

**Building Early Literacy Skills
with**



Dr. Betsy Diamant-Cohen

©Betsy Diamant-Cohen, 2008

Workshop Presented by:

Dr. Betsy Diamant-Cohen
Children's Programming & Early Literacy Consultant

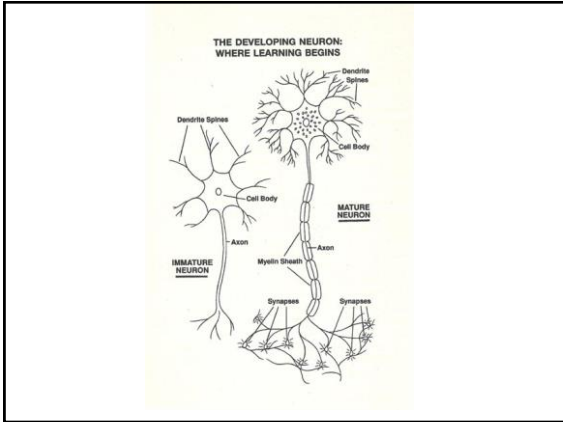
443-928-3915
betsydc@mgol.org

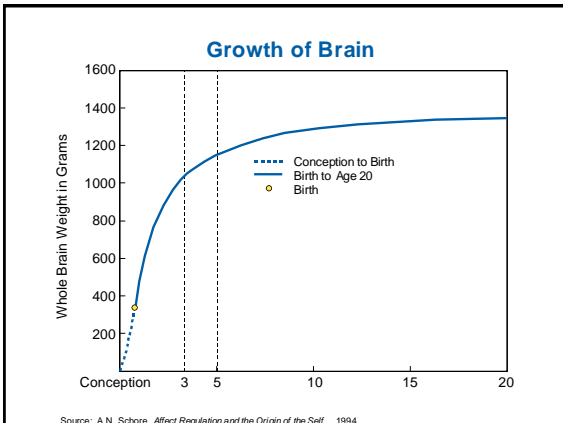
www.mgol.org
www.facebook.com/mothergooseontheloose



A few facts....

- At birth, a baby's brain contains 100 billion neurons
- At birth the brain weights 25% of it's adult weight; by age 2, it is 75% of its adult weight
- As a child grows, the number of neurons remains relatively stable, but each cell grows, becoming bigger and heavier





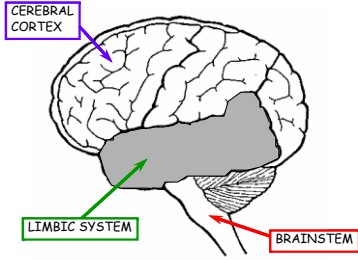
Brain Cells Song

By Brooke Harding

Sung to the tune of "Where Have All the Flowers Gone?"

**Cytoplasm nucleus,
 Axon, myelin sheath, dendrites.
 Synapse .. Between neurons
 Synapse .. Between neurons.**

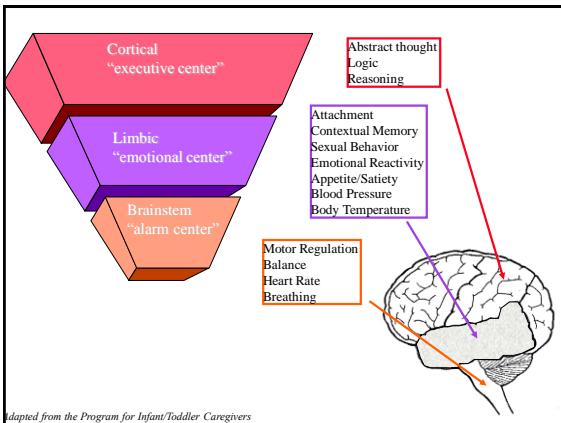
The Triune Brain



Limbic Level Communication

- Touch
- Tone of voice
- Facial expression
- Music
- Smell
- Rocking, other rhythmic motion

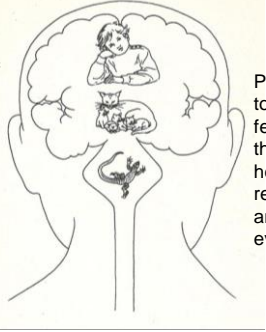




adapted from the Program for Infant/Toddler Caregivers

Three Brains in One

The executive part of the brain manages attention, emotions, and behavior. It weaves together social, emotional, and intellectual capacities in order to help us reach our goals.



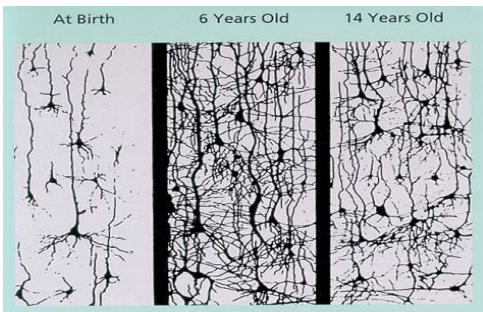
Pulling together feeling and thinking helps people reflect, plan, and evaluate.

Jane Healy, Your Child's Growing Mind / Ellen Galinsky, Mind in the Making

Experiences that Strengthen Connections

- Are frequent, regular, and predictable
- Occur in the context of a warm, supportive relationship
- Are associated with positive emotion (fun, excitement, humor, comfort)
- Involve several senses
- Are responsive **to the child's** interests or initiative

Synaptic Density



From Rethinking the Brain: New Insights into Early Development by Rita Dunn (NY: Families and Work Institute, 1997)

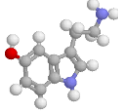
Synaptic Density: Synapses are created with astonishing speed in the first three years of life. For the rest of the first decade, children's brains have twice as many synapses as adults' brains. (Drawing supplied by H.T. Chugan)

Brain Chemistry

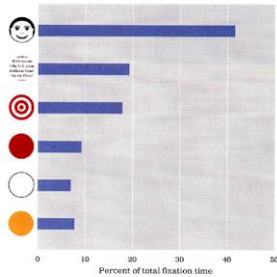
- Cortisol (stress hormone)



- Serotonin (neurotransmitter with implications for mood, anxiety, aggression, impulse control)



The Key Factor: Attachments between infant and mother



Source: Kathleen Stassen-Beggs, *The Developing Person: Through Childhood and Adolescence*, 1991

Our first relationships hold many clues to how we've become who we are...



Attachment theory explains how the parent-child relationship emerges and connects it with social, emotional and cognitive development.

Early Brain Development Research **Does Not...**



- Indicate that parents need specialized skills to meet their children's needs
- Support early emphasis on academic skills
- Show that genes determine everything

Early Brain Development Research **Does...**

- Support an emphasis on nurturing and early relationships
- Indicate that early experiences influence which brain connections are kept and which are pruned away
- Indicate that optimal brain development requires consistent, responsive, and affectionate caregiving.

What ingredients does brain research suggest for a successful early learning program?



Optimal Learning Environment

Welcoming
Warm
Safe
Stimulating
Joyful

Ritual

Invites us
Unites us
Involves senses
Activates memory
Embodies meaning
Eases transitions

Repetition...Repetition...Repetition

Promotes learning
Increases enjoyment
Creates a sense of safety

SURPRISE!

- Alert – senses*
- Focus – attention*
- Activate – response*
- Impress -- memory*

Movement

Movement is responsible for physical changes in the brain that can lead to higher intelligence

Movement provides an outlet for expression of emotions



Music Helps Children Develop

- Physically
- Mentally
- Emotionally
- Socially
- Aesthetically



"The basic elements of the *Listen – Like – Learn* program are the basic elements of music, which are: singing, movement, rhythm and melody, and these elements can only be introduced successfully if, at the same time, the children are learning to listen" (Cass-Beggs 1986, 21).

Enthusiasm Breeds Enthusiasm



Play



- Playing helps children cope with everyday pressures
- **Social play** strengthens and builds friendships and attachments
- **Imaginative play** develops creative problem solving skills
- **Physical play** helps children to develop gross and fine motor skills as well as balance and coordination.

Play is a basic biological necessity that has survived through the evolution of the brain

Most adults who have had appropriate play experiences as children, exhibit:

- Emotional control
- Social competency
- Personal resiliency
- Continuing curiosity



Research supports the developmental and therapeutic value of play; it also affects mental and physical health

Mother Goose ON THE LOOSE!

assists healthy development
of the **WHOLE CHILD**



Unique Features:



- Structure with 10 sections
- 80% repetition
- Librarian as facilitator
- Includes:
 - 2 developmental tips
 - Material by Barbara Cass-Beggs
 - Positive reinforcement activities

The Ten Sections



1. Welcome
2. Rhymes, reads, & book illustration
3. Body: Head, arms, belly, legs
4. Rum pum pum
5. Stand-up activities
6. Animals (books and puppets)
7. Musical instruments or scarves
8. Lullaby
9. Interactive rhymes (candlestick, Humpty)
10. Closing songs

Mother Goose on the Loose Demonstration



What is school readiness, anyway?



- o Verbally communicates thoughts (84%)
- o Enthusiastic and curious (76%)
- o Can follow directions (60%)
- o Is not disruptive in class (60%)
- o Is sensitive to other's feelings (58%)
- o Takes turns and shares (56%)
- o Pays attention (42%)
- o Identifies primary colors and basic shapes (24%)
- o Uses pencils and paint brushes (21%)
- o Knows letters of the alphabet (10%)
- o Can count to 20 or more (7%)

The National Center for Educational Statistics KTSSR 1993

Domains of School Readiness

1. Social and emotional well-being
2. Health and physical well-being
3. Approaches to learning
4. Language development
5. General knowledge



In other words, **The WHOLE CHILD**

Social & emotional development

- Self-confidence
- Able to express feelings and needs
- Sensitive
- See
- Can



Physical well-being and motor development

- Fine motor skills
- Gross motor skills
- Expressing self through movement

Physical problems
Identified and treated



Approach to learning

- Enthusiastic
- Good sense of the “teacher”
- Wants to find out about things
- Can work independently or as part of a group
- Can follow directions



Language Development

The average number of words heard by a child in an average year:

- In a higher income home: 11 million
- In an average income home: 6 million
- In a lower income home: 3 million



By age 3, children have HUGE differences in vocabulary and in IQ scores.

Children with smaller vocabularies are less successful in school.

Golinkoff and Hirsh Pasek

General knowledge

- Recognizing shapes
- Knowing colors and sizes
- Familiarity with everyday things
- Names of objects
- People’s roles
- Science
- Math



Why is school readiness important?

- Relationship with literacy and life experience
 - Graduation from high school
 - Likelihood of holding a job
 - Average weekly earnings
 - More successful long-term relationships
 - Lower rates of incarceration
 - Direct economic benefit to society

Language and Literacy: The Six Skills To Get Ready To Read

- Print Motivation
- Vocabulary
- Narrative Skills
- Phonological Awareness
- Print Awareness
- Letter Knowledge



EVERY CHILD READY TO READ @ your library

ECRR2

The Five Practices That Help Children Be Ready to Learn

- Talk
- Sing
- Read
- Write
- Play



EVERY CHILD READY TO READ @ your library

48

21st Century Learning Skills – Essential Life Skills

- 1. Focus and self control.
- 2. Perspective taking • Creativity
- 3. Communicating • Collaboration
- 4. Making connections • Critical thinking
- 5. Critical thinking • Communication
- 6. Taking on challenges
- 7. Self-directed, engaged learning

Ellen Galinsky, 2010, *Mind in the Making*

Connect the Dots!



How does Mother Goose on the Loose help children develop early literacy skills?



An Early Literacy Program
for Infants and Young Children



- 1. Welcome
- 2. Rhymes, reads, & book illustration
- 3. Body: Head, arms, belly, legs
- 4. Rum pum pum
- 5. Stand-up activities
- 6. Animals (books and puppets)
- 7. Musical instruments or scarves
- 8. Lullaby
- 9. Interactive rhymes (candlestick, Humpty)
- 10. Closing songs

MGOL Planning Template



- 1. Welcoming remarks**
- 2. Opening rhymes and reads**
Fingerplay: Old Mother Goose
Flannel board:
Flannel board or Puppets
Book:
Song:
- 3. Body Rhymes**
Head:
Fingers:
Knee bouncing:
- 4. Rum Pum Pum Sequence**
 Rum pum pum (*Tap out names with syllables*)
- 5. Standing-up Activities**
Circle Activity:
Circle Dance:
Sit down: Handy Spandy

There is a gap between what society knows and what society does relating to early care and education



- Mistaken impressions
- Misunderstandings
- Misplaced priorities



Science, Policy, and the Young Developing Child, Jack P. Shonkoff, M.D.

You are all superstars!



What else can we do?



Create Welcoming Environments for Children and Their Caregivers

- Warm welcome
- Ritual opening & repetition with surprise
- Only realistic expectations
- Social interaction with other children
- Positive reinforcement, when warranted
- Unthreatening new experiences
- Personal connection with you



Build children's vocabulary by:

- Modeling how to use books with very young children without actually reading them
- Incorporating language with movement, music, and art
- Using words in a variety of ways
- Explaining things



Create self-regulation & school readiness opportunities for children

State the guidelines at the beginning. Direct activities in an encouraging way, getting children to

- Follow directions
- Take turns and share
- Be curious and enthusiastic
- Interact positively with peers



SING!!!!

Whether or not you sing on key, music helps children

- Develop self-awareness
- Improve concentration
- Expose their natural abilities
- Strengthen muscle coordination
- Experience cooperation with others
- By providing another way to communicate
- By providing an emotional outlet
- By providing a source of enjoyment and/or relaxation



Bring parents into the picture

- Encourage discourse at home
- Provide developmental tips in small doses (*let parents know the importance of seemingly easy activities for helping in their children's brain development*)
- Remind parents that they are role models.



Help parents understand the value of parent/child interaction

In Mother Goose on the Loose sessions, parents experience a positive interaction of play and dialogue with their child.



Explaining the value of these activities encourages them to continue these type of joyful interactions at home.

Your Goals

- Serve as a voice to relay the message
- Read aloud or play w/books model for families
- Provide children with high quality pre-literacy experiences
- Give opportunities to practice social skills
- Encourage problem-solving and critical thinking
- Help foster a life-long love of reading
- Always make the library a welcoming environment
- Share yourself!!!!!!

MGOL incorporates scientific findings into practice in many ways.

- Takes place in an environment with the child in mind.
- Encourages the development of school readiness skills.
- Takes multiple intelligences into account
- Promotes bonding between parents and their children
- Enriches children's lives through the arts



Assist with healthy development of the **WHOLE CHILD** by offering


Mother Goose
ON THE LOOSE!



Hopes for This Workshop

- Knowledge
- Skill
- Motivation

Mother Goose
ON THE LOOSE!



Visit the MGOL Website!



www.mgol.net

71
