

How changing babies' worlds changes ours too

Dr. Suzanne Zeedyk
School of Psychology
University of Dundee



The Child's Curriculum
September 2010



With thanks to my
students & colleagues

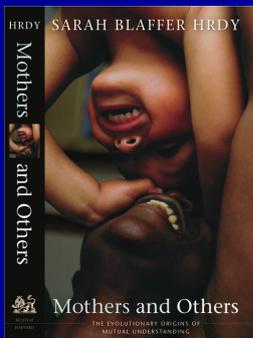
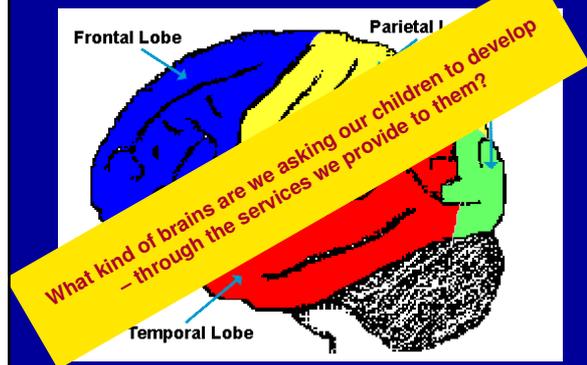


Michelle O'Neill	Louise Carolan	John Carnochan
Mandy Yilmaz	George Hosking	Karyn McCluskey
Cliff Davies	Margaret Duncan	Marji Henderson
Phoebe Caldwell	Irene Werritty	Sharon Doughty
Pete Coia	Sarah Parry	Vasu Reddy
Hannah Young	Myshi Mackenzie	Heidi Keller
Emese Nagy	Colwyn Trevarthen	Rona Dolev

My message

1. Infants come into the world already connected to others.
2. Infants' brains & bodies are shaped by the connection they feel from others.
3. We suffer as a society when children (and adults) don't feel connected.

Our Question



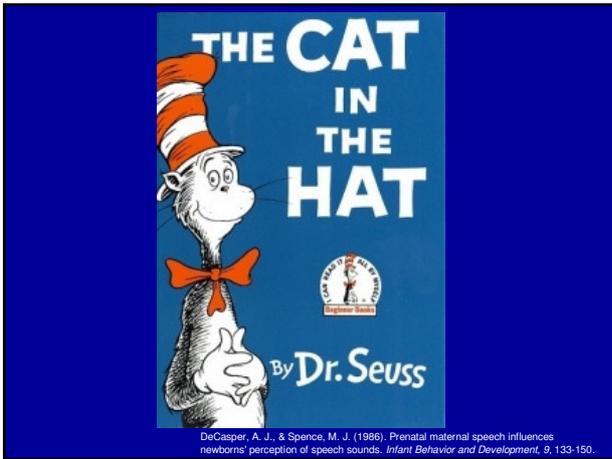
"To all the reasons people might have to worry about the future of our species – nuclear proliferation, global warming, infectious diseases, crashing meteorites – add one more, having to do with just what sort of species our descendants millennia hence might belong to.

If **empathy** and understanding develop only under particular **child-rearing conditions**. If an ever-increasing proportion of the species fails to encounter those conditions, but nevertheless survives to reproduce, it won't matter how valuable the underpinnings for **collaboration** were in the past. **Compassion** and the quest for **emotional connection** will fade away as surely as has sight in cave-dwelling fish."

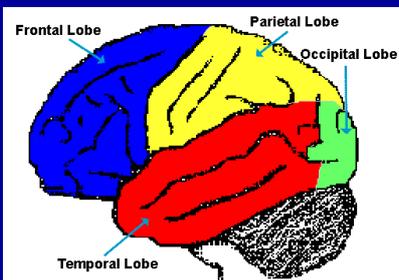
2009

(pg. 239 – 294)

1. Babies arrive already connected to other people.

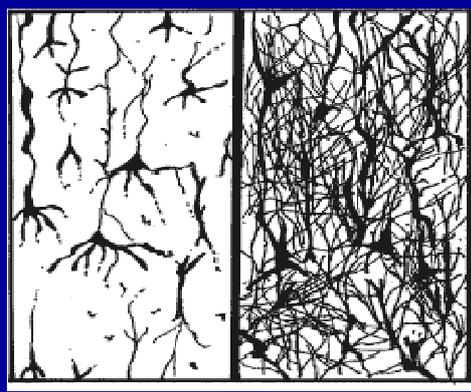


2. The development of children's brains and bodies is affected by that social connectedness.



Age 1:
Brain has attained 70% of final mass.

Age 3:
Brain has attained 90% of final mass



At birth

At 7 years of age

Source: Brotherson, 2005



All human infants are born 'premature' (Neoteny)

3-Year-Old Children



Normal

Extreme Neglect

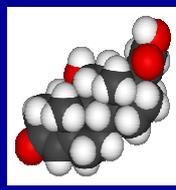
Child Trauma Academy

1997 Bruce D. Perry, M.D., Ph.D.

Source: Perry & Pollard, 1997

Cortisol

The fear hormone = Stress



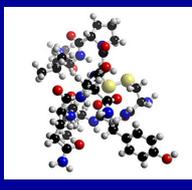
Cortisol puts a brake on other body systems:

- relaxation
- immune system
- learning

because the body believes it is in crisis.

Oxytocin

The love hormone = Relax



Oxytocin relaxes all body systems:

- more receptive to others
- more welcoming to others
- calmer physiological system

because the body feels safe.

3. We suffer as a society when infants – and grown ups – don't feel connected.

Violence



Violence Reduction Unit, Strathclyde Police
www.actiononviolence.co.uk 2005

Health



Harry Burns: Chief Medical Officer of Scotland

Care System – Fostering & Adoption



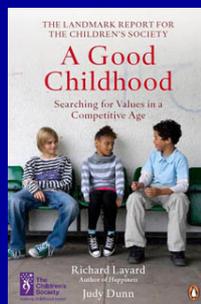
Two young brothers have appeared in court accused of torturing and attempting to kill two boys in a horrific case which has shocked the UK.

There was no sign of the boys' mum and dad in court, although their foster parents were in attendance.

Mental well being = Happiness



2007
 Britain ranks at bottom of 21 European countries for child well-being



2009
 For children, economic prosperity of the last 50 yrs has brought increased emotional problems

So how much connection are Scottish infants likely to experience on a daily basis today?

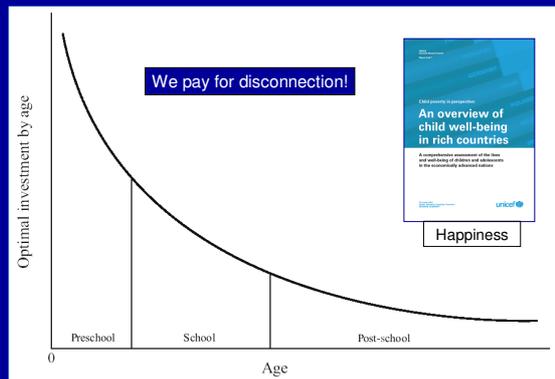
A baby's day



So how much (dis)connection are Scottish infants likely to experience on a daily basis today?

So how much (dis)connection are Scottish infants likely to experience on a daily basis today?

**** What's the ratio of connection to disconnection? ****



We can have happiness for free!



A useful insight for Austerity Britain !

Invest now



Save later

Invest now



Save now

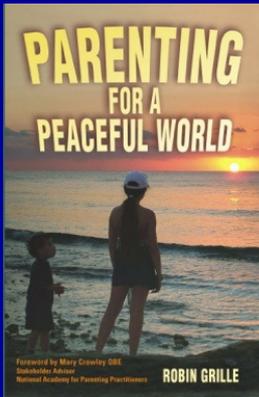


Save later

“Probably the most unexpected thing that I got from PALS was keeping my son. That doesn't sound nice, but I honestly think if PALS hadn't been there, I probably would have given up....It's now three years down the line, and it's working perfect.”

Programme: Parents Altogether Lending Support
6 weeks
£200 / participant

Source: Zeedyk et al., 2007



“At their very worst, parenting support programmes are cost neutral.”

2006

Interventions:
Evidence-based practice vs.
Doing the right thing

Parenting Support
vs.
Food

In conclusion...

Our Question

Frontal Lobe

Frontal Lobe

Temporal Lobe

What kind of brains are we asking our children to develop
– through the services we provide to them?

Children don't want services.
They want love.

Children don't want service providers.
They want giggle providers.

**We will know we are getting it right for
The Child's Curriculum
when the policy makers decide
that what we really need to assess is
giggling and cuddling.**

Thank you.

m.s.zeedyk@dundee.ac.uk

