

LIGHTER
BRIGHTER!
you!

FOODS TO MAKE YOUR CHILD A WINNER

EVERY CHILD IS BORN WITH THE SAME NUMBER OF NEURONS

that an adult brain has. The only difference is that they're not well connected yet. Life experience will connect their neurons in accordance to what they pay attention to and what they're exposed to.

The younger the brain, the more able it is to learn quickly and adapt to situations. These opportunities for quick development, learning and growth are called 'windows of development or opportunity' and occur from birth to between 23 and 27 years of age, depending on gender. Different cognitive capacities are focussed on during these 'windows', and we don't have the ability to 're-wind' any of them.

Research suggests strongly that when children are supplied with nutrient-dense foods during these critical developmental stages they can maximise their genetic, intellectual potential. Conversely, their brain doesn't have the capacity to develop optimally.

One of the most important foods that the brain requires is the right fats. Sixty percent of the dry weight of the brain is composed of fat, and 20 - 25% of that amount needs to be a very specific type of fat. When this type of fat isn't present the child's brain cannot develop optimally as these fats are required for neuronal growth and communication. These fats are found in chia and flax seeds, and dark green leafy greens, as well as sunflower and sesame seeds, and walnuts.

The growing brain also depends on a consistent and stable supply of energy for neuronal growth and communication. Nutrient dense, fibre-filled, fresh produce supply glucose steadily and ensure the brain stays well fuelled. Processed foods contain fast-release carbohydrates which supply a roller coaster glucose supply for the brain. Unfortunately, they also contain other damaging compounds, like flavourings and colorants, which shift the child's taste buds to prefer those foods. They also contain very few of the other nutrients that the brain requires for growth and development.

Protein is another building block of the growing brain and parents need to ensure children are eating a wide variety of legumes and grains if they choose not to feed their children any animal products. They also need to supplement with vitamin B12, and possibly iron, as these nutrients are not available in the quantities required when only plants are consumed.

When parents provide a wide variety of fresh, natural plant produce in the form of fruit, vegetables, whole grains and legumes, and supplement wisely, the child's developing brain is exposed to all the nutrients required to ensure optimal development. This supports healthy gut health which supports healthy brain health too. The child will be able to pay attention, focus and learn well. They'll also have stable moods which supports learning and friendships. They also have all the nutrients available to ensure optimal physical development, which supports optimal brain development too.

When you visit the supermarket, or your local farmers' market, focus on fresh, local, and brightly coloured fresh produce. Be patient as your child watches and learns from you about different tastes and textures. Children can take up to 12 exposures to new food before they try the new food, so be patient but consistent.



By Delia McCabe, MA (Psych), PhD
with Gary Kent



< Scan the QR code to
watch our program

Foods to Make your Child a Winner



The Incredible Journey

THE INCREDIBLE JOURNEY • tij.tv

Australia • 0481 315 101 • info@tij.tv

New Zealand • 020 422 2042 • infonz@tij.tv

USA • 770 800 0266 • usa@tij.tv