The Bigger Picture:

We can either use our logical brain (Prefrontal Cortex) or use our emotional part (Amygdala) of our brain.

To use our logical part of our brain we need to feel **safe**.

Feeling safe means:

- **Physically** we are safe
- **Emotionally** we are not worried about someone mistreating us, criticizing us, punishing us, threatening us, blaming us or judging us.

- The brain **doubles in size** in the **first year** of life.
- By **3** years of age, it's about **80% of adult size**.
- By **5** years of age, it's about **90% of adult size**.

From birth to age 5, a child's brain develops more rapidly than any other time in life.

A child who experiences nurturing & responsiveness, their body is able to devote energy to growing the prefrontal cortex.

When the developing brain is constantly on high alert during these crucial foundational years it affects the brain. Chronic stress has a shrinking effect on the prefrontal cortex.

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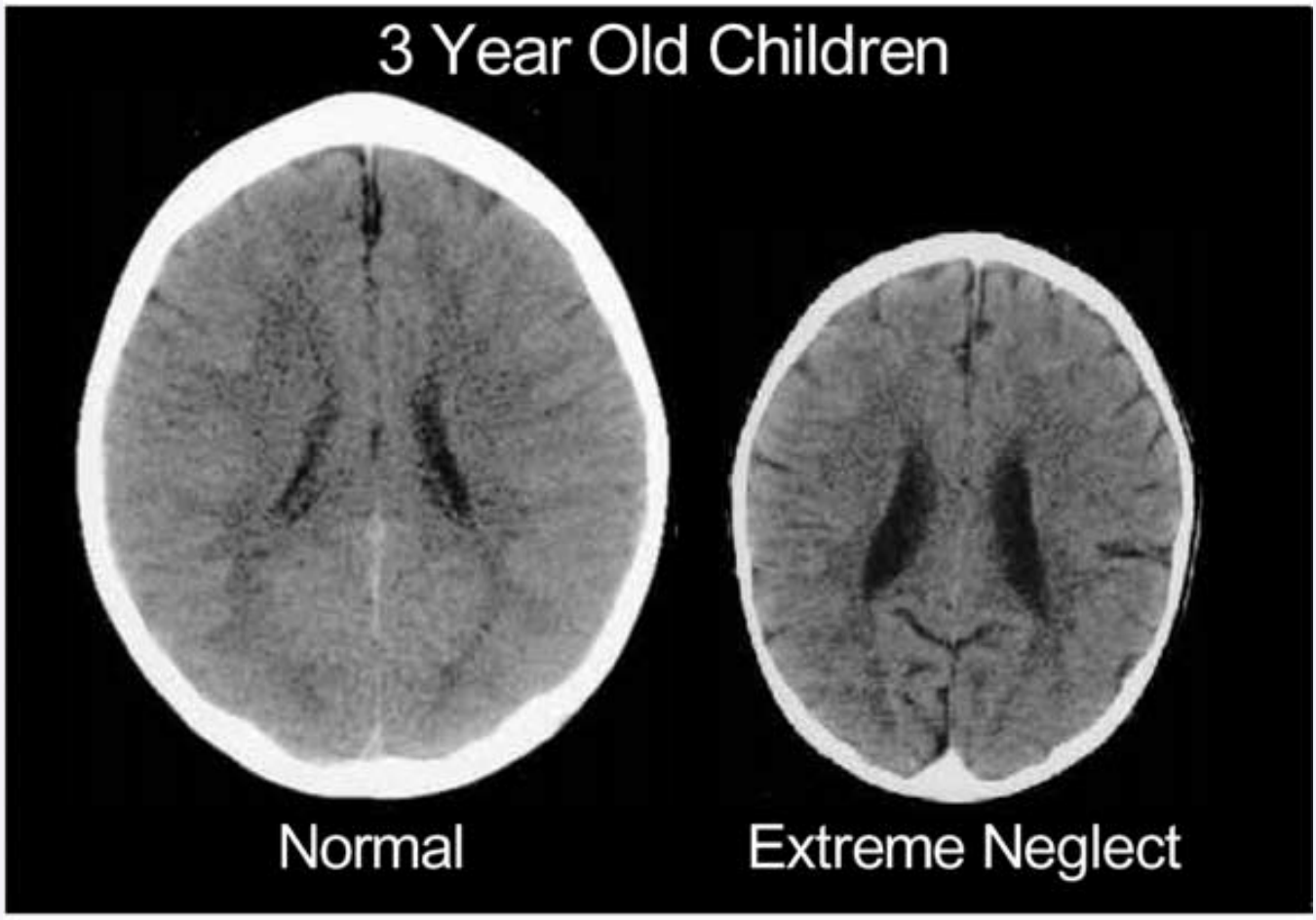
The CT scan on the left shows a normal child's brain, while the one on the right is the brain of a child who has been the victim of constant trauma.



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