Today’s piece was prepared by Sarah Connell, MD, based on an article in the New York Times, titled “Investments in Education May Be Misdirected”. <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/03/business/studies-highlight-benefits-of-early-education.html?ref=business&_r=0>

This article describes University of Chicago economist James Heckman’s research and conclusion, “that investment in the early education of disadvantaged children pays extremely high returns down the road,” and stresses that efforts that commence beyond early childhood are too late; the article discusses how our government has chosen to address educational disparities, providing monetary assistance in the form of tax breaks and grants for higher education. Yet, these efforts have not yielded the intended outcome.

While the article begins in a sensationalistic manner, “In February [2013], [Heckman] … demolished the United States’ entire approach to education,” it is dedicated to accurately representing its sources and contains links to Heckman’s research papers, presentations, and additional data sources (although not all of these resources work a year later). Additionally, the article makes useful comparisons with other nations as it discusses how investing in education at the right time in life is important for learning. The article briefly alludes to critics who note that some of the studies (upon which Heckman draws conclusions) are dated and may not be generalizable. Overall, however, without evidence to the contrary, and citing the lack of progress in educational achievement, the article is a convincing call to action, appropriately increasing awareness.

**RESOURCES ON EARLY EDUCATION & ITS IMPORTANCE:**

* Washington Learns: <http://www.washingtonlearns.wa.gov/> *Multi-disciplinary “roadmap” established by former WA State governor Gregoire to enhance education quality & delivery beginning in early childhood*

* Social Programs that Work: <http://evidencebasedprograms.org/> *From the Coalition for Evidence-based Policy, identifies social-welfare programs that have shown adequate research-based evidence of impact.*

And that’s today’s Developmental & Behavioral Pediatrics: IN THE NEWS!