



What babies and young children need for a great start

- Lots of time with adults who show they love them
- Heaps of cuddles and loving physical contact
- Plenty of opportunities for free play
- Lots of talking, singing and being read to
- Getting help early for those with sensory or other developmental delays
- Parents who feel well supported and able to get help if they need it

... and things they don't need:

- Watching TV, and playing on tablets, phones or other devices. These are best avoided in the early years
- Expensive toys – often the best play things aren't toys at all but everyday items such as boxes and pots and pans
- Classes and lots of scheduled activities. Babies and young children learn better from relaxed play opportunities and loving interactions with you... and, it costs nothing!

Who is Brainwave?

Every childhood matters. That's why we speak up about the importance of brain development in the early years.

We want everyone involved in the life of a child to understand the importance of early experiences on brain development and their lifelong impact. This will help maximise the chance that every child gets a good start in life, in a safe, secure and nurturing environment, free from abuse and neglect.

We review findings on brain development from across a range of disciplines and deliver the information through seminars, DVDs, booklets, newsletters, website and social media. We work with anyone who might affect the life of a child.

Want to find out more?

The Early Years Last Forever - Whakamana i te Tamaiti is the premier educational seminar on brain development in the early years for those working with, or caring for, children. Brainwave Trust has skilled educators throughout New Zealand who tailor each engaging, multimedia, seminar to meet the interest and experience of the audience.

To book a seminar

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 whakamana i te tamaiti

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Consistent, responsive,
 loving care

grows great
 brains



We have the science to support it.

How do early experiences shape brain development?

Your baby's brain is growing more in their first two to three years than it will any other time in their life.

The experiences they have in these early years have a big influence on how their brain develops.



Everything your baby thinks, feels and does is controlled by their brain, so the way their brain develops affects every aspect of their life.

Genes provide a guide, but the way those genes are expressed can be influenced by what happens. Early experiences help to set up a strong or weak foundation for later learning, behaviour and health. This is why these early years are so important.

This doesn't mean it's too late to improve life for an older child. It does mean the best chance of having babies grow up to be happy and healthy adults is a positive time in their early years.

What can help or get in the way of brain development?

What happens in the life of a young child can either help or get in the way of their healthy brain development.

Protective factors are the things that help make positive outcomes more likely. A major protective factor is a strong, loving relationship between parent and child. A child who has this, has a better chance of being mentally and physically healthy.

Those things that can get in the way of positive development are known as risk factors. These make poor outcomes more likely, including behaviour problems, physical or mental illness, difficulty learning, breaking the law, and alcohol or drug abuse. The more risks a child faces the harder it will be for them to reach their potential.

Things that increase risk for a child include their mother drinking or using drugs in pregnancy, parental depression, poverty, family conflict or violence, and abuse or neglect.

The more positives there are throughout your child's early years, and the fewer negatives, the more likely they are to grow up into the wonderful adult they are meant to be.



Why are loving relationships important?

Did you know that showing your child love, by spending time together, talking, singing, cuddling, reading and playing, helps their brain to grow?

Babies whose parents spend time with them, try to figure out what they need, and are usually quick to respond, are more likely to grow up physically and mentally healthy and be better able to learn at school.

Despite what some people think, parents don't need to buy special things to help their baby's development. The way you look at, touch and speak to your child as you go about daily activities is more important than anything else.

How might stress impact early brain development?

Because your baby's brain is adapting to the world they find themselves in, exposure to a lot of stress may harm their developing brain.

Some situations which can be stressful for babies include abuse or neglect, family violence, and parental substance abuse or depression.

If a baby experiences extreme or repeated stress, especially if they aren't comforted, this can have a lasting and harmful effect on their brain development. This doesn't mean you should be worried about mild or occasional hassles. If you are mostly able to comfort your baby through these times you will be helping him or her to gradually learn how to handle their difficult feelings. When your child feels tired, worried or scared they need someone to help them feel safe and secure. They can't do this by themselves.