



Parenthood and neuroprofessionalisation Towards resilience or fear?

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Overview

- Introduction
- Neurodiscourse of parenthood
- Neuroparenting: UK case
- Neuroprofessionalisation
- Conclusion: towards resilience or fear?

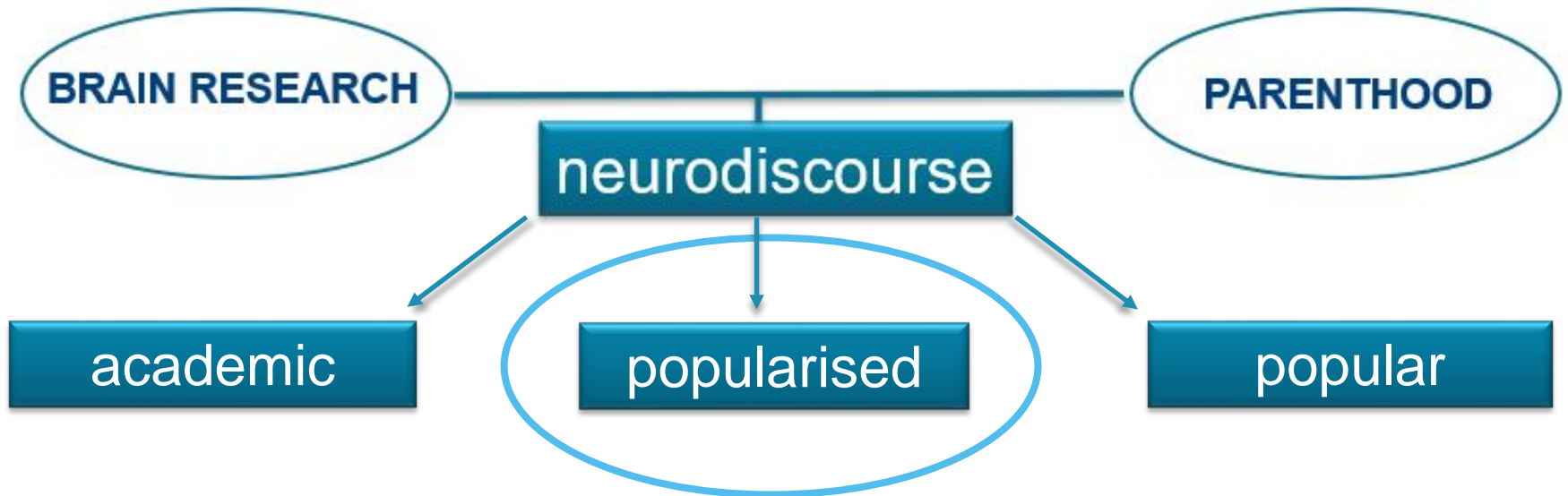
Introduction

- theoretical view
- doctoral research
 - empirical philosophy of education
 - What does it mean to be a 'good parent' in neurodiscourse of parenthood?

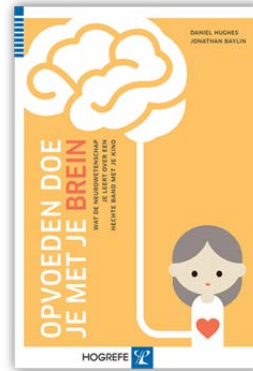


Neurodiscourse of parenthood

- What?
 - Discourse about results of neuroscience concerning functioning and development of the brain
 - addressing parenthood



- some examples



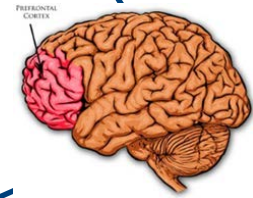
“good childrearing comprises qualities that not only protect the child’s developing brain, but also enhance the brain’s growth” (Hughes & Baylin, 2014, p. 17)

“good parenthood shapes children’s brains, ensuring emotional resilience and social competence”
(Hughes & Baylin, 2014, p. 20)

“We . . . are being taken on a . . . journey that teaches us how we can ameliorate our effectiveness as parents” (Siegel, in Hughes & Baylin, 2014, p. 12)



Teenagers need their parents to be their “substitute prefrontal cortex” (Jolles, 2016, p. 321)



@Thinglink Oy

“It is your task as a parent to continuously offer your children opportunities to train their upper brain, so that it gets . . . more powerful.” (Siegel & Bryson, 2015, p. 70)



The “quality” of parental agency brings forth a “particular kind of brain” (Gerhardt, 2018, p. 83, p. 68)

- Discursive positioning of parental agency?

- focus on the brain
- dyadic relationship
- responsibility



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- qualified & quantified agency
- fear induced agency
- neuro-parenting



The Brain is a Work in Progress

Partner Resources, Tools & Guides:
Training Module: “Build My
Brain”

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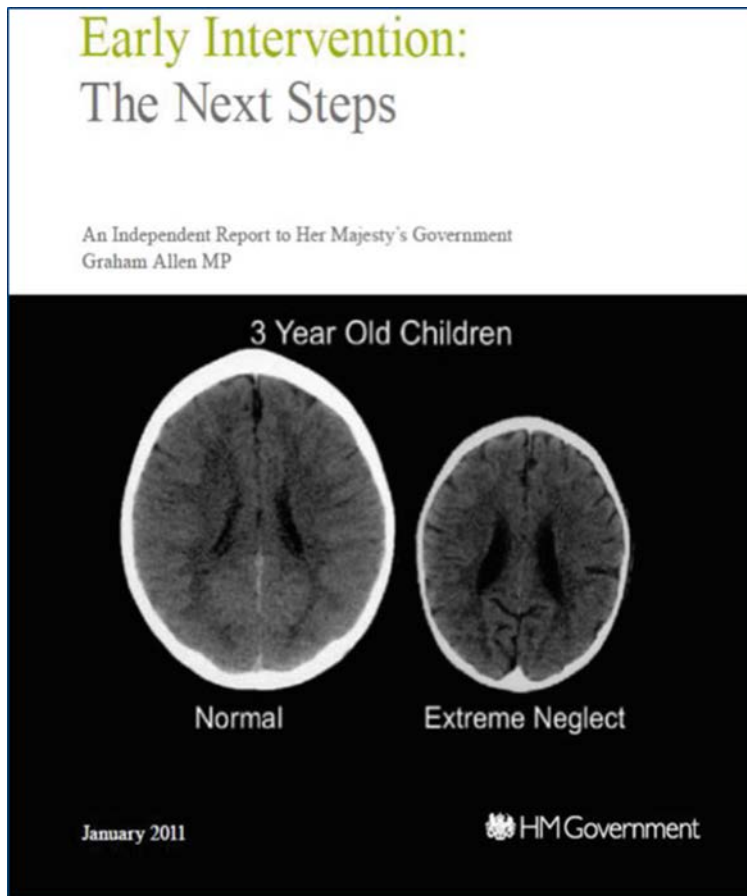
Neuroparenting

➤ Jan Macvarish (2016)

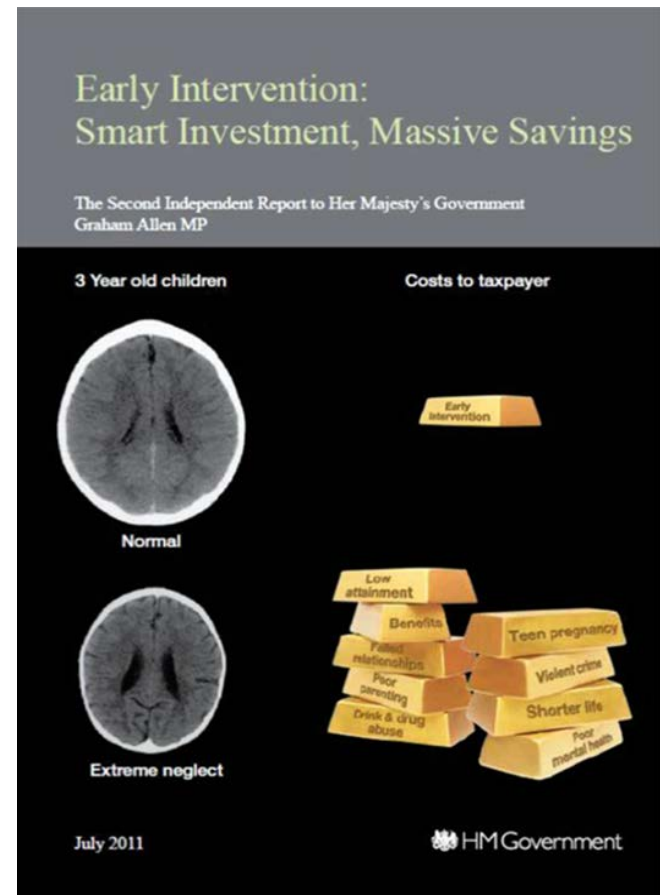


“Neuroparenting is a way of thinking which claims that ‘we now know’ (by implication, once and for all) how children ought to be raised”
(Macvarish, 2016, p. 1)

“The basis for this final achievement of certainty regarding child-rearing is said to be discoveries made through neuroscience about the development of the human brain, in particular, during infancy.”
(Macvarish, 2016, p. 1)

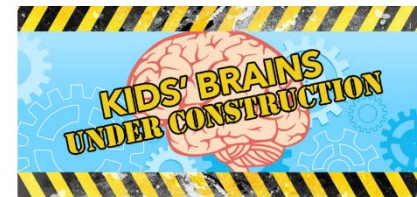
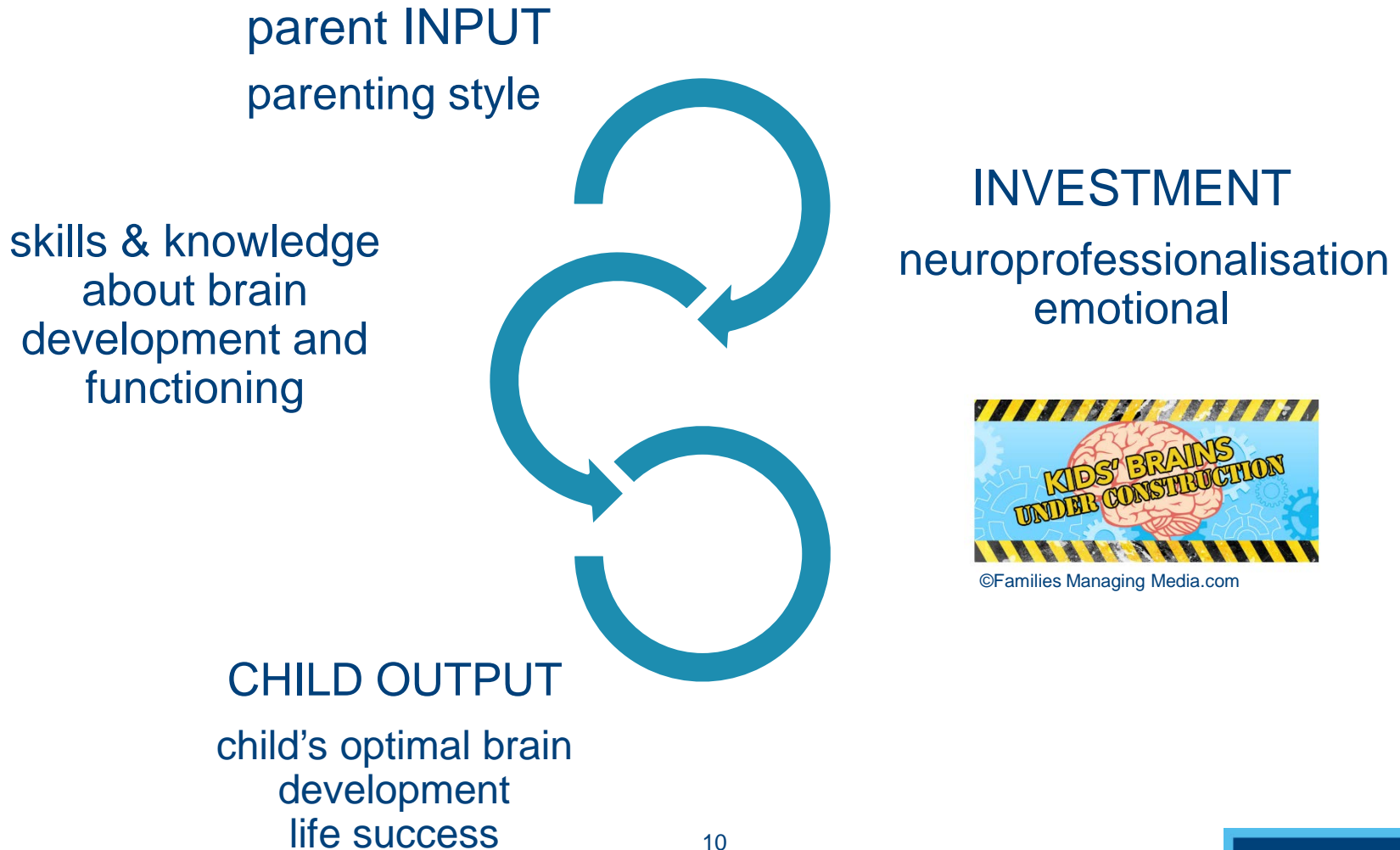


“critical significance” of parental behaviour in the early years
 (Macvarish, 2016, p. 2-3)



“early years last forever and therefore deserve much greater parental and societal attention”
 (Macvarish, 2016, p. 2-3)

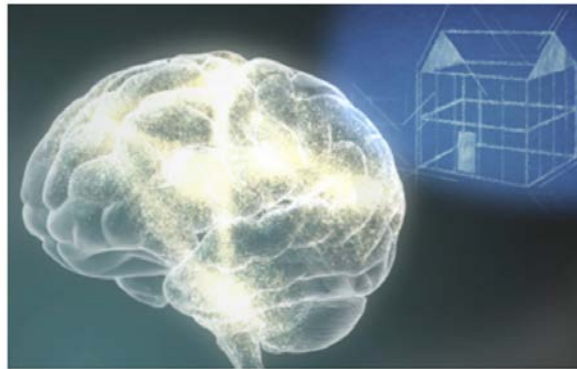
Neuroprofessionalisation



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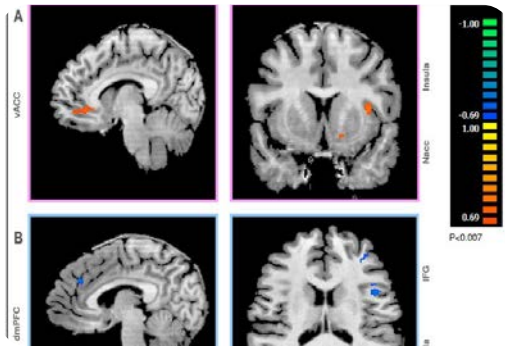
- different types of neuroprofessionalisation
 - learning how to be a “good parent”

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The development of a child's brain architecture provides the foundation for all future learning, behavior, and health.

- critical engagement with neurodiscourse of parenthood



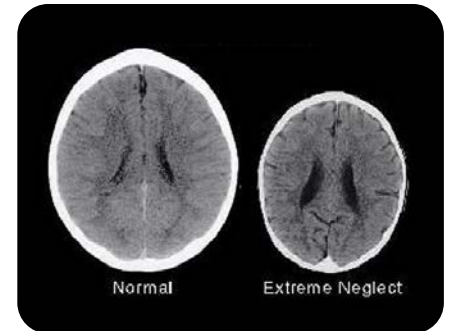
©Atzil et al. (2012). Maternal and paternal brain

neuroscience

results of brain research in original research context



suggestions reaching further than original research results
(Bruer, 1999)



neuroscientism

(Tallis, 2011, p. 28)

brain claims, neuromyths, mis-interpretation, over-generalisation

- neuromyth

“A misconception generated by a misunderstanding, a misreading or misquotation of facts scientifically established (by brain research) to make a case for the use of brain research in education or other contexts” (OECD, 2002, in Howard-Jones, 2010, p. 20)

smart-wiring your baby's brain

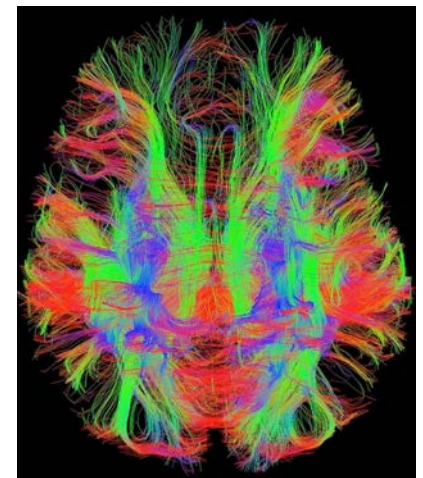
What You
Can Do to
Stimulate
Your Child
During the
Critical
First Three
Years



Winifred
Conkling



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Conclusion

- changing world
 - brain-based parenthood advice
 - problematic issues
 - pathologisation of parental behaviour
 - loss of trust in parents
 - love biologised – made measureable
 - parental determinism
 - universalisation, responsabilisation of parenthood
 - misunderstandings of neuro-concepts
 - misuse of results of brain research
 - disparaging constructions of figure of parents

Boyle, 2019; Broer & Pickersgill, 2015; Einboden, Rudge & Varcoe, 2013; Featherstone, Morris, & White, 2014; Hens, Cutas & Horstkötter, 2017; Leysen, 2020a; 2020b; Lowe, Lee & Macvarish, 2015; Macvarish, 2016; Macvarish & Lee, 2019; Thornton, 2011a; 2011b; Vandenbroeck, 2017; Wastell & White, 2012

- Towards strengthening resilience or inducing fear?
 - important role for parenting professionals
 - being aware of the words and images we use, and the reasons why we would do so
 - reflecting on the position from which we enter into a relationship with parents

- Taking care of brains or human beings?
- What does it mean to be a good parent?

“Children are not passive receivers of child-rearing or schooling, but active participants in every aspect of their own development. . . . special mental capacities or special training to develop the brain is not necessary, and most children find a way to grow in the circumstances the world has to offer to them.”

(Aamodt & Wang, 2012, p. 20, my translation)

Thank you for your attention!

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