



## True or false?

- a) Brain development does not begin until after birth.
- b) A child cannot see at birth.
- c) A child does not learn much in the first three years after birth.
- d) Parents should start talking and playing with a child only when s/he is able to talk back.
- e) At six months of pregnancy, an unborn child can sense light and recognize the mother's voice when in the womb.

# Did you know?

- At birth, the brain has around **100 billion neurons**.
- In the first few years after birth, the brain creates **more than 1 million connections** (called synapses) between these neurons **every second**.
- The human **brain doubles in size during the first year** and reaches 85% of the size of the adult brain by three years of age; creating connections between neurons that control emotions, movements, communication and more.

# Why nurturing care for ECD?

Globally, **250 million children** <5 years fail to reach developmental potential ( ECD lancet series 2016)

- **43%** of all children globally and **66%** of children in sub-Saharan Africa
- In contrast, 5.9 million children <5 die of disease and poor health
- Implication: while more children are **surviving** due to improved access to healthcare, many of those who survive **are not thriving**. As a result, there is 20% loss in adult productivity.



# Why nurturing care for ECD....

- The period from conception through the first 3 years of life is a time of very rapid development for the brain and other biological systems.
- Evidence shows that a child's earliest experiences, in the womb and in the first years of life, affect how genes are expressed and how brain connections are built.
- The quality of a child's environment, the nurturing, and the responsiveness of adults is vitally important for shaping brain architecture. meaning you and other loved ones play a critical role to help children thrive. (nurture shapes nature)

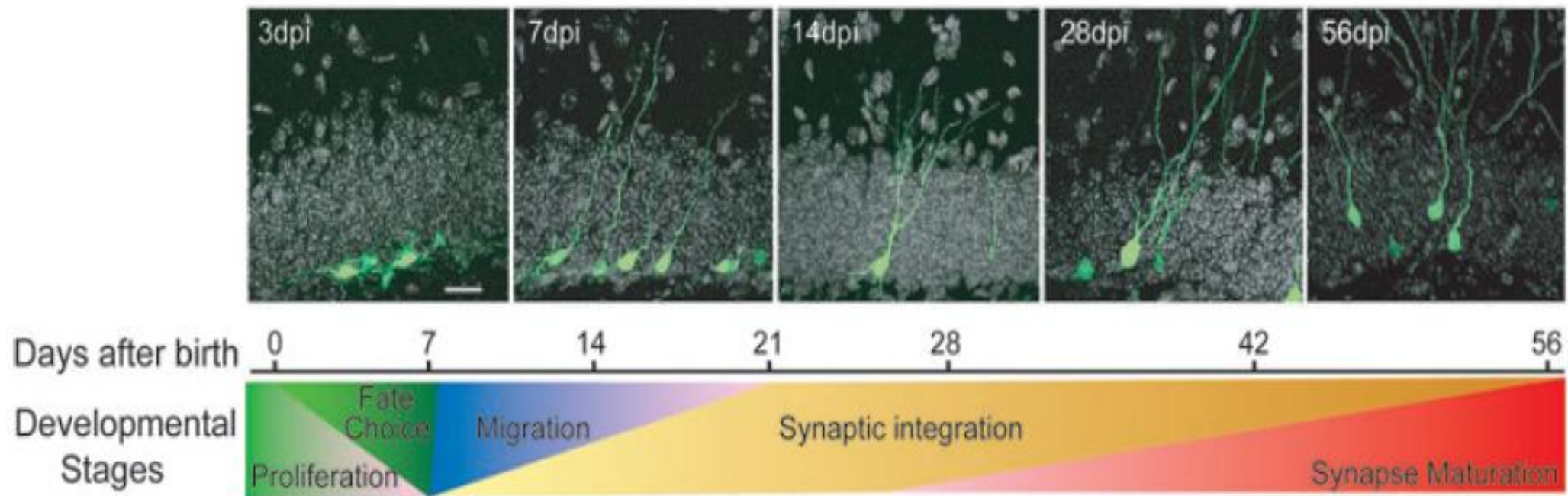


# Why nurturing care for ECD....

- Brain development begins a few weeks after conception and skyrockets through pregnancy and in child's early years.
- By the time a baby is born, their brain has around 100 billion neurons, all they will ever need. and in the 1st few years of life, their brain creates more than 1 million connections ( called synapses) between these neurons every second.
- Baby's brain doubles in size during the first year (85% by age 3) creating more connections between neurons that control emotions, movements, communication and more.



# Neurogenesis and synaptogenesis occur throughout development (intense during first 56 days)



Mikati, Mohamad. 2010. Presentation at the *International Congress of the IPA*. Johannesburg, SA.

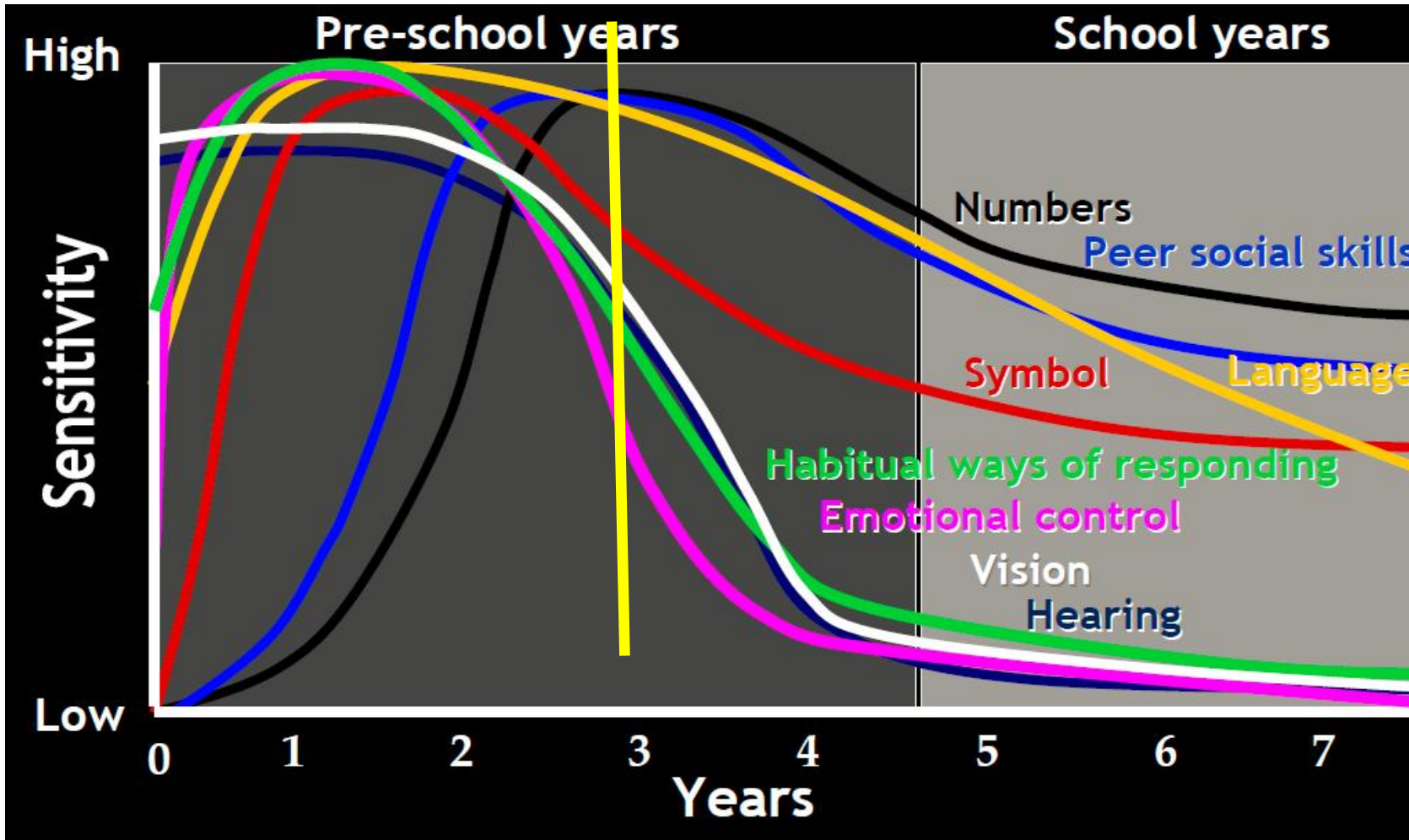
# Every child....

- What happens during the early years is of crucial importance for every child's development. It is a period of great opportunity, but also of vulnerability to negative influences.
- Good nutrition and health, consistent loving care and encouragement to learn in the early years of life help children to do better at school, be healthier, have higher earnings and participate more in society.
- A good foundation in the early years makes a difference through adulthood and even gives the next generation a better start.
- Caregivers and families can be supported to support their children's growth and development through daily activities and positive caregiver child interactions.





# In Summary



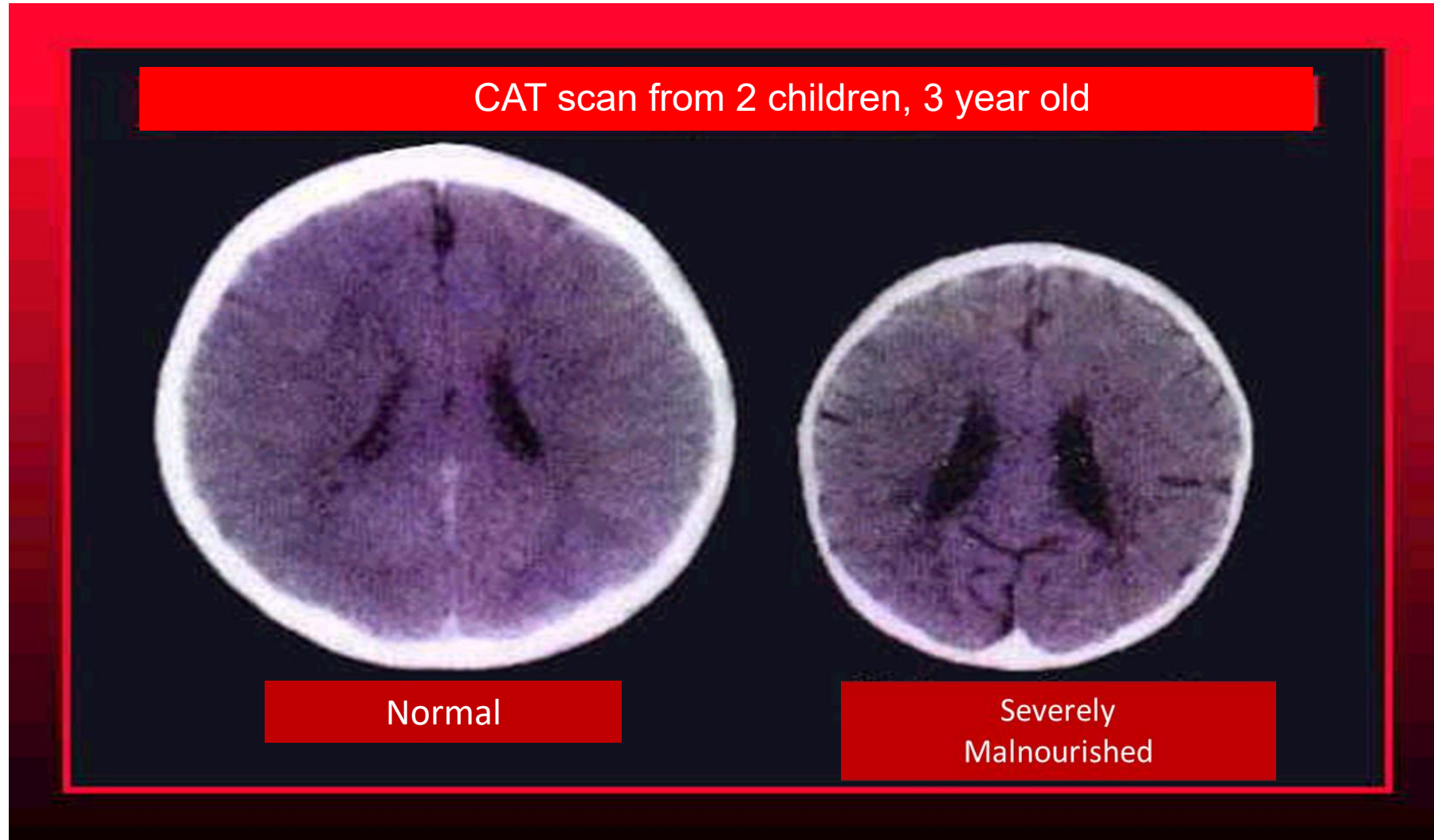
Brain develops most rapidly during 0-3 years, and failure to reach age-appropriate developmental milestones is often **irreversible in later life**

# There are multiple risk factors for poor development

**Intermediate causes** include; Inadequate maternal nutrition, Sub Optimal breastfeeding, malnutrition, low birth weight and premature birth, HIV exposure, frequent illnesses, maternal depression, Neglect, maltreatment, violence at home



**“It is easier to build strong children than to repair broken men and women” (Douglass F)**



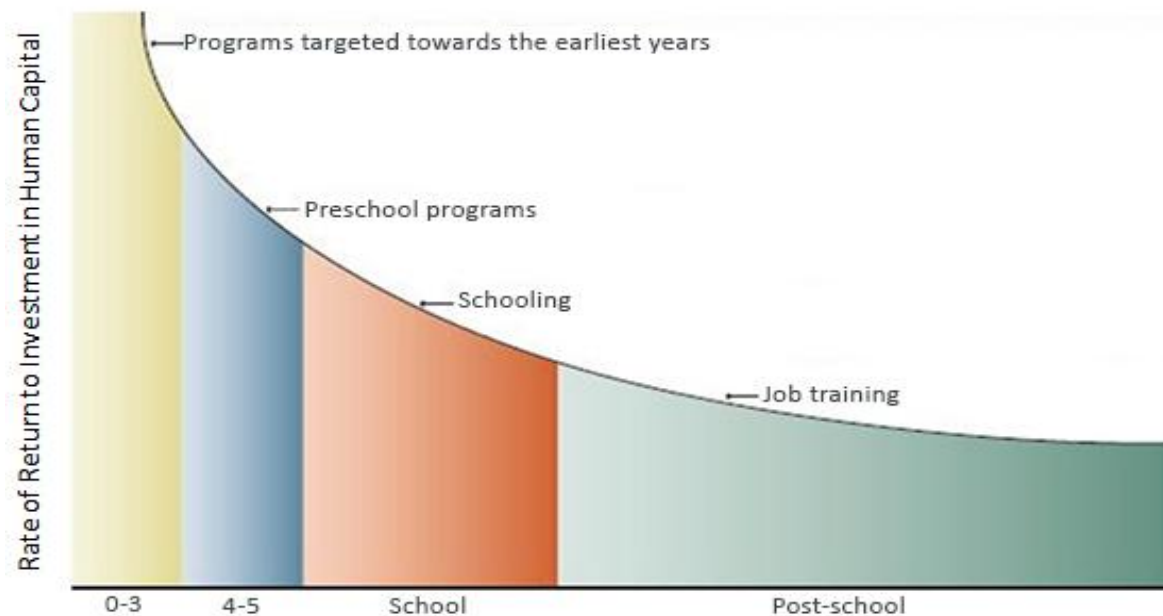
# Every child....

- **Watch and listen to children and follow their lead** (whether the baby is smiling or restless ask yourself what they are telling me?) Be aware and sensitive to how children may be feeling and what they need so you respond appropriately and build trust.
- **Make the most of everyday activities and experiences-** feeding, dressing, bathing, going for a walk are wonderful opportunities for interaction that nurture and stimulate the brain. Take advantage of everyday activities to talk and play with children.
- **Provide opportunities for children to explore the world using their senses-** Children are learning when they manipulate everyday materials. An old pot and wooden spoon allow children to explore sound. Talk about what children see and ask them to express their ideas to stimulate the senses and support early brain development.



# Economics of ECD

- Investment in ECD is good for everyone - Governments, business, community, parents and caregivers.
- Investing in ECD is the right thing to do, helping every child realize the right to survive and thrive and reach their full developmental potential.
- Investing in ECD is cost effective. For every \$ 1 spent on ECD interventions the returns on investment can be as high as \$13



ECD interventions in the early years provide higher return on investment

# Benefits of Investing in ECD

- Higher intelligence scores.
- Higher and timelier school enrolment.
- Less grade repetition and lower dropout rates.
- Higher school completion rates.
- Improved nutrition and health status.
- Improved social and emotional behaviour.
- Improved parent- child relationship.
- Increased earning potential and economic self sufficiency as an adult.
- Increased female labour force participation.

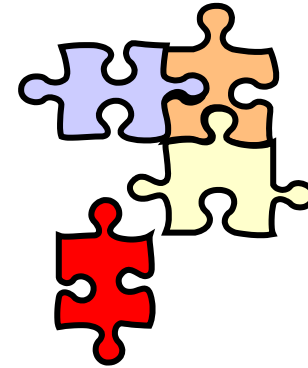
# Nurturing Care for ECD

- The Nurturing Care Framework was conceptualized by WHO, UNICEF, World Bank, and PATH and launched at the World Health Assembly in May 2018.
- Nurturing Care refers to conditions needed for young children to survive and thrive.
- The Nurturing Care Framework for the first time, gives **attention to responsive care and opportunities for early learning**.
- The Nurturing Care Framework calls for integrated programming for ECD, **asking health systems to expand their scope** to ensure that children thrive in addition to survive.



**“All Children are born to grow, to develop, to learn, to live ,to love, and to articulate their needs and feelings.”**

- Alice Miller





# Thank you!



**PATH**

