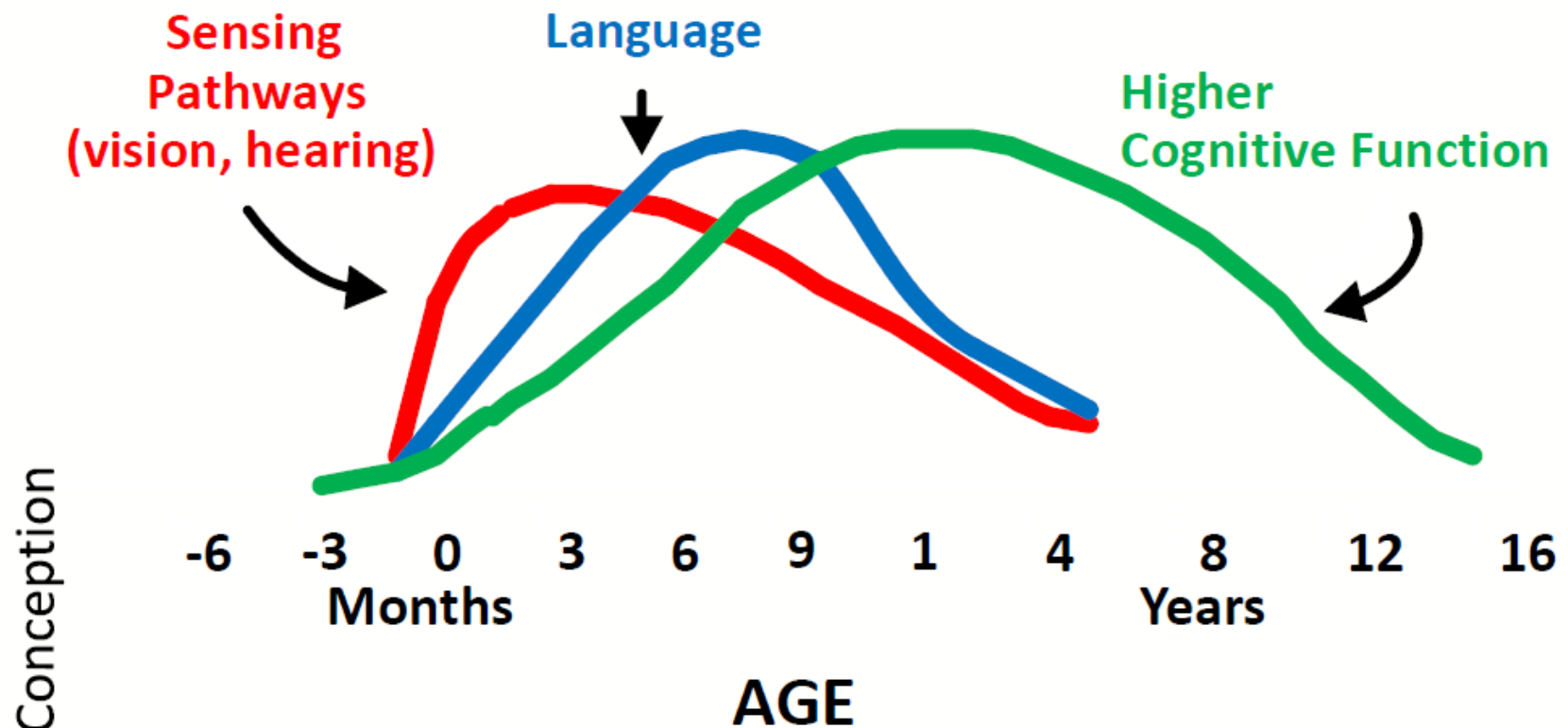
In other words, the increasingly complex hierarchy of neural circuits creates a framework for the development of increasingly complex behaviors and skills.

(Galinsky, 2006)



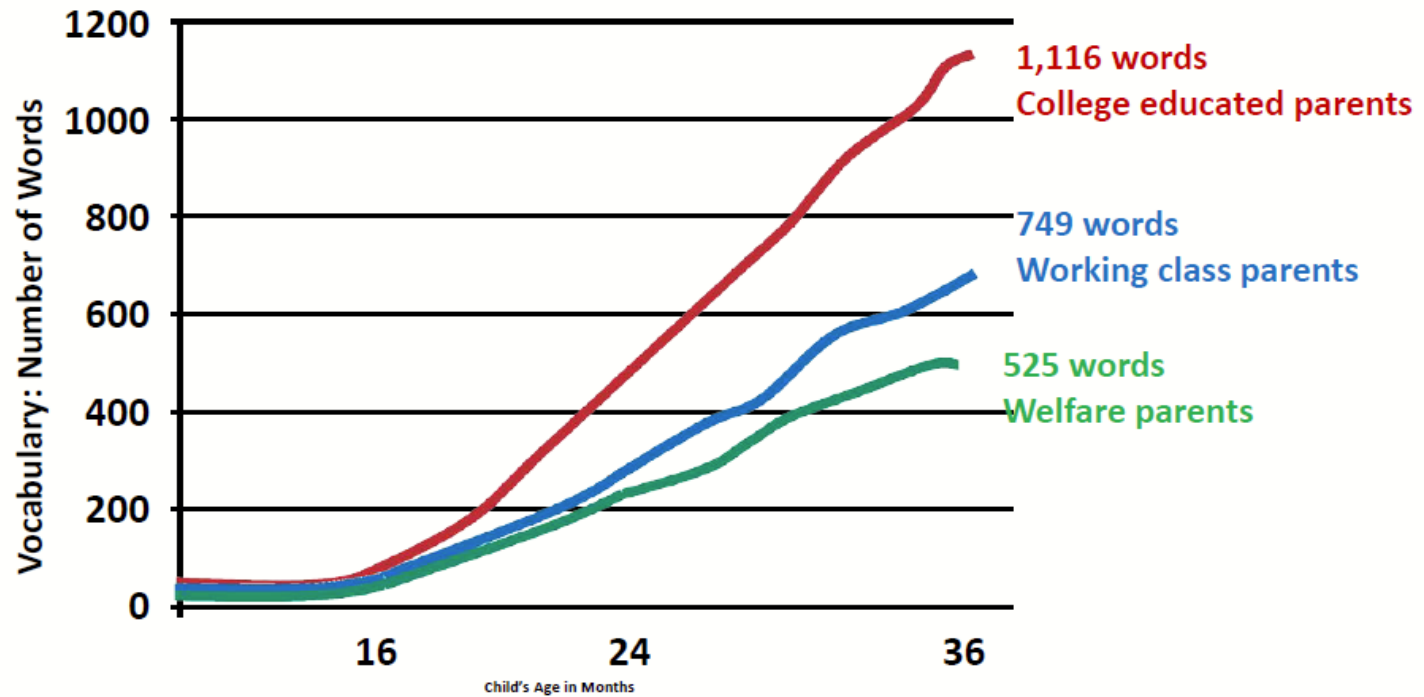
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# Sensitive periods & Synaptic Development



C. Nelson, in *From Neurons to Neighborhoods*, 2000.

## Achievement Gap starts early



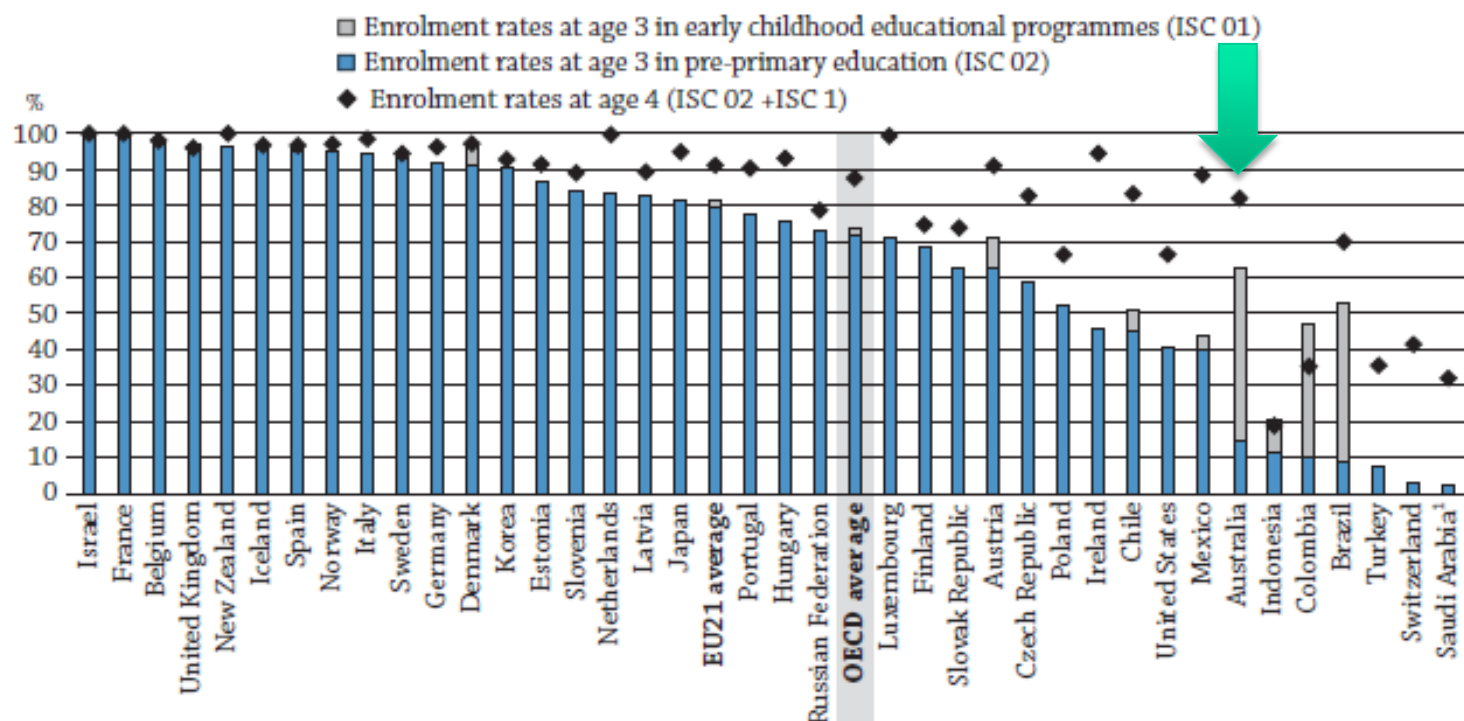
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The Children's Book Council  
of Australia



**Chart C2.1. Enrolment rates at age 3 and 4 in early childhood education (2013)**



1. Year of reference 2014.

Countries are ranked in descending order of the enrolment rates of 3 year-olds in pre-primary programmes.

Source: OECD. Table C2.1. See Annex 3 for notes ([www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm](http://www.oecd.org/education/education-at-a-glance-19991487.htm)).

StatLink <http://dx.doi.org/10.1787/888933284184>

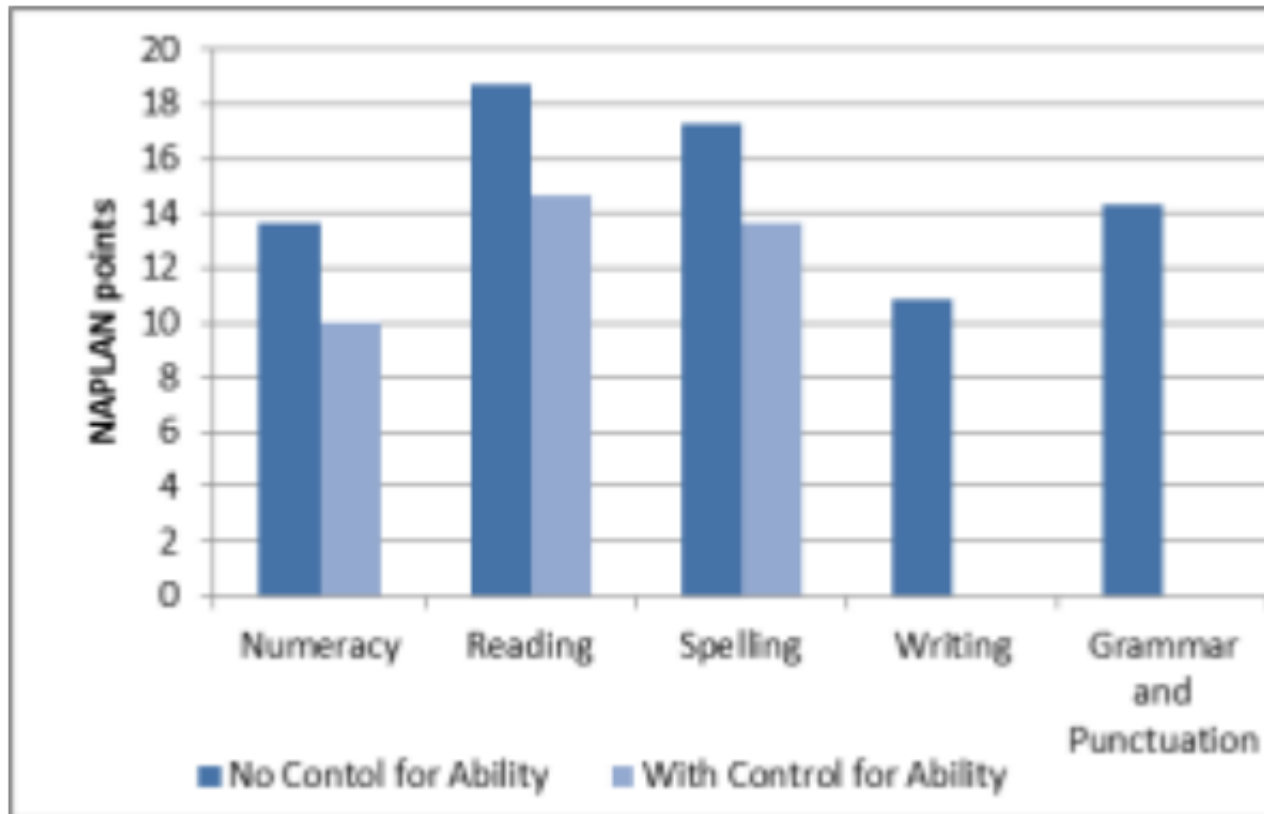
(Education at a Glance, OECD, 2015)



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***Figure 2: Comparison of benefits of pre-school attendance when controlling for innate ability***

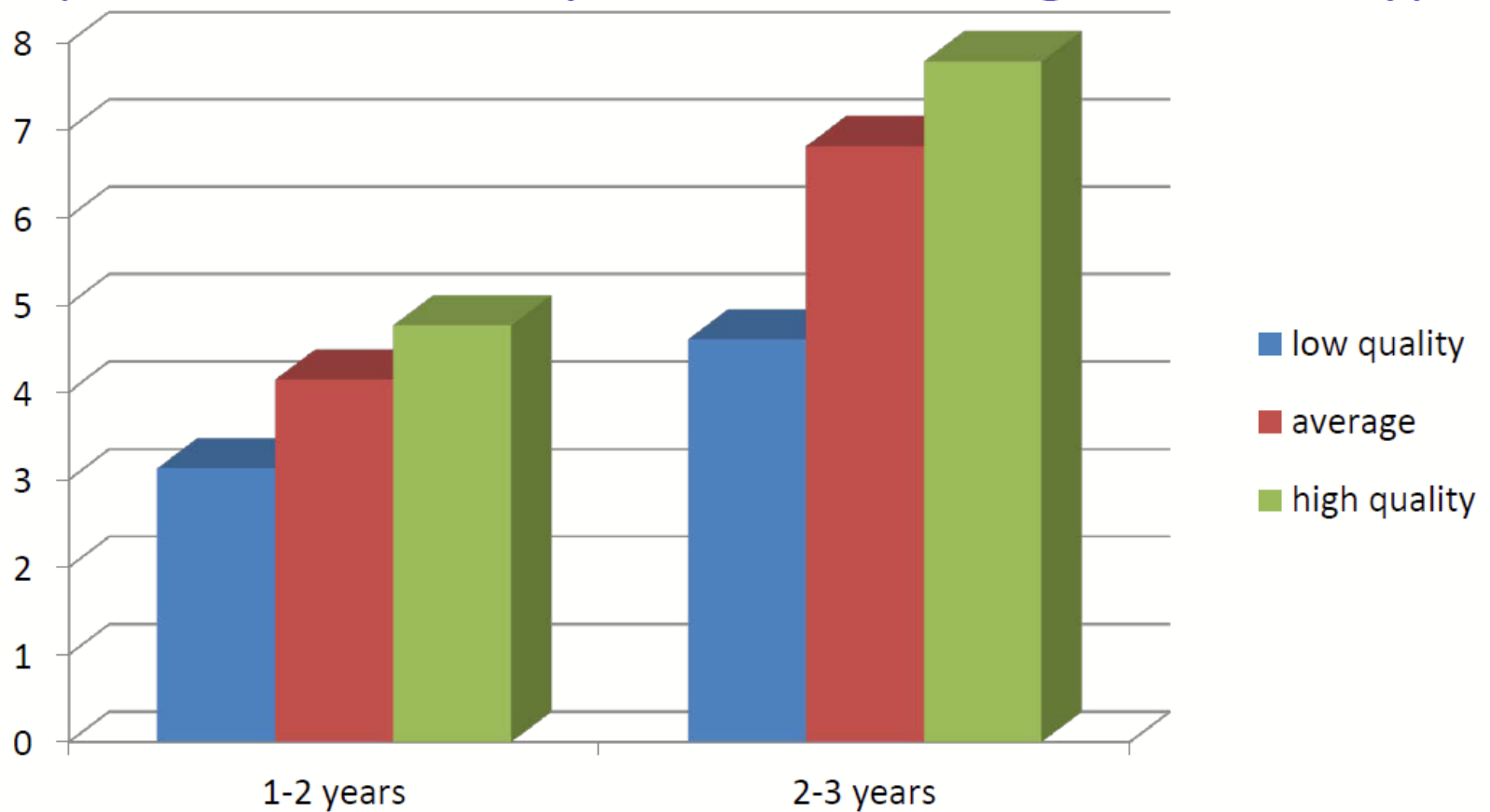


(Warren & Haisken DeNew, 2013)



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## Quality and Duration matter (months of developmental advantage on literacy)



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# The Longitudinal Study of Australian Children

(Haiken-DeNew, 2013)

- One year of schooling in year 3 is represented by 52 NAPLAN points
- In Year 3 - children who attended pre-school score 18 to 20 points higher in Reading, Spelling and Numeracy and 13 points higher in writing (compared to children who did not attend pre-school).
- This represents 30–40% of the learning impact of one additional year of schooling, 3 years after the fact.
- Children whose pre-school teacher had a degree in Early Childhood Education or a Diploma in Early Childhood Education or Child Care gained the most from attending pre-school
- Children whose teacher had only a certificate level qualification or no relevant qualification showed no significant benefit in terms of Year 3 NAPLAN scores.



**\$3.25  
BILLION**

Additional investment in the  
Families Package over five years

**\$40 billion**

Total investment in early childhood  
education and care over four years



Child Care Subsidy

One single  
payment



Child Care Safety  
Net

Disadvantaged  
children



Universal Access to  
Preschool

For four  
year olds

(PWC, 2014)



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# Universal statutory guarantee to early childhood education and care

**Birth**

**11 months**

**1 year**

**2.5 years**

**3 years**

Finland

Slovenia

Norway

Belgium

United Kingdom

Sweden

France

Kazakhstan

Germany

Italy

Mexico

Slovak Republic

Luxembourg



**Starting Strong IV**  
MONITORING QUALITY IN EARLY CHILDHOOD  
EDUCATION AND CARE



*(Starting Strong IV, OECD, 2015)*



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Literacy Levels of  
Educators – Yes,  
It Does Matter!

# Understanding the Australian **Early Development** Census

Resources for early childhood education and care services



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# Current Policy Frameworks

1. Convention on the Rights of the Child
2. National Early Development Strategy
  - Universal Preschool
  - National Quality Framework
3. Early Years Learning Framework
4. Declaration of Literacy in 21st Century Australia
5. Victorian Libraries' Reading and Literacy for All



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# Towards a National Strategy

1. Coalition of the willing – we need everyone with an interest to get involved
2. Clear statement of purpose – what is the problem we are trying to solve? – growing attainment gap
3. Policy solutions – measurable, agreed, evidence based
4. Political Strategy
5. Measurement
6. Long term commitment



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Policy, economy, social, cultural factors  
Community and services  
Kinship and neighbourhood  
Family and household



**CHILD**



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# Community partnerships

Libraries

Local schools

Toy libraries

Playgroups

Museums

Cultural organisations



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