

# GroBrain

Supporting you with 'tuning' into your baby's cues, cries and providing comfort, using smiles, cuddles and eye contact

## Introduction to Gro Brain

Welcome to Gro Brain. The following information is primarily aimed at parents who are accessing or have previously accessed the six week Baby Massage course which is delivered by trained Certified Infant Massage Instructors at the Children's Centres.

The Baby Massage course promotes positive nurturing touch, communication with your baby and tuning in and responding to baby's cues to enhance the bonding and attachment process.

Gro Brain gives a simplified explanation of your baby's brain development and how you as a parent support this with your interactions such as baby massage.

If you have a baby aged between six weeks and ten months old and have not attended a Baby Massage course, perhaps you would like to consider booking a place when the Children's Centres are able to offer the course again.

## 1. Your Baby's Brain

There are three parts to the human brain- a Primitive Brain, an Emotional Brain and a Thinking Brain.

Each part has its own special job and is linked to the other parts of the brain by a massive network of connections.

### Primitive Brain:

We humans share our primitive brain with creatures like lizards (see brain diagram).

Its main job is to keep us ALIVE (breathing and heartbeat). It also keeps us SAFE, if it senses we're in danger, it puts our bodies on high alert so we can fight back or run away ('fight or flight' response).

This part of the baby's brain is working well from birth.

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## Emotional Brain:

The Emotional Brain triggers strong feelings like fear, sadness, anger and joy. (see the brain diagram- feelings shown in the circles).

Babies experience these feelings from birth but cannot manage them on their own as their brain isn't developed enough to cope. This is where you, as a parent, come in!

## Thinking Brain:

This is the largest part of the brain and the last to mature for a baby. It helps us think through and control the emotions in our emotional brain (see the diagram with the 'wise owl' in the thinking brain).

Unlike adults, a baby's Thinking Brain is not developed enough to control their emotions or behaviour. When your baby cries, they are not being naughty or 'winding us up', they are simply overwhelmed by their feelings and can't calm down without help.

Babies are born with around 100 billion brain cells, but there are few connections, especially between the Thinking and Emotional Brains.

