# Science shows early learning cost-effective

The science is indisputably clear, fully confirming what good parents have known forever.
Kids develop very rapidly from the time they are born. Something like 85 percent of the brain is developed within the first five years of life. That's when kids are going to develop intellectually, socially and emotionally, And if they miss that critical window, they il have an increasingly tough time as they get older.

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The public policy consequence is equally clear.

Education should begin at age zero, not at age 5, which is when most kids start going to while school kindergarten.



zero, not at age 5, which is when most kids start going to public school kinderparten. Sadiy, there is a disconnect today between what we know about how and when children develop and when we start spending money in educating them.

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Power

Budget hawks, consider this Much of what needs to be done int going to cost taxpayers one red cent. Reading to your baby for just a half hour a day turb bocharges the development of her brain. How much does that cost? The verbs are compelling, the cost is cheap and the results vast read, hold, teach, laugh, play, care for, love.

And when costs are involved, the payoff is seven to one. Ypallantia High Scope/Ferry Preschool program is the most studied early childhood program in the country. Research conducted over 30 years shows that the public saves \$700 in the cost of prisons, drug treatment, welfare, remedial education and social services in return for investing \$100 in high-quality early childhood deucation and care.

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For the past few years, I've been part of a amail outit called the Rendy To Succeed Partnership, which is committed to early childhood care and education. It's a broad group, including folks from business, philanthropy, education, politics, law enforcement, health care and the media. You might remember its catchy slogan — Be Their Hero From Age Zero' — from last year's media campaign, Next week, it'il launch a new campaign, one generously funded by intermediate school districts and grants from foundations of General Motors, Ford and DaimlerChrysler. The campaign will be on TV, radio, billboard and newspapers and, counting the free match from media participants, this year's drive will bring total media expenditure over the past two years to more

than \$2.5 million.

The media are compelling, Images of parents reading, holding, laughing, caring — those verbs again! — are juxtaposed with the faces of children juxt beginning to sense the excitement of discovering the wonder of themselves and the world around them.

A great part of this year's campaign — which will kick off next Monday — is a telephone number linking parents and interested adults with local information. Dialing (828) BE-A-HERO gets you in direct touch with trained staff that will direct you to information about programs and services in your own local intermediate school district. During peak times, calls will be answered by an automated voice mail system requesting a caller's contact information. This will be forwarded to the local ISD for direct followsp.

will be forwarded to the local 1812 in Mindson Jowap.
Fortunately, this private effort is drawing support from the public sector. One of the themes of Gow. Jennifer Granholm's State of the State speech was Project Great Start, through which the state's 57 intermediate school districts are being asked to define education as beginning at birth and not when a kid starts kindergarten.
Over the past couple of years, something like \$90 million in state grants have jump started community-based coalitions to help the parents of the 130,000 babies who are born in Michigan each year.

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Public engagement is not limited to Gov.
Granholm. A bi-partisan Children's Caucus in the Legislature is developing to help Michigan become a national leader in high-quality early education and care for young children. Former state representatives Pan Godchaux from Birmingham and Lynn Martinez from Lansing were key in starting the caucus a few years ago; with their departure from the Legislature (thank you term limitst), new leaders are stepping up.
A tot is coming together in all this. Brain science, Public policy. Private philanthropy and volunteerism. State government. Local teachers, nurse, doctors, ciergy and parents. But the results could be, quite literally, revolutionary.

luttonary.
Readers interested in statewide information and resources for early childhood education and development can log on to www.heroftomzer.org. For information on the Michigan Ready To Succeed Partnership, go to www.readytosucceed.org.

Phil Power is the chairman of the board of the company that owns this newspaper. He would be pleased to get your reactions to this column either at (734) 953-2047 or at ppower@homecomm.net.

# Like old times in Ann Arbor as people gather to protest

It was almost like old times.

Ann Arbor was alive again to the sounds of anti-was protesters Saturday. They assembled in groups from different ends of the downtown and gathered in front of the Federal Building, it was deja vu.

Imaginative demonstrators carried a fabric bomb and another group carried a papiermache Mother Nature puppet. The signar sanged from the inane, Tranja ure people, too, to the crudely effective, Bush, Cheney, Rumsfield, The Asses of Ev.

Overhead, there was an air battle. Two provents of the property of the provider of the provents of the provider of the provi

Rumsfield, The Asses of Evil.

Overhead, there was an air battle. Two prowar planes proclaimed

Saddam, Step Down, and

Protesters Promote WarPeriod' and an anti-warplane encouraged those on the ground to join the movement.

A car carrying a middleaged man on his way downtown offered another point of view. On the left hand as de, a bumper sticker read: A Vet for George W. Bush and on the right, a bumper sticker featured The New York Times nameplate on one side and on the other the words' Left of Lenin' on a bold red background with a harmner and siekle.

The local newspaper put the number of demonstrators at 2,000 but that seems generous, It was probably in the low hundreds. It was not nearly as many as were gathered a mile away at Crisler to wastch the basketball game.

Still, they did have enough protesters to

game.

Still, they did have enough protesters to form a giant peace sign on the Diag. It was a formation that would have satisfied the director of the U-M Marching Band in its preci-

sion. But, unlike the early demonstrations against the war in Vietnam, this was a mixed crowd. Maybe a third were students. There were also young parents with their children, giving them a taste of democracy in action. There were older people, who probably marched against the war when they were students. There were people from the Muslim community.

dents. Increwere people from the sustain community.

As the marchers made their way down Liberty, a lone man stood with a large American flag in one hand and a sign in the other, proclaiming "I support the President."

An older marcher stopped to discuss their difference of opinion. He was joined by another marcher who also carried a flag, with the stars arranged as a peace sign, and a sign warning people not to wrap themselves in the flag in blind acceptance of U.S. policy.

Vietnam provided a template for protest. The first protests against that war came from the hard left -democratic socialists, communists, Trotakeyites - and the 'new leftlists', young people inspired by the civil rights movement, flirting with socialism as an antidote to grauping capitalism, and a few true pacifists. Every social movement and innovation starts at the fringe.

They were joined in time by thousands of young people who just didn't want to die in a war they didn't understand and by traditional liberals, usually the major champions of American defense, who questioned the legitimacy of the war's goals. Finally, they were joined by fathers and mothers, disgruntled vets, retired people with time on their hands to lick envelopes.

Many Americans learned that it was OK to protest government policies. They learned that loving America and blindly following the current administration are not the same thing. That notion has been under attack recently by the Bush administration and Attorney General John Asheroft. But there are more people than ever willing to put it to the test. It is a lesson that will get a scrious wirkout in the weeks and months alead. For now, Fresident Bush is seen as a strog leader. He responded forcefully after the Sept. I stateks. His shift from hunting the terroits to going after Saddarn has met with resistance but has not scriously evoded his support.

Folls show most Americans back

ists to going after Saddam has met with resistance but has not seriously eroded his support.

Polls show most Americans back President Bush but want him to act in cooperation with the United Nations. Most Americans trust that Saddam Hussein is an evil, mentally unstable man, who either has or recently had weapons of mass destruction. They might be wary of the motives of the President and Vice President, but they have a deep respect for the Secretary of State, who has until recently been a voice of moderation.

But when saber rattling turns to bombs and American airmen and soldiers are killed in action, the mood will change. If America becomes bogged down in a ground war, the poll numbers will plummet. If it turns out that the threat of deadly weapons was a ruse to free up oil deposits, the consequences could be devastating.

But for now, the American people are willing to wait, watch and trust. In time, they may be willing to carry a sign and march.

Hugh Gallagher is the managing editor of the Observer Newspapers. He can be reached by phone of (734) 953-2149, by e-mail at hgallagher⊄oe.homecomm.net or by fax at (734) 591-7219.

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