



## About First 5 Placer Children and Families Commission:

The First 5 Placer Children and Families Commission (CFC) is an autonomous self-governing commission appointed by the Board of Supervisors. The primary purpose of the Commission is to develop and implement a strategic plan for the use of Proposition 10 funds to support early brain development for children 0-5 and their families. For more information on First 5 Placer, visit [www.first5placer.org](http://www.first5placer.org).



# Brain Development from Ages 0-5

Ready for School. Ready for Life.



At birth, a child's brain is fertile ground for knowledge. Sights, sounds, smells and feelings all create the foundation for growth and development, now and throughout a child's life.

In particular, a child's relationship with parents and other caregivers is crucial for providing the building blocks that the child will depend on to help endure the many stresses experienced over a lifetime.



## Ways to help stimulate brain development

Children learn from the moment they arrive in the world. Here are 10 essential things children need to improve their early brain development:

**Interaction** — Consistent, long-term attention from caring adults actually increases a child's capacity to learn.

**Touch** — Holding and cuddling does more than just comfort a baby; it helps her brain grow.

**Stable Relationships** — Consistent relationships with parents and other caregivers buffer stress that can harm a child.

**Safe, Healthy Environments** — Environments should be free of lead, loud noises, sharp objects and other hazards.

**Self-Esteem** — Through respect, encouragement and positive role models, this important trait will grow from the very beginning.

**Quality Child Care** — When provided by trained professionals, this can make the difference when parents can't be with their child.

**Play** — This stimulates motor skills, social skills and problem-solving abilities. Exploring her world through objects and people provides sensory information.

**Communication** — The ability to communicate is a key function. Talking with and listening to a baby builds verbal skills needed to succeed in school as well as later in life.

**Music** — This expands a child's world, teaches new skills and offers a fun way to interact with your child. The language of music is universal.

**Reading** — Reading to a child from the earliest days of life shows how important this skill is and creates a lifelong love of books.

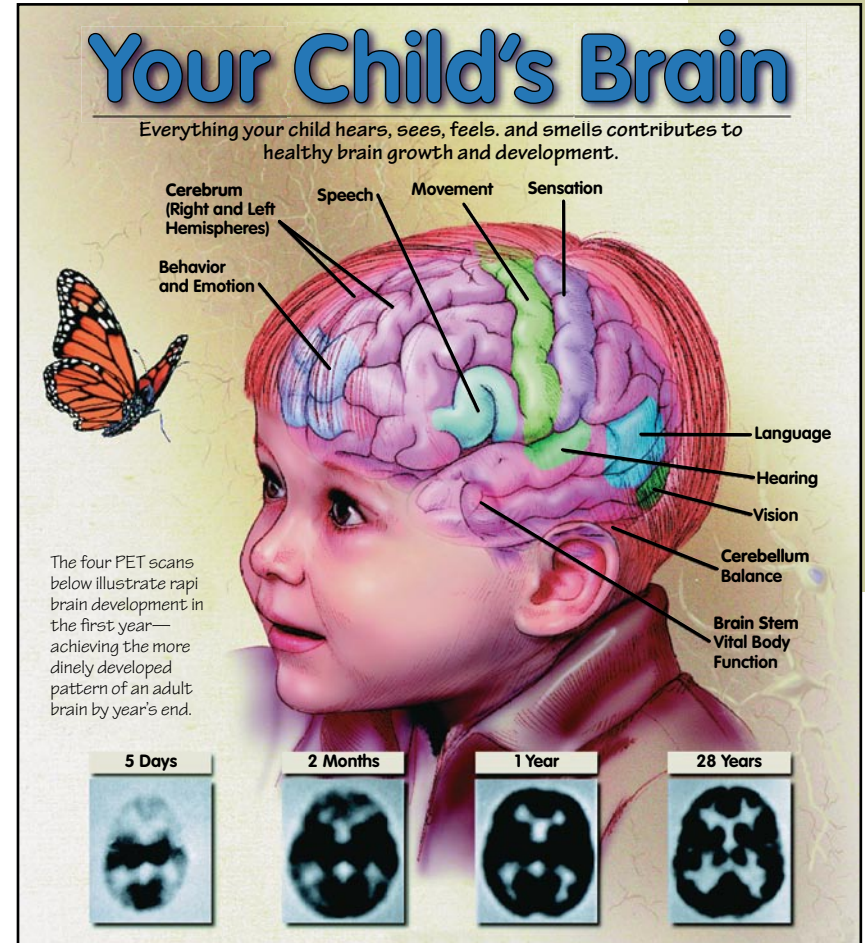
## Did you know...

The most rapid brain growth occurs in the first three years of a child's life. By age three, a child's brain has formed about 1,000 trillion connections – about twice as many as adults have.

Critical, relatively short periods exist when the infant's brain must have certain kinds of stimulation to develop properly – including areas such as vision, language and thinking.

## Did you know...

Scientists have learned that different regions of the cerebral cortex — where memory, attention, thought, language and consciousness are processed — increase in size when they are exposed to stimulating conditions. The longer the exposure, the more they grow. Research bears out that an enriched environment can boost the number of synapses that children's brains form.



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For more information about services and resources available in Placer County for improving children's emotional and intellectual needs and supporting early brain development, parents, teachers, child-care providers and health care professionals can contact

**First 5 Placer at 530.886.1869 or [www.first5placer.org](http://www.first5placer.org).**