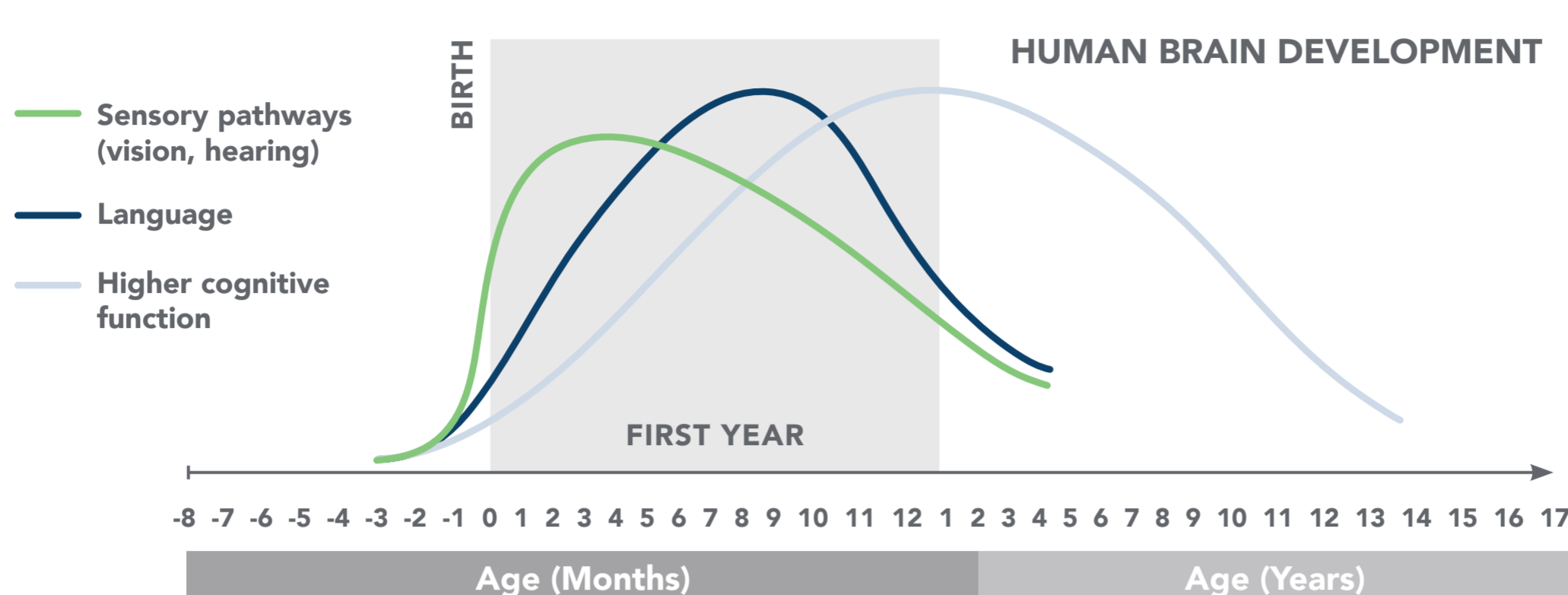


Itasca Project First 1,000 Days Report: When it Matters Most

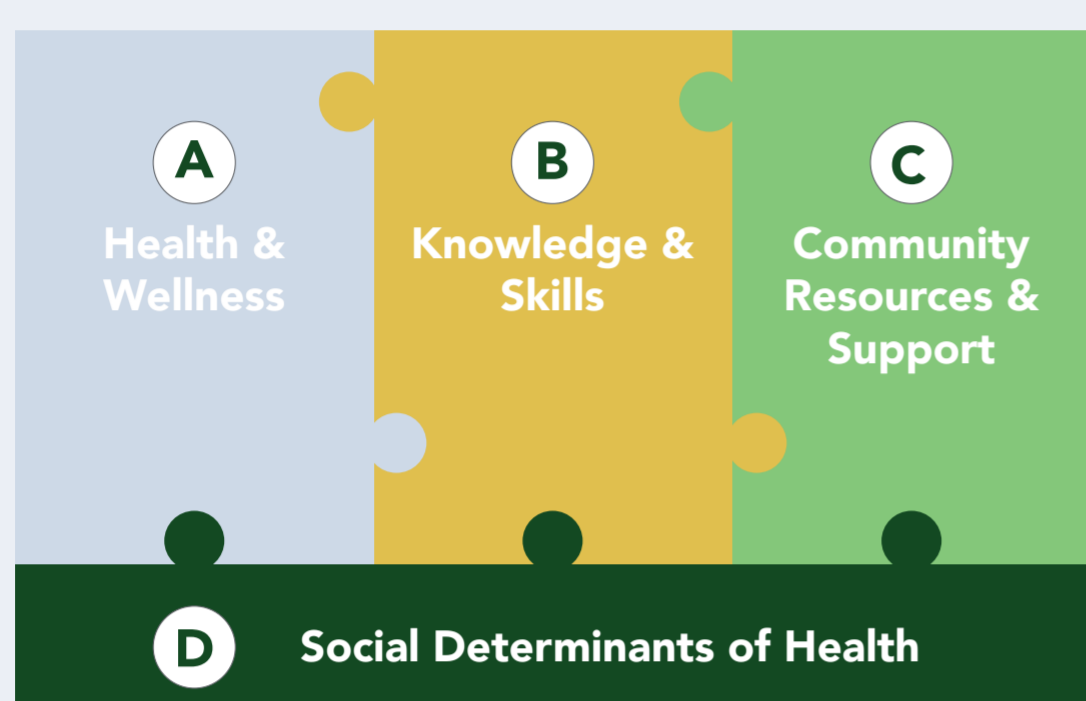
March 2021 **ITASCAproject**

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.

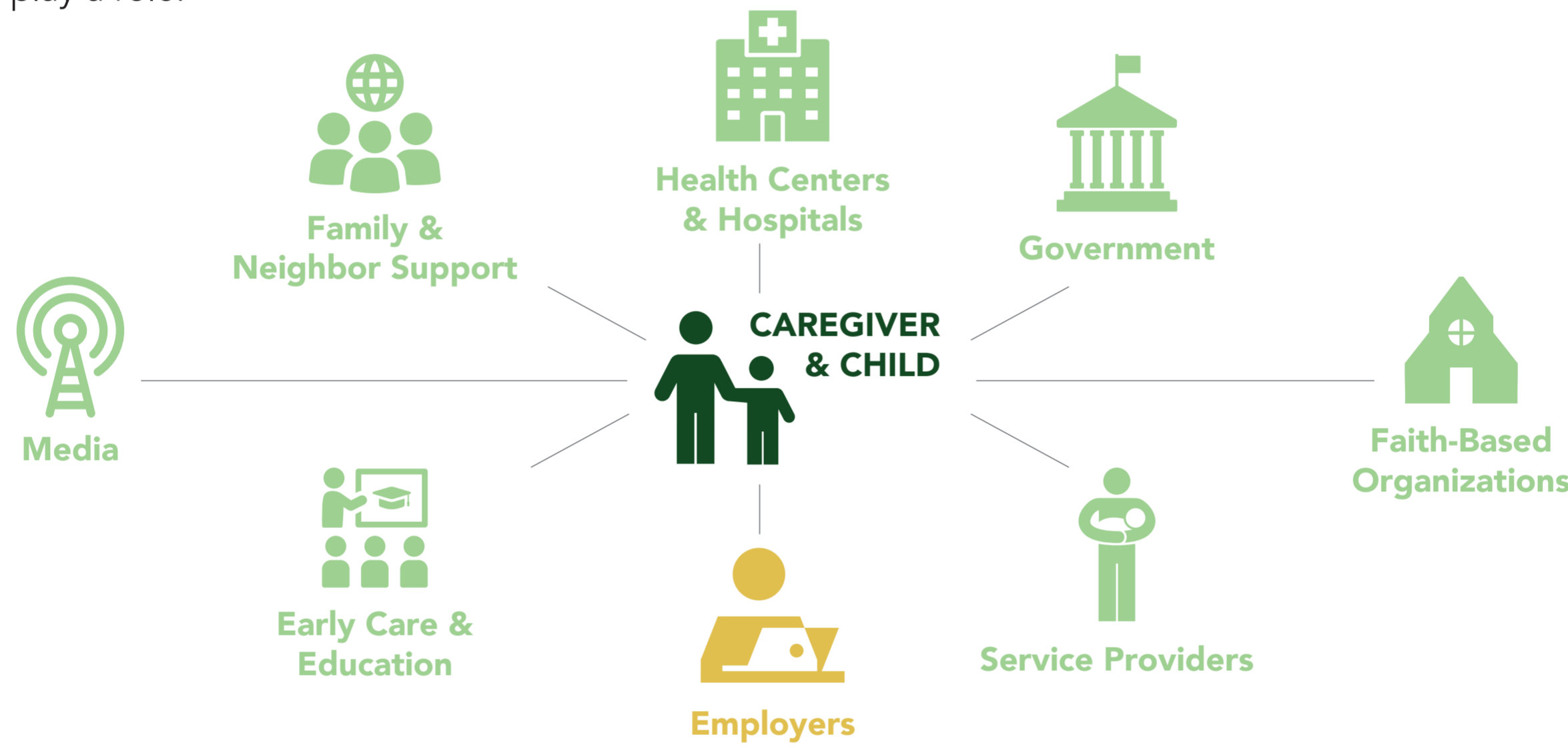


There are four major factors in optimal brain development during those first 1,000 days that support healthy brain development: health and wellness, knowledge and skills, community resources and support, and social determinants of health.



- A** Healthcare and age appropriate nutrition for child and parents, includes mental and emotional support.
- B** Learning principles to stimulate and support brain development.
- C** Resources for parents and caregivers, including informal sources like peer mothers and family and formal sources like high quality childcare.
- D** Foundational elements for children and families including steady housing, financial stability, food security, safety, reduction/elimination of pollution and toxins from ambient environment, etc.

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



Healthy brain development sets a foundation for the future of that child - affecting their health, ability to learn, ability to function in the community, and economic success



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 workers



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



Nearly a third of births are to families making less than \$50,000, over 40% are to families on Medicaid



One in five lack adequate prenatal care



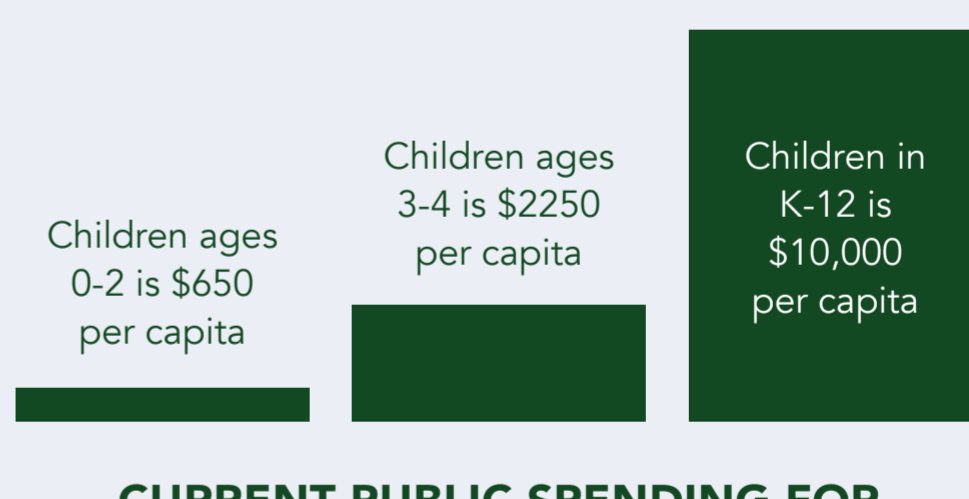
More than half of eligible families do not receive childcare subsidies due to lack of public funds



More than half of parents wish they had more information and resources on positive parenting strategies

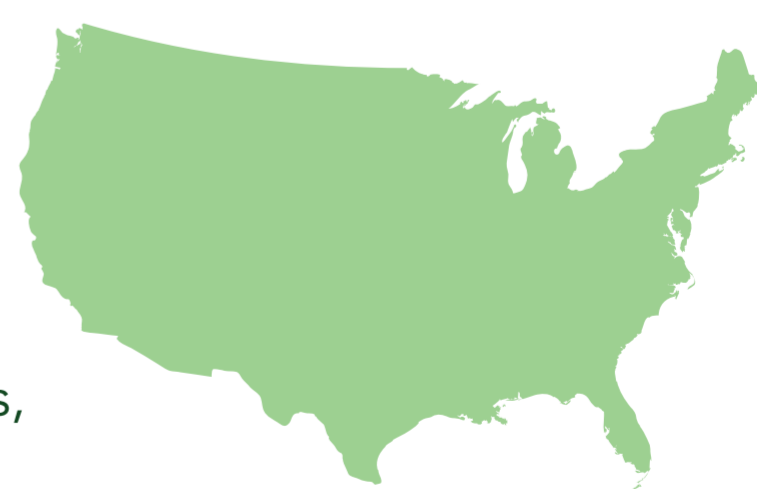
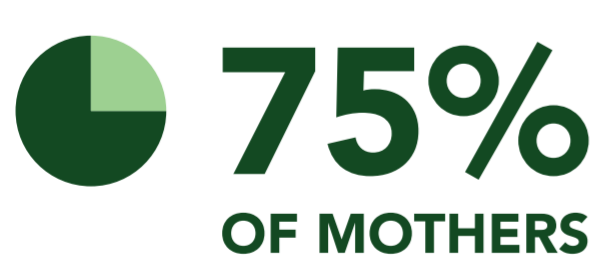
These challenges fall disproportionately to families with low incomes and families of color, which is exacerbating inequities in our region.

- **2-3x** – rates of Black and Indigenous families lack adequate prenatal care compared with all families
- **2-3x** – rates of Black and Hispanic families that reported food insecurity in 2020 compared with all families
- Only **42%** of families with low income read to their child every day
- **2x** – the rate children from families with low income have two or more adverse childhood experiences compared with all families



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

in the US:

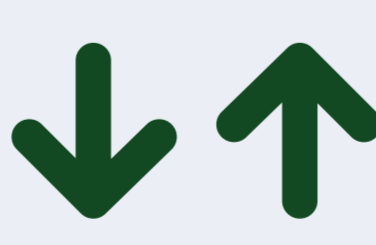


say that they have passed up work opportunities, switched jobs, or stopped working to care for their children

Employers stand to benefit from supporting their employees' efforts to give their children a strong start in life.



Employers who help parents better balance work and family life enjoy higher attraction and retention rates



Family-friendly practices can decrease employer health care costs and employee absences, and increase employee productivity and morale



Research has also shown that investments in early childhood development produce an annual return on investment (ROI) of 7-10% by improving school and career achievement and reducing costs for remedial education, health care, and the criminal justice system. For the children most at-risk, that return may exceed 13%

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:



Sharing the story of early childhood development additional materials can be found at: littlemomentscount.org



Adopting family-friendly policies, practices, and resources to support employees and their children



Support advocates for increased funding and better service delivery for families in greatest need

Please contact Justin Freiberg (justin_freiberg@mckinsey.com) if you or your organization is interested in participating in this coalition

The Itasca Project

An employer-led alliance drawn together by an interest in new and better ways to address regional issues that impact our future economic competitiveness and quality of life in the Minneapolis-St. Paul region.

