

## Communicating Effectively About Government Investments in Birth to Three Programs



Widespread belief that early childhood is a critical window for development

- Recognize the first three years are “critical” and the “foundation”
- Don’t position the first three years as *overly* determinative



Brain science is compelling but it’s only half the story

- Lead with brain science to answer “why now” and convey urgency
- Provide the scientific evidence without getting too “science-y”
- Connect policy with the brain science to strengthen the case for policy makers



This is about empowering parents, not replacing their parenting

- Recognize parents as a child’s most important teachers and caregivers
- Talk about how policies and programs are a resource and support for parents
- Emphasize the voluntary nature of programs



Government plays a role, but opinions span the spectrum

- Explain how government efforts will support – not replace – parents
- Couple the why with the how and demonstrate what’s possible
- ROI is important, especially for policy makers
- Policy makers need a clear vision of what’s working and how investments are paying off

### Other Ideas to Emphasize

- ✓ Community led (not new federal program)
- ✓ Non-duplicative of existing efforts
- ✓ Caring, highly trained, highly qualified experts

### Ideas to Avoid

- ✗ Identifying parents who need additional help
- ✗ Appearance of a financial handout
- ✗ Talking only about low-income families
- ✗ Any suggestion that parental responsibility is being abdicated