

BREAKING THE CYCLE – CATCH THEM WHILE THEY'RE YOUNG!

Fergus Finlay, CEO, Barnardos





"Whether a cat is black or white makes no difference. As long as it catches mice, it is a good cat."

What do we mean by poverty?



Relative versus Consistent Poverty



Relative Poverty (or at risk of poverty)

'Is defined as having an income that is below 60% of the median income (the median is the mid-point on the scale of incomes in Ireland). In 2007, that was an income of below €11,900 per annum for an adult.'

Consistent Poverty

'Is defined as having an income below 60% of the median and also experiencing enforced deprivation. This means being on a low income and not being able to afford basic necessities.'

N.B. The Government prefers to quote the Consistent Poverty figure (5.1%, 2007) as it is always lower than the Relative Poverty figure (16.5%, 2007)

Is there poverty in Ireland ... really?



In 2007:

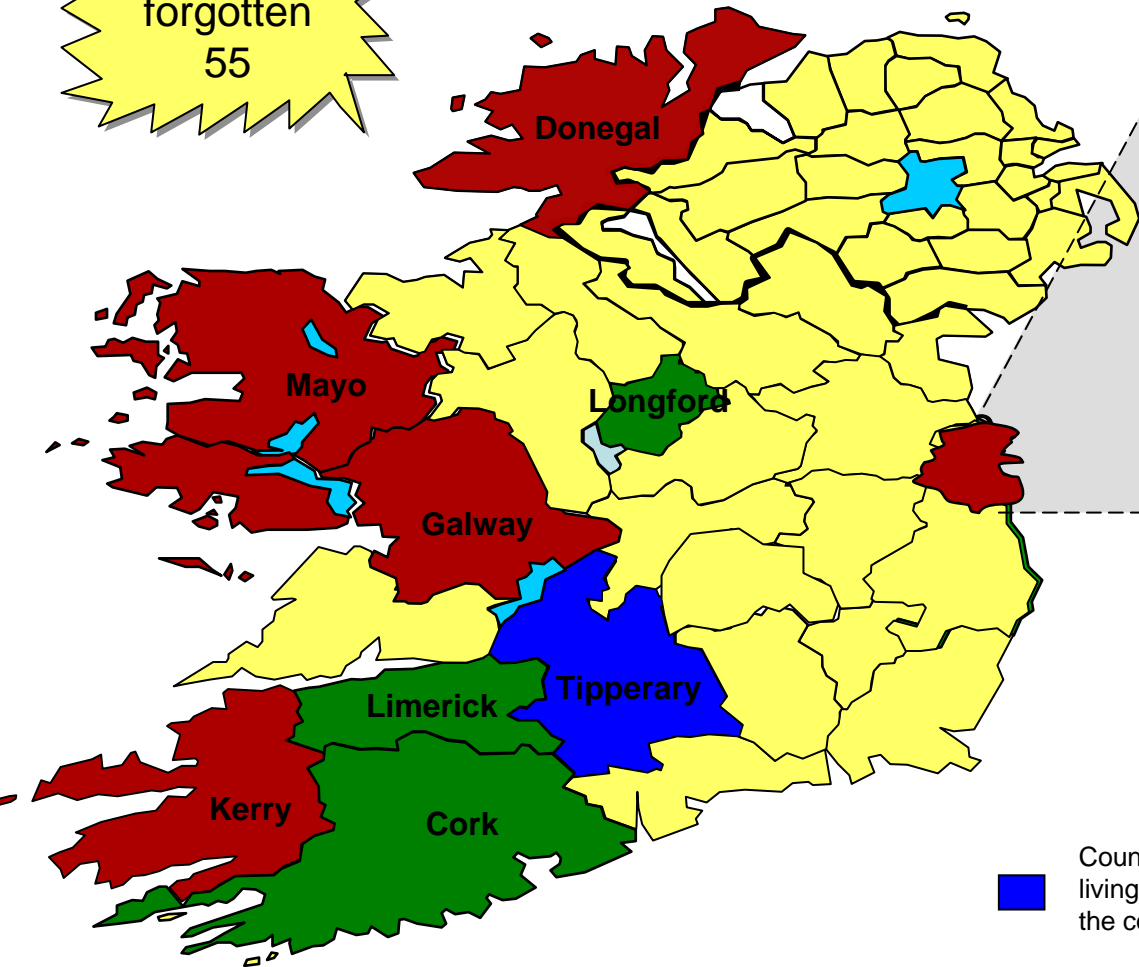
- **5.1%** or **216,000** of the population was living in Consistent Poverty
- **16.5%** or **700,000** of the population was living at Risk of Poverty (Relative Poverty)
- **11.1%** or **110,000** children were living in Consistent Poverty
- **23.4%** or **230,000** children were living in Relative Poverty
 - *6th highest in the EU25*

Is there poverty in Ireland ... really?

Patterns of poverty can be mapped geographically – “where I live”






The forgotten 55



Where I live - most deprived areas in Dublin

- The inner city
- In north Dublin: Coolock, Darndale, Cabra & Finglas
- In west Dublin: Inchicore, Clondalkin, Blanchardstown & Ballyfermot
- In south west Dublin: Cherry Orchard, Tallaght, Crumlin & Walkinstown

-  Highest number of young people in low income areas as a percentage of county youth population and highest rate of deliberate self harm
-  Highest number of young people in low income areas as percentage of county youth population

 Counties with the highest rate of young people living in low income areas versus the rest of the country

Is there poverty in Ireland ... really?



Patterns of poverty can be mapped by family type & socio-economics – “my family”

My Family - most at risk of poverty

- Children
- People with disabilities
- Older people
- Lone parents
- Unemployed people
- Those at work, on low incomes

Poverty for families means in real life...



- Struggling to make ends meet on an inadequate income
- Living in poor housing
- Getting into debt
- Feeling discriminated against
- Suffering from poor health; physical or psychological
- Having fewer educational opportunities
- Surviving on an inadequate diet

Because of the drivers we know – poverty is a cycle that has to be broken

Political & Economic System

Poor or uneven investment in infrastructure, schooling, job creation. Power balance. No Voice

Systemic Dysfunction

+

Societal Dysfunction

=



100,000 Kids

Increased risk of -

- Emotional & Behavioural disorders
- Under performance in school
- Poor literacy
- Drop out of school & society
- Drug & alcohol abuse
- Crime
- Teen pregnancy

Individual Responsibility?

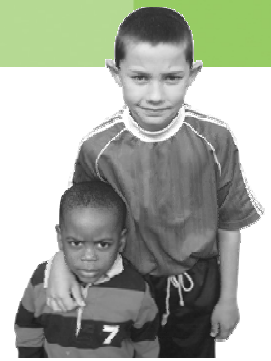
Social & Cultural

Teen pregnancy, family & community strength, attitudes to education, success. Media. Societal & institutional prejudice

Generational Poverty Trap

Life chances further diminished. Natural talent & potential lost. Impact on next generation

So what works to break the cycle?



- **Parental Employment at a decent wage**

- The risk of poverty for children where one or both parents are working is only 9.4% but for children in jobless households it is 61.6%

- **Social welfare - Child Benefit**

- €1,992 p.a. for the first & second child
 - €2,436 p.a. for third & subsequent children

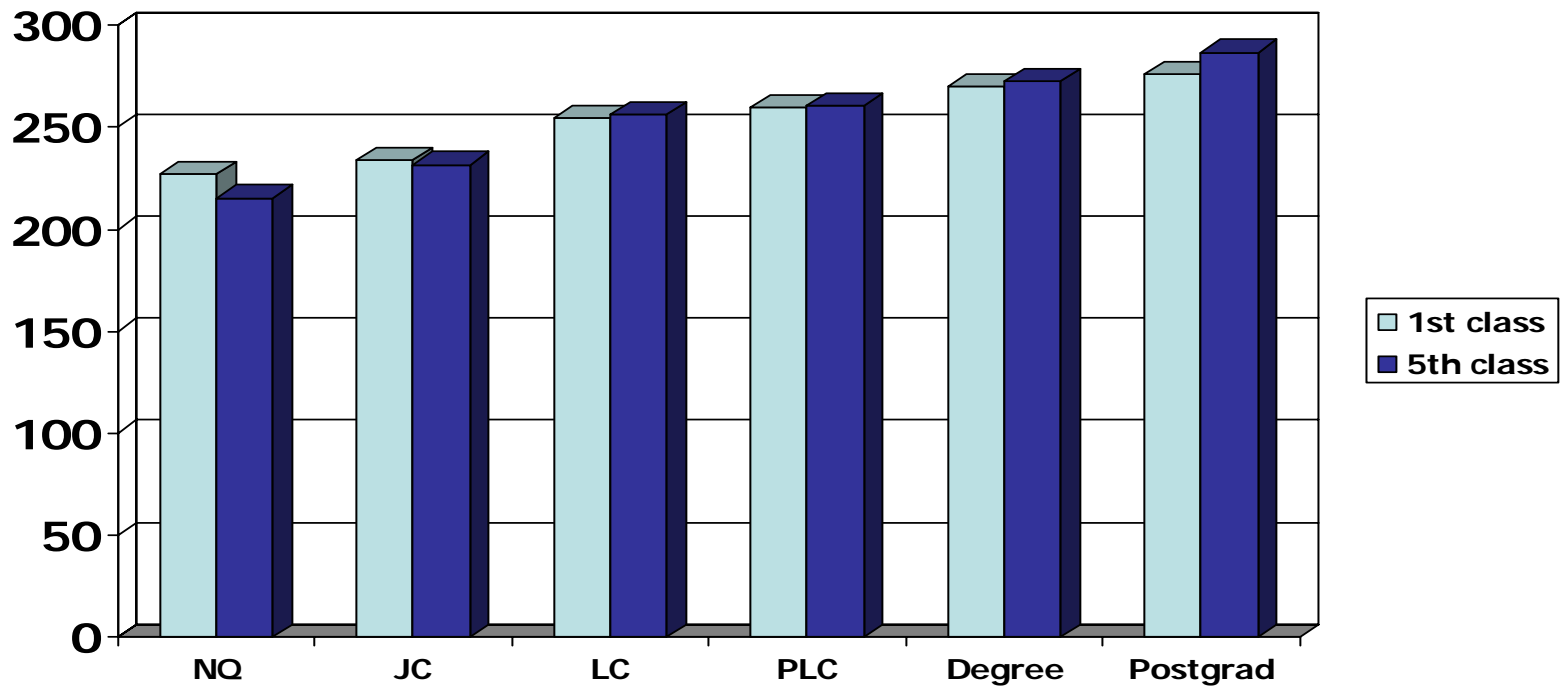
- **Life-skills**

- Good choice making
 - Resilience to life's challenges

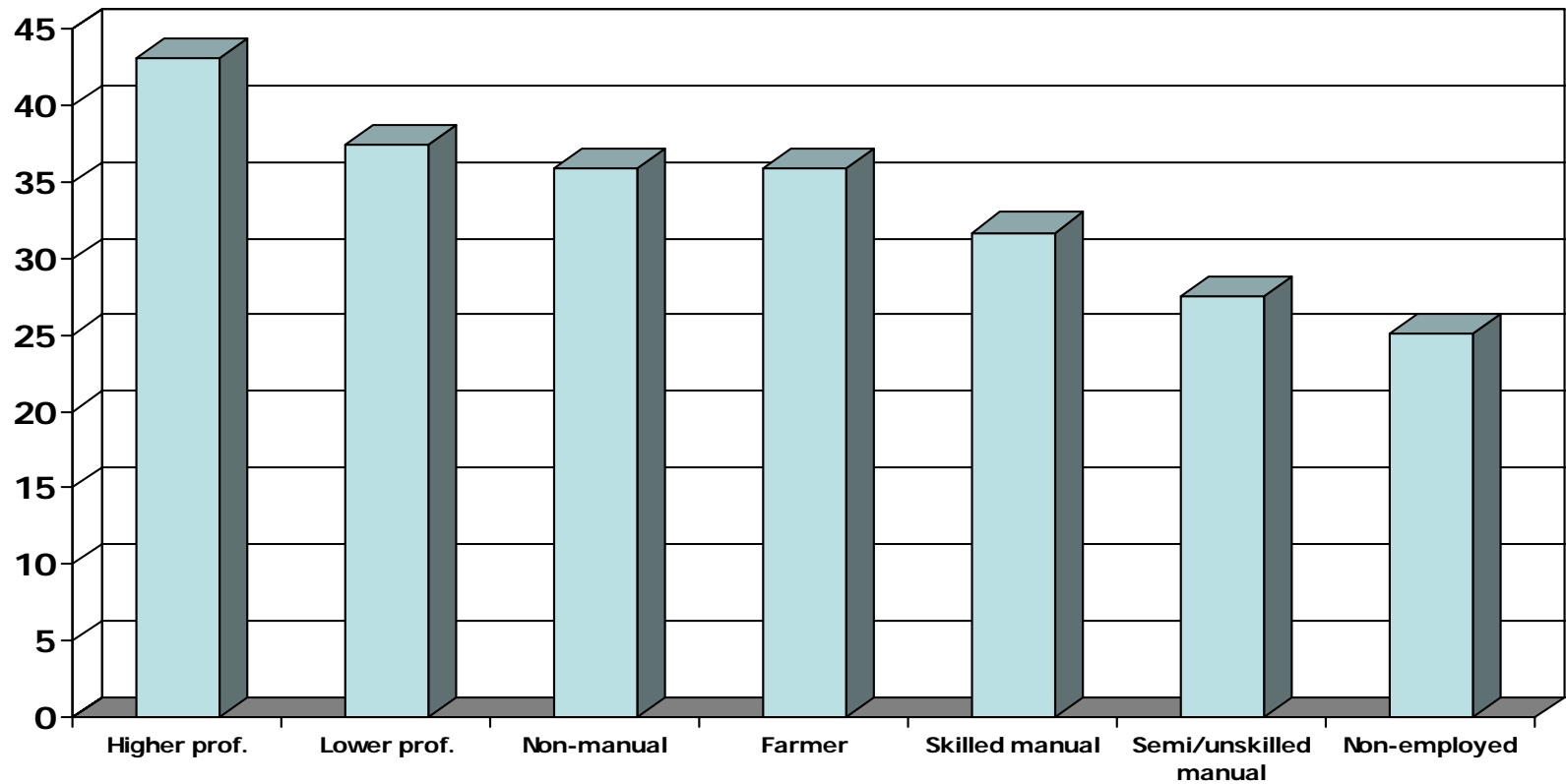
- **Education** (for both child & parent)

- Education** is considered the greatest vehicle for lifting oneself out of poverty, however in disadvantaged areas, *1 in 3 pupils have serious reading or writing difficulties*

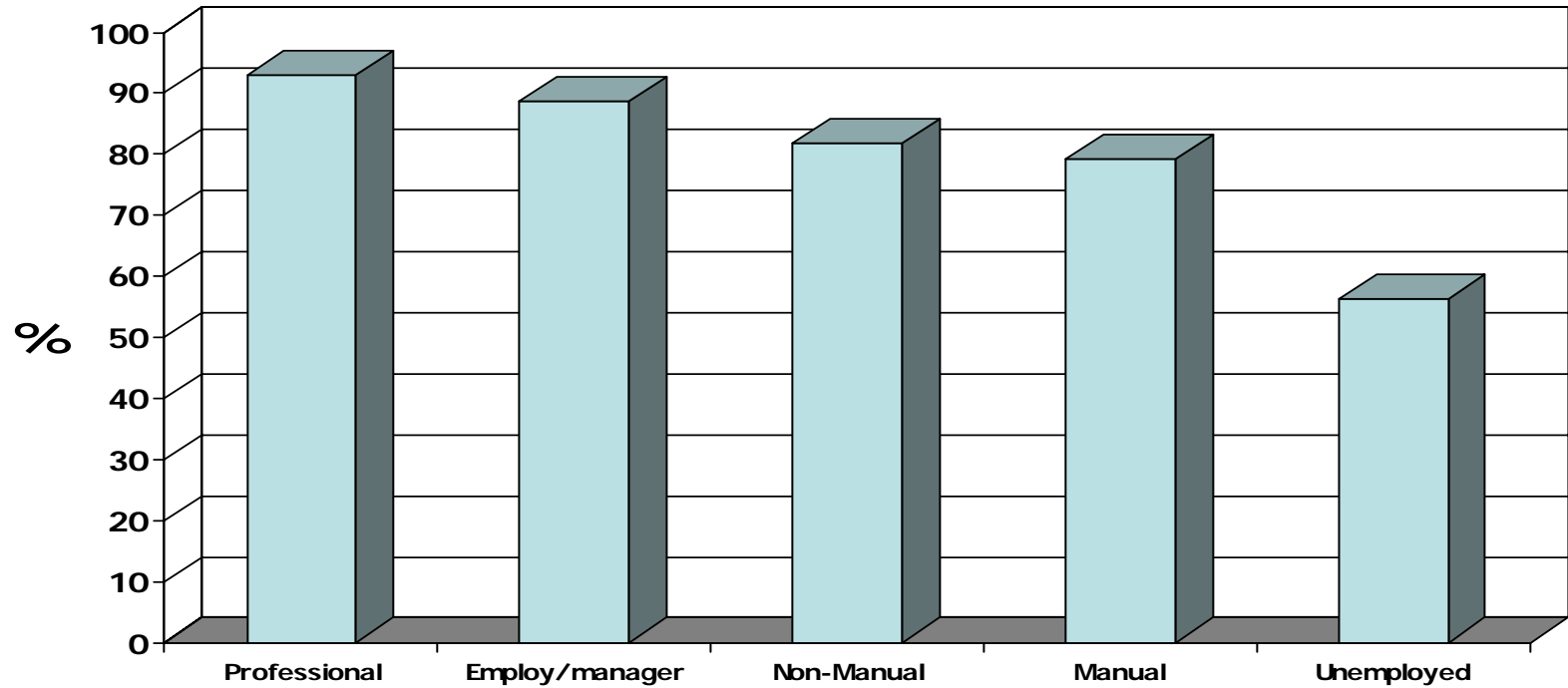
Primary reading scores and mother's education



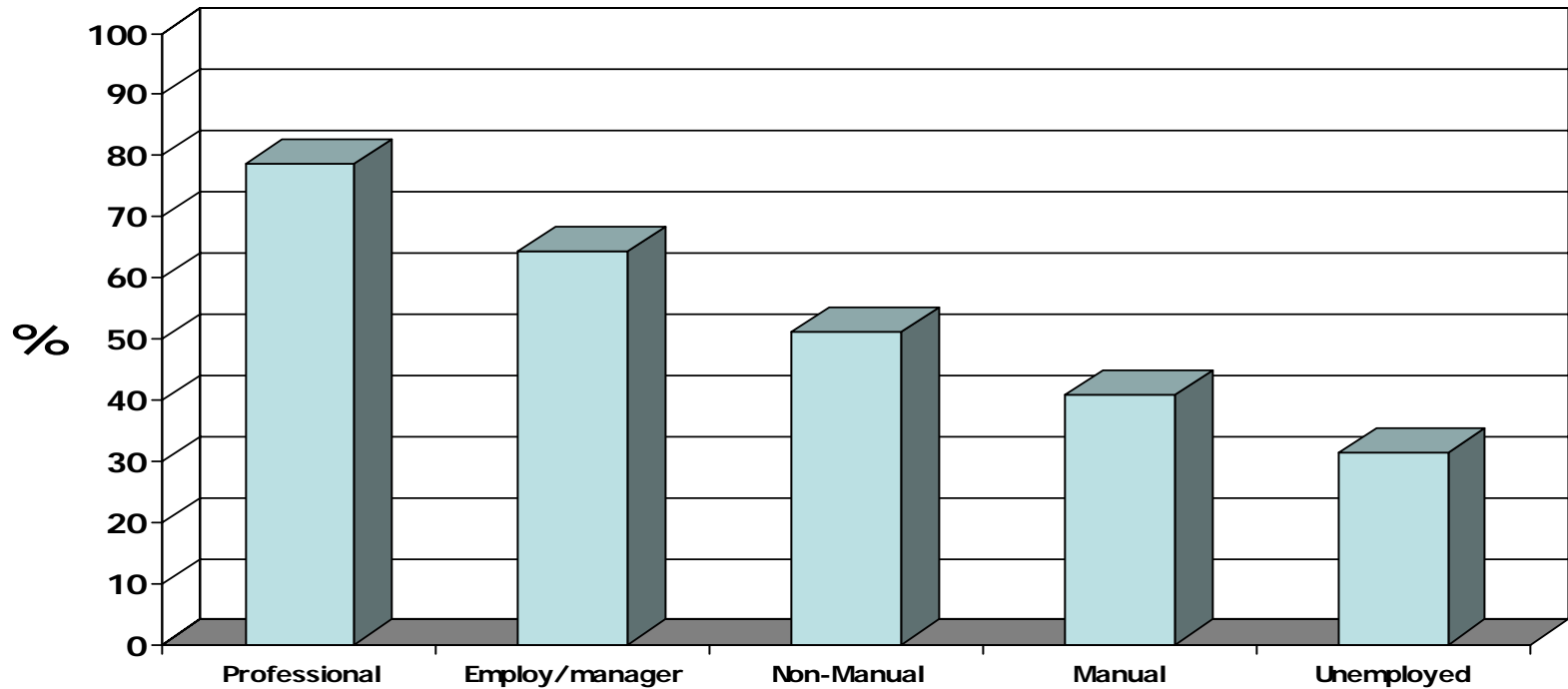
Literacy scores on entry to second-level school



Leaving Certificate completion



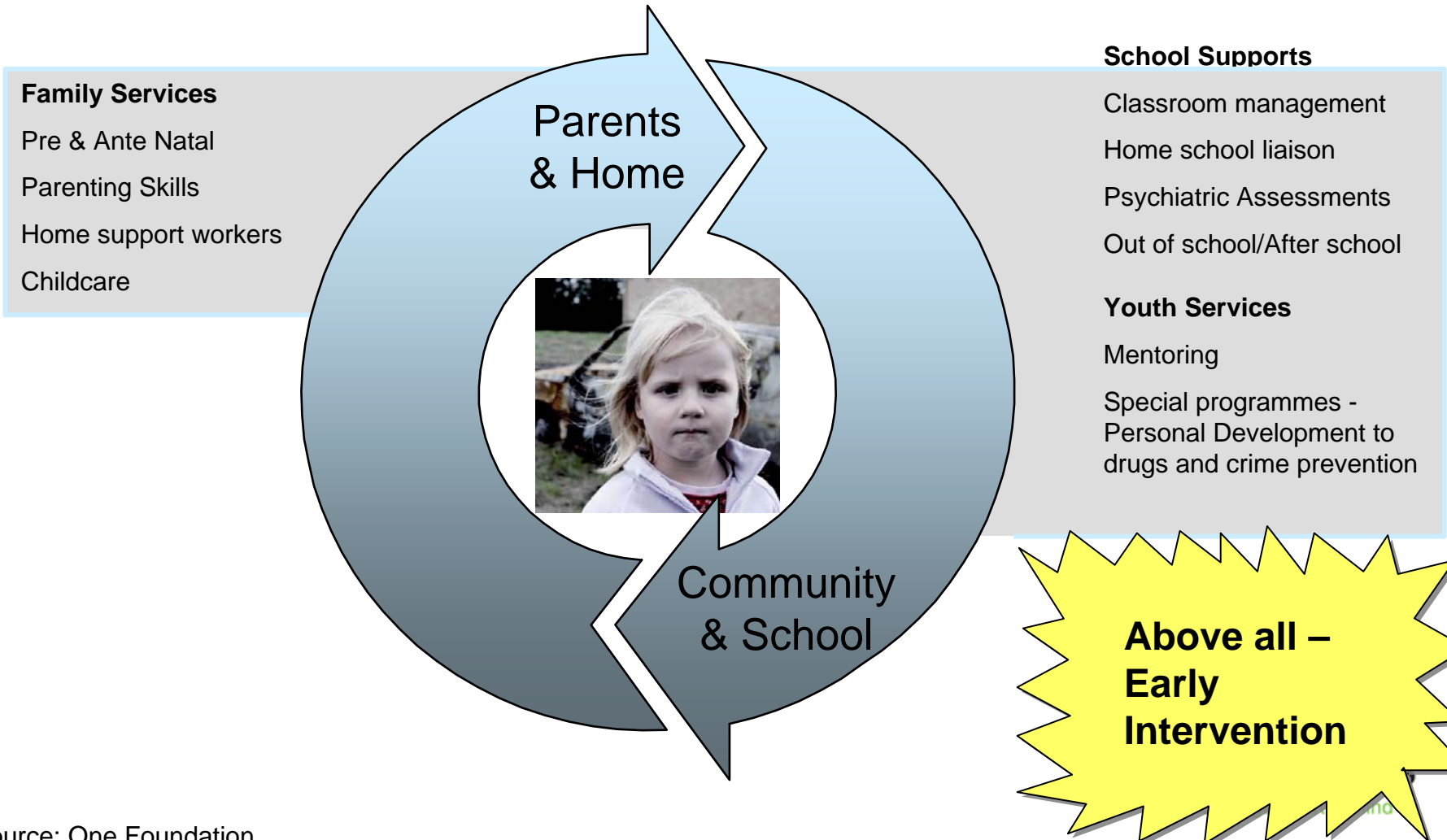
Entry to full-time third-level education (LC leavers)



What works to break the cycle?



Possible points & types of intervention - services



What we spend (US\$ per head)

- Third level – \$10,468 (OECD average \$11,512)
- Second level – \$7,500 (OECD average \$7,804)
- Primary level - \$5,732 (OECD average \$6,250)

- Pre-school – Almost nothing at all

- In 2005 we spent 4.6% of our national wealth on educating our children. Ten years earlier (1995) it was 5.2%

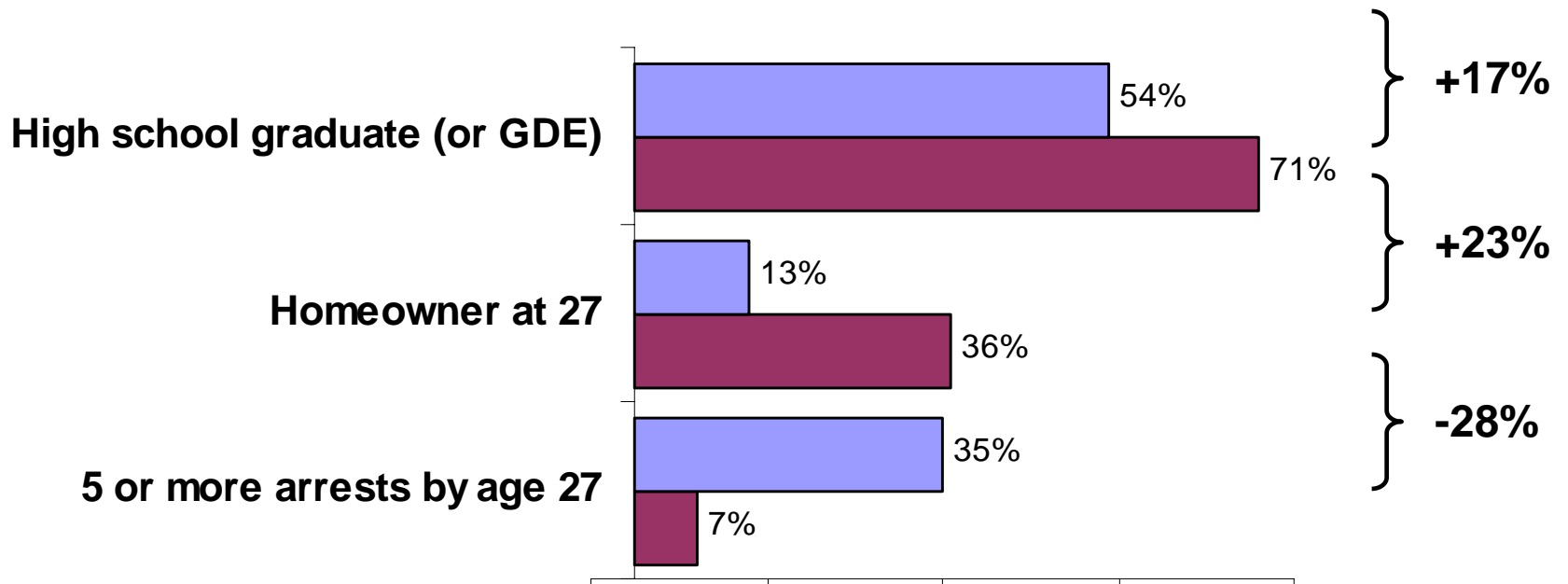
Why should we focus on early childhood?

- Age 0-3 most receptive stage of development
 - Lays foundation for cognitive functioning; behavioural, social, and self-regulation; and physical health

“The healthy development of all children benefits all of society by providing a solid foundation for economic productivity, responsible citizenship, and lifelong physical and mental health” J.P Shonkoff



Early Childhood Intervention: Perry Preschool Program

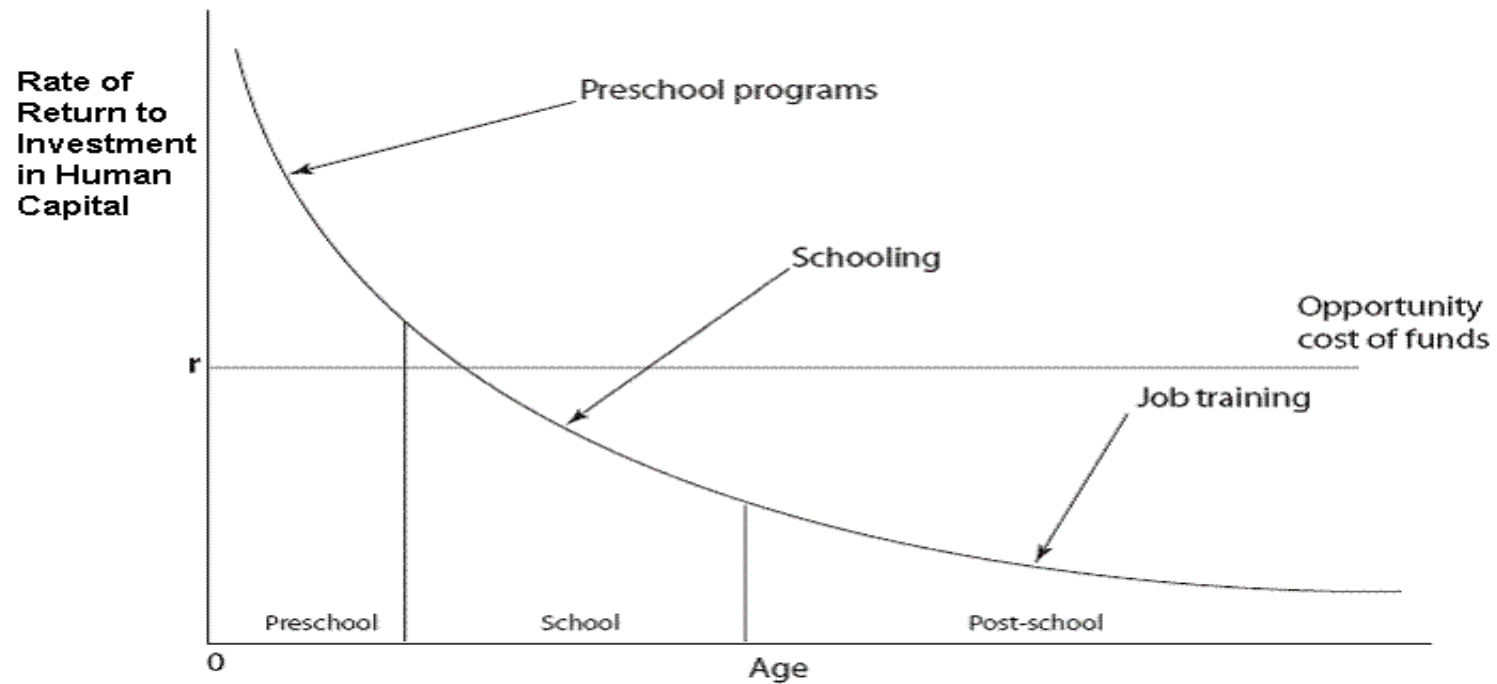


■ Program Participants

■ Control Group

High Returns to Early Intervention

Rates of Return to Human Capital Investment Setting Investment to be Equal across all Ages



Rates of return to human capital investment setting investment to be equal across all ages

The Economics of Early Childhood Investment

Development is more malleable early in life
&
Skills begets skill



Costs of early intervention lower than remedial programmes and benefits
larger

&

By investing early, benefits are enjoyed for longer, raising
the productivity of later investment