

# Children's Defense Fund



## A Partner in the Project for Babies

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# CDF-MN 0-3: Research to Policy

- State Policy Should Reflect What We Know About Child Development & Adult Outcomes
  - Make Research Findings Relevant to Minnesota
  - Research & Develop Policy Options
  - Engage public, allies and policymakers
  - Promote 0-3 Legislative Agenda
  - Follow Through to Implementation

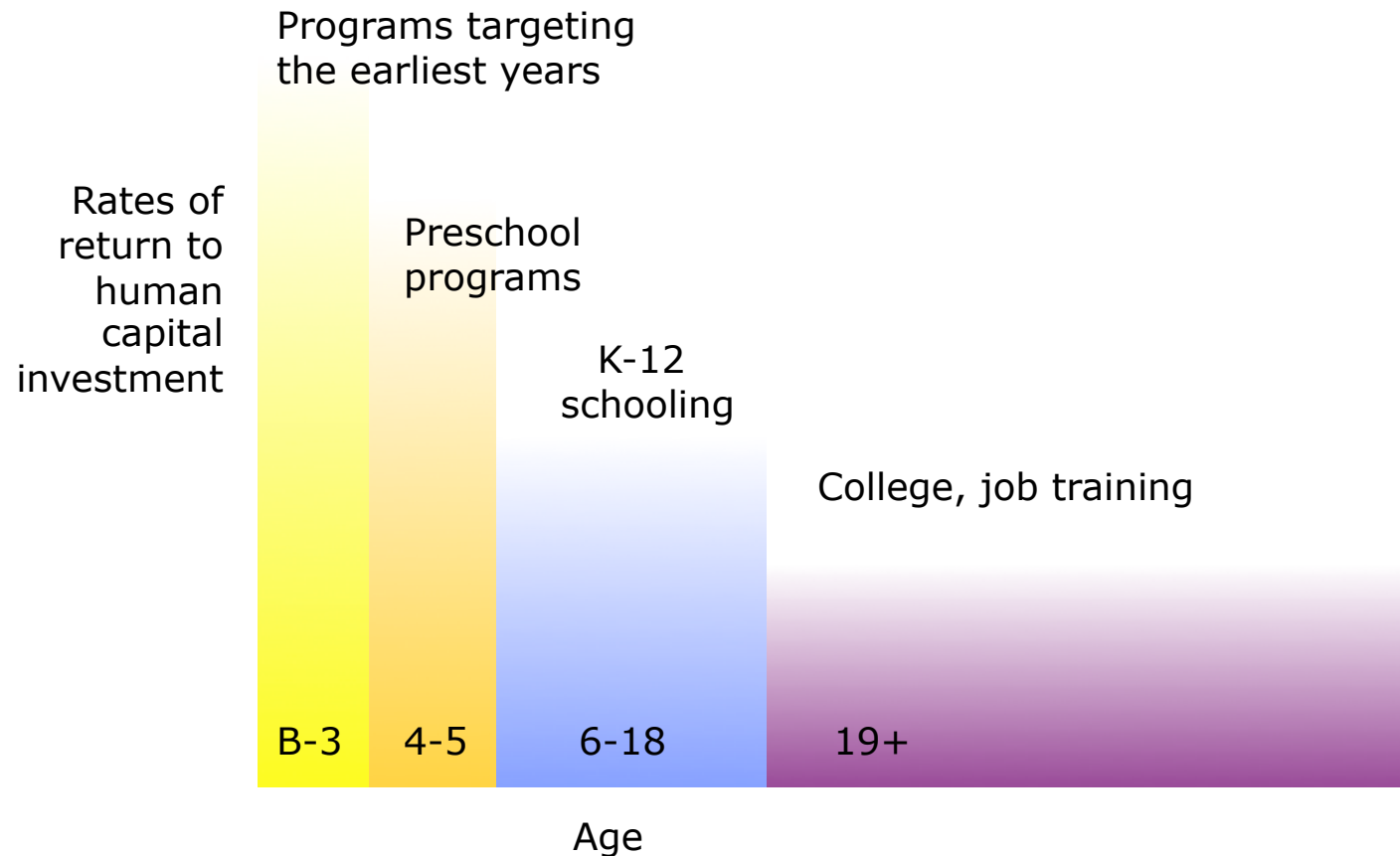
# 2011 Projects

- Maternal Depression and Its Impact on Early Childhood
- Infants & Toddlers in Child Welfare and MFIP
- Accountability (Budgeting for Prevention)
- Incorporate into CDF MN Family Economic Security Initiative

# Underlying Research

- Children of depressed mothers experience toxic levels of stress
  - More likely to be born prematurely, at low birth weights
  - More likely to exhibit developmental, social emotional and cognitive delays in infancy and early childhood
  - More likely to enter school less ready to learn
  - More likely to have emotional problems in adolescence
  - More likely to develop health problems in adulthood

## Preventive Intervention is More Efficient and Produces More Favorable Outcomes Than Later Remediation



# Minnesota

- 10% of new mothers report serious depressive symptoms first year after their child's birth (PRAMS)
- Low income, women of color, and women with less education twice as likely to report depressive symptoms
  - Women with incomes below \$15,000 3X rate of over \$50,000
  - Women with less than high school education almost 5X rate of women with college education

# Minnesota con't

- One-fourth of the state budget has its roots in early childhood
  - Special education, public safety, welfare, county social services, MA basic health care for families
- Another almost one-fifth is spent on long term and basic health care for people with disabilities & the elderly
- Investment in early childhood (child care, ECFE, Head Start etc) less than 2% of the state budget

# High-Risk Families Are Often in Public Systems

- One-fourth of children in MFIP families are less than three years old; 28% of children reported as neglected are less than three years old
  - 44% of MFIP families in 2009 had a caregiver diagnosed with a serious mental health condition in prior three years
- One-third of children receiving MFIP are in child-only cases
  - 53% of the caregivers in child-only cases receiving SSI had a serious mental health disorder diagnosis

# Components of an Effective Policy Response

- Two-generation focused
- Early screening and referral for mothers and children
- Economic security & social supports
- Broadly shared vision & clear points of public responsibility and authority
- Public awareness

# Minnesota Infrastructure

- Effective, knowledgeable and committed professionals & others at all levels
- Successful pilot projects and local programs with documented effectiveness
  - School Readiness Connections, Strong Beginnings
- Professionals educating and supporting their colleagues
  - Read Out & Read
  - HCMC Women’s Health Center Provider Warmline
- Internationally recognized university researchers & resources

# Strengths con't

- Innovative state policies and programs
  - Mat Dep screening in infant check-ups
  - Social emotional/mental health screening incentives
  - Children & Adult Mental Health Collaborations
  - Health care maternal depression information
- Innovative communities
  - Northside Achievement Zone, Arrowhead EHS, Human Development Center, Baby Space
- Foundation & policymaker interest & support
- Families wanting the best for their children

# Challenges

- Effective pilots have not been brought to scale; other programs are severely underfunded.
- Many programs are not consistently administered or implemented.
- Programs are often uncoordinated at the delivery and administrative levels.
- Disparities in services and outcomes.
- Information regarding the impact of state policies, broader social conditions and family well-being is unavailable or often excluded from public policy debate.

# Challenges con't

- State policies do not take maximum advantage of cost-effective targeting opportunities for prevention and early intervention efforts.
- Federal funds are not fully utilized.
- Some policies contribute to the development or maintenance of depression.
- Public still largely unaware of the importance of early childhood and the impact of caregivers' mental health.
- Most programs & policies lack a two-generation perspective.

# Work plan—Winter 2011

- Full Report Released
- Summary for Policymakers, Media (Framed)
- Media; Op-eds; CDF-MN Website/blogs
- Meetings with Legislators
- Child Welfare Briefing
- Legislation/Authors
- Presentations, etc

Thoughts? Suggestions? Additions?  
Corrections?

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