

ROUNDTABLE – The Future of Research on Human Development:  
What Data Should Be Collected, How and Why?



## Most Striking ...

- 1. "Ordinary magic" of resilience (WHO/WHAT/WHERE)**
  - e.g., Christchurch, Dunedin, Kauai, Isle of Wight, Minnesota, Montréal, Rochester, Stockholm multidecade studies
- 2. Developmental origins of major policy problems (WHEN/WHY)**
  - e.g., chronic disease, crime, educational and labour market failure, mental disorders
  - gene X environment interplay
  - intergenerational transmission (2G and 3G)
- 3. Long-term effects of early childhood intervention (HOW)**
  - e.g., Abecedarian, Chicago CPCs, IHDP, NFP, Perry Preschool multidecade studies (and economic analyses)

Presented by Dr. Rob Santos, Healthy Child Manitoba Office, Healthy Child Committee of Cabinet, Government of Manitoba  
**Understanding Early Childhood, Acting for the Future: The Contribution of Longitudinal Studies**  
 – 10th journées annuelles de santé publique – October 26-27, 2006 – Montréal, Québec



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## Policy Needs ...

### CONVINCING EVIDENCE ON:

- 1. Causal mechanisms**
  - policies as hypotheses (often lacking evidence or evaluation)
- 2. Best policy mix ...**
  - efficacy, effectiveness, dissemination
  - minimally sufficient policies for meaningful population-level effects
  - long-term effects of policies, especially null and negative effects
- 3. ... especially for life course of most vulnerable**
  - Aboriginal children
  - children with disabilities
  - children in care (child welfare system)

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## Best Ways ...



1. **Link program data to longitudinal studies** (evaluate cost-effectiveness)
2. **Collect genetic data in longitudinal studies** (“psychosocial epigenomics”)
3. **Embed experiments in longitudinal studies** (test policy innovations and developmental hypotheses)
4. **Meta-analyze longitudinal studies** (disentangle age, cohort, period effects)
5. **Use theory to find “what works for what, for whom, by whom, under what circumstances”** (address permutation problem)
6. **Partner across disciplines and sectors** (e.g., academic, community, government)
7. **Increase public understanding and demand for longitudinal studies** (political will for public funding)