

These daily interactions promote early relational health in children



Hannah West is the Statewide Vroom Coordinator at the Children's Cabinet

BY HANNAH WEST

In the world of health care, there is a focus on child milestones and critical interventions. While these benchmarks are important, it is also crucial to remember the profound impact of everyday moments on child development. Vroom, a web-based resource, and early relational health highlight the importance of these ordinary interactions and emphasize how these moments contribute to a child's cognitive and emotional growth. Nevada's health programs are at the forefront of promoting relational health within families.

Introduction to Vroom

Vroom is an initiative of the Bezos Family Foundation and is designed to empower parents and caregivers with simple, effective tools to nurture early brain development through daily interactions. Vroom translates the latest neuroscience into practical tips that transform everyday moments into brain-building opportunities. By integrating Vroom's principles into their routines, caregivers can support their children's cognitive and emotional growth in meaningful ways.

The five brain building basics of Vroom

Vroom's approach centers around five Brain Building Basics, that provide framework for engaging with children in ways that promote their development:

1. Look: Making eye contact and observing a child's cues is foundational. This engagement helps children feel seen and valued, fostering a sense of security and connection. When caregivers respond to a child's expressions and actions, they validate the child's feelings and

encourage communication.

2. Follow: By following a child's lead, caregivers show that they value the child's interests and curiosity. This practice encourages children to explore and discover their environment, reinforcing their confidence and sense of agency.

3. Chat: Engaging in conversation with children, even before they can speak, builds their language skills and cognitive development. Narrating activities and responding to their sounds and expressions help form the building blocks of communication.

4. Take Turns: Interactive play and conversation teach children the dynamics of social interaction, including patience, cooperation and empathy. This back-and-forth exchange is crucial for developing relational skills.

5. Stretch: Introducing children to new experiences and ideas extends their learning and problem-solving abilities. This encourages resilience and adaptability, preparing them for future challenges.

Early relational health and Vroom

Early relational health focuses on the quality of relationships between children and their caregivers. Positive, responsive interactions in the early years lay the foundation for healthy emotional regulation, social competence and cognitive skills. Vroom's brain building basics align seamlessly with ERH principles, emphasizing nurturing, responsive and engaged caregiving.

Nevada health programs: promoting relational health

Nevada's health programs are crucial for nurturing the relational health of families with young children and supporting their well-being through initiatives like the Nevada Maternal,



Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting Program. These programs enhance parenting skills, promote child development, strengthen familial bonds and empower parents with essential resources. First 5 Nevada, a website and eligibility portal, makes it easy for families to find and access the programs to help their children thrive. By focusing on early intervention and preventive care, these initiatives improve immediate child health and lay a foundation for long-term emotional and cognitive development.

The Nevada Association for Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health is another initiative that recognizes the impact of early experiences on children. It supports practitioners endorsed by Infant and Early Childhood Mental Health and provides valuable resources and free professional development opportunities to equip practitioners with the latest research and best practices in promoting healthy social and emotional development in young children.

Moreover, these initiatives foster community resilience by addressing socio-economic disparities and ensuring equitable access to health care services through programs like Nevada Check Up. By supporting comprehensive health care coverage, including essential medical services and preventive care, these efforts contribute to family well-being by addressing broader social determinants such as housing stability and educational access. Collaborative efforts with health care providers, educators, and community organizations create a supportive environment where every child can thrive and reach their full potential in a nurturing and healthy family context.

How to be a part of this brain-building movement

Everyone, including parents, educators, health care professionals, policymakers and others, can play a vital role in a young child's life. Research consistently shows that supporting children's development in early childhood lays the foundation for their lifelong success. To explore the range of resources available to Nevada families, please visit [First5Nevada.org](https://www.First5Nevada.org) for more information.