

---

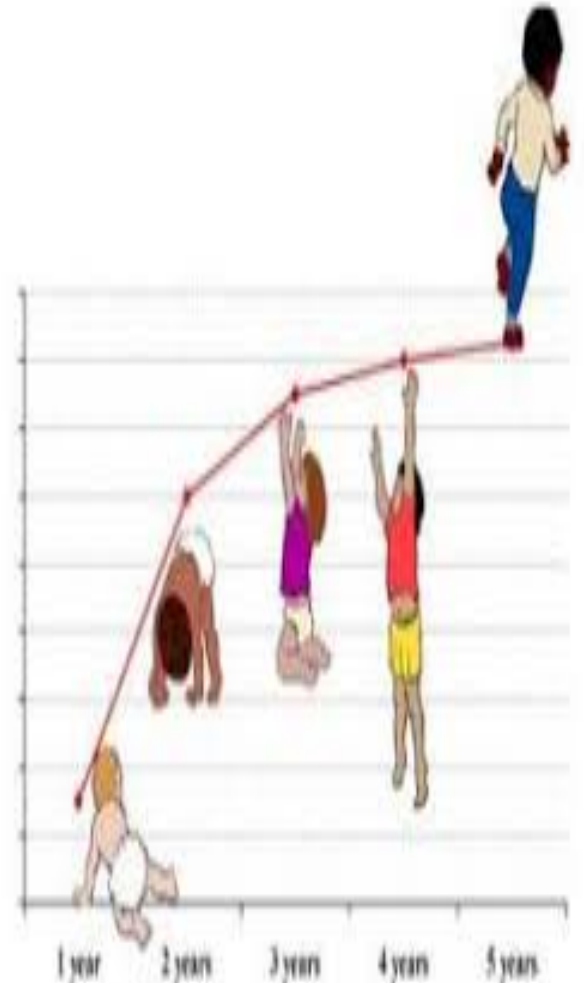
# Five To Thrive- A Formula For Healthy Brain Development



Christina Enright  
Child & Family Psychotherapist  
Specialist in Trauma and Attachment

# Five To Thrive

- Developed by Kate Cairns- drawn from current neuroscience & attachment theory
- Five vital parental functions: Respond, Cuddle/Engage, Relax, Play, Talk - Sequence of brain and body activity every time parents and children are meaningfully connected
- Happens in the blink of an eye- each component equally important for brain connection and mental structure & coherence
- Provides a structure for thinking about developmental stages in children, as well as interventions for attachment and relationship disruptions between adults and children
- Grounds theory in practice -accessible for all responsible for the wellbeing of children and who support the development of positive parenting.
- Promotes a shared language between professionals, and parents and professionals
- Supported by a range of creative materials



# People Need People

- The more individualistic we become, the more anxious and depressed we become?
- Relationships build brains and minds
- **Relationships come to regulate us as “biochemical processes become entrained with social interactions” (Cozolino, 2014)**
- Relationships heal troubled brains
- We are only as resilient as the people we are connected to
- Community resilience models support good mental health for all
- This knowledge changes lives

# Respond

- Noticing every social interaction as an opportunity/ noticing impact
- Respond and attune to cues of initiation
- Respond and attune to anxiety, distress, anger, regulate shame
- In the course of everyday caregiving- feeding, bathing, nappy changes
- In the classroom
- Children's homes
- On the sports field
- Youth clubs

# Cuddle/Engage

- Copious evidence on preterm infants
- Romanian orphanages- failure to thrive
- Touch is communication- processed via the right hemisphere- online pre-birth
- Touch in infants crucial for state regulation and integration, weight gain, growth and development of a sense of self
- Oxytocin and dopamine linked to bonding and reward as well as emotional regulation
- Mothers/fathers may be touch averse due to conditions such as ASD or from a lack of touch in their own infancy
- Practitioners support parents to seek opportunities for touch and engagement

# Relax

- The development of emotional regulation capacity begins pre-birth
- Separation is highly arousing for infants
- Emotional regulation connected with the development of biological/physical regulation
- Training of the stress response system- HPA axis and amygdala
- Synchronization of maternal and infant states through co-regulation of arousal, both positive and negative
- Development of reflective function

# Play

- Face to face interaction and playful engagement- infants emotional engagement system
- Face to face transmits emotional information- right brain of mother to right brain of infant
- Parents need to process affective sensory information to respond appropriately
- Facial feedback through mirroring and imitation-Infant learns how to understand own internal emotional states and read those of others- crucial for development of empathy

# Talk

- Language development begins pre-birth
- Dependent on exposure to a language model **but** more importantly social engagement
- Face to face proto-conversations and infant directed speech- the foundations of, development of focus, eye contact, turn-taking/social skills and language acquisition
- Infants who are spoken to more often speak earlier, have a much richer vocabulary
- Practitioners can support parents to talk with their babies and children in a myriad of ways.





Contacts: [christinamenright@gmail.com](mailto:christinamenright@gmail.com)

Kate Cairns-[www.kca.training](http://www.kca.training)