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Latin America and the Caribbean

HOW HAS EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT EVOLVED IN THE REGION?

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While attendance rates and funding for preprimary have increased education, both remain relatively low. Despite recent efforts like PRIDI, countries still lack data on the quality of programs aimed at developing children's competencies before entering school.

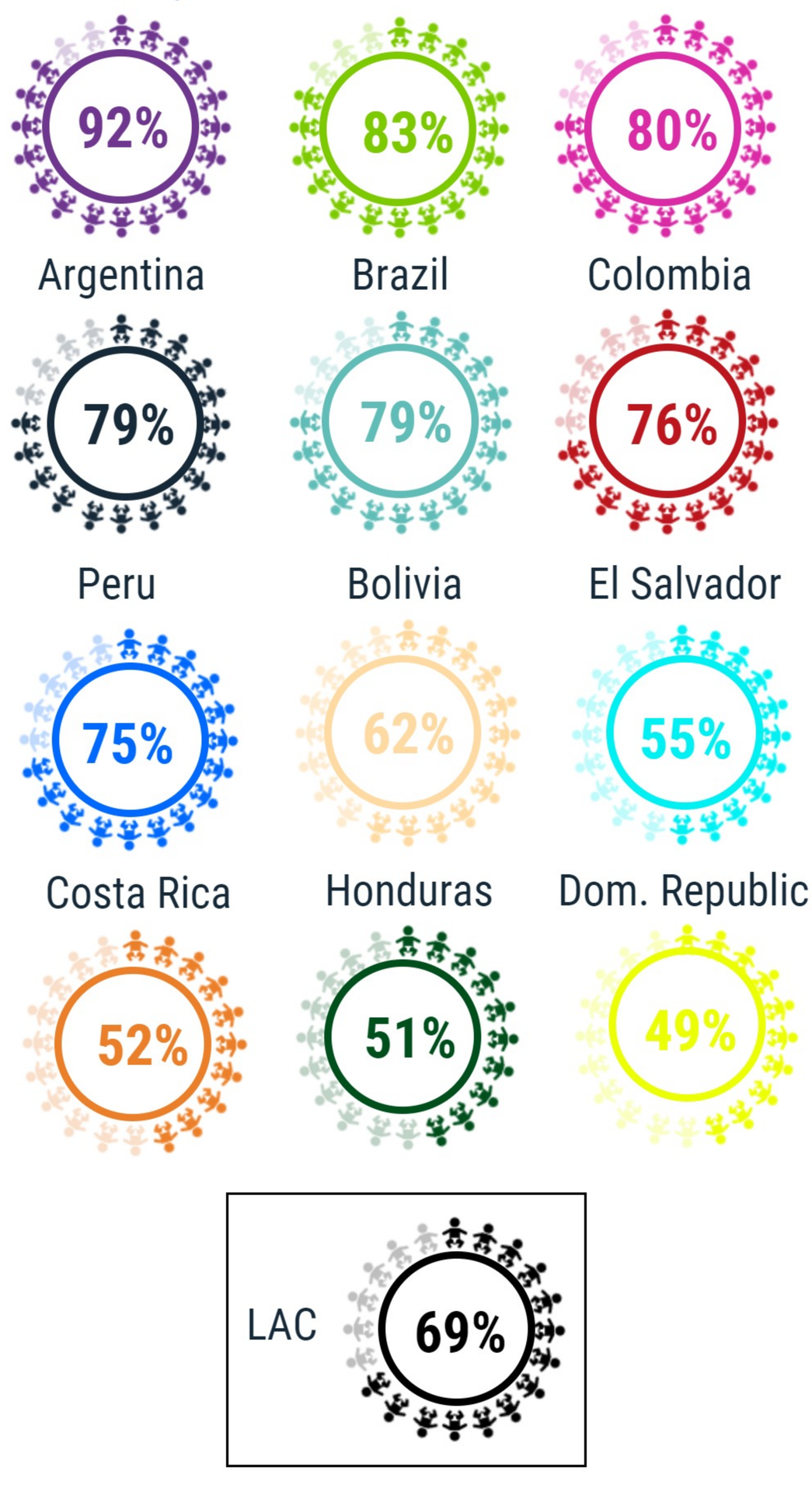
While attendance rates have grown, they remain relatively low

- The average regional net attendance rate in preprimary was 69% in 2015. Net attendance rates remain much higher in primary school, with an average regional net attendance rate of 94% in 2015.
- In 2015, the countries with the highest attendance rates for children ages 4-5 included Mexico and Chile, where more than eight out of every 10 children attended preprimary programs, and Uruguay, where more than nine out of every 10 children did so.
- In 2006, only Uruguay (83%) and Mexico (83%) had preprimary attendance rates over 80%.
- The most substantial improvement occurred in countries with lower net attendance rates: between 2006 and 2015, Peru (23) and Colombia (24) saw improvements of at least 20 percentage points.

Funding for preprimary education lags behind other funding

- In 2015, only Ecuador (21%), Guatemala (17%), Peru (17%), and Chile (13%) directed more than 10% of their education budgets towards preprimary education.
- In the OECD, countries spend an average of 9.4% of their education budgets on preprimary education.
- Some countries, like Jamaica, spend relatively less on preprimary education, instead focusing on other areas of early childhood development like parental education (Berlinsky & Schady 2015) or childcare (Mateo-Díaz & Rodriguez-Chamussy 2016).
- Guatemala (9.2 percentage points) and Peru (7.0) saw the greatest increases in funding for preprimary education between 2006 and 2015, while Jamaica (-3.2), Ecuador (-1.6), and El Salvador (-1.0) saw the largest decreases.

NET ATTENDANCE RATE, AGES 4-5, 2015



Source: Harmonized household surveys, CIMA 2017.
Note: Argentina, Honduras, and Mexico did not have available data for 2015; data from 2014 was used instead.

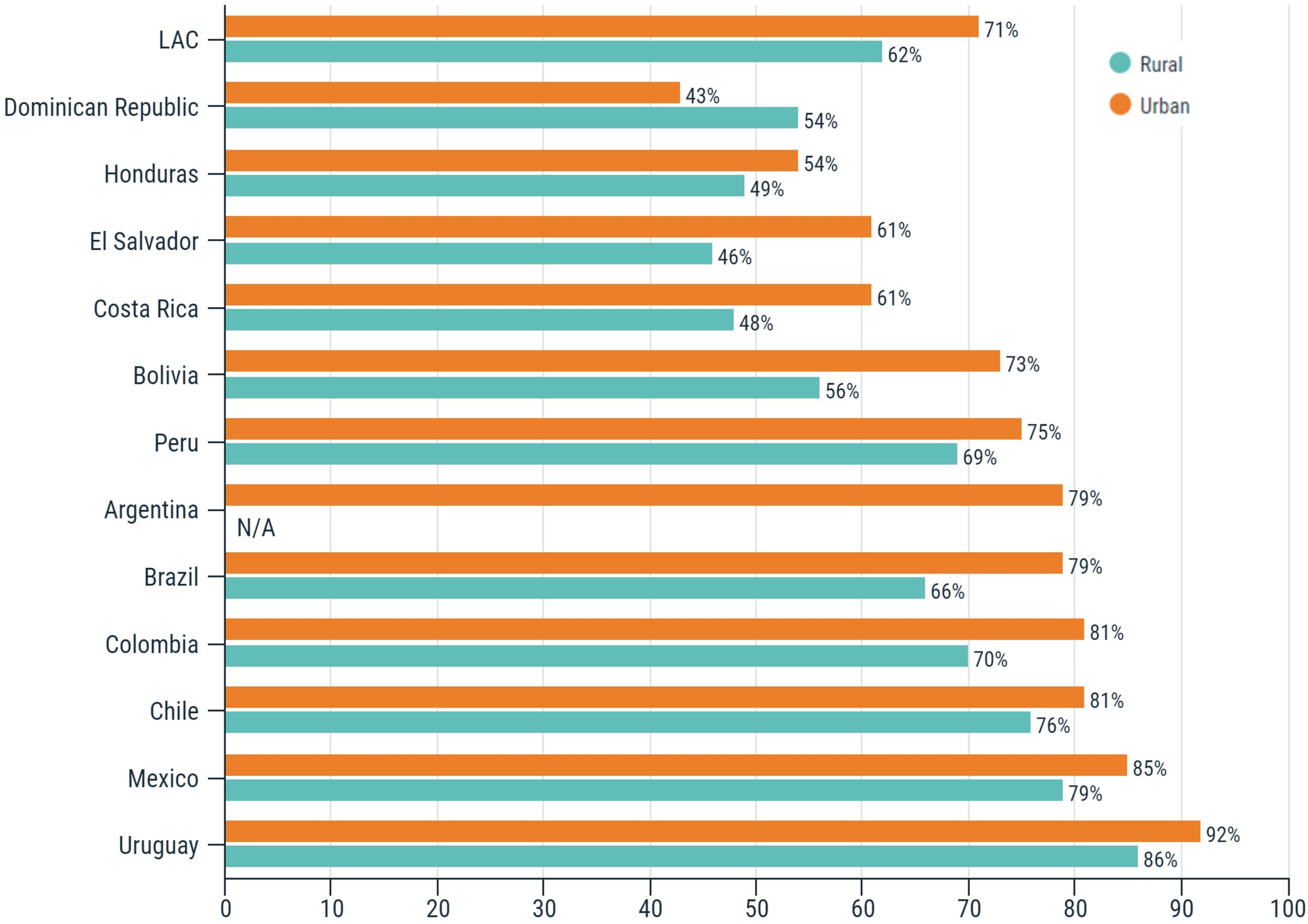
High-income students are more likely to attend preprimary than low-income ones

- On average, eight in 10 (81%) children from high-income households participate in preprimary programs, while only six in 10 (62%) children from low-income households do so.
- Socioeconomic inequity decreased between 2006 and 2014 in terms of preprimary access, with the difference in attendance rates between children from the highest- and lowest-income households declining from 26 to 19 percentage points.
- Uruguay and Peru have the region's smallest gaps between children from high- and low-income households: seven and 10 percentage points, respectively.
- In El Salvador and Costa Rica, the gap in attendance rates totals 41 and 44 percentage points, respectively.

Gender and geographical gaps favor girls and those who live in urban areas

- In every country except Honduras, preprimary attendance rates are slightly higher for girls (69%) than for boys (66%).
- In every country except the Dominican Republic, children in urban areas (71%) have higher preprimary attendance rates than children in rural areas (62%).
- Between 2006 and 2014, the gap in preprimary attendance between boys and girls increased (from 0.6 to 2.4 percentage points). The difference in attendance rates between students in urban areas and those in rural areas declined (from 16 to 9.2 percentage points).

NET ATTENDANCE RATES FOR URBAN AND RURAL STUDENTS, AGES 4-5, 2014



Source: Harmonized household surveys, CIMA 2017.
Notes: 1. The household survey for Argentina was only distributed in urban areas; 2. Data for Chile is from 2015 and is not counted in regional average.

PRIDI aims to generate high-quality and comparable data on early childhood development

- PRIDI, the Regional Project on Child Development Indicators (Verdisco, Cueto, Thompson & Neuschmidt 2012), augmented the available information on early childhood development programs in four countries: Costa Rica, Nicaragua, Paraguay, and Peru.
- PRIDI aims to generate comparable and relevant data on child development in nationally representative samples in an effort to identify gaps in development between different groups of children aged two to five years.
- It attempts to capture the fact that children develop in an integral manner in order to work towards ensuring all children are able to achieve basic developmental milestones and competencies before entering school.

Peru performed best in the cognitive, motor, and language domains and worst in the socioemotional domain

- PRIDI measures progress in four domains of child development: cognitive, language, socioemotional, and motor.
- PRIDI also collects information on factors associated with early childhood development, including characteristics of a child, his/her home, and his/her community and early education programs.
- Peruvian children performed best in the cognitive, motor, and language domains, while Costa Rican children performed best in the socioemotional domain.
- Nicaraguan children scored lowest in the language domain, while Costa Rican and Nicaraguan children received equally low scores in the cognitive and motor domains.

PRIDI RESULTS ACROSS ALL DOMAINS

Source: Table IX, p. 31, Regional Project on Child Development Indicators (PRIDI), 2012.
Notes: 1. The mean is 50, with a standard deviation of 5. Standard errors can be found in the PRIDI report. 2. The lines designate statistically significant differences between results within a particular domain ($p<0.05$).

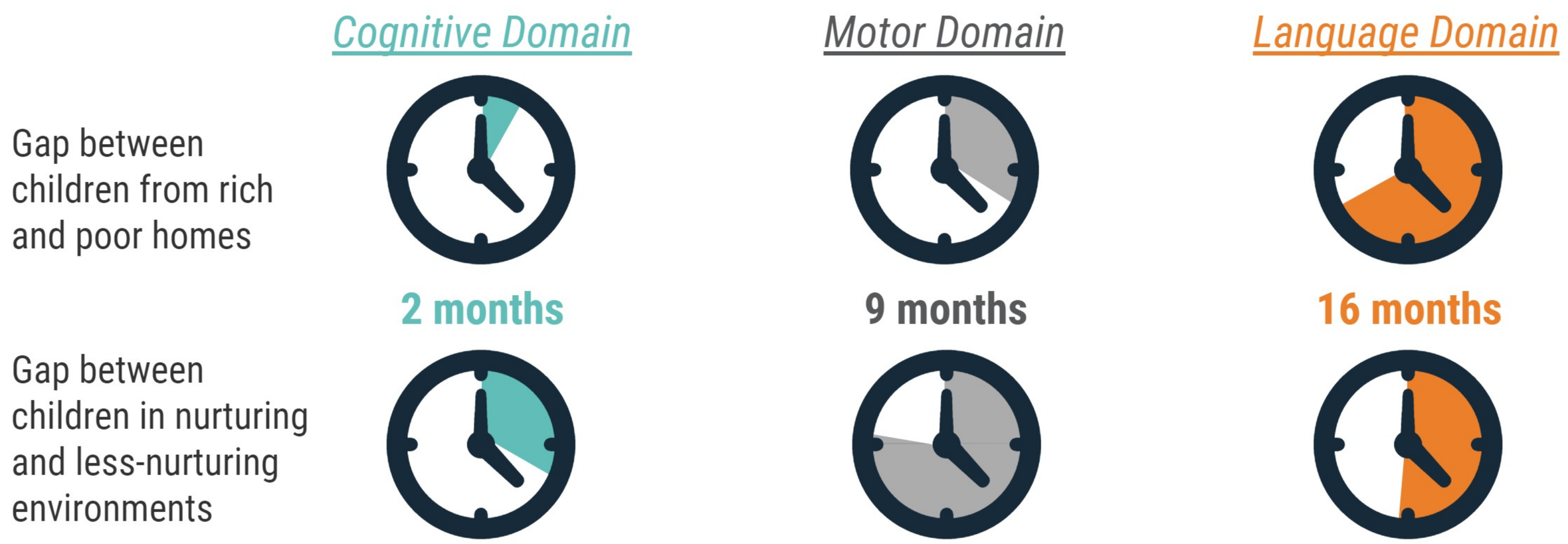
Children's wealth and the environment in which they grow up affect their development

- Wealth is most strongly associated with cognitive, linguistic, and socioemotional development. It is most weakly associated with motor development.
- When children from low-income households turn five, their development lags behind that of their counterparts from high-income households by two months in cognitive skills, nine months in motor skills, and 16 months in language and communication skills.
- When children from less-nurturing home environments turn five, they lag behind their peers in nurturing homes by eight months in cognitive skills, 19 months in motor skills, and 13 months in language and communication skills.

Nurturing environments can help alleviate the effects of socioeconomic inequity

- In all domains except language and communication (socioemotional, cognitive, and motor), children in households with positive adult-child engagement come close to matching the performance of their less-nurtured but higher-income peers.
- Even in language and communication, children from low-income households from more nurturing environments perform better than their peers from low-income households in less-nurturing homes.
- In the socioemotional domain, children from low-income yet nurturing homes perform no differently than children from high-income and nurturing homes, overcoming differences caused by their socioeconomic status.

GAPS IN DEVELOPMENT BETWEEN RICH AND POOR CHILDREN AND BETWEEN THOSE IN NURTURING AND LESS-NURTURING ENVIRONMENTS, AGE 5



Source: PRIDI, 2012.

The Information Center for Improvement in Learning (CIMA, for its acronym in Spanish) of the Education Division of the Inter-American Development Bank seeks to promote the use of data and indicators in evidence-based decision-making when developing education policy, with the goal of providing a quality education for all. With this objective, CIMA publishes a series of briefs that analyze indicators that contribute to the improvement of education quality in the region.

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Contact: education@iadb.org
References: UNESCO Institute of Statistics (2017). PRIDI (2012). CIMA (2017). Mateo-Díaz, Mercedes and Rodriguez-Chamussy, Lourdes (2016): "Cashing in on Education: Women, Childcare, and Prosperity in Latin America and the Caribbean". Berlinsky, Samuel and Schady, Norbert (2015): "The Early Years: Child Well-Being and the Role of Public Policy".