

Why a special system for children

Anne Lindboe, Ombudsman for Children in Norway



BARNEOMBUDET

What is an ombudsperson for children?

- Independent institution
- Spokesperson for children
- Influencing policy makers and practitioners to take greater account of rights of children
- No formal power



«Children differ from adults in their physical and psychological development, and their emotional and educational needs.

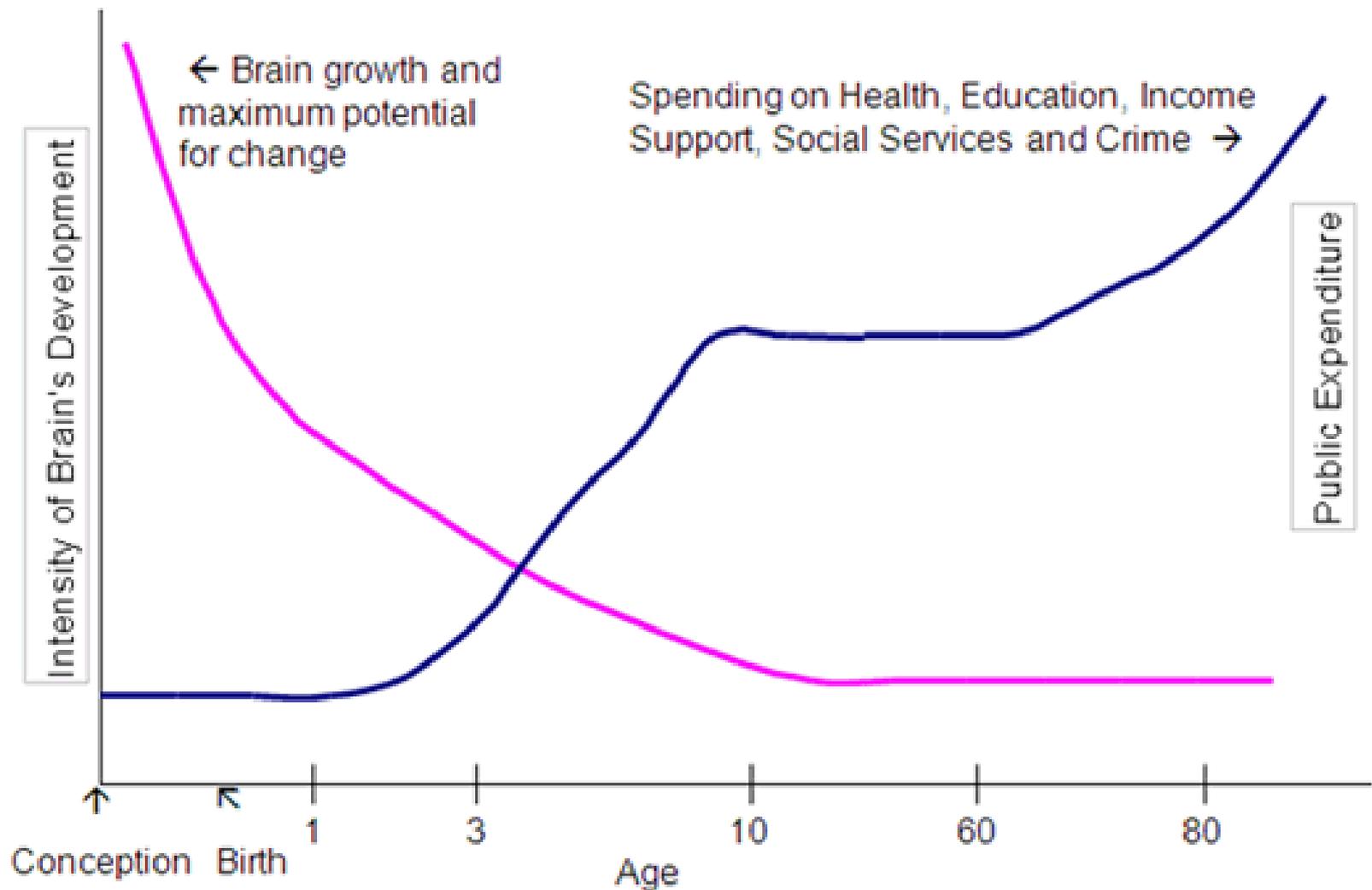
Such differences constitute the basis for the lesser culpability of children in conflict with the law.”

**UN Committee on the Rights of the Child
General Comment No 10**



The brain develop most rapidly the first 5 years after conception





Dr. Jacques Vandergaag - University of Amsterdam - Calgary Presentation January 2004



**10 % of families
characterized as high risk
families.**



**Experiences from early
childhood has a high
influence on the
development of the brain.**



**“When a child experience
chaos, neglect, threats,
violence and other adversity,
their potential is stunted,
distorted and fragmented”**

Dr. Bruce Perry,
The Child Trauma Academy,
Houston, Texas



3 Year Old Children



Normal



Extreme Neglect

Dr. Bruce Perry,
The Child Trauma Academy, Houston, Texas



Increased risk for more self-absorbed, impulsive, aggressive, violent and anti-social behaviour.



**Brain research shows that
adolescent brain is not adult
brain**



**Self-control, planning and
abstract thinking fully
develop in late adolescence.**



Who are children in conflict with the law?

- A high number of juveniles have experienced fragmented childhoods.**
- High number of juveniles have serious psychological problems.**



Children in conflict with the law are not born evil and cruel.



There is still hope for change



Brain research show that there is great potential, but we need to stimulate the right areas of the brain.



Punitive practices do not build new skills, good relationships or promote healthy development. It does not lead to effective remediation or rehabilitation.



**Punitive practice may create
new problems**



**We should rather have
interventions focusing on the
need of the specific child**



**Promoting relational health
by increasing the quality and
number of supportive, good
role models around the child.**



**Child protection
is crime prevention.**



“The most important is to have people around me that I know support me and do not turn their back on me, who do not abandon me like my father did. To know that people believe in me is important.

Boy 17 years in prison



“The protection of the best interests of the child means that the traditional objectives of criminal justice, such as repression/retribution, must give way to rehabilitation, and restorative justice objectives in dealing with child offenders”

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