



Information Sheet

Why focus on the Early Years?

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The early years are the foundation for lifelong health and well-being. The experiences children have in the early years shape the brain and the child's capacity to learn, establish relationships, regulate their emotions and build resilience.

From conception to age five, a child's brain undergoes significant change. The brain doubles in size in the first year, growing to about 80 per cent of an adult size brain by age three, and reaches about 90 per cent by age five.

A child's genetics, family relationships, community relationships and cultural experiences all impact their development. The foundational relationships that babies, toddlers and children experience with their caregivers in the early years provide essential supports for health, development and wellbeing.

Early years development relies on good health and nutrition, safe and caring relationships, respect for each child's unique qualities, supportive boundaries and positive experiences.

Community and service environments play key roles in supporting children and families during these critical periods of development. By building the resilience and strength of individuals, families and communities, we create the conditions for healthy child development.

“The brain is the only organ that is not fully formed at birth. During the first three years, trillions of connections between brain cells are being made. A child's relationships and experiences during the early years greatly influence how their brain grows.”

- Getting Ready for School Begins at Birth, 2004, Zero to Three., DC.

More information

To find out more about Early Years Networks, please visit our website or contact the Connecting Early Years Networks team:

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