

Why are the early years a smart investment?

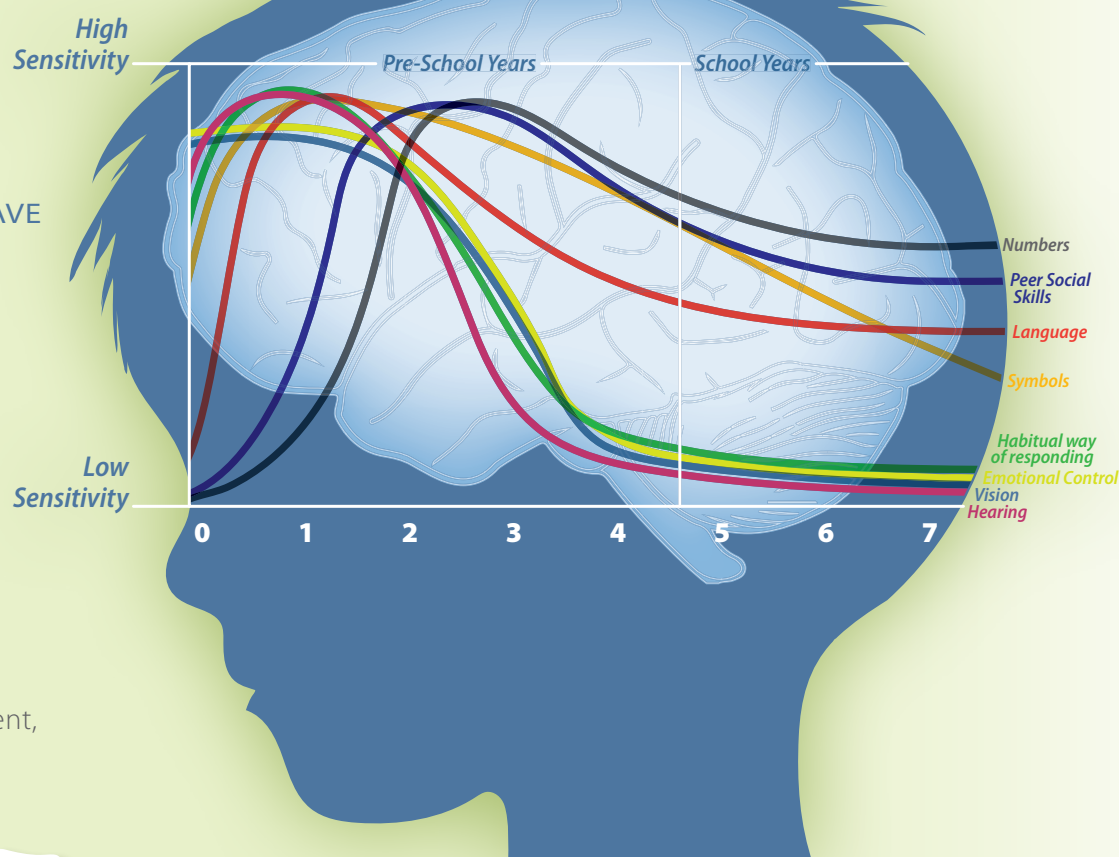
You may already know

that because of the way the brain develops after birth, **A CHILD'S FIRST YEARS HAVE A PROFOUND IMPACT ON THE REST OF THEIR LIFE.**

During these first years, **"WINDOWS OF OPPORTUNITY"** open wide and investments into children are maximized.

This chart ►

shows how the preschool years are the **MOST ACTIVE PERIODS** of brain development, and most sensitive to development opportunities.



Investments in a child during these **EARLY YEARS** **PAY DIVIDENDS** to society and the economy **THEIR WHOLE LIFE THROUGH** including in the form of savings to the healthcare, education, justice, and social service systems.

In fact, some economists project that **INVESTMENTS IN EARLY CHILDHOOD** provide more return on investment than formal education or job training — one study suggests investments in children aged 0–3 produces a benefit of **10 to 1** (Heckman, goo.gl/SDHnXh)

There's an infinite number of ways to help young children develop, and everyone has a role to play. **THE GOOD NEWS IS** that we're learning more each day about how best to invest in that **WINDOW OF OPPORTUNITY.**

2x

A three-year old's brain is twice as active as an adult's

Why are the early years important to a child's healthy development?

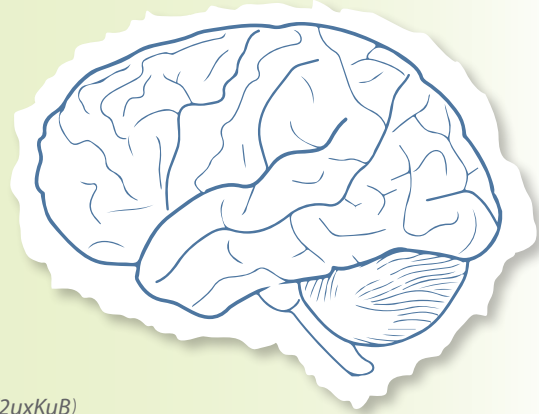
The evidence

is starting to stack up. It says that a child's **FIRST SIX YEARS** can have a major impact on their personality, **BRAIN**, and **FUTURE** prospects.



The brain is the only organ not fully developed at birth.

(Karen Kearns, goo.gl/2uxKuB)



During a child's first years, important synapse connections are made that form the **BASIC INFRASTRUCTURE** that the rest of their brain development will rely on.

In fact, evidence suggests:

90%

OF BRAIN DEVELOPMENT OCCURS IN THE **FIRST 6 YEARS** OF A CHILD'S LIFE.

(Arkin, Braveman, Egerter, & Williams, goo.gl/E7snxM)

Early experiences

impact many aspects of an individual's **DEVELOPMENT**.

These are sometimes classified as:

COGNITIVE DEVELOPMENT,
which refers to a child's ability to solve problems and learn

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT,
which includes the ability to interact with others, to help oneself, and to use self-control

SPEECH AND LANGUAGE DEVELOPMENT,
which means using and understanding language

FINE AND GROSS MOTOR SKILLS,
which allow children to use small and large muscles

(HealthLink BC. Milestones for 5-year-olds. goo.gl/b9gPqL)

If a child enters kindergarten without a foundation of healthy development, they may struggle to catch up throughout their school years and beyond. **FORTUNATELY, WE CAN ALL HELP** create opportunities for children to grow and learn so that every child starts out with a healthy foundation.



Provincial Office
for the Early Years