

# AHIP's National Conference on Medicare, Medicaid & Duals in Washington, D.C.

# Saving Millions of Children from Prison, Poor Health, and Financial Failure.

By George C. Halvorson; Chair And CEO Of The  
Institute For Intergroup Understanding, And  
Chair Of The First Five Commission For Children  
And Families.

You Can Change The Future For Millions Of  
Children — Beginning Almost Immediately.

The Number One Predictor For Who Will Be In Prison At Age 18 Is The Number Of Words In Their Vocabulary At Kindergarten.

We Have More People In Prison Than Any  
Country In The World By A Wide Margin.

We Have Seven Times More People In Jail Per  
Capita Than Canada.

We Disproportionately Imprison Minority Americans.

We Have More African American Males In Prison Today Than The Total Number Of African American Males Who Were Enslaved At The Beginning Of The Civil War.



Roughly 30 Percent Of The African American  
Males In This Country Will Spend Time In Jail.

There Are Major Differences In Imprisonment Rates For People Of Every Race, Ethnicity, And Culture Based On Whether Or Not The Person Graduated From High School.

For African American Males In Their 30s Who  
Dropped Out Of High School — 80 Percent Will  
End Up In Jail And More Than 60 Percent Are  
Actually In Jail Today.

That Compares To Only 5 Percent Of The African American Males Who Graduated From High School Who Are Currently In Jail.

Dropouts Are 12 Times More Likely To Go To Jail  
— And We Know With More Than 80 Percent  
Accuracy By Age Three Which Path Each Person  
Will Be On.

Basic Biological Science For Brain Development  
Is The Same For People From Every Ethnic,  
Racial, Cultural, And Economic Group.

We Have Wonderful New Neurological Science  
To Guide Us Today.

We Now Know The First Three Years Of Life Are  
The Years When Biological Neuron Connectivity  
Happens In Each And Every Child's Brain.



The Children Who Have Had Their Brains  
Exercised In Those First Months And Years Have  
More Neuron Connections For Life — And They  
Have Stronger Brains.

Exercising Muscles Builds Strong Muscles — And Exercising Brains Builds Strong Brains — But The Brain Exercise Only Has Its Optimal, Positive Biological Impact In The First Months And Years Of Life For Each Child.

After Age Four, The Brains Actually Biologically Prune Themselves And Get Rid Of Neuron Capabilities That Were Not Exercised In Those First Three Years.

The Children Who Have Fallen Far Behind By  
Age Four Simply Never Catch Up.

Kindergarten Is Too Late.

Learning Does Not Begin At Kindergarten.

It Begins At Birth.

Wonderful And Extensive Research Done At Harvard, Stanford, Ucla, Columbia, The University Of Washington, And A Number Of Other Great Programs Is Now Showing Us How Those Processes Work, And Those Researchers Are Explaining Why The Children Who Have Fallen Behind By Age Three Tend To Stay Behind For Their Entire Lives.

WE SHOULD NOT EVER GIVE UP ON ANY CHILD  
— AND ALL CHILDREN BENEFIT FROM GOOD  
EDUCATION RESOURCES — BUT THE VERY BEST  
TIME TO HELP EACH CHILD IS IN THE FIRST  
MONTHS AND YEARS OF LIFE.

The National Testing Programs Show That The Children Who Have Fallen Behind By Age Three Have Lower Learning Levels In Fourth And Eighth Grade For Both Reading And Mathematics.



We Need To Make Sure That No Children Fall Behind.

That Goal Requires Us To Begin Helping Children  
At Birth.

To Begin Helping At Birth, We Need All Parents  
To Know What Can Be Done To Exercise The  
Brain Of Their Child.

The Exercise That Works To Improve The  
Strength Of A Child's Brain Is Easy To  
Understand And It Can Be Done In Almost Any  
Setting.

Neurons Connect In The Brain Of A Child When Adults Talk, Read, Sing, And Interact Directly With Each Child.

Talking Is A Very Powerful Brain Building Tool.

Talking Directly To A Child Has A Huge Impact  
On Building Strong Brains.

Having A Mother, Father, Family Member, Or Any Other Trusted Adult Talking Directly And Constantly To A Child Creates Billions Of Neuron Connections In The Child's Brain.



Too Many Children Have No One Talking Directly  
And Often To Them — Because We Have Not  
Taught The New Science Of Brain Strengthening  
To All Parents.

Children Who Have Adults Interacting Directly  
With The Child And Talking Directly To Them  
From The Very First Days, Weeks, And Months  
Of Life Have Stronger Brains — And Are More  
Emotionally Secure.

The Children Who Are Talked To Are Also Healthier. The Children Who Have Not Fallen Behind By Age Three Have Significantly Lower Rates Of Asthma — More Than 60 Percent Lower.

They Have Significantly Lower Rates Of All Major Diseases — Including Diabetes.

Look At The Health Status Differences For High School Dropouts — Including Pregnancy And Drug Abuse — And You Can See Differences In Those Highly Expense Problem Areas That Are Equivalent To The Incarceration Rates.

Toxic Stress Syndrome Causes Multiple Problems And Creates Major Health Care Expenses — And Toxic Stress Syndrome Can Be Cut In Half By Interacting Directly For 30 Minutes Each Day With Each Child.

Reading To A Child Creates Those Needed Buffer Times — And Reading Also Strengthens Brains.

Reading Builds Learning Skills, Teaches Cognitive  
And Representational Thinking, And Buffers  
Directly Against The Negative Neurochemicals  
Of Toxic StreSS.



Working Mothers Read, On Average, Roughly  
1,500 Hours Between Birth And Kindergarten.

Medicaid Mothers Read, On Average, Less Than  
30 Hours.

More Than Half Of The Medicaid Homes Do Not  
Have A Single Book.

Nearly 30 Percent Of Medicaid Mothers Do Read  
Almost Daily To Their Children.

We Need To Double That 30 Percent That Reads Regularly To 60 Percent — And We Can Reduce The Number Of Children On The Path To Prison By HALF.

We Know What To Do For Children To Make  
Major Improvements In Both Ability And Health.

# **Talk. Read. Interact. Count. Sing**

Five Magical Interactions That Build Brains And Improve Emotional And Physical Health.

**Mothers Want Their Children To Thrive.**



More Than 70 Percent Of Medicaid Mothers Who Are Given Information About Building Those Stronger Abilities In Their Children, Change Parenting Behavior And Practices In Positive Ways To Make That Happen.

The People In This Room Today Can Make That  
Whole Array Of Benefits For Medicaid Children  
Happen.

You Can Change Lives.

The People In This Room Can Make A Huge Positive Difference In The Life Trajectories Of Children — And You Can Do It At Extremely Low Levels Of Expense And Resource Use.

You Can Also Build A Competitive Edge For Your Plan By *Being* The Plan That Not Only Has Healthier Kids — You Can Also Have Happier And Smarter Kids.

All Moms Want Their Kids To Be Healthy, Happy,  
And Smart.

Talking To Kids And Reading To Kids Makes Kids  
Both Happier And Smarter.

Start By Having Every Obstetrician In Your Plan Or Network Teach That Basic Brain Development Science To Every Expectant Mother. It Can Be Done In Minutes — And That Teaching Can Be Supported With Either Simple Materials Or No Materials At All.

Also — Teach That Science To Each And All Of  
Your Pediatricians, Family Doctors, Nurses, And  
Social Workers.



When Members Of The Care Team Know The Science, They Can Easily Teach It And Encourage Parenting Behaviors That Create Major Benefits For Each Child.

In Order For Your Care Network And Team To  
Know That Science, You Need To Teach It To  
Them.

The Institute Of Medicine And The Academy Of Pediatrics Both Know That New Science.

But Far Too Many Caregivers Have High Levels Of Ignorance And Non-awareness On Those Issues And That Science.

Helping The Children Doesn't Involve  
Assessments Or Screens Or Even Processes.

It Is A Teaching Strategy — A Public Health  
Campaign — And That Public Health Message  
Just Needs To Be Delivered By A Trusted  
Messenger To Every Parent.

**Children whose brains are exercised in the first Three Key Years of life have larger vocabularies, learn to read more easily, and are much less likely to drop out of school.**

**You can exercise your baby's brain by talking to your baby, reading to your baby, singing to your baby, and even counting with your baby, beginning in the very first days, weeks and months after your baby is born.**



The Internet Is A Rich Source Of Information For Both Caregivers And Patients.

For The Caregivers, Steer Them To The  
Magnificent And Free Teaching Materials  
Available At The Website For The Harvard  
Center For The Developing Child — Or The Great  
Website Of The Center For Infant Brain Science  
At The University Of WashinGTON.

For Parents, There Are A Number Of Free Web Teaching Sites And Tools That Convey And Model That Information.

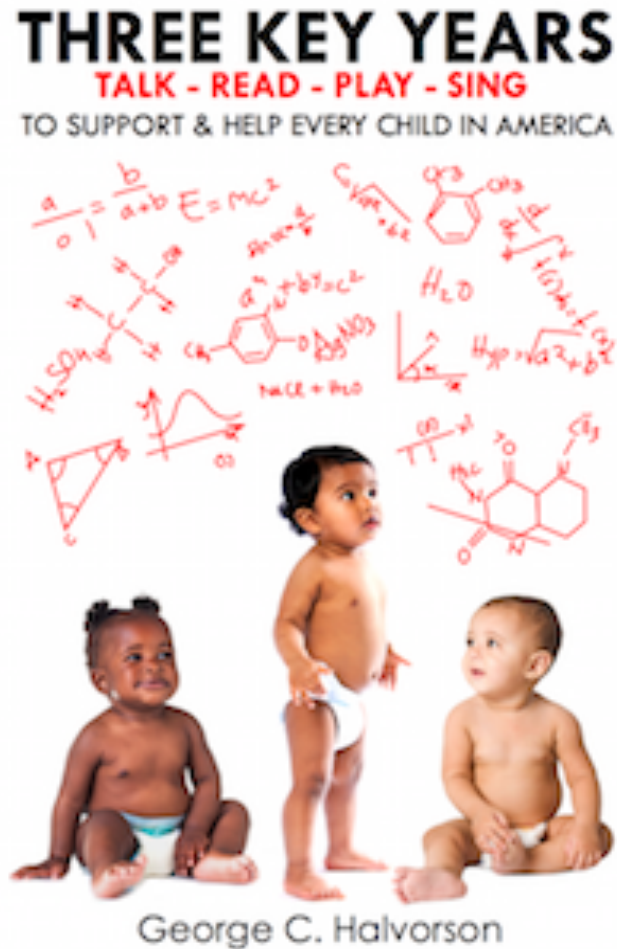


Links To Free Supportive Websites Are Available  
At The Institute For Intergroup Understanding.

You Can Link To More In Your Markets.

One Simple Low-cost Texting Process Reminded Mothers By Texting Them To Talk To Their Children — And The Mothers Who Got Those Free Texts Had Children Who Were Four Months Ahead Of Their Peers In Learning Levels By Two Years Old.

# Those Examples Are Included In The Three Key Years Book.



You Can Change Lives.

You Can Use Your Program To Change Lives — In Ways That Will Close The Learning Gaps In Our Schools, And Improve The Health And The Well Being Of The Children You Serve.

It Will Significantly Reduce The Likelihood That The People You Serve Will End Up In Jail.

By Teaching This Information To Each Mother,  
You Will Reduce Health Care Costs By Reducing  
Asthma Levels, Toxic Stress Levels, And Helping  
Mothers Better Understand Basic Parenting  
Roles And Functions.

That's Not A Bad Use Of Your Life, Your Talent,  
And Your Opportunity.

Once We Understand Those Key Issues, We Have A Personal Opportunity And An Ethical Obligation To Put The Information To Good Use And Save Kids.