

Do educational opportunities begin in infancy?

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NBC's [Education Nation](#) summit in New Orleans kicked off on Friday (April 12) with Hoda Kotb, a co-host of the "Today" show, interviewing Dr. Geoff Nagle of the Tulane Institute for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. The [interview](#) was followed by a panel discussion with Nagle; Tony Recasner of Agenda for Children; Pearlie Harris, owner and director of Royal Castle Child Development Center; and Jenna Conway, executive director of early childhood, Louisiana Department of Education.



NBC's Education Nation tour in New Orleans kicks off with an exploration of early childhood education in Louisiana with Hoda Kotb interviewing Dr. Geoff Nagle of the Tulane Institute for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health. (Photo from NBC News)

NBC News selected New Orleans for the second stop of the national NBC Education Nation On-the-Road tour, with a week of live events and news coverage April 12-19.

In the interview at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts, Nagle said that educational opportunities begin even before a baby is born. He advocates home visits for mothers who are at risk of having children with childhood developmental

issues.

Early childhood education, which Nagle says should be called “early childhood development or experience,” has an impact on a person's later educational performance, future employment, potential salary, risk of criminal behavior and access to health care.

Nagle and his colleagues recently issued a report, [“Early Childhood Risk and Reach in Louisiana,”](#) that identified indicators for risk as well as strengths and challenges in the state's education system for young children. Currently 35 percent of all the children under 5 in Louisiana are in the moderate- or high-risk categories for educational problems. In New Orleans, 68 percent of children are born to single mothers and one in three children in Louisiana live in poverty.

“There are solutions but the problem is they cost money,” Nagle said. “We aren't investing in our young children, so it's not a surprise that our children are in great need.”