

# Parents Sculpt Brains

Research has now proven that millions of parent-child sharing moments in childhood can set up vital **brain connections** that enable our children to have deeply enriched lives.

As parents we can affect the chemistry in our children's brains, by the way we listen, play, cuddle, comfort and discipline our children.

90% of the growth of the human brain occurs in the first 5 years of life. So the time we spend sharing and responding positively to our young children will forge connections between the brain cells. These connections help our children cope well with stress and emotional situations later in life.

Please help me cope with the world. Take my fears seriously and acknowledge my feelings whenever you can. Then I can cope with the world better when I am older.



# 10

## tips for Parents

to help develop your children's brains

### 1 Positive Attention

Children need lots of **positive attention** to develop their brains.

### 2 Special moments

Sharing **special moments** with your child develops the emotional part of the brain to help him feel safe, loved and good about himself.

### 3 Time to play

**Play** encourages creativity, curiosity, and interest in the world around him, which is essential in developing the 'seeking system' in the brain. This activates the drive and energy needed for life.

### 4 Rough and Tumble

**Rough and tumble play** is a natural way of helping your child's brain to manage emotions and to adapt to others.

### 5 Cuddles Galore

**Cuddles** are vitally important for brain connections to happen. The more touch your child gets in childhood, the calmer she is likely to be as an adult.

### 6 Feelings and Listening

Help your child with his **big feelings** by really **listening** to him and naming his feelings in language he can understand.

### 7 Enthusiasm and Energy

Be really enthusiastic and interested in what your child is doing. Meet her **joyful energy** with your joyful energy.

### 8 Time 'in'...

Time in with your child rather than 'time out' will help you better understand why your child is behaving badly.

### 9 Clear Boundaries

Your child needs to be taught what is acceptable or unacceptable behaviour by giving clear boundaries and using **choice and consequence** to develop the rational part of his brain.

### 10 Breakfast

A protein-rich breakfast is essential for your child's brain to cope with stress and anxiety. Encourage healthy eating habits, as soon as possible.



GOVERNMENT OFFICE  
FOR THE EAST OF ENGLAND