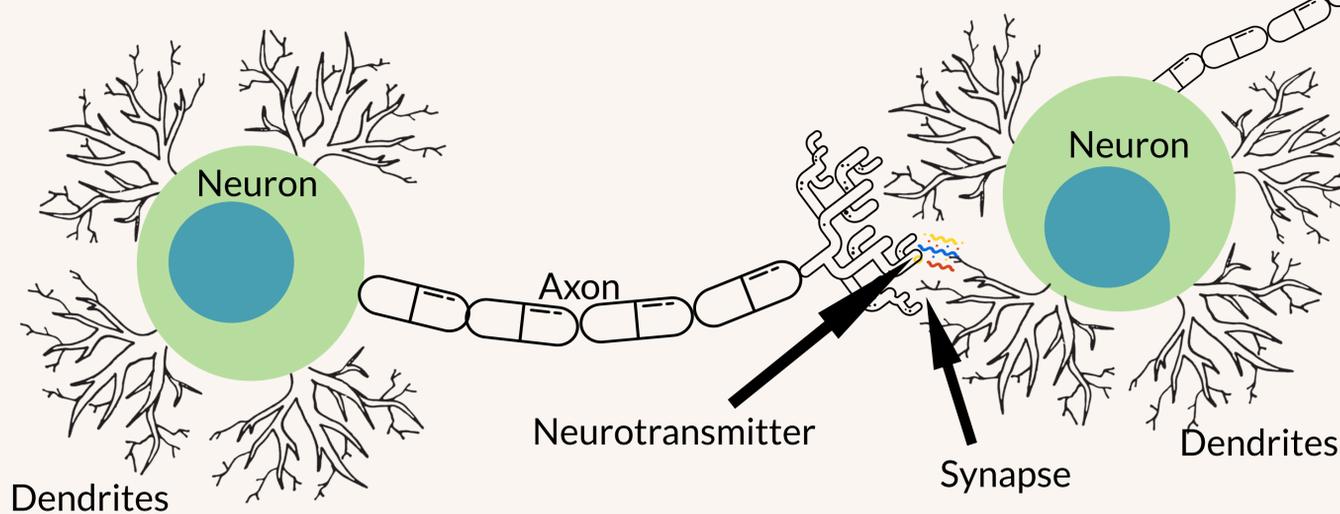


# How BRAINS Grow

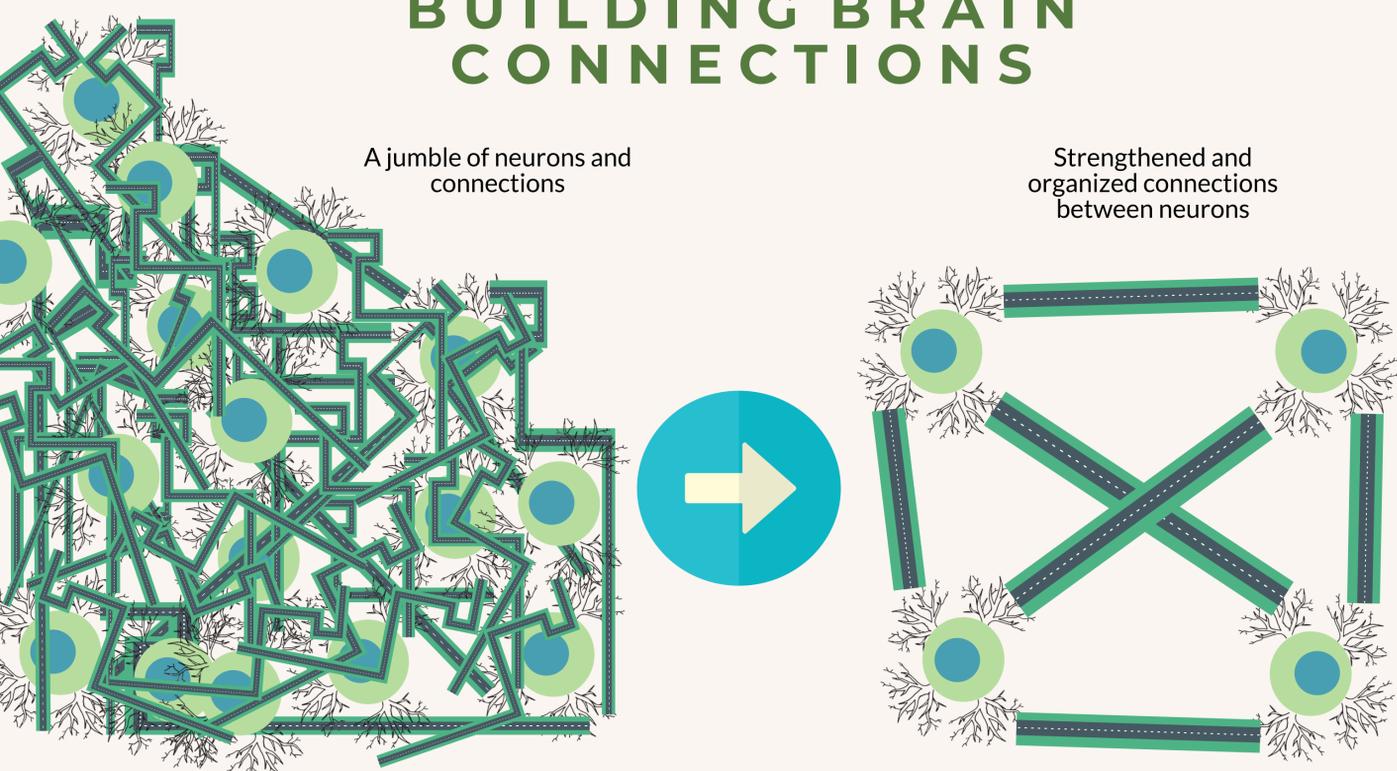


## BRAIN BUILDING BLOCKS

Neurons are the basic building blocks of the brain. They "talk" to each other by sending signals down their axons. When the signal gets to the end of the axons neurotransmitters are released into the synapse (the space in between neurons). The dendrites of the next neuron pick up the neurotransmitters from the synapse and send the message down the line.



## BUILDING BRAIN CONNECTIONS



**Repetition and exposure to experiences, along with pruning of unnecessary information, are the way we build brains.**

Our brains start out with millions of neurons that are not necessarily well organized. Interactions and experiences give neurons practice in making connections based on repetition. Our brains also like efficiency. So if neurons make a connection once, but then never need that connection again, our brains will end up pruning, or getting rid of, this unused neuronal connection.

## NURTURING BRAINS

Start with your child's interest. Children's brains develop through relationships and interactions with the world around them. One of the best ways to encourage this brain growth is by paying attention to what children are interested in and nurturing this interest.



### Labeling and naming

Notice where your child's attention is, and provide a name or label for their interest.



### Asking questions

Encourage your child to expand on their interests by asking them questions to prompt them to think differently, or more deeply, about what they are doing or interested in already.



### Encouraging turn taking

One of the ways caregivers can help wire children's brains is to encourage turn taking behavior that is based on responding to children's bids for interaction.