



SEO CONFERENCE 2014

IMPORTANCE OF EARLY EDUCATION

Brain-Based Research

Old Thinking

How the brain develops depends primarily on the genes you were born with

The experiences you have before the age of three have a limited impact on later development

A secure relationship with a primary caregiver creates a favorable context for early development and learning

Brain development is linear: the brain's capacity to learn and change grows steadily through childhood

A toddler's brain is much less active than the brain of a college student

New Thinking

How the brain develops depends on a complex interplay between your genes and the experiences you have

Early experiences have a major impact on the architecture of the brain and on the nature and extent of adult capabilities

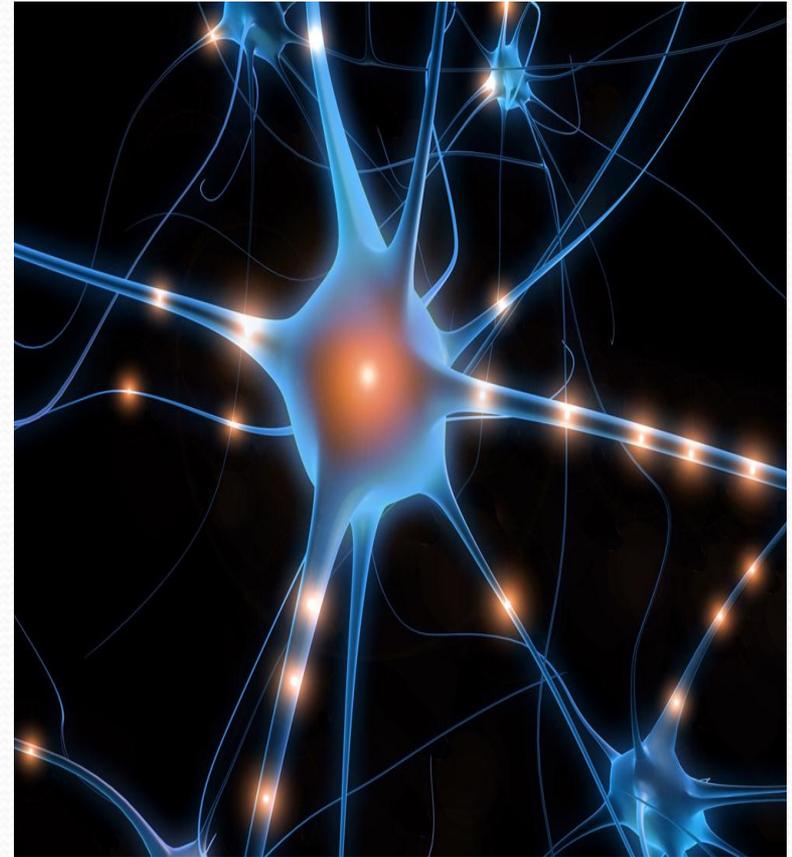
Early interactions don't just create a context, they directly affect the way the brain is wired

Brain development is non-linear: there are prime times for acquiring different kinds of knowledge and skills

By the time children reach three, their brains are twice as active as those of adults

Brain Connections

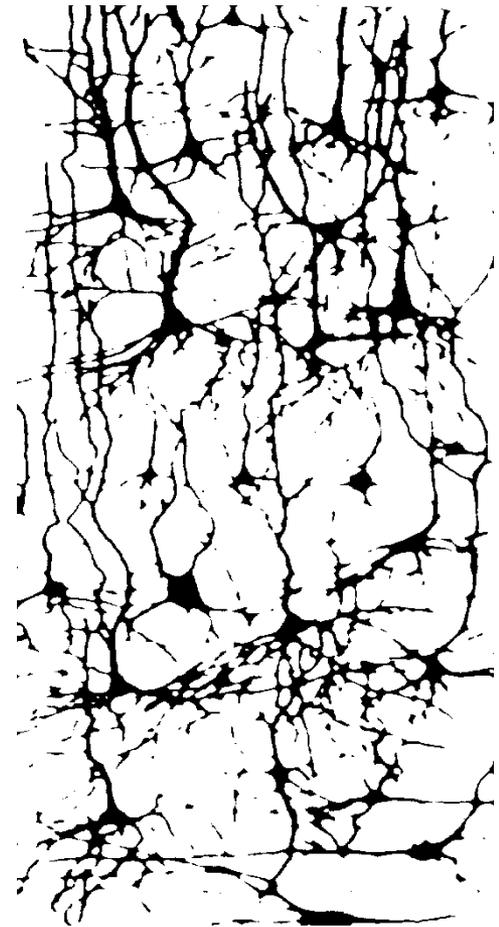
- 15,000 synaptic connections for each cell
- Signals sent to other cells at speeds of more than 200 mph.
- Connections (synapses) grow and change as a result of stimulation from the environment



Human
Brain
at Birth

6 Years
Old

14 Years
Old



Brain Development

Making Connections

- Between ages of 3 to 10, the brain continues to make and break connections
- After age 10 the pruning process picks up dramatically and by late adolescence just half of the connections (500 trillion) remain
- This process is called sculpting or refining



'Sensitive periods' in early brain development

Vision

Hearing

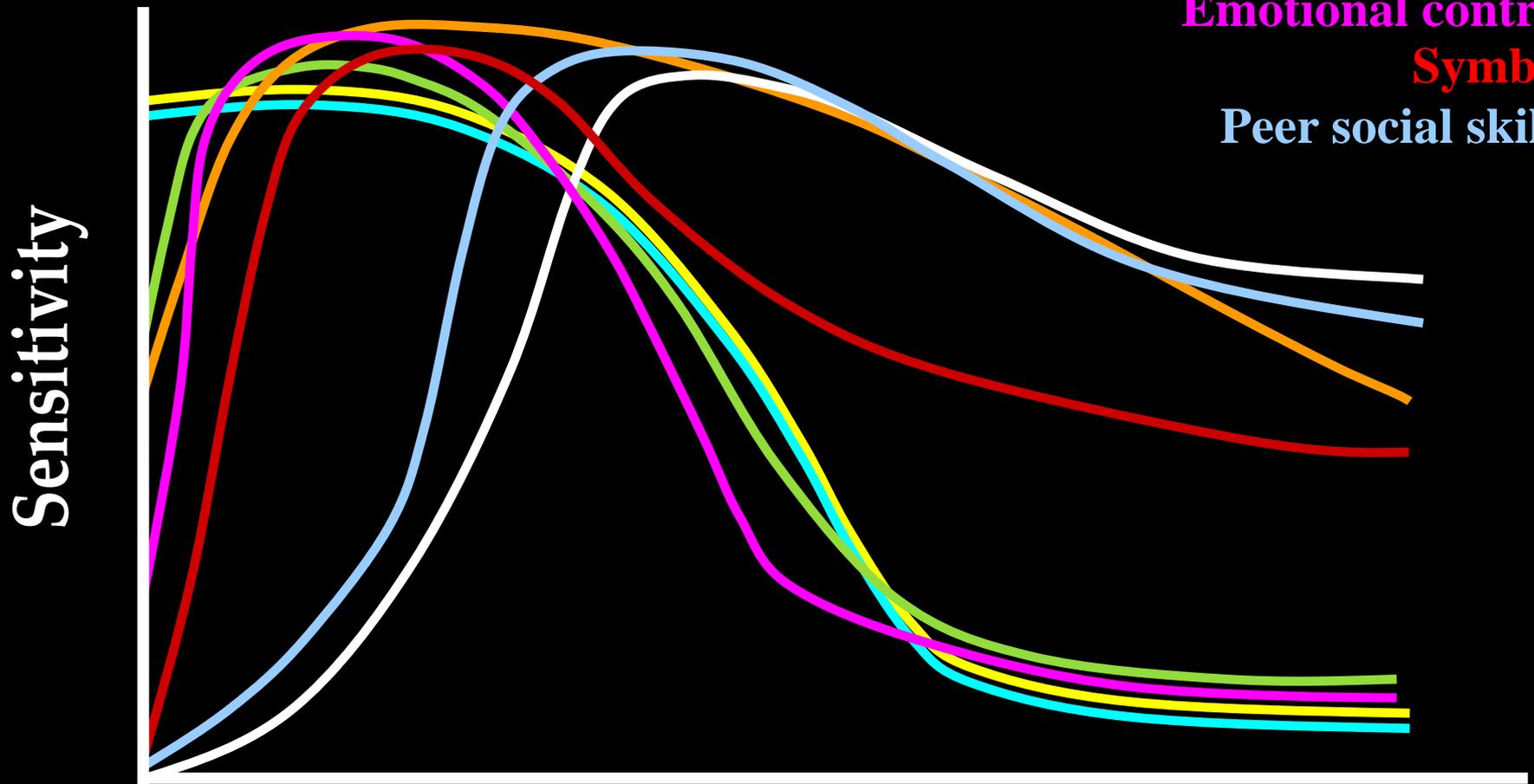
Habitual ways of responding

Language

Emotional control

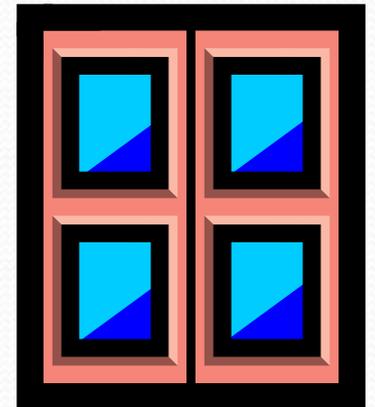
Symbol

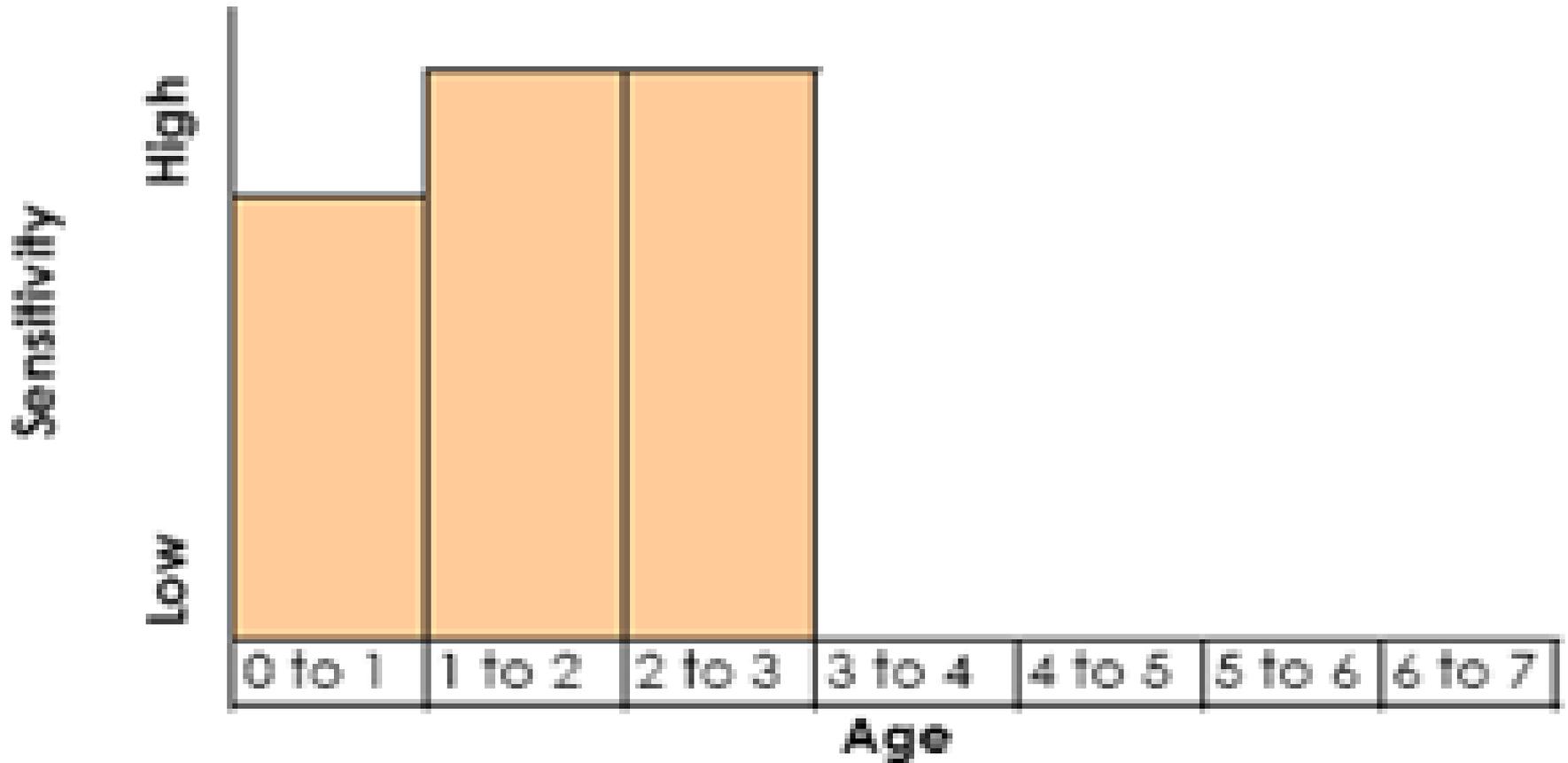
Peer social skills



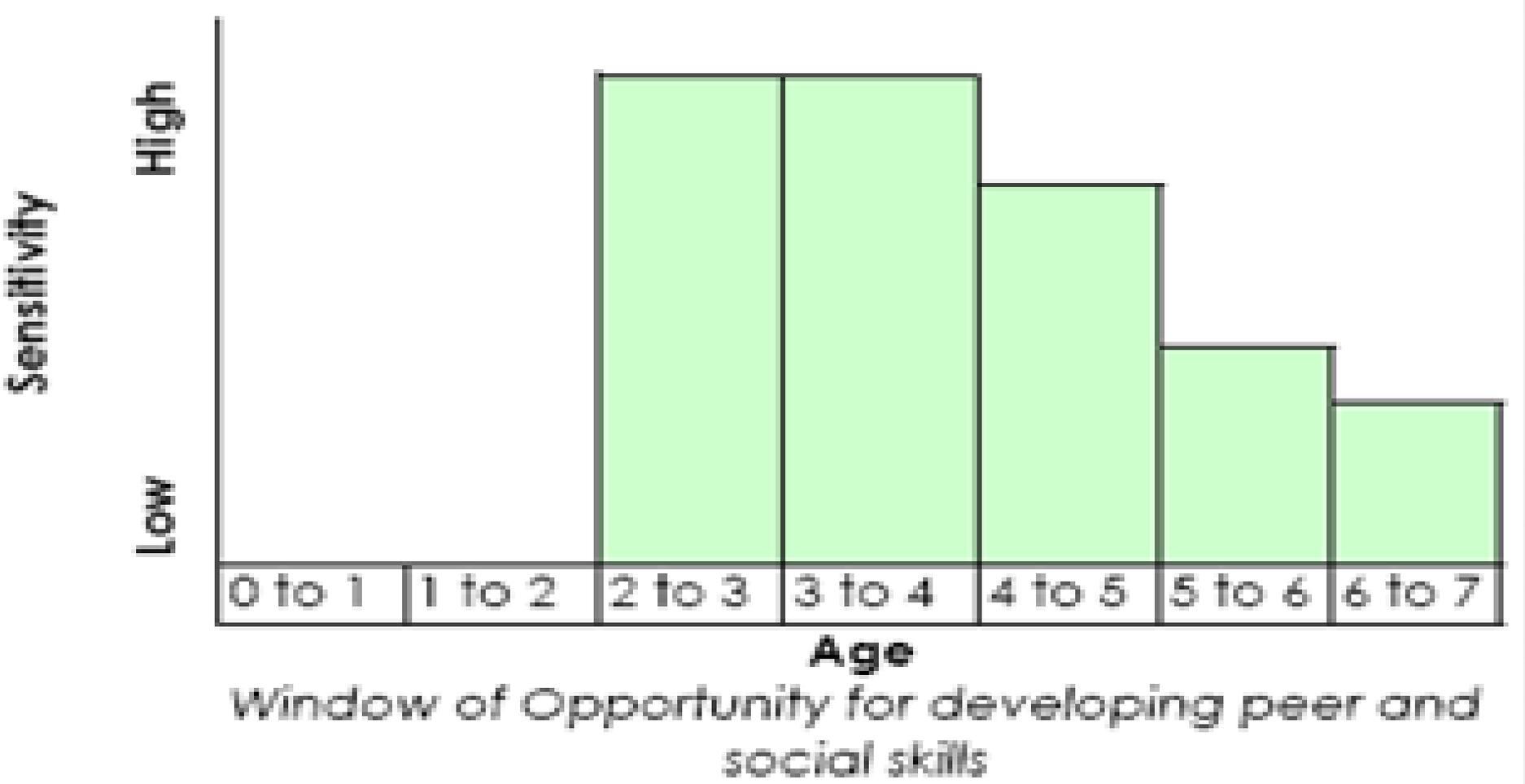
“Windows” of Learning

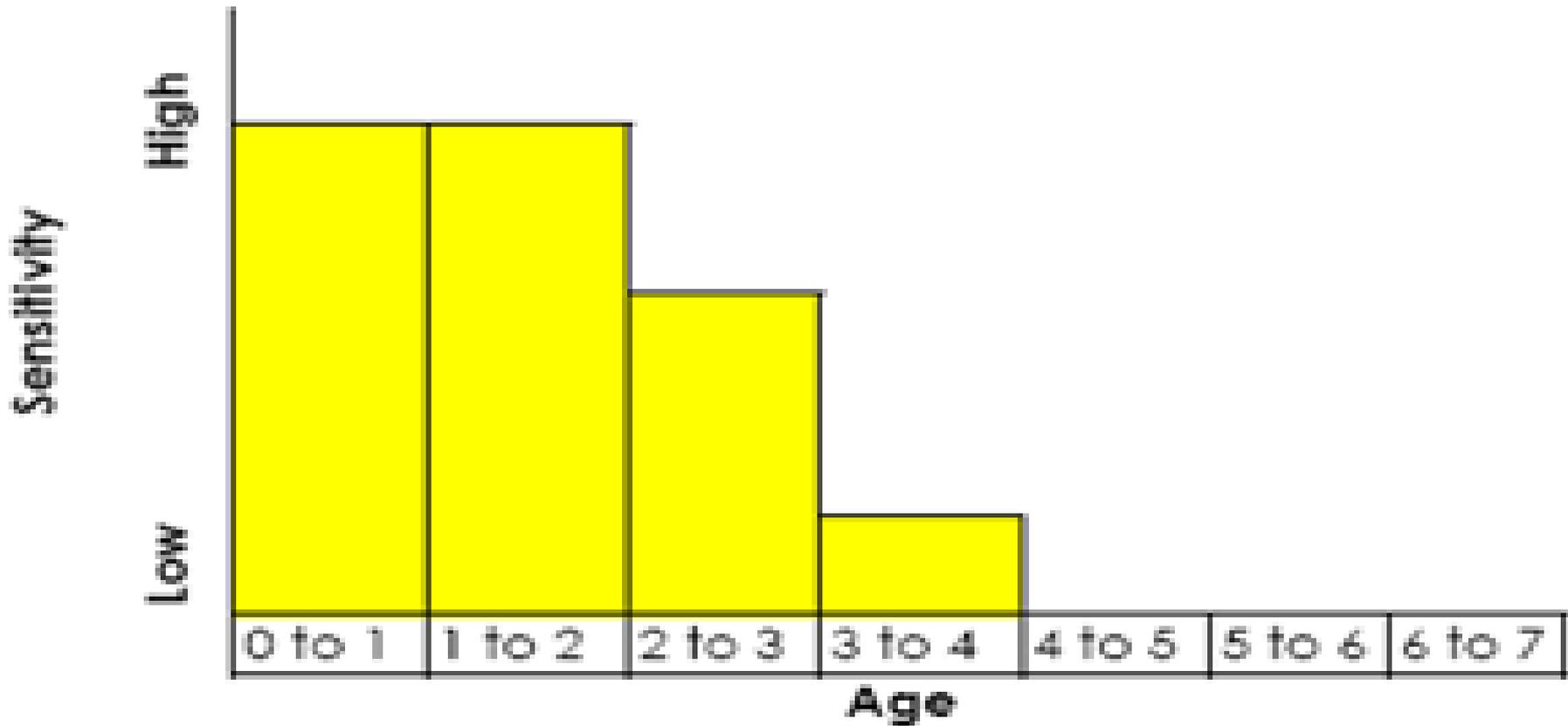
- Periods when particular experiences are especially important or when some skills are more easily developed.
- Some windows cannot be missed...
if so, opportunity to learn can be greatly diminished.



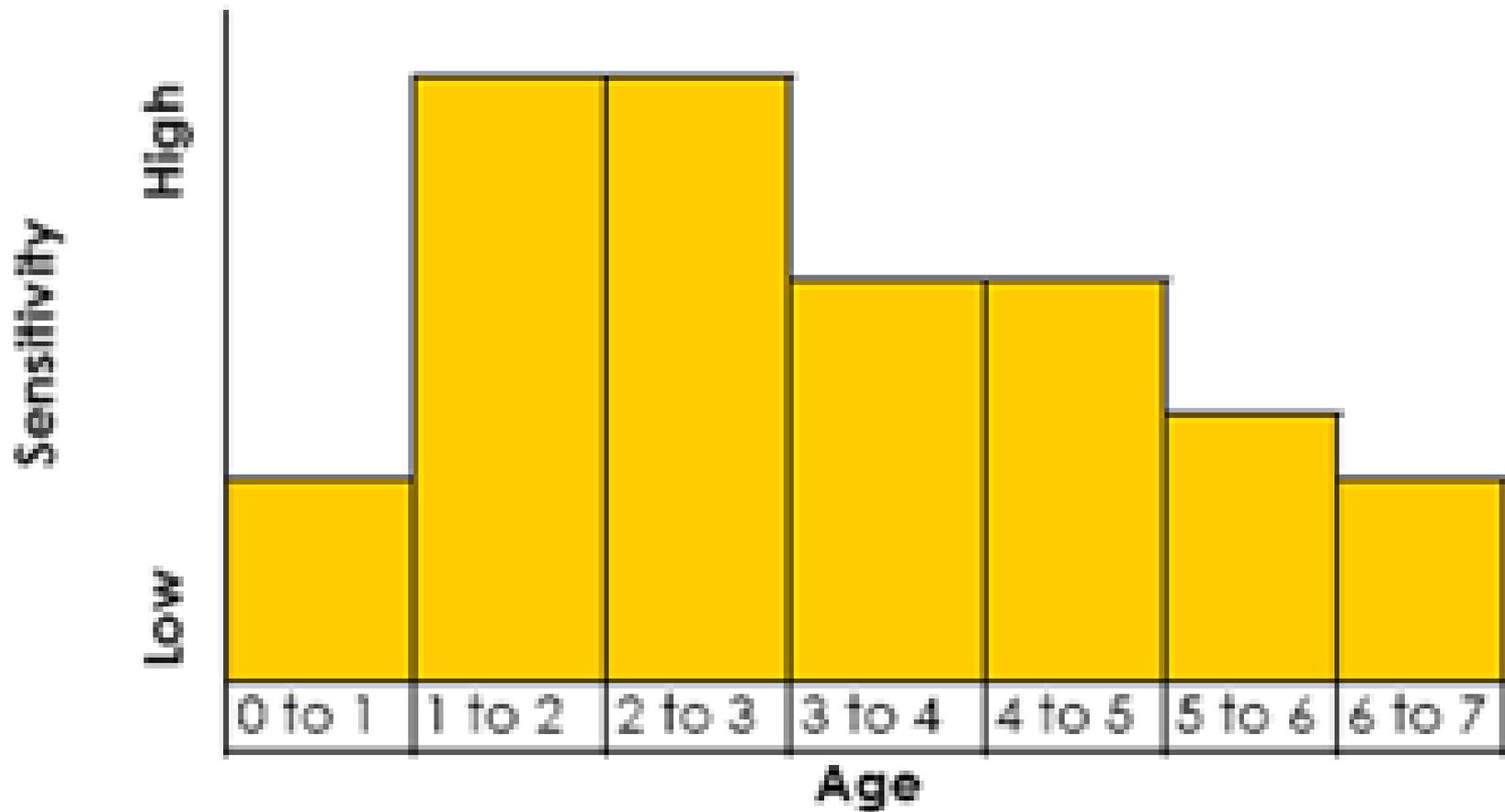


Window of Opportunity for developing emotional control





Window of Opportunity for developing vision



Window of Opportunity for developing language skills

Threats to Early Years Development

- Poverty
- Nutrition
 - Chronic under nutrition
 - Micronutrient deficiencies
- Lack of care and education
- Lack of social protection

Community Support

- From various field visits, there is significant lack of community support to fund teachers' salaries, erect learning centers, etc.
- Fees are too high and even where provision of aid in kind is proposed, parents fail to meet this
- Communities depend heavily on the government
- Parents and community leaders do not send children to kindy for the first two years of learning prior to Year 1.
- Evidently, there is need for more Community awareness.

Community Support

- Provincial ECCE Coordinators and WV Community Coordinators do not visit Kindys regularly.
- Communities do not assist the school to establish play grounds
- Too many over aged Children in kindy – school age policy
- Evidently, this shows how much we care or do not care about Early Childhood Education

Toxic stress

- Children can handle, even benefit, from mild stress.
- Toxic stress (institutionalization, maltreatment, neglect, trauma) during the early years has long-lasting adverse effects on development.
- Toxic stress hinders development

Life Course Development

- Exposure to risks sets children on a lower developmental path.
- Long-term effects on schooling and income contribute to continued inequalities in the next generation.
- Inequalities can be reduced with intervention in the early years

Facts

- Pre-school reduces grade repetition
- Pre-school increases literacy rates
- Children who attend pre-school are most likely to enroll at school and stay there

“The Pacific region indicators available suggest that the efficiency of Vanuatu’s primary sector in terms of Net Enrolment Ratios and Survival Rates to the last primary grade is at the lower end of regional norms.”
(PER, 2012 p.

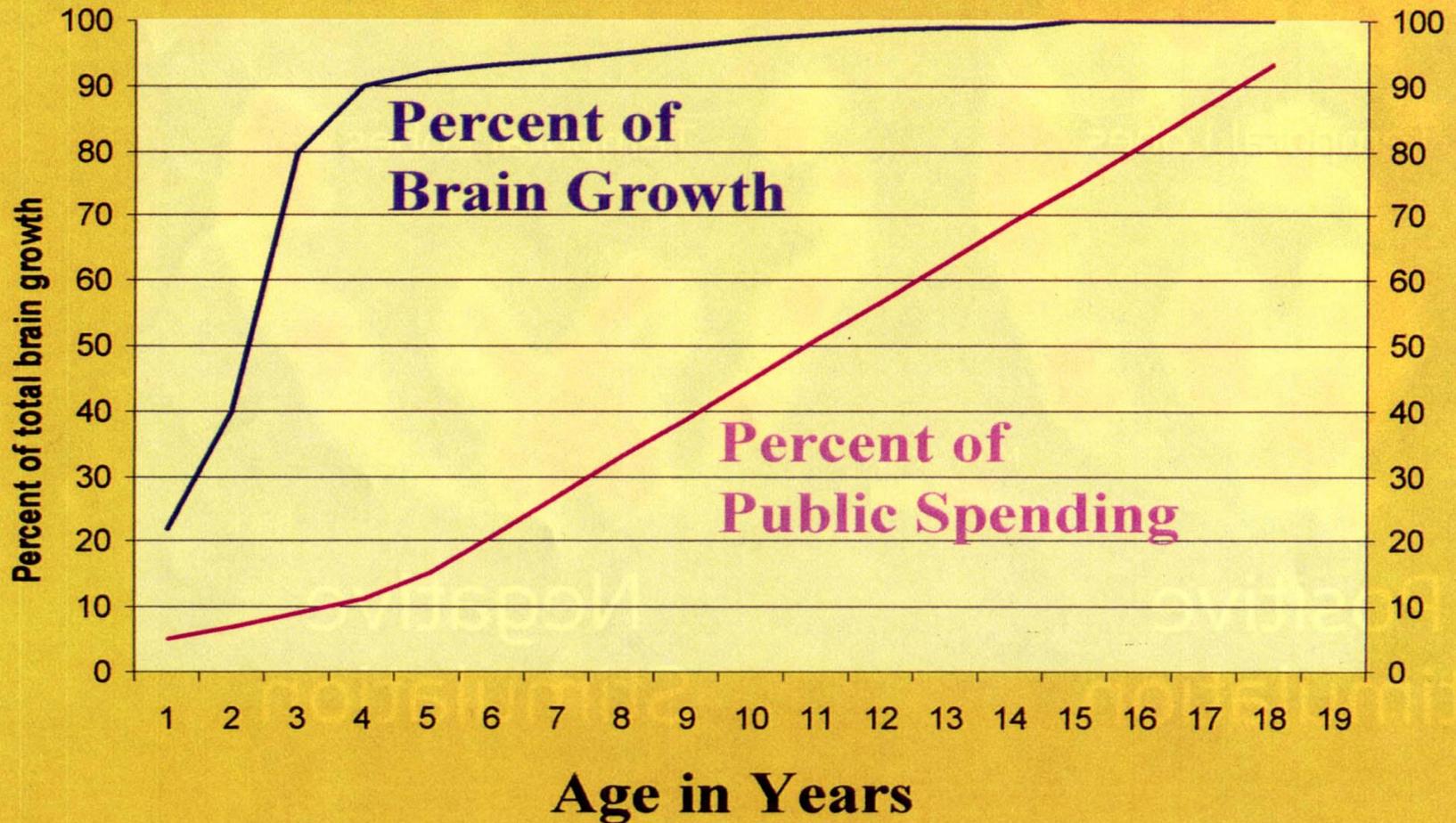
Facts

- ECCE is a right
- ECCE lays the foundation for later learning
- It is more cost effective to introduce preventative measures than compensate for disadvantages later
- ECCE lays the bricks for language development

Economic Reasons

- Even one year of preschool increases child's income generation potential in adulthood
 - Fiscal efficiency of investment in high quality early childhood services
 - A focus on prevention which reduces long-term costs = Invest now or pay later

Brain Growth versus Public Expenditures on Children Ages 0 - 18



Today

- We have to remember that every human being in the world is responsible for the future of all children.
- Children are our hope, our future, and our conscience.
- We must support Early Childhood Education to foster prosperity in later years of life.
- We need to influence our Provincial, Municipality and National Leaders to have greater influence and interest in ECCE development.

Recommendations:

- i. PEOs and EAs ensure that communities are well informed through awareness on the importance of early childhood education
- ii. Everyone to support ECCE Teachers
- iii. ECCE Coordinators to be more proactive in ECCE Activities

Thank you



C, Q & A