



## Nutrition for Brain Development

Good nutrition during the early years is the foundation for early cognitive abilities, motor skills and emotional development, this is all largely due to the incredibly impressive rapid growth and development of the human brain.

Particularly between 0-3 when there is an optimal window to maximise the early brain's potential to increase the brains' connections - (the synapses and fibres).

### Holistic approach

Much of the brain development at this age is linked to positive experiences and feeling safe, nutrition has a part to play too.



### Two Factors

Food has an impact on brain development in two fundamental ways: -  
Biologically certain foods specifically support the growth and development of the brain

### Two Factors

The second factor is how we can influence food connections .  
We influence palate development, food preferences, food habits, behaviours even food addictions via the foods we introduce.

### High Energy

During childhood when the brain is undergoing its' rapid growth 50% of the total energy intake goes to feeding the brain  
Grown-up brains only need 20%.

### Brain- Boosting Foods

There are many elements to nutrition for brain development, an early years diet must include:  
Fats, Protein  
Carbohydrates for stable blood sugar  
Vitamins and Minerals (colourful fruit and veg)

### FATS

Essential Fatty Acids (EFA) are crucially important for intelligence mood and behaviour.  
The body cannot make these. We need to obtain from dietary sources

### EFA Foods

Fish is the best food source of Omega 3 Fatty Acids  
Cold water fish such as salmon are a great source of the Essential Fatty Acid's -  
DHA and EPA  
Eggs, nuts, seeds and Avocado are all sources of essential fats.  
Nuts are an allergen

### Vitamins & Minerals

Vitamin D plays a role in brain development and function  
Iron is crucial for transporting oxygen throughout the body, including the brain.  
Iodine is essential for the production of thyroid hormones, which are critical for brain development

