

Plant the Seed of Learning

Brain and Literacy



Agenda

- Brain Review
- Emergent Literacy- What is it? How can I prepare my child to be a life-long learner in literacy?
- Beyond Bedtime Stories



In the Past

- Scientists thought the brain's development was determined genetically and followed a predetermined pathway

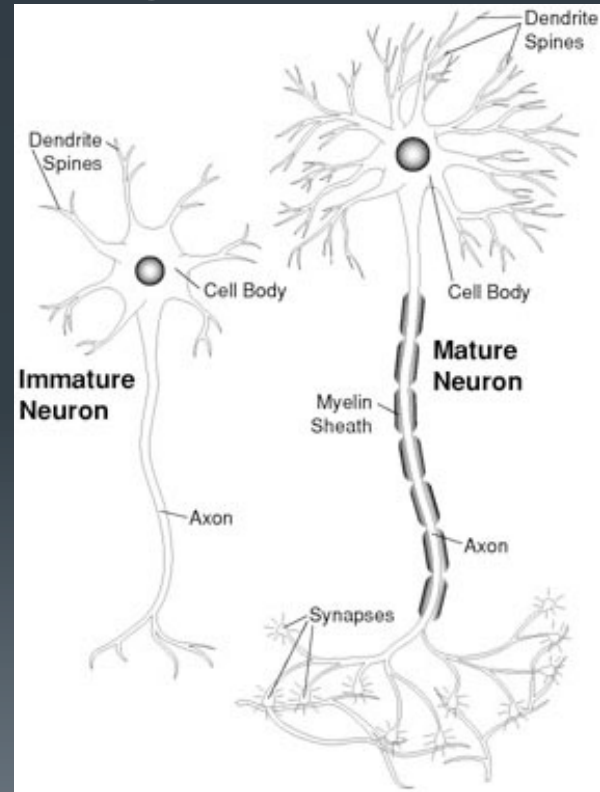


Outside Influences that Help Wire the Brain

- The scent of the mother's skin (smell)
- The father's voice (hearing)
- Seeing a face or brightly colored toy (vision)
- The feel of a hand gently caressing (touch)
- Drinking milk (taste)

Neurons and Connections

- Neurons mature when axons send messages and dendrites receive them to form synapses

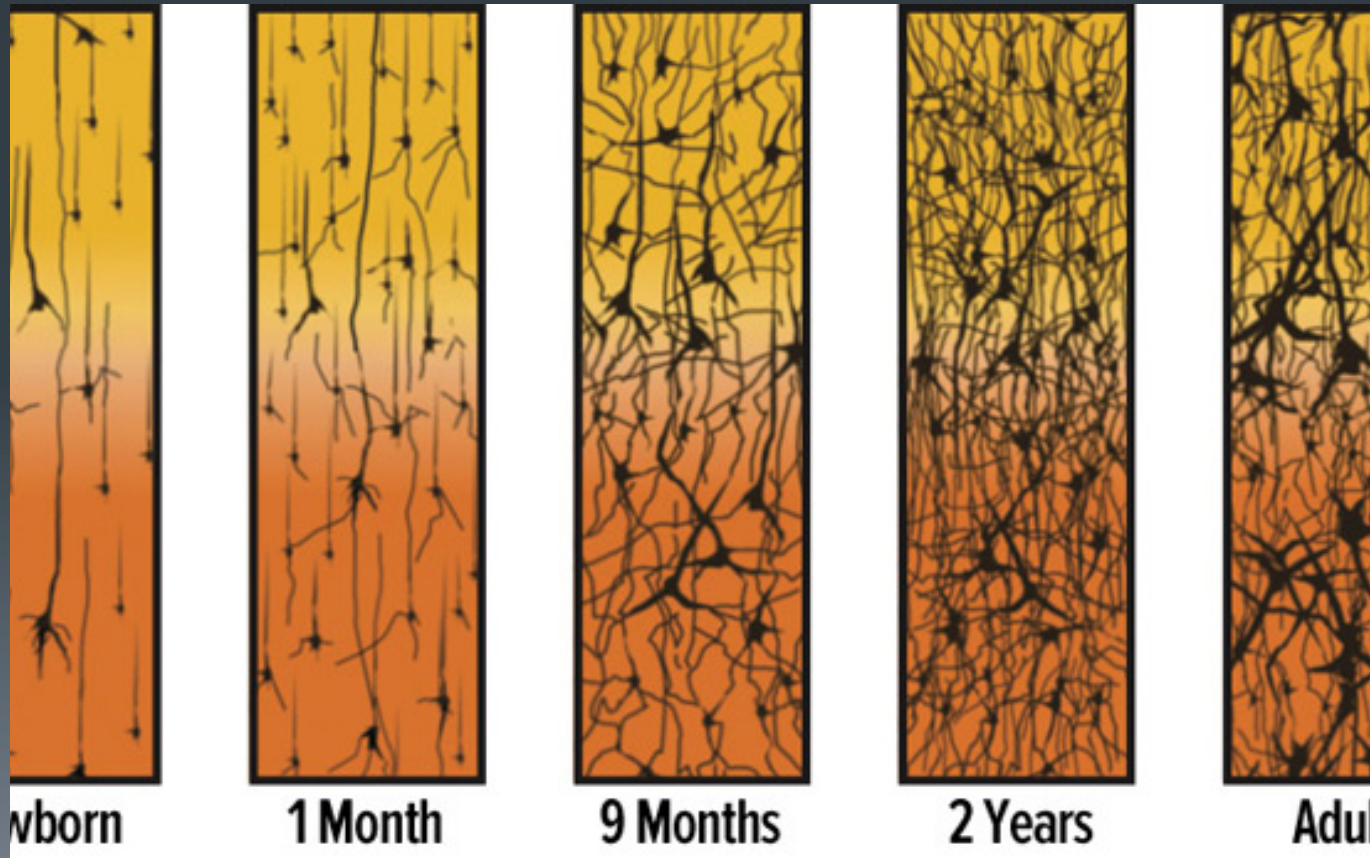




From Birth to Three

- Brain can create more Synapses than it needs
- The Synapses that are used a lot become permanent
- The Synapses that are not used frequently are eliminated

Synaptic Density Over Time





The Nurture of Early Brain Development

- Conversation
- Safety
- Love
- Stimulating Environment




The Science of Early Childhood Development

- Healthy development of young children in the early years of life provides a foundation for learning- Jack P. Shonkoff, professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.
- "When we talk about preparing children to succeed in school, we cannot separate cognitive development from social and emotional development. You can't have one without the other"- Shonkoff
- A young child's brain is shaped by his experiences. Interactions with adults, both positive and negative, affect the development of a child's brain.- Shonkoff



Literacy for Life

- Literacy for life begins with early reading. Research shows reading to young children stimulates brain development, lays the foundation for language and literacy, and prepares children for academic success.
- **Emergent literacy** refers to the point in children's development before they can read on their own or write text that others can read. This concept assumes that literacy begins at birth. Children are always becoming readers and writers.



What to Read with Young Children

- Board books and touch and feel books.
- Books that allow you to build your child's vocabulary (point and find).
- Books with large photos.
- Books that interest your child (the one they want to hear over and over).

What to Do

- Encourage children to participate as you read. Point and find characters and objects.
- Don't rush the story or feel that you have to finish it in one sitting.
- Use a variety of activities for stimulation.



Websites

- <http://nccc.org/child.dev/child.dev.page.html>
- <http://www.nccic.org/cctopics/brain.html>
- <http://www.zerotothree.org>
- www.healthychildren.org