

Emerging Minds.

National Workforce Centre for Child Mental Health



Understanding brain development **online course**

Brains aren't just born; they're built over time. Nurturing and responsive relationships and safe environments are key to developing thriving brains.

About this course

This course was developed by Emerging Minds in partnership with the **Australian Research Alliance for Children and Youth (ARACY)** and the **Thriving Queensland Kids Partnership (TQKP)**, and in collaboration with **The University of Queensland's Queensland Brain Institute (QBI)**. TQKP received philanthropic funding from the Paul Ramsay Foundation, the John Villiers Trust, Hand Heart Pocket, the Bryan Foundation, and the Tim Fairfax Family Foundation.

The experiences we have and the environments we live in directly shape our brains. Understanding how brains are built can help you to make a positive difference in the lives of children and families.

Just as a house needs a sturdy foundation, a brain needs a good base to support all future development. This course will introduce you to the interactions, relationships and environments that lay the foundation for healthy brain development. It will provide you with an increased awareness, knowledge and understanding of foundational concepts of neuroscience, including how positive development in the early years sets us up for a lifetime of learning, health and wellbeing.

This course explores neuroplasticity, the impacts of stress and trauma on brain development, and the important role of 'serve and return' interactions and executive functioning in supporting a child's wellbeing. It also includes information on strategic framing, best practice and 'what works examples' to improve children's mental health, development and wellbeing in your work context.

Why was this course developed?

Children's brains are built through interactions with people, communities, systems and environments. And if thriving and healthy brains are built through relationships, then we all have a significant role to play in children's development.

Put simply, we are all brain builders, and we have a responsibility to ensure that children are provided with opportunities that allow their brains to develop and thrive.

No matter the kind of service you work in, the learnings in this course will help you to support infants, children, adolescents and families to build resources for lifelong wellbeing.

How was this course developed?

This course draws on the latest research, clinical insights from academics and health and social service professionals, and the lived experience of child and family partners (parents).

Who is this course for?

This course is for anyone who interacts with children and families during their day-to-day service delivery. It will benefit practitioners across multiple sectors and systems including health, social and community services, justice, housing, and education. It will also be useful for professionals involved in management and leadership, policy making, strategic planning, quality improvement, and systems change.

The course is suitable for people with no prior understanding of neuroscience, along with those looking to increase their knowledge of the research and best practice.

What is included in the course?

This course features reading materials, reflective activities, and video interviews with researchers, practitioners and parents.

This resource was co-produced with:



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