

Key Message ...

You are What Makes the Difference in a Child's Life

Play

- Babies need books in the toy box and diaper bag.
- Read out loud to your toddler while they play nearby; this will invite them to come and listen
- Pre-schoolers need to be read to daily. If this is new for your child, it's never too late to start.

Positive back and forth interactions (serve and return) build sturdy brain architecture.

Grow

Every caring and supportive adult can make a difference in the life of a child. Parenting can be a lonely job, ask about classes, support groups, counselors, meeting places for parents and children. *Remember that taking care of yourself is important too!*

Executive function skills help your child learn to focus, problem-solve, get along with others and manage their emotions.

Connect

Early experiences and relationships stimulate brain development. Create safe, nurturing environments for your children. When adults work to limit stress in a child's life, they create stronger brain connections.

Stress is a part of life and shapes the brain. Connect with and support your child to build a stronger brain.

Shine

Families can support children by:

- Providing proper nutrition, sleep and safety
- Learning what to expect as your child grows
- Being attentive and responsive to children's needs
- Offering consistent love and affection
- Reading to your child
- Teaching children about how feelings affect what they do

Brains are not just born; they are built over time and continue to grow into adulthood. Early experiences build brains!

Some resources in your community include:

The Foothills Children's Wellness Network: www.foothillsnetwork.ca (403) 995-2706

Literacy for Life: www.litforlife.com (403) 652-5090

Wild Rose Community Connections: www.wildrosecommunityconnections.com (403) 601-2910

Parent Link Centre: www.parentlinkalberta.ca (403) 652-8633

Okotoks Family Resource Centre: www.ofrc.ca (403) 995-2626

