

## Invest in babies, toddlers

February 4, 2015

Kudos to The Bee for urging our leaders to fund programs enabling our children to thrive.

Hundreds of studies document that the most cost-effective time to help insure a positive future for every child is from conception to age 2. Virtually every criminal had negative experiences during this formative time, as is documented in the book, "Ghosts from the Nursery: Tracing the Roots of Violence."

Pregnancy is the critical time frame for brain-cell development. After birth, the child's development is greatly determined by the environment. Is there reading, singing, talking and holding during the first two years? If so, the child will have increased brain activity, be more socially interactive, ready for kindergarten and graduate high school. If not, the child will be less engaged and more likely face situations with a fight-or-flight response.

Annually, Fresno City and County spend over \$300 million on law enforcement; Fresno Unified spends over \$100 million on a range of special needs students. Investing more resources educating prospective parents on the critical needs of conception to age 2 will save taxpayers tens of millions of dollars and reduce crime in our community.

It is time for our elected leaders to make a difference!

Howard Watkins

Fresno

### Join The Conversation

[Copyright](#)

© 2015 [www.fresnobee.com](http://www.fresnobee.com) and wire service sources. All Rights Reserved. <http://www.fresnobee.com>