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Can Early Childhood Interventions Increase Economic Opportunity?

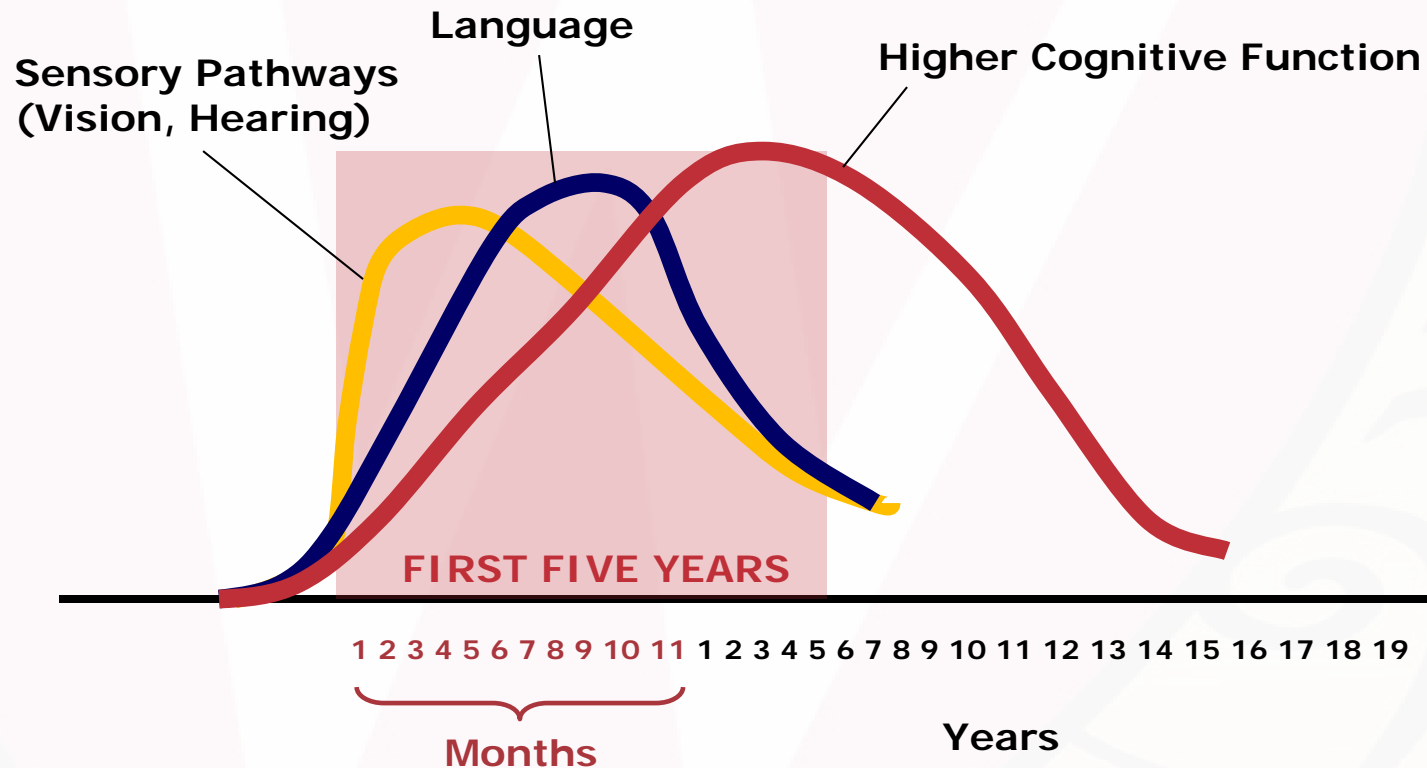
Katherine Magnuson
UW-Madison



Why focus on the early years?

Neural Circuits are Wired in a Bottom-Up Sequence

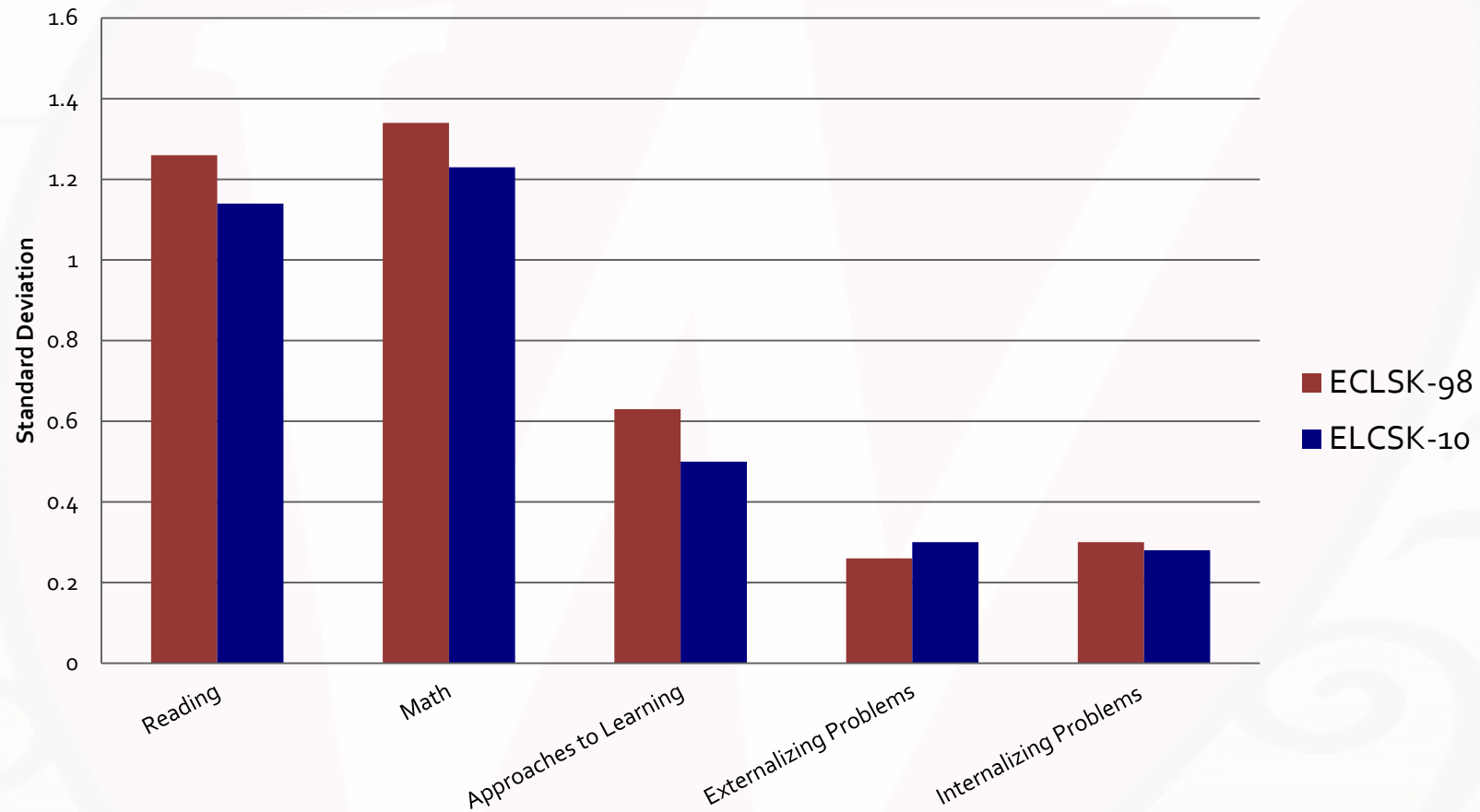
(700 synapses formed per second in the early years)



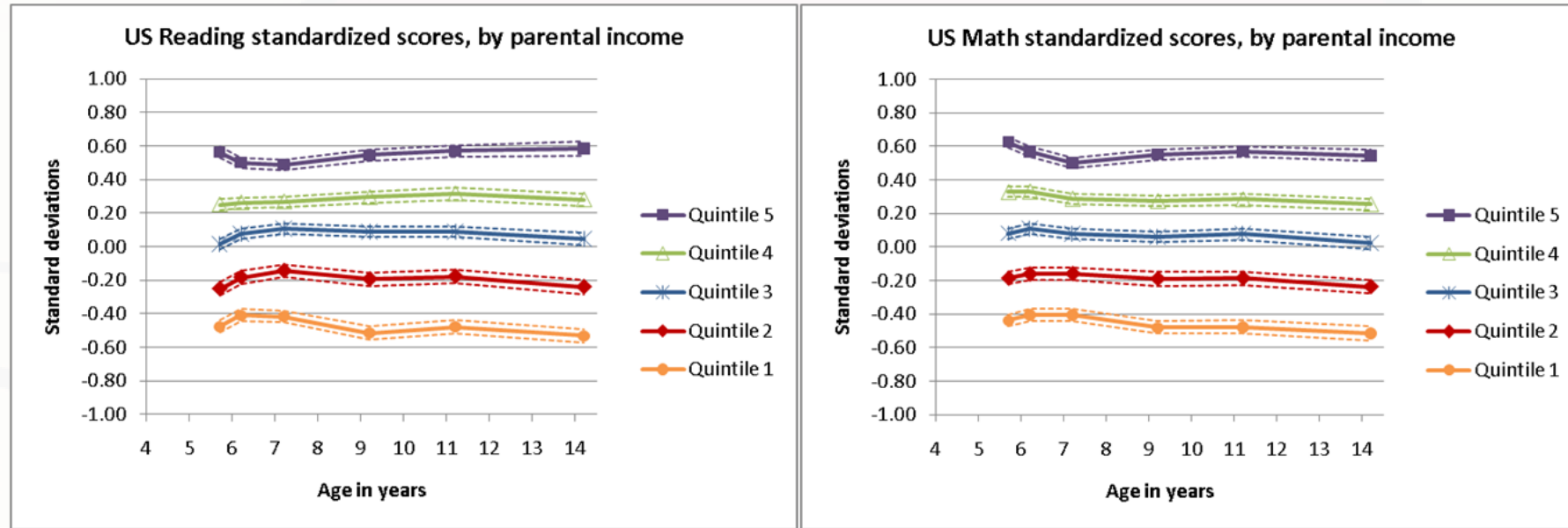
Early Life Experiences Are Built Into Our Bodies (For Better or For Worse)

- **ENRICHMENT:** Stable and supportive relationships, language-rich environments, and mutually responsive, “serve and return” interactions with adults promote healthy brain architecture and adaptive regulatory systems.
- **PROTECTION FROM HARM:** Excessive or prolonged activation of stress response systems and reduced availability of the buffering protection of supportive relationships can weaken brain architecture and disrupt the development of other organ systems.

Skill and behavior gaps between high- and low-income kindergarteners

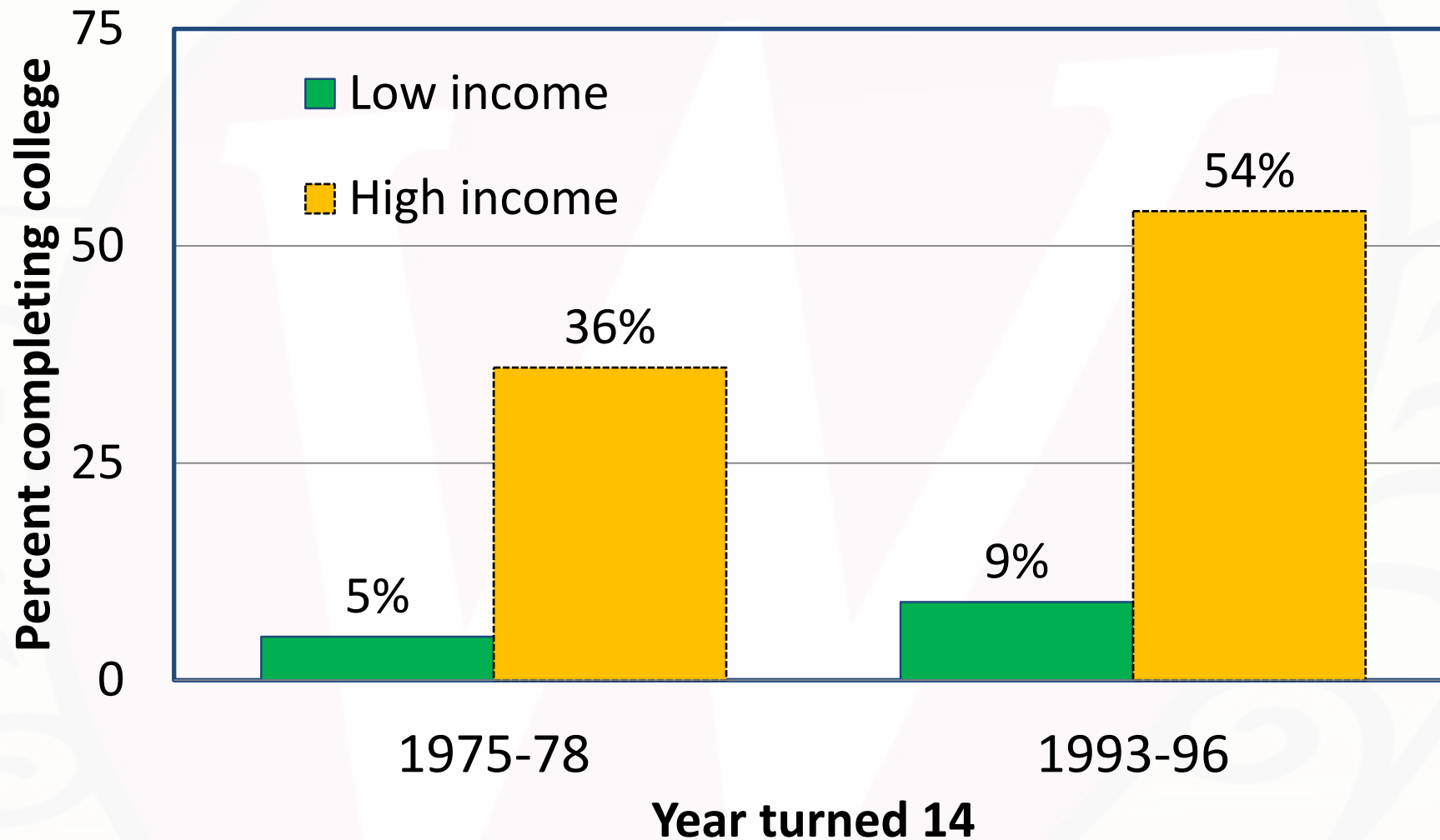


Notes: The graph shows standard deviation differences in skills and behavior for children in the lowest income quintile and the highest income quintile, Sources: Early Childhood Longitudinal Study Cohorts of 1998, 2010.



**Reading and Math Skill Income Gaps
from Kindergarten to 8th grade,
ECLSK-98**

College graduation rates for low and high income children

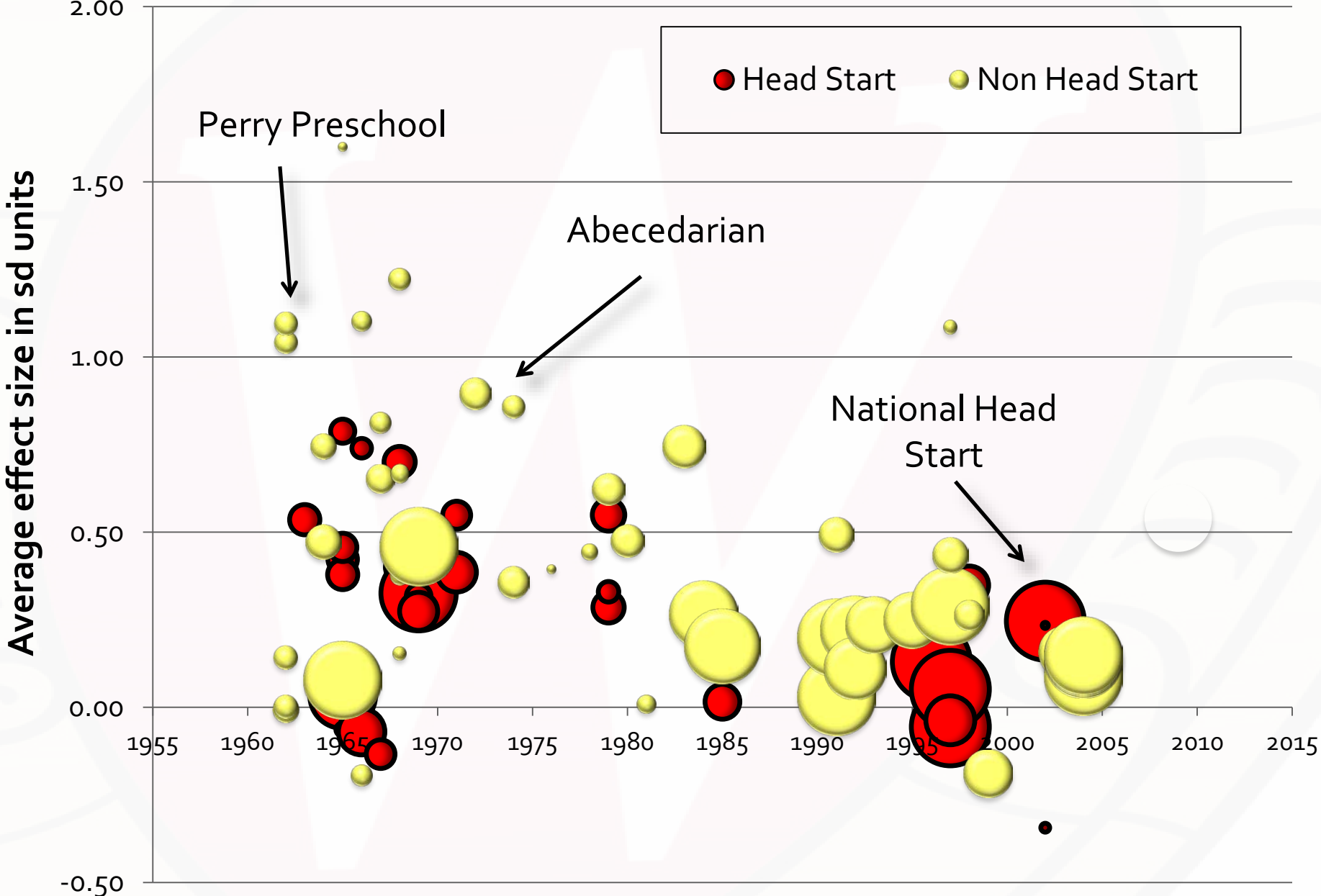


Source: Calculations based on Bailey and Dynarski (2011). Low and high incomes are defined as the bottom and top quartiles of the parent income distribution.

How effective are ECE programs at building skills?

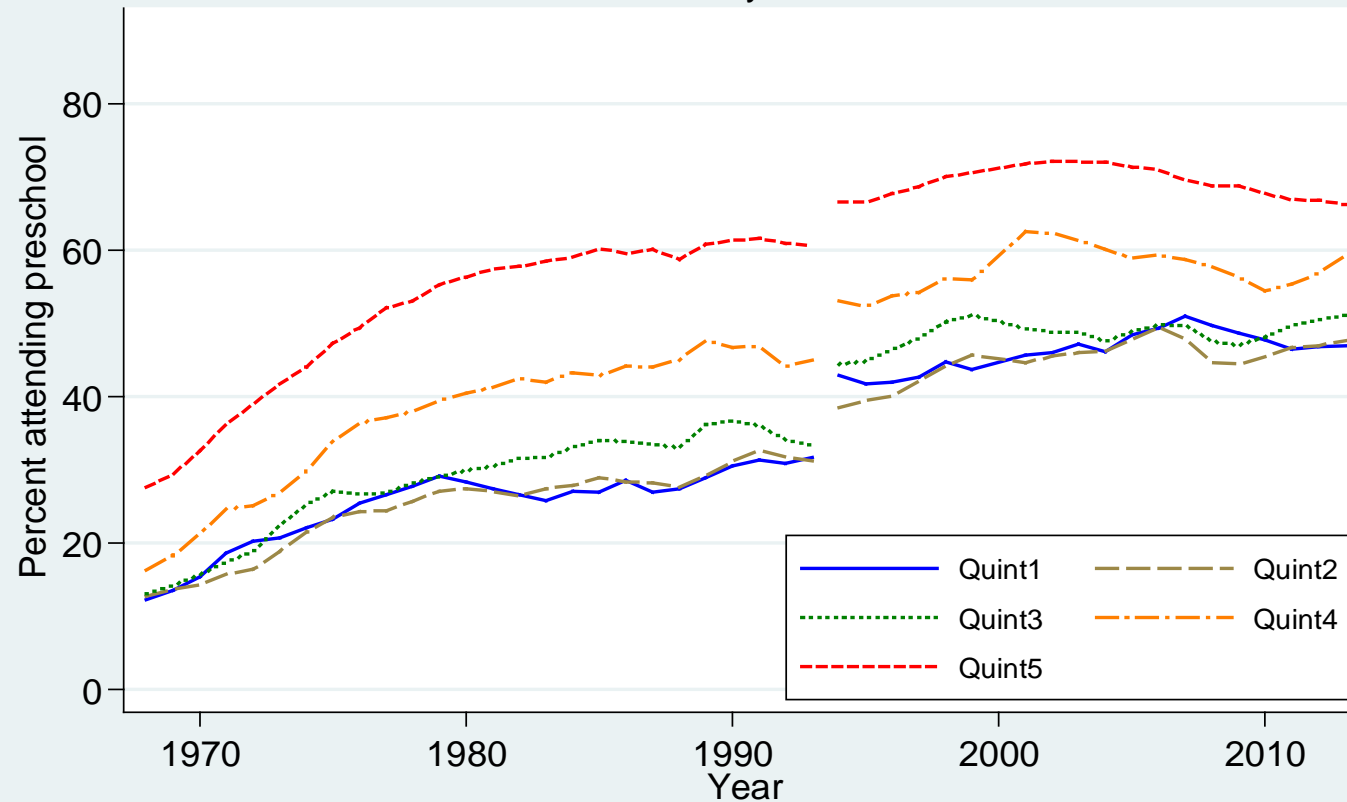
- Evidence from strong evaluation studies published between 1960-2007
- End of treatment effect sizes (vs. longer-run studies)

Average cognitive impact at end of treatment



Current ECE Enrollment Trends by Income Quintile

Figure 1: Percent of children enrolled in preschool by family income quintile:
3- and 4-year olds



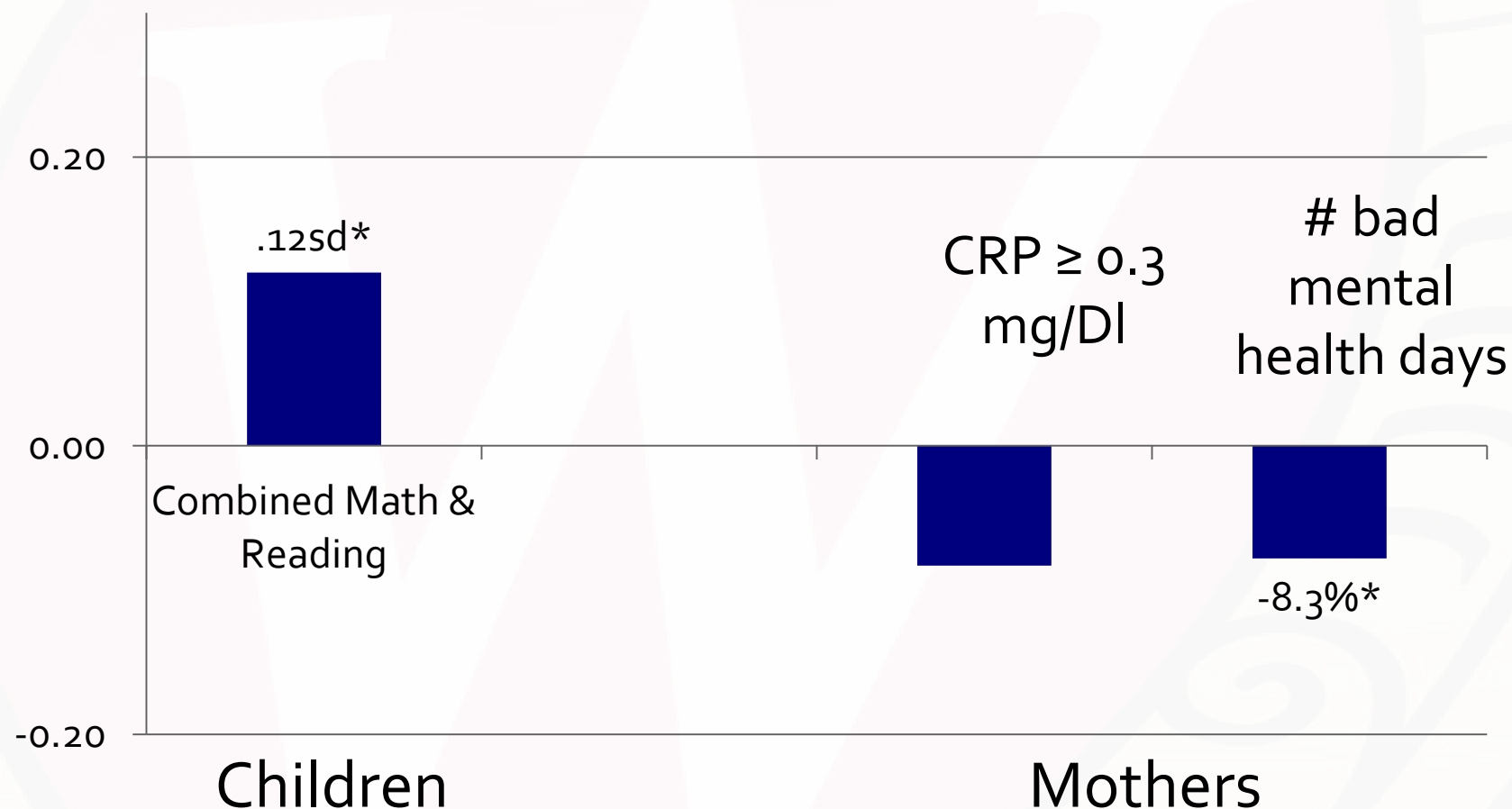
Note: Data from October CPS, data shown are from 3 year moving averages

Effective Early Childhood Investments for Low-Income Families

> **Home Visiting:** For vulnerable parents expecting a first child, early, intensive support by a skilled home visitor can produce significant benefits.

> **Economic Supports for Parents:** Cash and near-cash supports enable parents to better care for children's developmental needs and improve family functioning.

Effects of EITC expansion on children's test scores and mothers' health



Dahl and Lochner, 2012; Lundstrom, 2017; Evans and Garthwaite, 2009

Conclusions

- Early Childhood is a foundation for human capital development and a productive investment
- Vulnerable children and families need a range of supports and experiences to thrive
- All evidence points to the benefits from :
 - ECE programs
 - Home visiting
 - Economic family supports

Thank You

kmagnuson@wisc.edu



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