



Early Child Development Toolkit: Sample Letters to the Editor

The following examples incorporate the framing research and elements of the core story into letters to the editor. These letters to the editor are written in support of a fictitious early childhood advocacy coalition. They are examples of how to use the media to advance a new frame about early childhood development and related/relevant policies, and contain language that can be incorporated into your own writing on this topic.

To The Editor:

Every morning as I welcome our children into the school building, I realize that, as their principal, I am a steward – not only of their futures, but of the future prosperity of our state. That’s a tall order, of course, and a humbling one. But it’s one that we take seriously as educators. **[Value: Prosperity]**

As a faculty, we have recently been studying some of the newest discoveries in neuroscience for how to create the optimal learning conditions for our students. We now know that the brain is a highly integrated organ, and that all its domains – cognitive, social, emotional and physical – are linked. **[How Brains are Built: “Can’t Do One Without the Other”]**

Our kindergarten teachers know this very well. They see our students at the beginning of their school careers and can easily tell which children have spent their earliest years in healthy environments, surrounded by a network of caring adults – and which children have not. Just like in a game of tennis, where you serve and return a ball, interactions between young children and adults flow back and forth, with adults responding to children’s gestures, facial expressions and language. However, if a child is put in a daycare center with a high turnover of caregivers, or with too many children to care for, this has negative consequences for the serve-and-return process that is the basis for successful child development. **[How Development Happens: “Serve and Return”]**

If we want good, solid, successful kids who will contribute to our communities in the years to come, we must ensure that all children get that strong foundation in the earliest years of life. That’s why we support the Kids Come First coalition, which is working to ensure that all kids can participate in our state’s early childhood programs. Help make the future bright for our children and our state by supporting this coalition.

To The Editor:

As grandparents of a 4-year old, my wife and I realize that our granddaughter is already moving beyond the cocoon of her immediate family. Not only does she have her own strong opinions, but she has learned much from the many adults – parents, aunts and uncles, neighbors and teachers – who surround her every day, and who help reinforce the values that are so important to us.

We read an article recently that said that neuroscientists are now affirming what we know instinctively: Children develop best in an environment of positive relationships like the one our granddaughter is so lucky to have. According to the article, good relationships in early childhood actually strengthen the physical architecture of the brain, creating a strong base for everything that is to come in a child's life. In the same way we build a house, our granddaughter's brain is also being built from the ground up.

[What Develops: Brain Architecture Simplifying Model]

The experiences she is having now lay the groundwork for her future success. But too many disruptions of those relationships through things like high turnover in a child care center, or frequent moves due to economic instability in a family, can harm children because they literally disrupt this building process.

[How development can be disrupted and stress can be buffered: Environment of Relationships]

We are grateful for the blessings we have been given, and that we can pass on to our granddaughter. We know that a healthy society depends on providing healthy environments and positive relationships for ALL children in our state, and yet gaps in our system prevent many children from getting what they need to thrive. We have the resources, knowledge and innovation to fill those gaps and make sure all children have opportunities for good outcomes. **[Value: Ingenuity]** That's why we support the Kids Come First coalition. We hope you will, too.