There are four major factors in optimal brain development during those first 1,000 days that support healthy brain development: health and wellness, knowledge and skills, community resources and support, and social determinants of health.

Employers stand to benefit from supporting their employees' efforts to give their children a strong start in life, as well as making a smart business decision.

Nutrition, healthcare, parenting, environmental safety, and thousands of other things that physically shape the connections in the brain. Research has shown that in the first 1,000 days of a child’s life, 80% of the foundation of the brain is built based on the experiences of the child.

Healthy brain development starts from the beginning of life and continues throughout the first 1,000 days of a child’s life.

Employers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul region can play an important role to support their employees, their children along with all families in the region by:

- Adopting family-friendly policies, practices, and incentives to support healthy brain development
- Supporting advocates for increased funding and better service delivery for supports for healthy brain development are needed not just for children, but for their families – and the majority of adults in those families who are parents

Each year, 34,000 children are born in the Minneapolis-St. Paul region; many of them face barriers to healthy development.

Nearly one in five families are so impoverished that their children live in poverty

More than half of families lack adequate income to meet basic needs

• Nearly one out of four families report experiencing hunger

Lack of supports for children creates barriers for parents who want to work:

Employers who help parents by reducing or eliminating barriers to employment can:

- Increase employee attendance and retention rates

Supports for healthy brain development are needed not just for children, but for their families – and the majority of adults in those families who are parents

Each year, 34,000 children are born in the Minneapolis-St. Paul region; many of them face barriers to healthy development.

The family is at the center of supporting healthy brain development, but many other stakeholders play a role.

Parents can play a role.

- When it Matters Most

- Itasca Project First 1,000 Days Report: Healthy brain development

The Itasca Project

March 2021

ItascaProject

Employers who support employees and their children are investing in the Minneapolis-St. Paul region’s future success, as well as making a smart business decision.

Everything that children experience affects their ability to realize their potential. This includes nutrition, healthcare, parenting, environmental safety, and thousands of other things that physically shape the connections in the brain. Research has shown that in the first 1,000 days of a child’s life, 80% of the foundation of the brain is built based on the experiences of the child.

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