

# RAISING RESILIENCE

## REVILLA ISLAND RESILIENCE INITIATIVE

Volume1/ Issue 3

### RAISING RESILIENCE

Will feature facts about healthy brain development, information on preventing childhood trauma, and tips on how to build healthy relationships between kids and caring adults. Resilient families and communities mean better outcomes for everyone!

[Click on hyperlinks for more resources!](#)



## WEEKLY INFORMATION ON TRAUMA AND RESILIENCE

### Brain development and resilient children

Understanding brain development can help caregivers support, teach and raise healthy children. A child's brain utilizes both genes and experiences as it develops. Caregivers do not have control over a child's genes but they can help children develop healthy brains through the interactions they have with them.

### Brains are built over time, from the bottom up

The basic structure of the brain begins to develop before birth and continues into adulthood. The lower function regions of the brain that govern bodily functions develop first. Higher function regions, such as regions that regulate emotion, learn language and have the capacity for abstract thought, develop later in life.

**A child's brain develops by forming neural connections. In the first few years of life, a child's brain will develop a million new neural connection every second.**

After this period of rapid development, the brain begins to trim back pathways it rarely uses. The pathways a brain uses most become strengthened, while unnecessary pathways die off.

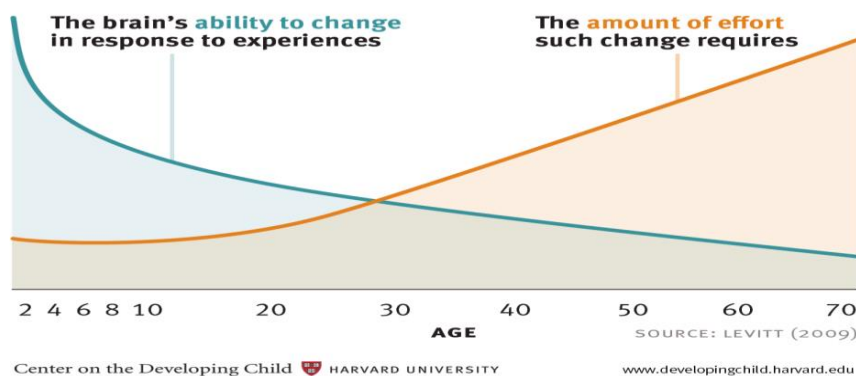


Neural Pruning

This is where things can get off track for children who do not receive healthy support from caregivers. If a child is not exposed to a needed skill – such as language or self-regulation – an important neural pathway can become trimmed, causing a setback in the child's development. On the flipside, a child who receives proper support from caregivers will strengthen necessary neural pathways.

But it's not all without hope for children who miss connections. Our brains retain their "plasticity" even into adulthood. Plasticity is the term used to describe our brains' ability to learn new skills and adapt to new situations. The brain is most "plastic" when we are children.

The older we grow, the more difficult it is for us to change our behavior or learn new skills. This is why giving children proper support is so important – it's easiest to make these connections as children. However, plasticity allows both children and adults the ability to make up for neural connections missed due to adverse experiences. It becomes more difficult to develop these neural pathways as adults, but it is not impossible.



## WAYS TO BUILD RESILIENCE

You can help retrain your brain's plasticity by learning new skills!

Learning an instrument or a new language can help your brain develop new neural connections. **If you don't have time to take on a task that large, even little thing like going for a walk on an unusual route or brushing your teeth with your non-dominant hand can help maintain plasticity.**

Another easy way to help retain your brain's plasticity is to simply get enough



## LOCAL USEFUL RESOURCE:



Head Start helps children under the age of five develop social skills, motor skills and cognitive skills. Head Start is federally funded and available to low-income and moderate-income families. **This comprehensive child development program promotes school readiness by enhancing the social and cognitive development of children through the provision of educational, health, nutritional, social and other related services.** The program also offers services for the entire family through trained parent

advocates. These advocates help parents and caregivers access resources in the community. In addition to the great services children and families receive through the program, the school time offers caregivers a much needed break to catch up on tasks or just practice a little self-care.

Locally, both Ketchikan and Saxman have Head Start programs. The Ketchikan RuralCAP Center can be reached at 225-7499. Tlingit & Haida Head Start can be reached at 225-8728.

You can learn more about the program [here](#).

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