



A Baby's Brain

Did you know?

How a child's brain develops

- A child's brain begins to grow before they are born.
- Infants' brains have 100 billion neurons – special nerve cells in the brain.
- Just like babies' bodies, their brains continue to grow after birth.
- As the brain grows, the neurons become connected to each other.
- When neurons are connected, they send and receive information throughout the child's body.
- Babies and children can learn about the world around them by seeing, smelling, touching, tasting and hearing.
- When you respond to a baby or child in a loving and caring way, you are helping her brain to grow.
- Neurons in a child's brain connect when the child plays, talks, and enjoys people and things around them.
- When many neurons make strong, permanent connections, the child's brain has a foundation that will help him learn throughout life.
- A baby's brain grows to 90% of its adult size during the first 3 years of life.

Remember...

- Children learn and grow through loving and caring relationships.
- All the people in a child's life – mother, father, brother, sister, grandparents, aunts and uncles, other family and friends – have an important role as the child grows, learns, and develops.
- If you have questions or concerns about a child, talk to their health care provider.



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What you can do...

... to help a child's brain develop

- Develop a caring, loving relationship with the child.
- Hug, talk, sing, and play with babies and young children often and every day.
- Respond in a loving way to what a baby or child is telling you through sounds, facial expressions and body movements.
- Give the child a chance to use all of their senses: seeing, hearing, tasting, touching, and smelling.
- Read or tell stories to the child. Even very small babies love to hear your voice. They also enjoy hearing the same story or song over and over.
- When a child struggles to learn something new, like stacking blocks that keep falling down, encourage them to keep on trying. This builds confidence and a love of learning.
- Involve the child in everyday activities by describing what you are doing, and letting him or her help with things like shopping, cooking, errands and chores.
- Repeat activities with the child. When the child is hugged, read to, and played with, brain connections will be stronger.
- Encourage the child to try new things.
- Have fun together! Delight in the child, and let him or her know you do.



HEALTHY BRAIN DEVELOPMENT IS A CHILD'S FOUNDATION FOR SUCCESS IN SCHOOL

Strong neuron connections in the brain form a base children can build upon as they learn new things in school and in life. When young children have had loving relationships and a lot of different experiences, they begin school feeling confident and excited about learning.