

# THE IMPACT OF THE FIRST 2000 DAYS OF A CHILD'S LIFE



Health  
Illawarra Shoalhaven  
Local Health District

## Love

### CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

Children flourish when they are given opportunities to learn through play.

Fostering resilience can help to overcome negative childhood experiences.

Exposure to toxic stress during the first 2000 days can disrupt development and increase the risk of poor lifelong health.

Attending a high-quality education centre in early childhood sets children up to do well at school. This is also a time when mental health concerns start to arise and are best addressed.

22 months is an accurate predictor for a child's educational outcomes at 26 years.

## Talk

C

## Read

## Play

## Sing

From conception to the time they start school has a lifelong effect

B

### BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

Children need secure relationships with sensitive and reliable caregivers.

Developmental checks and immunisations ensure that children are healthy and growing well.

The foundation of the developing brain is built by positive interactions.



# 90%

of a child's brain development happens before age 5

A

### ANTENATAL

From conception, a mother's health and the lifestyle of the family, has an impact on a child's health, development, and well being for life.

Every week of pregnancy counts. In the last five weeks of pregnancy, the brain grows a third of its weight.

Illawarra  
**Rotary**  
Clubs



Corrimal, Dapto  
Fairy Meadow, Kiama

# Investing in the first 2000 days of a child's life is one of the best investments a community can make for the future!

## WHY IS THE FIRST 2000 DAYS SO IMPORTANT?

The first 2000 days helps to shape a child's future. Let's make them count!

90% of brain development happens before age 5

Growing brains change and respond to experiences and the surrounding environment

Gain an understanding of the importance of the first 2000 days through the new ABC - **Antenatal period (conception to birth)**, **Brain development** and **Childhood experiences**.

### ANTENATAL

# A

During pregnancy, a baby's health is being "set" for the rest of their life. The physical health of a mother and the lifestyle of a family impacts on the future health and development of a child.

### BRAIN DEVELOPMENT

# B

During the first 2000 days a child's brain grows rapidly and is shaped by their experiences, particularly the interactions they have with their parents and other caregivers. What happens during this time has a lasting impact on development. Stressful events and experiences have been shown to influence future outcomes.

### CHILDHOOD EXPERIENCES

# C

Children need at least one sensitive, nurturing caregiver who can respond to their needs. Exposure to toxic stress such as domestic and family violence, untreated parental mental illness, substance misuse, financial and housing issues can have a negative effect. The greater the number of stressors, the greater the risk to development.

**Tackling adversity + supporting early relationships + healthy brains = better futures. As a community, there is a lot we can do!**

### HEALTHY SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT DURING THE FIRST 2000 DAYS:

- lays the foundations for lifelong health and wellbeing
- provides a safe and secure environment which enables children to play, explore and learn
- creates the bricks that build the foundation for all future development through positive interactions by talking, singing, playing and reading together
- helps children to better understand and manage their emotions and behaviours
- builds resilience
- gives children the skills to form trusting relationships
- supports children to become a nurturing parent, sowing the seeds for the next generation

Find out more  
[daptorotary.com.au](http://daptorotary.com.au)

