

THE ASPEN INSTITUTE

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ASPEN LECTURE: PUTTING EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH INTO  
ACTION TO BUILD AN EARLY LEARNING NATION

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LIST OF PARTICIPANTS

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ASPEN LECTURE: PUTTING EARLY CHILDHOOD RESEARCH INTO  
ACTION TO BUILD AN EARLY LEARNING NATION

(9:00 a.m.)

MR. GERSON: Ladies and gentlemen, if you could take a seat. We are going to start just in a minute or so. Thank you.

Terrific. What a beautiful morning. I'm Elliot Gerson, executive vice president of the Aspen Institute and it is my great pleasure to introduce Jackie Bezos for this morning's Aspen Lecture. This is one of a series of specially labeled and distributed presentations that we think of are singular importance.

Jackie is president and co-founder of the Bezos Family Foundation, whose primary focus is to affect education, to improve the life outcomes of children. The Bezos Family Foundation supports critical research, promotes greater public awareness and designs and champions programs that work, that really make a difference. Vroom, for example, is one of her inspired developments.

She is also a very important part of the close Aspen family, where her contributions and those of her husband, Mike, who is one of our trustees, have been profound.

The Bezos Scholars Program, which many of you are familiar with which has brought remarkable young people to the Aspen Ideas Festival from inception, indeed, really the most, frankly, gifted and important contributors to our conversations it seems year after year. The Aspen Challenge, which brings the spirit of Spotlight Health and the Ideas Festival to inner cities all over the country. And most recently the Stevens Initiative, which is an extraordinary venture to join young people in the United States with young people in predominantly Muslim countries around the world.

She is also active on many boards, including the Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences and the Character Lab. Jackie is simply a model philanthropist and a model public citizen. She is smart. She is involved. She is hands-on. She understands the importance of research and evidence. And her passion to change the world for those who otherwise might be left behind is matched by no one else.

So it is my pleasure to bring up Jackie to give us an Aspen Lecture entitled *Putting Early Childhood Research into Action to Build an Early Learning Nation*. Jackie?

(Applause)

MS. BEZOS: Well, Elliot, well, I want to say thank you first. But I'd also like to say can I have a copy of that?

(Laughter)

MS. BEZOS: Maybe two copies: one for Mike and one for me. Seriously, thank you. That was a beautiful introduction and something I hope I can live up to. Thank you all for being here on this beautiful morning and joining us for breakfast. It's really nice to see such a full house, see so many people interested in our younger citizens.

So I'm deeply honored to be here with you today, surrounded by all of you who value the health of our youngest children and are committed to bringing wellbeing to the forefront of conversations that will affect them.

As we were reminded in several other talks around brain science in the Deep Dives that the early years of life are a critical time for supporting the development of healthy brains and bodies and the path to lifelong health in fact begins at birth.

Science also tells us that during that first five years of life, the brain develops more rapidly than at any other time in our lives. And during those first five years, trillions of neurons, trillions of connections are made, forming the foundation for health and future learning.

You know, you never hear that word "trillion" in a positive sense. You usually hear it, you know, in reference to the national debt. But here's a good way to think about trillions, about the neuro connections.

And these connections or synapses are created at an astonishing rate of 700 to 1,000 per second -- every second -- and by the age of three a child's brain will have formed 1,000 trillion connections.

Dr. Sam Wang of the university at Princeton calls this development a constant construction project, where babies and small children are putting together the foundation of who they are going to become later in life. And what promotes these connections and makes them strong? Positive interactions between young children and the adults in their lives.

Let's take a look at this overview of the science. I think we are having AV problems. Why does it always work during practice and never in the real time? Okay. We will come back to that.

So -- but the reality that we face is that many children begin their lives without the most basic supports they need. They are surrounded by stress and adversity. And if we want to help these children, we must act now. The best anecdote -- antidote to stress and adversity is supportive relationships with caring adults as early in life as possible. And we have proof of this. Science is on our side.

Advances in imaging technology reveal that even simple exchanges like counting toes or sparking a conversation even when your baby can't talk yet are brain

fertilizer. I like to show you what I mean -- and I'm hoping this one is going to work. I like to show you what I mean by taking you on a fieldtrip to the lab of Dr. Patricia Kuhl, the co-director for the Institute for Learning and Brain Sciences at the University of Washington.

The University of Washington is a leader in brain research. Dr. Kuhl and her team are conducting groundbreaking research with the world's only magnetoencephalography machine that is calibrated to take a movie of the infant and toddler brain in real time. Let's take a look.

Oh, okay. So let me tell you what you're going to see, hopefully. You're going to see the magnetoencephalography machine, which they call a MEG for short because magnetoencephalography has 26 letters and it's a mouthful. You're going to see a child seated in this machine and -- and, Jon (phonetic), now we're seeing all different kinds of things. Are we going back to this one? Are we -- no? We're going to skip that? Okay. Oops! I saw the magnetoencephalography flash by. Here we go.

(Video playing)

MS. BEZOS: Thank you, audio people. Thank you. As you can see, every time we engage with young children by looking into their eyes, reading, giggling or babbling, we are fueling healthy development. And though it may not seem like much, these brain building exchanges can transform the course of children's future and our own.

Is there more of this video right now about -- talking about how they catch -- you know, catch what the data -- okay. I think they are rewinding. So I'm going to keep on going until I'm told not to.

Intuitively, we can all see the inherent value of investing in a child's wellbeing early in life in order to bear the benefits both individual and societal further

down the road. We've seen it in our own children and in our grandchildren. Gut instinct is overwhelmingly in support of early childhood education.

But gut instinct rarely sways decision makers who are responsible for focusing on the bottom-line. They have to operate using a preponderance of evidence before getting behind an issue in a big way. Candidly, it's been a challenge up until now. Think about it: when you invest in young children, it can take years to see the upstream benefits.

Just this month, however, public health experts argued that absent new investments 200 million children may not reach their potential -- 200 million children -- because global policy and support lags behind the science of brain health.

Do you want to try this again? No? All right. Again, science is our guide, giving us the proof points. And here is what we know: quality early childhood experiences boost high school graduation rates and boosting high school graduation rates means a lifetime of higher earnings for the individual.

Quality early learning or early childhood experiences reduce the need for special education, which is costly. Quality early childhood experiences curb violent crime and other negative behaviors that become a drain on our society, and quality early learning experiences build adults with 21st century skills like resilience and collaboration.

It is time this became a national conversation and you can help make it so. This is not just about the children in any one community, it's about all children, all families -- creating a tipping point where we become a nation that supports the health and development of our most valuable asset, young children.

How we do this? By thinking of early childhood education not just as a constellation of programs and

policies -- and trust me, these programs and policies are critical -- but thinking of early childhood education as a movement.

Let me share some of our work at the foundation. We've been focused on education from birth to the end of high school since we were founded 16 years ago. This was the issue our family chose to coalesce around. And since we felt early learning -- that learning starts at birth, we went in search of empirical evidence about the power of early brain development.

For the past seven years we've been funding neuroscience at the world's leading institutions. The cutting-edge findings have come fast and furious like the uncapping of a fire hydrant. For this groundbreaking science to go no further than professional journals would be a crime.

The science has the potential to change the behavior on a massive scale, but only if it's shared with those who can act upon it: parents, caregivers, providers. It turns out that people possibly thought of as babysitters are actually brain builders.

The research results set up deep discussion at the foundation about how to translate and share the findings, how to make science inspirational and actionable for a broad audience. We partnered with IDEO, which is a human-centered design firm out of San Francisco, to do field research with parents living in poverty.

They canvassed the United States talking with parents to understand their realities, their aspirations for their children and their interest in what the science had shown. Not surprisingly, they all wanted a better life for their children than they had for themselves. Did they know they could make a difference? No. Did they want to know the science? Yes.

So we created an initiative called Vroom. It's one of the few words that children say very early on in

life and it shows forward motion and it's an onomatopoeia and we just kind of liked it. It's an effort that will help change parenting routines around the country. Confidentially, my co-workers and my husband are terrified that we are going to take this global, and after receiving recent e-mails, enquiries from Kosovo, China and Russia, their fears may be founded.

Think about it: what could the world look like if there was a global conversation centered on brain building and helping children not just survive, but thrive. We were deeply aware from the beginning that communications efforts are hard, especially when you are talking about real behavior change.

It is important that this initiative reflect the wisdom and input of the people we are trying to support. So we invited parents to co-create. The insights from IDEO's research keep us honest. Don't judge. Don't guilt trip. Don't give parents a to-do list. Meet them where they are, and because parents have a huge appetite to know more, make the science shine.

Much is already in place to promote change. We are constantly reminded that all parents love their children and desire to be good parents and we are inspired by the growing national drumbeat around early learning and the many new and creative ways emerging that allow critical messages and solutions to reach parents at scale.

This led us to the idea of transforming moments: being present in the moments with parents to turn routine tasks into brain building opportunities, giving encouragement and support in those moments when parents are pre-disposed to act. We can't overstate the importance of this insight: meet caregivers in the moment where they are.

And considering the scarcity of time, we had to think about being on the daily journey of a parent shoulder to shoulder in the home, in the community through tested networks and when parents are on the go. It's not

about a single delivery point. It's about a pleasant disruption in the journey of a parent that elevates awareness and triggers action right then and there.

We've developed a set of flexible tools that put brain building prompts right into the hands of parents and caregivers using the time they have and without spending any money. Every tool is designed to be adoptable and adaptable and community-based organizations can layer this on to existing programs and messages.

The materials are all written at a fifth grade reading level and currently are available in both English and Spanish. However, some materials are currently being translated into Russian, Chinese and Vietnamese by our partners as we speak.

I think you have some of the tip cards right on your table. And I'm proud to say that these tip cards have been flexible enough to make their way into the homeless shelters and also into the women's prison system. So when you make something adoptable and adaptable, it can go far.

We are harnessing technology. We've developed a parent-friendly website where all of our resources are available for free download and a free mobile app that delivers personalized age-appropriate tips to parents daily.

Vroom has a database of more than 1,000 tips for children zero to five, which are fun, simple activities that work for family routines like bath time and meal time. Each tip is paired with a brainy background, which highlights the science behind the activity.

And I like to thank the author of all 1,000 tips, who is here with us today, Ellen Galinsky from Mind in the Making. She authored all 1,000 tips and put the brainy background behind them.

(Applause)

So I'm going to read a tip -- I think it's on -- yeah, it's on the screen for you -- and give you an idea of what they are like. While sorting and folding cloths, ask your child to go on a sock search. Hold up a sock and ask him or her, "Who does this sock belong to?" Ask him or her to explain the answer. Then ask your child to find the sock's match. Use math words like big, small, short and long. And here's the brainy background, which is on the flipside of your cards.

Your child is practicing early math skills, like estimating size, to determine whose sock it is and having everyday experiences with concepts like shape and length. Your child is using focus and memory to find the matching pairs and critical thinking to explain his or her ideas. The parents love the brainy background and they love the knowledge that they are building their child's brain, that they are making a difference.

So strategies for scale: Vroom information and tools like these scale through partnerships mostly with national organizations like Nurse-Family Partnership, Save the Children, Child Care Aware, and they also scale through communities and brands that drive awareness and action.

So let's take a look at communities. Using the physical and digital materials, we've started partnering with communities nationwide. We're working with cities and states from Oregon to New Hampshire to right here in Colorado to activate Vroom.

Our partner in Louisiana, Project LAUNCH, an initiative that promotes resilience and healthy development in young children, saw Vroom's potential and is bringing it statewide. This year, Vroom materials will be included with every birth certificate mailed out in the state, reaching more than 60,000 families each year. And this fall, New York City will embark on a five-year effort to become the first early learning metropolis in the country.

Let me share some data about New York City. In the city alone there are approximately 140,000 children under the age of four living in poverty, and those are unreached by any kind of brain development initiatives. And 20,000 children under the age of four will sleep in a homeless shelter tonight. That's enough to fill Madison Square Garden.

So with widespread support, the city will dramatically increase the reach and impact of early childhood programs and tools, including Vroom. And part of this effort in New York City is Mount Sinai. So thank you very much.

National organizations like Save the Children and Child Care Aware, they have direct reach to parents and children. In Florida, the Suncoast Campaign for Grade-Level Reading is implementing Vroom to boost school readiness and literacy. They started a pilot with 300 families last fall and did ongoing surveys with parents about their experience. Within 2 months, 97 percent of the parents reported that Vroom was helping to deepen their connection with their child.

In addition, let me tell you about the creative way that we are working with partnerships. In addition, we are collaborating with national consumer brands, retailers and media companies to deliver brain building prompts right on pack, right when a parent is making dinner, drawing the bath or changing a diaper. Brand products sit in a privileged position between a parent and child in a moment latent with potential.

It turns out -- and a neuroscientist told me this -- that the distance between the baby and a parent during a diaper change, approximately 17 inches, is optimal for brain building exchanges. So there are approximately 8,000 diaper changes in the first few years of life. That's 8,000 opportunities to support a brain building moment. For Vroom, having a message on a diaper

is the holy grail. Can anyone here help me do that? I have not been successful with diaper companies yet.

But we were very successful with Goya. So Goya Foods is one of the go-to products for Latinos here in the United States and for a lot of other populations as well. And when we went to Goya, they got it right away. There was no, you know, second, third, fourth, fifth meeting still trying to convince them. They said just tell us what to do.

So they have changed their packaging to give parents learning tools right in the moment. So here's a look at how they did it. Each package contains a custom tip. So the alphabet "pasta" focuses on letter recognition to build language skills and so the tip reads about -- tells about that.

And the Vroom tip on the Maria's cookies explores shapes and sizes. So the cookies will be hitting shelves right about now from Colorado to Alabama and will be available in other regions of the United States by this fall. The pasta is rolling out later this year. So a big round of applause for Goya.

(Applause)

MS. BEZOS: We are also working with Johnson & Johnson to add brain building messages on shampoo and other products they distribute to rural families served through a partnership with Save the Children. Amazon has stepped up I'm proud to say. They have changed their boxes to include brain building tips that are customized to the products inside their Baby Registry Welcome Box. More than 50,000 households receive these boxes every quarter. That's 200,000 new families every year.

There are so many opportunities and possibilities to explore either on pack or in stores. You can see what a grocery store would look like if we could get brain building prompts right in the grocery store. So

the idea is that wherever parents and children are together, brain building moments can occur.

We're talking to media and broadcasting companies like Univision and Fred Rogers Company that brings us *Daniel Tiger*. I don't know how many people in here know Daniel. But Daniel has stepped up to bring brain building moments on screen. So next month you can see Vroom spots airing before and after *Daniel Tiger's Neighborhood*. It is the award-winning, most co-viewed parent and child program on PBS.

I don't even remember how many millions of -- 40 million people per month, okay. That's 40 million brain building opportunities per month. So nobody has seen this except the office, but I'm going to give you a sneak peek at one of the videos that will run before the Daniel show -- I hope.

(Video playing)

MS. BEZOS: So it's only 15 seconds, but it's a very valuable 15 seconds. And then we'll give you a peek at what happens after the show.

(Video playing)

MS. BEZOS: So we're also looking at a sector approach. In July, our first museum partner will come on board, and that's the Children's Museum of Denver. We're very proud to have Colorado do that. They will roll out Vroom prompts throughout the museum to create a seamless and fun brain building experience for parent and child.

Another sector approach that we've begun is with hospital systems, and again, Mount Sinai was the first to step up and yes that they got it. They had everybody in the room from the OBs to the pediatricians and it was just -- it was a great, great meeting.

So all of these tools and touch points create a surround system to support families. It gives a bigness

to what they are doing. They realize that everybody is pulling for them, everybody wants their child to have a good healthy brain.

And all of us here have an asset to bring. As individuals, advocates for health, as community leaders, we all have something to contribute to building a nation that supports our children's healthy brain development.

For instance, pediatricians: while pediatricians do not necessarily receive formal early brain development training during their certification, they like all of us can leverage a moment during the 10 well visits each child receives during the first three years of life. There are approximately 62,000 pediatricians in the United States. If we assume each pediatrician cares for 100 babies aged zero to three, that would result in 62 million brain building moments sparked by pediatricians alone.

Just imagine what it could look like in your communities if all of the trusted messengers in a family's life committed to make brain building a priority. We might have to create a brand new number to capture all the zeroes.

Parents are a child's greatest asset. Parents play a critical role in their child's development. But how do we help parents understand their role and empower them? We created this video to celebrate parents.

(Video playing)

MS. BEZOS: So we already have everything it takes to do this, right? Vroom is not a campaign. Those have a beginning and an end. We're trying catalyze a movement that leads to a culture shift, one that sets the table and expands the conversation while adding knowledge, the why behind the how.

So how do we know that this works on the ground? We first piloted Vroom in South Seattle in a very diverse community where over 65 languages are spoken. We

assembled a group of 50 organizations ranging from social service agencies, health and housing departments, community clinics, childcare providers and home visitors. They all raised their hands to be part of the pilot, to use Vroom tools and messages and to give us feedback. Over 130 local businesses use their storefronts to promote the effort.

In four months Vroom was able to move the needle on awareness and positive parenting routines. With the benefit of this learning, we scaled nationwide: our on the ground partners are activating Vroom in 25 states. The daily Vroom app is used in all 50 states and downloaded in more than 100 countries and hundreds of thousands are being reached through our brand partnerships.

Does all of this sound audacious? Yes. And are we daunted? Every day. But we are inspired and humbled by others who are sticking their necks out too. The need for bold maneuvers and innovative ideas has never been more pressing. The number of children born into poverty is increasing and gaps persist, which affects the development of the children's brains and bodies.

Imagine what it could look like if we recognized and acted upon the potential of all children. I recently came across this quote by Robert Kennedy: "Few will have the greatness to bend history itself, but each of us can work to change a small portion of events, and in the total of all those acts will be written the history of this generation."

On day one babies arrive swaddled in potential. And while potential maybe universal, we all know that opportunity is not. If we want to be a nation that values all children, it will take many bold people like you here to make it happen. Jack Shonkoff from Harvard Center on the Developing Child sums it up with this statement: "There is no healthy social, emotional and cognitive progression for children without relationships."

So my ask of you today is to think of yourself and every adult in the life of a child as a brain builder. Take this message about the importance of a healthy brain into your workplaces and into your homes. Together we can help write the history of the next generation. Thank you.

(Applause)

MS. BEZOS: So we have some time. I didn't even look at my timekeeper. I looked at you, but I didn't look at your card. We have 20 minutes. Ellen, would you join me up here for -- we are so lucky to have somebody that understands everything about the emotional, social development of children. Ellen Galinsky from Mind in the Making. And now -- I'm also proud to tell you that now she works for the Bezos Family Foundation, yes.

(Applause)

MS. BEZOS: So does anybody have any questions about brain building, about your committee? Yes?

SPEAKER: You know, everybody (off mic)

MS. BEZOS: Yeah, here comes a mic for you.

SPEAKER: Everybody talks about brain building, obviously, and under less than optimum circumstance, you know, you can always do something. But I thought that there were life events for a young child, especially, say, having a new brother or a sister or something like that.

Are there things that you address in that area, like difficult moments, stressful moments, parents hospitalization, a new baby born where they are just simple words, say, could sort of defray some of the tension?

MS. GALINSKY: I don't -- is the mic on, this mic? Okay. One of the things that we've done -- Mind in the Making, which had been a part of the Families and Work Institute came to the Bezos Family Foundation this spring

and we're thrilled to join forces because there's so much that we can do together.

One of the things that we did was take the most frequent questions that parents ask during well-child visits and on the internet and we have written a hundred what we call prescriptions for learning. And those take those moments like the birth of a child or the picky eater or the kid who won't sleep or the kid glued to screen time or, you know, any of those sorts of things.

And they take -- we are now -- we have now spent 16 years looking at the research -- and they take them and give tips to parents for how to take what might be seen as a behavior management problem and turn it into an opportunity to build skills. Because we focus on -- Jackie talked about the importance of serve and return, that back and forth interaction as fundamental. Within that, we also promote families and the professionals who work with them, helping kids develop executive function skills.

And so that's our approach. We are also taking -- and this is the wonderful partnership we have with Mount Sinai -- we are also taking well-child visits and we are actually incorporating -- because we know the typical questions that are asked, we are incorporating those moments in the scripts of well-child visits that we are now piloting in Mount Sinai. And then the pediatrician can give that tip sheet. So we are dealing with the everyday moments with Vroom as well as those kinds of issues that you raise.

MS. BEZOS: Anybody else?

SPEAKER: Hi. A diapers question.

MS. BEZOS: A diapers question?

SPEAKER: I'm an authority now being in my second go around on diapers. And ours --

MS. GALINSKY: We've been to Cincinnati a lot.

(Laughter)

SPEAKERS: Ours are Elmo and Doc McStuffins. So Elmo comes from Sesame Street from PBS and Doc McStuffins comes from Disney. So those are licensed. So maybe the license source, Disney and PBS, might be willing to incorporate some of these messages.

MS. BEZOS: That's a good idea. We also thought about making our own diapers. But that became just, you know, a crazy idea very quickly. Even for me that was crazy. Yes?

SPEAKER: I have a question. One of the things that I'm familiar with and I'm becoming personally familiar with is young families who adopt children from -- particularly from Asia. The child arrives with no English and usually at an age -- my son is bringing home a Korean kid this week who is about 17 months old. Neither my son nor his wife speak Korean and this boy speaks no English.

Is there work -- there must surely be because adopting children from abroad and certainly from Asia is no -- it's nothing new. Is there work that's being done and is Vroom doing work in this very specific universe but with a large population like that?

MS. BEZOS: We aren't doing -- Vroom is not doing something like it, but the scientists we support are doing research on bilingualism and how important it -- it's an additive, not a detractor from their learning. We also have -- one of our granddaughters is from China and she came home at eight months, learned English very quickly. I'm sure that your grandson will too.

MS. GALINSKY: One of the reasons that both Mind in the Making and Vroom partner with organizations within a community is that there are in communities incredible support groups that deal with very specific issues like that. And I have lots of friends who have adopted

children from abroad. And there are amazing groups that -  
- where you can meet other people like you and talk about  
what works. So we -- Jackie called it layering on. We  
layer on to the existing resources and communities  
wherever we work.

And Mind in the Making does training, so we  
bring together those organizations. And we have an eight  
part module series that shares -- like the video that you  
saw of Patricia Kuhl -- that shares that research. So we  
-- you don't have to make a visit to the University of  
Chicago, to Harvard, to Carnegie Mellon, to any of the  
hundreds of institutions where some of the best  
neuroscience is taking place. We bring that research to  
you within this training so that the people within a  
community who already have those existing programs can be  
up-to-date in what we know from neuroscience and other  
developmental sciences.

MS. BEZOS: Oh! Yeah?

SPEAKER: Being a clinical psychologist by  
training and a fairly large group that I work with, we  
have a sub-group of kid psychologists. And over the years  
we've talked about very much like Kenneth's group at Mount  
Sinai is doing, personalized medicine, talk about  
personalized parenting program.

Obviously, if you're dealing with behavioral  
based issues and you have a single mother family with x  
number of variables versus an intact family, middle-class,  
upper -- there is probably 50 different variables -- the  
parenting recommendations are clearly different because  
with a kid -- the kid isn't just your patient, the family  
is your patient. I think this stuff is a great foundation  
in personalizing this. Can you speak a little bit to  
that?

MS. BEZOS: Yeah. So on the app it really is  
pretty personalized only in the aspect that it addresses  
your child by name and by age -- and so you can do that.  
What Vroom is really poised to do is build that

relationship between a parent and a child, and so that becomes the personalization, is how the mother interacts with the child.

And it brings -- also it brings the joy back to parenting. The joy has gone out of parenting a lot because of the --

MS. GALINSKY: (Inaudible).

MS. BEZOS: Yeah. It's -- you know, there's no time and nobody has any money and everybody is under stress. But when -- and a mother told me the other day, she said, "When I come home from work and I open the door, my two little girls run to me and say, 'What does Vroom say today?'" you know.

So it gives that kind of -- you know, that moment to be a child with your child again, right? But I -- yeah, I do think that, you know, we're moving in the direction of personalized everything.

MS. GALINSKY: In the communities where we do Mind in the Making and Vroom together, we actually bring together families and professionals to learn -- to see the science themselves and then they can customize it in the ways that are appropriate to their children and their culture, their background, their economic issue.

An example is Providence, Rhode Island, where we have an i3 grant -- or Providence got an i3 grant. And they have had 1,500 parents in all 22 of their public schools go through Mind in the Making training and 500 professionals. And it becomes the language of the community, which is so exciting.

And we're trying to move away from the problem focus to the joy, to the inspiring, to the problem solving, to the promotion of skills rather than the kind of culture that we have around parenting today.

MS. BEZOS: Thanks.

SPEAKER: Hi, Jackie. I don't know if you recall we met at TED. And as a matter of disclosure, earlier that --

MS. BEZOS: Oh, I do remember. We had a long conversation.

SPEAKER: Yes.

MS. BEZOS: Yes.

SPEAKER: It was wonderful. And as a matter of disclosure, I worked on a similar project, which I spoke about earlier in the session. And I won't say it because I think Vroom is great and I'm not here to sell my thing, but it is a little bit more in the personalized space that you're referring to.

So one thing that we found -- so we have some partnerships in South Africa and in China -- is -- one of the things I spoke about earlier was that we found that parents that were doing better with their kids were actually more productive at work. And we found a lot of fruit in doing partnerships with large employers. So in South Africa it's Pick n Pay, which is one of the largest grocery chains in the country.

And I think what Vroom could do: in telling a similar story and the wonderful research that was done out of Kingston, Jamaica, where they showed --

MS. BEZOS: Right.

SPEAKER: -- this tiny interventions and 25 years later these kids were living longer and earning more. I really hope that -- you're talking about expanding into Russia and China and so forth -- that you guys are able to have a similar sort of impact, because I don't think there's enough focus on that relationship building right from the start.

MS. BEZOS: Right. Thank you.

SPEAKER: Absolutely.

MS. GALINSKY: Families and Work Institute, where I came from, that's its work: is to work with large corporations. So this message has been taken out to, you know, companies from MetLife to Goldman Sachs to Johnson & Johnson, to all of those companies. And interestingly enough, when we talk about executive function skills and we share the research, we get bigger audiences than they ever expected. There is such a hunger. Google is another one. But there is such a hunger for this kind of information. And we are working through the avenue of corporations as well as being approached by a lot of people to work internationally.

MS. BEZOS: There's somebody -- I don't know where the mic ended up. Oh, it's really hard to be a mic runner in this --

MS. GALINSKY: Yeah, could you take that through the aisles?

MS. BEZOS: Right.

SPEAKER: Thank you. This is phenomenal learning for all of us. Medical school is a track here. I was wondering if you could say something about what you'd like to see in medical school training on brain building in particular. Thank you.

MS. BEZOS: Yeah, go ahead.

MS. GALINSKY: Okay. We have had a very long-term goal of changing at least pediatric training to bring developmental sciences. Understandably, it has been less focused on in pediatric training, but so many of the questions that pediatricians get are around these behavioral kid issues.

So what we are doing is we've taken the Mind in the Making modules and this is where we are piloting, again thanks to Ken Davis and his team at Mount Sinai. We've taken the Mind in the Making modules and we've adapted them for all of the other workers in the healthcare setting; so nurses, family life workers, social workers, et cetera. And then we're building it into pediatric training into the second year of residency on the brain development work that they do there.

So we're sharing the research with pediatricians as a part of their formalized training. We have experimented a lot with how to bring this to medical training. And this -- right now with the incredible creativity of Mount Sinai, this seems to be the best approach.

And then when residents in training get feedback on how they handled a well-child visit, they also get feedback on the behavioral issue and they get sent articles and videos. And also we are going to do exemplar videos of people doing well-child visits where they incorporate child development information. So we're taking -- we've also worked with museums and libraries. We've trained people in 30 states on this research through Mind in the Making and Vroom.

And so we are taking a sectorial approach. The next sector that we are going to be working with is home visiting because they reach so many of low income families. And I know we will be in prisons and in the --

MS. BEZOS: Yes, absolutely. Yeah -- no.

MS. GALINSKY: -- and those systems next. So we are taking, you know, top down, bottom up, sideways, all -- you know, we really are talking about a cultural shift.

MS. BEZOS: Yeah. And I'm happy also to say that NYU Langone has come on board as well. So they will be just a few steps behind Mount Sinai.

MS. GALINSKY: We love the competition.

MS. BEZOS: We do. When I was at NYU talking to them about coming on board, I kept on bringing up Mount Sinai and I could see them flinch every time.

(Laughter)

MS. BEZOS: Yes.

MS. GALINSKY: Mount Sinai has absolutely been the leader in stepping up to the plate.

MS. BEZOS: Oh, yeah, absolutely. We need a mic.

SPEAKER: Hi. I'm Lorrie Zafrin (phonetic). I'm a gynecologist and a health innovator fellow. I'm interested in hearing your work around working with women that are pregnant. And is there any data supporting some of this work and what you've developed in women or parents talking to a baby while they are in the womb or even as you're reaching out to pediatricians, also reaching out to gynecologists, because we see a lot of patients that bring their kids and really want to start early with these positive messages?

MS. BEZOS: Right. When we went to Mount Sinai, they had such a wonderful gathering of top tier leaders from across the hospital and across the different sectors of the hospital. And the gentleman that leads the OB/GYN division said, "You're not starting early enough." He said, "I see that mother 15 times. I could have 15 interactions with her. Give me what you got." So, yes, we are looking at going prenatal.

MS. GALINSKY: New York Langone said the same thing. They brought the head of their OB/GYN group in to meet with us. And what we will do is we will create an advisory group. We -- Jackie calls it citizen science. I mean we take the very hardcore science, but then the way

we use it in communities is developed by in partnership, in collaboration with the people with whom we use it.

So we will create an advisory group of doctors who see people during the prenatal time and figure out the best ways to bring this to them in the same way that we figured out the best ways to work with home visiting or museums and libraries or the healthcare system. We've done it with the practitioners.

MS. BEZOS: Yeah. We have time for one more question -- or two more. Where -- this -- yeah, here and then there.

SPEAKER: I'm not sure -- maybe more of a comment. I'm Gwen (phonetic) from Kentucky and I'm an adult psychiatrist. I treat a lot of adults with ADHD. And you mentioned that you had a big turnout for the executive functioning discussion. And there's -- that's a buzzword now, a lot adults are learning about that. And so maybe there is a connection --

MS. BEZOS: Yeah.

SPEAKER: -- why you're having a good turnout.

MS. BEZOS: Yeah. Thank you bringing that up. Yes?

MS. GALINSKY: And we are -- there's a website called understood.org that does some really wonderful work with children and families with learning and attention differences. And we have been their consistent partner from the day that they launched. And they reach millions and millions of families. So we partnered with them as a way of reaching those families. It's called understood.org; it's free. And our team of scientists have been regular resources to them rather than trying to recreate that.

SPEAKER: Congratulations on your mission and a beautiful presentation.

MS. BEZOS: Thank you.

SPEAKER: Have you had a chance to look at your cohort as far as kindergarten readiness goes? Because what we see is that those students who start behind, especially in their reading skills, never catch up --

MS. BEZOS: Right.

SPEAKER: -- and quite often they are in fifth grade or eighth grade and reading at a third or fourth grade level.

MS. GALINSKY: Yes. We are from research to action, to research to action, to research to action. You can think of it that way. We are doing a random school assignment, evaluation looking at exactly that question. And we think it's not just the content, not just promoting literacy, as you can see from this -- the tips that Jackie read. We think it's also executive function skills.

So what we found in our random school assignment pilot is that kids made six month gains in their four-year-old year before they enter kindergarten on both knowledge -- on content and on executive function skills. We will continue to improve the interventions.

We also partner with a child intervention in that case, which is called Circle Time Games by Megan McClelland, one of the scientists who advises Vroom. So that we bring the parent intervention of Vroom, the parent and professional intervention of Mind in the Making and a child intervention to try to address this gap, because we know that kids don't -- they start school unequally and we're trying to close that gap.

MS. BEZOS: I think that's the end of our questions and answers period. We will be around for a little while if you still want to chat. Remember to think of yourselves as brain builders.

(Applause)

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