Roundtable Dialogue:
Early Care and Education Across the Aisle

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Development of brain connections ("synapses") from birth to age 2

Newborn 1 month 6 months 2 years

The importance of early human development hasn’t changed... but the world has.

• In 1940, fewer than 1 in 10 mothers with children under age six were working outside the home... Today, almost 7 in 10 are.

• Two-thirds of children from birth to age five now have all residential parents in the workforce.

• Over half of American children under age five are in out-of-home care, for an average of 36 hours a week, often starting in infancy.
Total hours in childcare before age 5 vs. a year in full-time pre-K/Head Start
Young children learn *wherever they are*

- Every environment is a learning environment for young children

- Common distinction between “childcare” and “preschool” is false

- *Childcare is America’s most important early education program*
Rates of Return to Human Capital Investment

Source: Cameiro and Heckman, 2003