

Why Early Years Matters

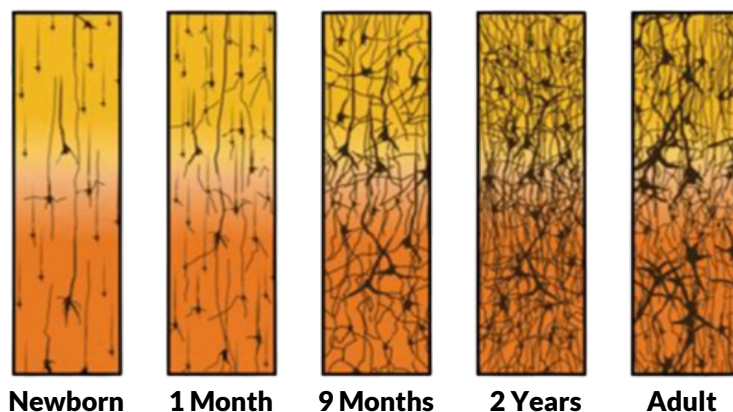
Brain Development in the Early Years

The [architecture of the human brain](#) is comprised of billions of connections between individual neurons across different areas of the brain. The early years (pre-birth to five) are a time of unrivalled brain growth and is the most active period for establishing new neural connections. Although connections in the brain do continue to form throughout life, from childhood and into adulthood, the image below demonstrates that it is fastest from pregnancy to age two. The connections that form early on in life provide the foundation for the connections that form later, meaning that early experiences and environments have a profound impact on the growing brain.

The way babies and children learn and develop at these early stages of life is holistic – nurture, care and the development of social, emotional, physical and cognitive skills are interconnected. Children are born ready, able and eager to learn. They are hardwired to interact and relate with the world and people around them, and they require adults to provide experiences and interactions to help them to develop and thrive. The [First 1001 Days Movement](#) outlines the importance of this time for laying the groundwork for children's future potential and success in leading healthy and fulfilling lives.

[Every child has the right](#) to be as healthy as they can be, to learn and develop to their full potential. Alongside these fundamental rights of all children in their respective present moments, what happens during this period lays the foundations for every child's future health, well-being, learning and earnings potential; the competencies they need to thrive. However, as important as this time is for a child, many children thrive despite difficult beginnings. Our responsibility is to maximise the chances of good outcomes for babies and children at every stage of childhood.

Neuron Growth & Connections Over Time



Corel, JL. The postnatal development of the human cerebral cortex. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press; 1975

