



## **WHY EARLY CHILDHOOD MATTERS**

**At birth, a baby's brain has about 100 billion nerve cells.**

**But the cells have not yet formed the critical connections that determine an individual's emotional, social, and intellectual make-up. Most of this "wiring" develops between the ages of 0 to 3.**

**By age 3, a child's brain has twice as many synapses - or connections as an adult's. This suggests that infants and toddlers are biologically primed for learning as synapses are a fundamental basis of learning. When a connection is used repeatedly in the early years, it becomes permanent. But a connection that is used rarely, or not at all, is unlikely to survive.**

**For example, studies show that a child who is rarely spoken to or read to in the early years may have difficulty mastering language skills later in life. Similarly, a child who is rarely played with may have difficulty with social adjustment as she grows.**

**Scientists have found that your relationship with your child affects his brain in many ways. By providing warm, responsive care, you strengthen the biological systems that help him handle his emotions. Research also shows that a strong, secure connection with your child helps him withstand the ordinary stresses of daily life -not just today, but in the future. A strong bond doesn't just reassure him, it actually affects the biological systems that adapt to stress.**