



Recommendations
Early Learning Transition Team
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The Obama-Biden Transition Team states:

At this defining moment in our history, America faces few more urgent challenges than preparing our children to compete in a global economy. The decisions our leaders make about education in the coming years will shape our future for generations to come.

I applaud the focus on a global economy and on preparing our children for the very challenging world of the 21st century. And I applaud the focus of the platform in:

- Including—for the first time—children zero to five;
- Expanding Early Head Start and Head Start; and
- Providing High Quality Child Care.

Most of the conversation and thus strategies will undoubtedly focus on:

- The content of what children need to know to be ready for school (literacy, math, etc.); and
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- The structural ingredients of early childhood programs that make children's learning most likely to occur—teachers' educational qualifications and teacher retention, staff/child ratios, group size—as well as the relationships between the teacher and child.

What is largely missing from these discussions and strategies is a focus on **learning-related skills**. At the Families and Work Institute, I have spent the past seven years involved filming some of the best research on early learning (birth through eight). I have also worked with employers for the past 30 years and know very well the skills that they see as imperative for the future. If we are to achieve the goals the Obama-Biden team have set forth, we must concentrate on the content that children need to learn and the settings most likely to provide this content, but we must also promote learning-related skills, such as focus (paying attention), self-control, perspective taking and others. These skills relate to Executive Functions of the brain. Research shows that they can be taught in everyday ways and if they are, they can help to narrow the divide between the have and the have-nots in education and can better prepare our children for the 21st Century.

Attached are a description of the researchers we have filmed for Mind in the Making and a description of this initiative.