

Important Information About Brain Development

All children are born with virtually the same number of brain cells. It is how those brain cells are connected during the first few years of life that determines how successful a child will be.

- 80% of the brain development occurs in the first four years of a child's life. During this time normally developing children learn to communicate, develop sophisticated movements, and learn how to get along with their peers.
- In a healthy environment a child's brain is stimulated, the neurons are connected, and the higher functional parts of the brain develop – the thinking portions. This occurs when a child feels emotionally safe and secure.
- If a child is in a stressful or frightening environment, the brain is prevented from developing. If a child's brain is not stimulated, or is in a stressful, frightening environment, the neuron connections are not made and the brain does not develop to its fullest potential.

Can a child make up for this lack of brain development in his/her early years? To some extent, but it takes a lot more effort, a lot more resources, a lot more time, and a lot more money. Too often the child never does make up enough of the necessary development, and his/her chance for success in school and in life is limited. *"A child that starts behind stays behind."*

Early Childhood Investment Does Make a Difference!

Brain Growth and Public Investments by Child Age (Michigan)

