

Introduction — Each Child We Save Is A Child We Save

Three key years.

Too many people do not know that the first three years of life are the key and most important years when brains develop in our children.

Biologically, those are the years where we make the overwhelming majority of the neuron connections in our brains — and those are the years when each brain goes through the processes that will determine both the physical structure and infrastructure of the brain, and the key future capabilities of each brain.¹

If we don't get those first three years right for each child, we handicap children for life — relative to the structure, function, and capability of each child's brain.

The basic biological truth is that we each build the basic strength levels of our brains in those first years of our lives. We all then build the wisdom and the knowledge base that we each have in our brains through multiple levels of learning processes that extend through our lifetimes.

But we build our wisdom, our judgment, and our personal knowledge in those later years on the physical footings, the functional foundation, and

the basic underpinnings that we create for each brain in those first three key years of life.

Exercise is key.

Brains need exercise in those first years to develop at the best and highest levels.²

Brains that get direct exercise in those years actually are physically different than unexercised brains. The exercised brains are each clearly, directly, and individually strengthened by that exercise. It is an amazingly simple and direct process.

If we do not exercise each brain well in those years, the brains without exercise have fewer internal connections and those brains have fewer brain cells available to help us think. Physical exercise makes physical muscles bigger and stronger and — in a very similar process — mental exercise makes our brains grow bigger and stronger.

The cutoff for that process is not absolute, but an extremely important portion of our biological brain development process for each of us is overwhelmingly focused on those first three years.

If we miss those first key years of great brain plasticity and brain growth, we can still have some positive impact on our brain capacity after

that point, but to a significantly smaller degree, and with significantly more difficulty than the opportunity that exists in those first years.

We can and should continue to improve each child's brain functioning after those first key years, but the process is both biologically and economically more costly and more difficult after that time.

Learning Does Not Begin At School

Brain science is on the cusp of a golden age. We now understand some key brain development issues for children in a way that we did not understand them before. People used to think that learning started for children when the children arrived at school.³

That was a completely wrong and totally inaccurate belief.

It could not be more wrong. That belief is dangerously and dysfunctionally wrong.

Learning starts at birth. Some learning starts just prior to birth, but the period of time immediately after birth is extremely important. The first three months of life are times when the baby's brains are structured in ways that affect long time emotional security and stability for each child. Children who feel secure and responded to in the first three months tend to have

different interaction patterns as early as year one that sometimes last for many years.

The entire first year of life is an extremely important time of learning and brain development for each child. Children who have their brains exercised through adult interactions in that time period benefit significantly from those interactions.

Years two and three are extremely important, as well. Those are times of great biological connectivity for all babies and all children.

The process is the same for children from every group, ethnicity, race, and culture. Those first three years are biologically the times when all babies from all groups build key-capacity in their brains.⁴

Learning in those first key years strengthens brains in ways that create life long impact. Children who learn the most in those first years of life, and the children whose brains are exercised well and often in those first key years, have benefits from those first years that continue for their entire lives.

Children who get the least brain exercise in those early years far too often have challenges and difficulties that also continue for their entire lives.

Children with the least brain exercise in those first three years are less likely to read in school. Children whose brains are not exercised in those key

areas are much more likely to have health problems, learning problems, and behavior problems.

Those children are much more likely to drop out of school — and those children are far more likely to end up in jail. The percentage of children who have very small vocabularies in kindergarten — who end up in jail — is a painful and shocking number.⁴

We Can Create Positive Life Trajectories In Those Key Years

We now know what that set of brain development problems, issues, and opportunities is for each child. We now know what can help create positive life trajectories for children based on those first three years of life.

We now also know what can create negative, dysfunctional, and damaging life trajectories for our children — life paths that are also a direct extension of the developmental support that is given or not given to each child in those first three key years of life.

We need to save children. All children. Now that we know about the importance of brain development processes in those first months and years, we owe it to all children to give each child the support in those first months and years that will make life better, and that will make thought processes stronger for each child.

The interactions that help children are not complicated. We need to talk, read, play, interact, and sing to our children at that time of high opportunity learning. We know that the children who have adults talking to them, interacting directly with them, and reading to them in those key months and years have many more neuron connections made in their brains.

We now know that very basic interactions with parents and with other caring adults have an almost magical ability to strengthen the basic biological connections happening in those key time periods in each child's brain.

Knowledge is power. We need all mothers, all fathers, and all families of newborn children to have the power of knowing the realities, the science, the biology, the basic types of possible brain exercise activities, and the very important consequences of either building — or not building — the brain connectivity levels for their babies and their infants, in those first years of life.⁵

We need all families, all parents and all communities to know the opportunities that exist to create emotional security in their children in the first three months of life, and we need all parents, families, and communities to understand the opportunities that exist to create learning-capacity strength

and greater learning ability levels in their children in the first three years of life.

We very much need our governmental leaders, our group leaders, and our educational-system leaders to understand that set of issues — so we can make informed decisions at multiple levels in multiple settings to support strengthening the brains of all children in those key months and years, when those biological processes are happening for each child.

The Experience Is Specific To Each Child

This process happens one child at a time. It happens individually and it happens directly for each child.⁶

We need to help each child in that time of opportunity and need. Families and parents can provide that help and support directly to each child, and various other resources can also help in various intentional, functional, and strategic ways to provide the right level of help for each child.

Overall — collectively — our ethical responsibility to each child should require us to figure out how each child can be helped in those key first months and years now that we know that science and now that we know the consequences to each child of not providing that support at that time of opportunity and biological structuring for each child.

The early brain development process that happens for each child

creates a very personal set of functional consequences for each child. Each brain develops in the same time frames and each brain develops in those time frames based on its own direct experience during that time.

It is a universal, biological process that affects every child. Every child faces the same biological realities in the same high opportunity time frames.

That same kind of basic physical development process happens in each child's brain. Biology dictates the process. The first three years of life are critical for each of us because that is when that very basic set of purely biological processes happen that give us many of the basic underpinnings that we use for the rest of our lives.

Every Child We Save Is A Child We Save

Because we now know that science to be true, we also now know that we can do important things that will create very real and almost immediate value for every child. We need to do several crucial and valuable things for each child — because lives are changed significantly when those key things are done for each child in those first days and years of life.

That opportunity and functionality exists for each child. As a society, we need to use that knowledge to help each child succeed, and we need to use that knowledge to help each child thrive.

Each child we save is a child we save. Each child we save by helping the child in those key years is individually, personally, and directly saved.

Let's save our children. We can achieve that goal. This book is intended to provide a set of information about both brain science, and brain development processes that can help each child to be saved.

The information we now know about those processes can be used to change many lives in ways that we did not understand until we developed a better understanding of the basic issues, and the basic and core science and biological processes that relate to developing brains.

This book is an invitation to change lives. This book is intended to both make people aware of those opportunities and to point to things we can do as parents, families, educators, caregivers, and communities to help children lead better lives.

Use this book and use its basic information in any way that can help make a difference in the life of an individual child, or in the lives of numbers

of children in any and all of the groups and the communities who are part of your life.

You Can Help A Child Today

This is a very immediate and extremely current set of realities. Children are being born every day. Each child who is born gives us the opportunity today to do this process well.

This actually can be a very personal opportunity for you as a reader of this book to make a difference in the life of a child. You can personally use this knowledge to change lives. Teaching this information to a relevant parent or to a relevant family can change the life of a child forever.

If you personally teach this information to a parent at the right time who then changes parenting behavior because of this information, that child can literally benefit for life. The differences in life trajectories can be huge when parents have this knowledge. This is incredibly powerful information.

You can also personally identify a child who is in that time of opportunity and need, and you can personally take the time in some way to individually help or support the specific and direct interactions that will make a difference for that child.

Take that opportunity to change a life. Help save a child today. A child who you help to save today — either directly with your own interactions or indirectly by helping relevant people understand those issues — is a child whose life will be different, and whose life will be better because you helped make that difference in key and basic life-pathways a reality for that child.

Now is a good time to save a child. Wherever you are is a good place to make a difference in the life of a newborn child, an infant, a toddler, or a small child. The value you add for each child who has a different life trajectory because of what you did with that knowledge can be huge.

Simply reaching out and teaching those issues to one parent and directly sharing this information with one family in ways that help one newborn or one infant child with better support in those key areas, could change that child's entire life.

How many other things can you do today that will change an entire life and make that life better?

We Owe It To All Of Us To Do This Well

Now that we know this science to be real and true, and now that we understand what those processes and key time frames that help each child actually are, we owe it to all of us to make a difference in children's lives.

Knowledge is strength. Deeply important and powerful knowledge creates a clear combination of opportunity, responsibility, and accountability for whoever holds that knowledge.

That particular body of knowledge needs to be both shared and used.

We need all parents to understand those opportunities and those risks for their children. We also need all families to understand those opportunities and those risks for the children in their family.

We need our community groups, schools, and our public officials to also all understand those issues, opportunities, and risks for the children who are relevant to them.

We need our government programs and our health care caregivers to all understand those sets of issues and to all help our children in those key years get the support each child needs.

When we all understand those sets of issues, we have the chance to be creative in multiple problem solving ways at multiple levels to create the support that each child needs. The time for creativity and innovation is now.

Our creativity as individuals and as groups has not been focused on those issues and those opportunities in the past. We need to focus our group and individual creativity on those issues now, and we need innovative people who understand this set of opportunities to figure out a variety of ways to have our children benefit from that knowledge.

When we actually understand a problem, and when we fully understand an opportunity, then we often can figure out a wide variety of creative, innovative, practical, operational and functional ways to take advantage of the opportunity.

Let's trigger group and individual creativity on this issue and let's have a thousand flowers bloom relative to making real improvements in children's lives as a result of that innovation and creativity.

Our children need us to be caring, responsible, accountable, and to be focused on helping each child in that key time of high opportunity and high need for each child.

Let's meet that high level of need. Now that we understand what can be done, let's do what needs to be done to do what needs to be done for every child.

Each child we save is a child we save. Lives matter. We can, in fact, change lives by helping our children in that window of wonderful biological opportunity that is a gift given to each child.

Three Key Years.

Let's not let them be wasted for anyone.

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