FUNDAMENTALS

Guidebook

Second Edition

by

Colin Rose and Gordon Dryden
from a concept by Colin Rose

This book, together with the Activity Cards in your ***FUNdamentals Online*** application and video, forms a comprehensive child development programme for ages 2 to 6 years.

The Word Cards, Writing Templates and Number Cards described here and in the Activity Cards can all be accessed from within F***UNdamentals Online***.

See last page for details.

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INTRODUCTION

Accelerated Learning's FUNdamentals is for parents of children from two through to the time they start school at five or six. It is the second stage of a unique child development program which will help you develop your child's potential from the day he or she is born. The first two years of your child's life is covered by **First FUNdamentals**.

The intention is that your child should grow up to have truly well-rounded capability and, above all, to be happy.

Your children are not your children.
They are the sons and daughters of life's longing for itself.
They come through you but not from you,
And though they are with you,
Yet they belong not to you.
You may give them your love,
But not your thoughts,
For they have their own thoughts.
You may house their bodies,
But not their souls,
For their souls dwell in the House of Tomorrow,
Which you cannot visit,
Not even in your dreams.
You may strive to be like them,
But seek not to make them like you.
For life goes not backward
Nor tarries with yesterday.
You are the bows from which yourchildren,
as living arrows, are sent forth.

Kahlil Ghibran in *The Prophet*



Like you, I love my children deeply. Like you, I want them to grow up to be happy. Happiness, however, is not something you can give a child directly. It is the result, the by-product, of the abilities, characteristics and values that he or she develops. Helping your child develop all these important abilities and characteristics is what this program is designed to do.

21st Century Children

Your child will live in a world of even faster change and complexity than you and I have experienced: a world that will reward the ability to adapt quickly, to think logically and to innovate. A job world of mind-power more than man-power. A world that will require self-reliance, and where much knowledge and many skills will be self-taught through media such as the internet and interactive television, and indeed media as yet uninvented.

In short, the qualities your child will need most will be the willingness and confidence to continue to learn broadly and deeply throughout life. She will need to enjoy the challenge of new problems, to be creative and to expect to succeed.

Yet it will still be a world where kindness, honesty, respect for others, cooperation and the ability to form close loving relationships will be at the heart of true happiness. New challenges coupled with basic human values.

The building blocks and habits of mind for success are formed very early. The secret is to provide your child with a rich, stimulating environment during the first six years. An environment planned to encourage him to develop truly rounded abilities. An environment which challenges him to think, yet which results in his success – so he becomes self-confident and excited about learning.

All-round ability

I put the highest possible value on the word ‘rounded’. What would be the point, for example, of helping your child to read early or to be very numerate, if he lacked curiosity, creativity, delight in nature or the ability to share generously, relate well and cooperate?

I also put a high value on the word ‘planned’. To work to a plan doesn’t mean you lack spontaneity, laughter or fun. It merely means that you not only have a dream for your child, but you have also thought out how best to achieve that dream. It’s a structured, not a haphazard, development.

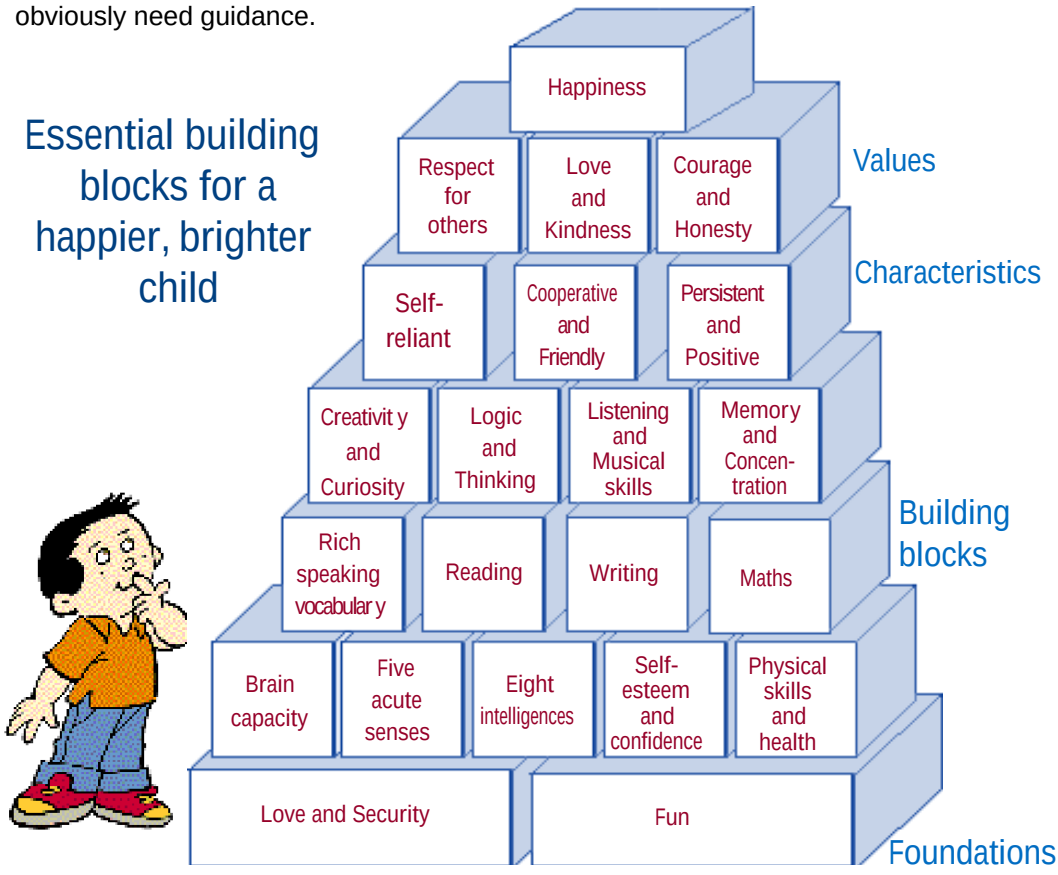
The Pyramid of Happiness

I like to visualise a child's early development as a series of foundation stones and building blocks. These need to be put in place, step-by-step, in order to achieve the ultimate goal of happiness. This pyramid structure is the plan on which the **FUNdamentals** program is based.

I'm not assuming that you will necessarily agree with all the elements in this pyramid. All parents will have their own ideas.

The pyramid also deliberately doesn't include one building block that many will consider key: spirituality. Each parent must build that in his or her own way. Nor does it include a sense of humour (which I think will flow anyway, from a fun environment).

Nor does it imply that you impose a rigid structure on your child. That would be against our whole objective, which is to help create an environment in which individuality will flower. But we are dealing with children from birth to six – and they obviously need guidance.



Let's look briefly at each element in the pyramid.

The underpinning foundations are the love and security and fun you provide.

This whole program is based on games and activities. But while they are lots of fun, they all have a purpose. Each game contributes to one or more of the building blocks. There is a big difference between enjoyable, yet 'purposeful' play, and activities that merely fill time. When you play a game from ***FUNdamentals*** you can be sure it is contributing directly to your child's physical, emotional or intellectual development.

Hence the double emphasis in our name ***FUN damentals***.

You'll sometimes hear the argument that pre-school children shouldn't, for example, learn to read – 'they should be joyfully exploring nature'. This misses the point – they can do both. **FUNdamentals** is built on the conviction that a properly designed word game can be just as much fun as making mud pies. Children need a whole range of activities to bring out their potential.

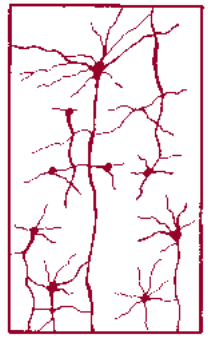
Brain building

Your child is born with more than enough brain cells to be highly successful. It's not the number of brain cells that determines usable intelligence, it's the number of connections that are made between those brain cells.

These connections are formed by the experiences and thoughts that you prompt for your child through the rich, stimulating environment you provide in the early years.

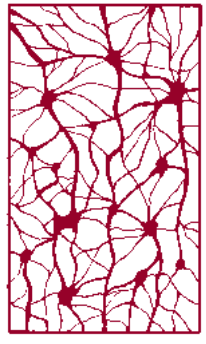
The illustration alongside says it all. What you do with this program will directly affect your child's brain capacity.

Unstimulated Brain



Fewer pathways to develop thought

Stimulated Brain



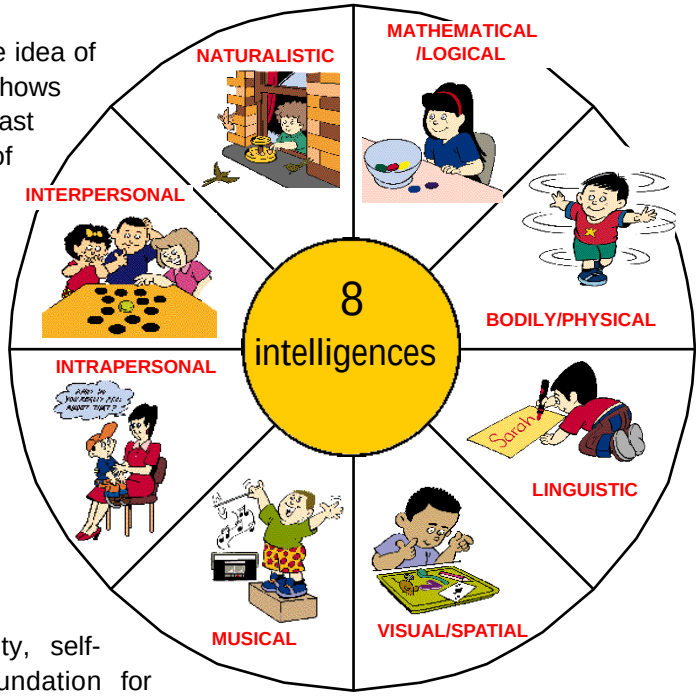
A rich network of pathways to permit complex thinking

Eight different intelligences

One of the most important new insights into the brain comes from one of America's prestigious universities, Harvard. It argues that intelligence is not fixed.

Instead of the restrictive idea of a single fixed IQ, it shows that your child has at least eight different forms of intelligence – illustrated here and discussed in detail later in this Guidebook.

For your child to grow up with truly rounded abilities, she needs to develop each one of these intelligences.



Self-esteem

Like love and security, self-esteem is a vital foundation for success. But unlike love and security, which only you can give, a child must develop his own self-esteem.

So we've included activities that help your child build up a sense of his own uniqueness and self-worth. But self-esteem also comes from a sense of one's own progress and competence. That's why ***FUNdamentals*** is careful to stress that you need to create an environment that is sufficiently challenging to produce a feeling of achievement – but never so challenging as to be overwhelming. It's a delicate but vital balance.

Over-ambitious parents fail because, instead of support and encouragement, they provide a hot-house environment and pressure. *The unshakeable rule is: if your child is not enjoying it, stop immediately.*

It's also vital to recognise that each child develops at his own pace. Albert Einstein started talking very late and he failed mathematics early in high school. Yet, of course, he went on to become the greatest scientist of his age. Winston Churchill initially talked with a stutter and a lisp. Yet he became one of the 20th Century's greatest leaders and orators.

The only race your pre-schooler is in is the human race.

On top of these solid foundations come the building blocks of success and ultimately happiness. So we have included not just the 3 Rs of reading, writing and arithmetic, but the ability to think both logically and creatively, the ability to concentrate and persist with projects, and the development of a strong memory.

How the programme works

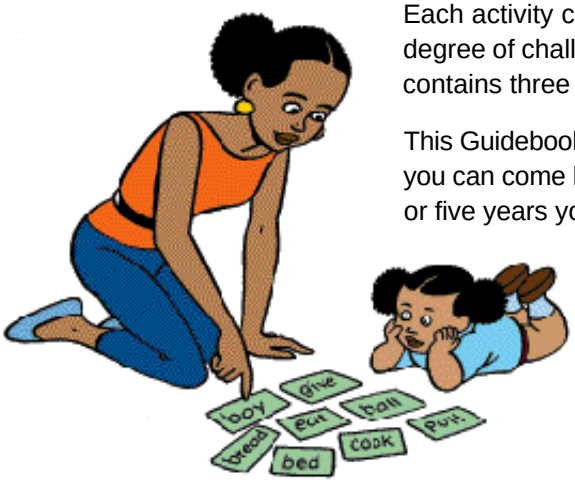
We have tried, above all, to design the programme to be practical. Parents do not have unlimited time or money, and they do get tired.

The **Activity Cards** are the heart of the programme. There is an index screen at the start that will prompt you to undertake a variety of activities.That way you can not only regularly play new games, you can select activities that suit the moment.

You should never impose an activity on your child; ideally let the game or activity develop naturally from what he's already enjoying.

The activities are arranged by subject, eg games to develop memory, games for reading, games for mathematics, games to stimulate creativity, etc. Within each subject they are broadly in age sequence.

Even if your child is already four, however, do skim the earlier cards as many of the ideas will still be useful. Try to incorporate several different types of game or activity each day. For example, you might play a pre-reading or reading game, then a music game, then a creativity exercise, then a vocabulary game, then a physical activity. It's the variety over the course of a day or week that's important.



Each activity can be carried out at a greater or less degree of challenge. So each Activity Card normally contains three ideas.

This Guidebook is designed as a friendly advisor that you can come back to again and again, over the four or five years you will be using ***FUNdamentals***. So it doesn't have to be read all at once.

After all, it covers over 1,500 days of your child's life – so you can read it in steps.

A rounded child

The central idea of ***FUNdamentals*** is to combine fun and laughter with games and activities that contribute to all-round strengths.

Your child may be small now and has limited means of communicating back to you, but you can be sure that he takes in much more than it appears. And what is taken in now will eventually come out later as ability and attitude.

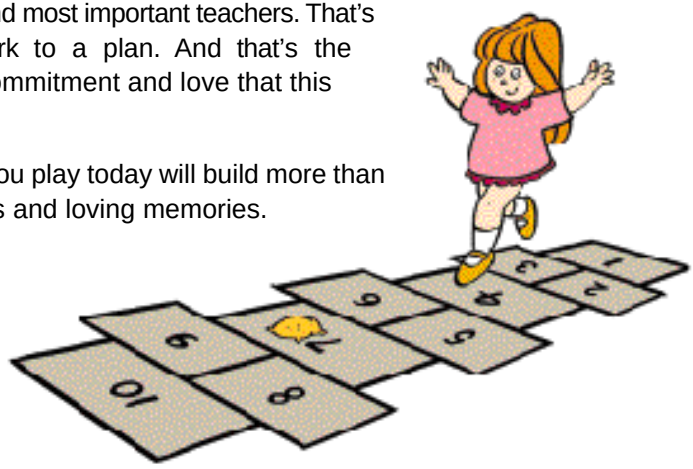
Is your child likely to read early? Yes, because it's fun. Will she really understand counting, adding, subtracting, dividing (and even multiplying!) by the time she's five or six years old? Yes, because, we've made it fun. Will she write before school? Yes, because we've shown you the 24-step sequence that automatically leads to writing.

But she'll also have the best possible chance to develop her early musical, artistic, social and creative skills. And love of learning. And memory. And self-esteem. And thoughtfulness. And respect for nature. And values. No one ability is more important than any other – the goal is all-round ability.

We believe that the foundations for the whole range of human talents and abilities are laid down in the first five or six years of life. What a wonderful, awesome, exhilarating, challenging opportunity that is for us as parents.

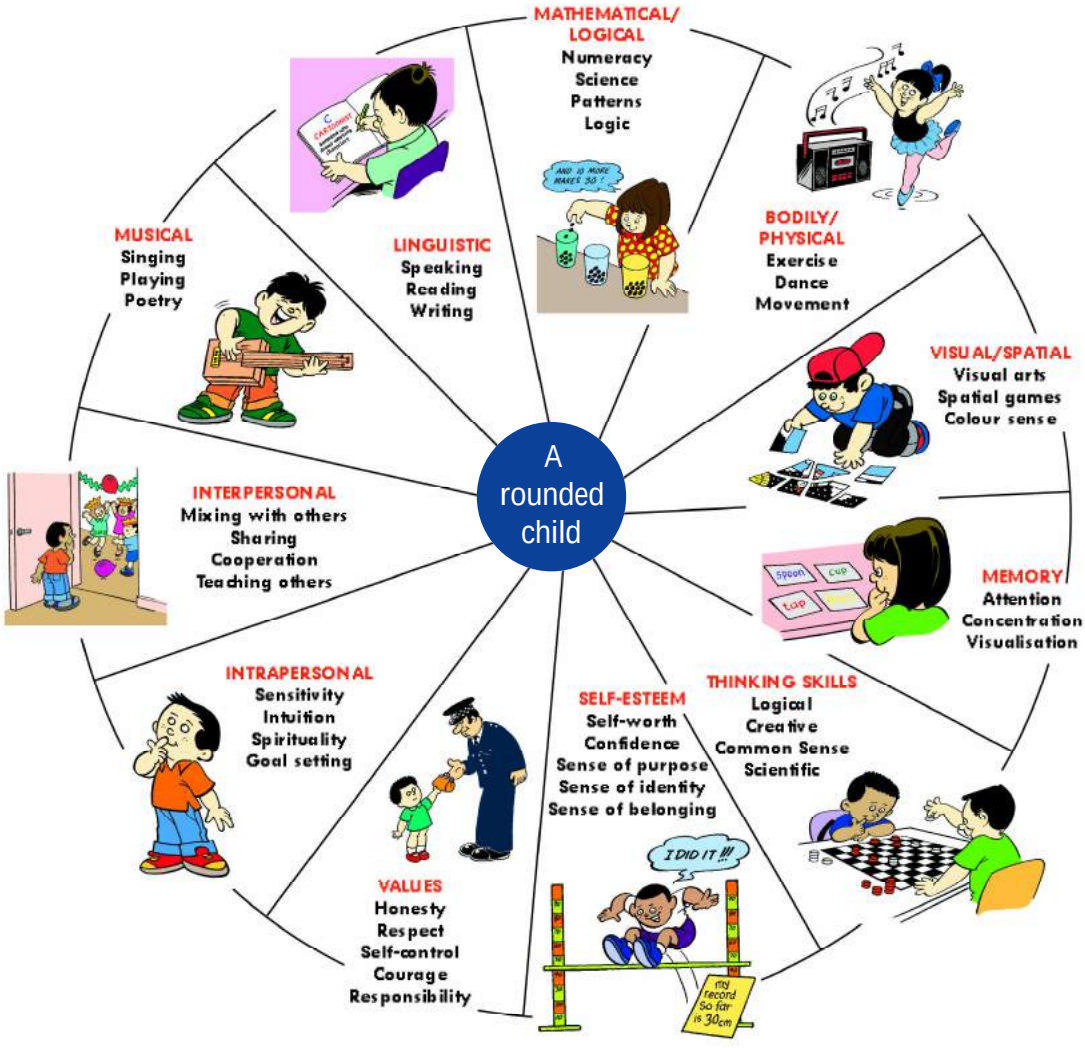
We are our children's first and most important teachers. That's why it's necessary to work to a plan. And that's the justification for the time, commitment and love that this program will take.

The activities and games you play today will build more than ability, they will build bonds and loving memories.



Colin Rose, England 2018

A ROUNDED CHILD

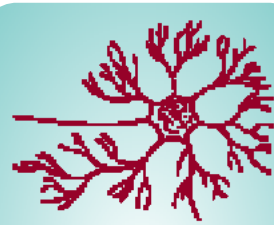


The central idea of **FUNdamentals** is to combine fun and laughter with games and activities that contribute to all-round strengths. No one ability is more important than any other – the goal is all-round ability.

Developing the Amazing Brain

Here's one way to appreciate the staggering capacity of a baby's brain:

- A fruit fly has 100,000 brain cells
- A mouse has five million
- A monkey has 10 million
- Every healthy baby is born with approximately **100 billion** active brain cells, or neurons. That's 100,000 million!
- And each cell is capable of sprouting up to 20,000 different branches to store and process information.



Each of your child's 100 billion brain cells starts like the circular neuron above. As the child is exposed to a variety of stimulating experiences, each cell is capable of sprouting up to 20,000 different branches to store the new information. In this way, the child literally grows his own brain.

We now know that each one of us possesses at birth a brain potentially more powerful than the world's greatest computers – and that intelligence is not fixed.

We also know that each of us is only using a small fraction of that potential ability. And you can help your children to use much more. Almost every child has the potential to flower in dozens of different ways.

Here's why:

- The brain's most vital connections are made very early in life. They are the basis of all future learning and mental ability.
- These connections grow directly as a result of a child's rich and varied experiences. The activities outlined in the First FUNdamentals program are designed to provide precisely that stimulation at the time when it is most vital for brain growth.
- A healthy baby will also grow around 900 billion other cells which surround and nourish the active neurons. Exercise and good diet are vital to build and maintain the cells that provide the brain's nutrients. Proper nourishment builds a strong brain as well as a strong body.
- The brain communicates with the rest of the body by nerve pathways.

  Each pathway can transmit those messages efficiently only if it is well coated with a special insulation. When fully coated – generally by about the age of seven – each nerve pathway can send messages around the brain and body up to 150 miles an hour.

- The brain also has eight different forms of ‘intelligence’. Many people develop real strengths in only one or two, to the detriment of the rest. They may be brilliant at mathematics or language but weak in music and art. Yet each one of us can develop **all** those abilities.

And FUNdamentals will help you do that with your child.

- The brain is rather like three brains in one. The lower brain controls your breathing and heartbeat. The middle brain plays a big part in emotion and memory. And the outer brain (or cortex) folds around the rest like a thin crumpled blanket. It is that outer layer that makes us truly human. It provides us with the ability to speak, read, write, sing, dance, run, play sports, think, reason, and create great masterpieces.

  But the emotional middle centre of the brain is also vital. It acts as the filter for all information coming into the brain. If a child is under stress or feels threatened, the middle brain will often block information entering the thinking brain. We instinctively recognise this when we say, “My mind went blank!”.

The left side of the brain mainly processes language, logic, mathematics and sequences.
The right side plays a big part in processing music, rhythm, rhyme and artistry.
But children learn fastest when both sides of the brain work effectively together, through a program of overall enrichment.

That’s why we place so much emphasis on a close, loving bond between parent and child and the need to make learning fun and not forced.

• The brain also has two sides. It’s an over-simplification, but you can say that the left side plays a big part in processing logic, reason and language: the so-called academic abilities. The right side plays a key part in processing music, rhyme and rhythm: the so-called creative activities. In fact, the brain works best — and everyone learns more effectively — when both sides work smoothly together.

• The reason that it is relatively easy to learn the words of popular songs is because the right brain is basically processing the music while the left brain is processing the words. And, of course, the emotional centre of the brain is also involved.

Enabling your children to develop all that ‘brain power’ is at the core of the FUNdamentals program. The good news: it can all be done easily, with fun, common sense and enjoyment.

At least 50 per cent of everyone’s brain connections are developed in the first five years of life. Perhaps 30 per cent more are developed before the eighth birthday. These connections determine usable intelligence:

- This means that parents are the world's key teachers.
- And your home is the most important educational institution.

Yet no nation spends even one per cent of its educational budget on the most vital task of all: educating the parents of young children.

We are not saying that anyone absorbs 50 per cent of life's knowledge in the first five years of life. Nor 50 per cent of one's wisdom.

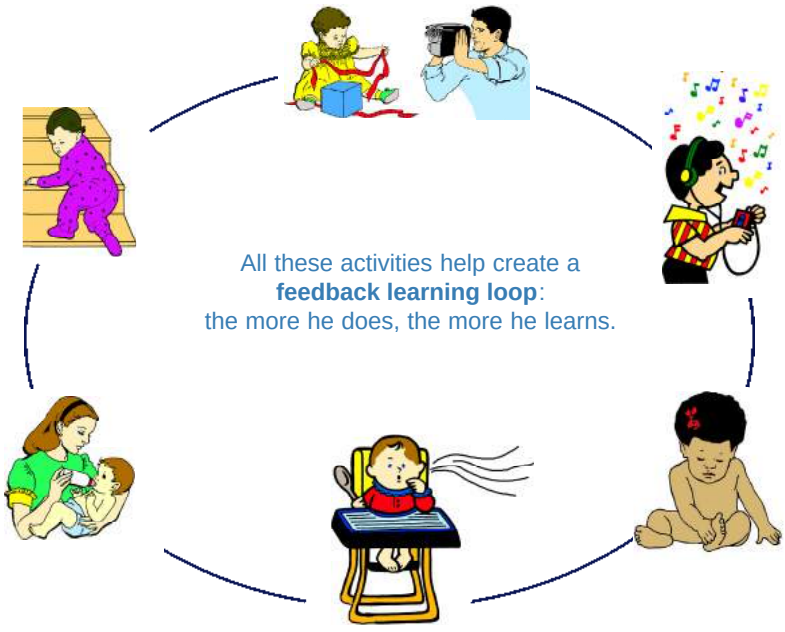
What we mean is that, in the first five years, your child forms 50 per cent of the main learning pathways in his brain. Everything else he learns in life will be built on that base. If the base is not sound, future growth is stunted. Making lots of brain connections gives your child an invaluable advantage.

Learning through all the senses

The more you can provide a rich, stimulating environment for all the senses, the more your child will bloom.

There are five main pathways into your baby's brain.

From his very first days he develops the parts of his brain that deal with what he sees, hears, touches, tastes and smells. The more he can focus all his senses on a task the easier and more efficiently he will learn. So the better developed his senses, the easier it will be for him to learn.



Eating right

You really are what you eat! So any program aimed at stimulating a child's mental development would be somewhat lacking if it did not address, at least briefly, the critical issue of proper nutrition.

Every mother-to-be knows how vital it is to eat right, ie 'while eating for two'. Attention to good dietary habits is just as important after birth because 'myelination' (the 'coating' of the system of brain cell pathways) continues until about three years of age. This process requires many nutrients including essential fats, protein and zinc.

The best source of all three is mother's milk, which also contains a wealth of protective antibodies which coat the baby's intestines and respiratory tract and fight off infection.

It also helps protect from ear infections, various allergies and provides calcium and phosphorus for rapidly growing bones.

In fact, the only thing missing in a healthy mother's breast milk could be Vitamin D. That's why many doctors suggest a Vitamin D supplement for mothers who are breast-feeding. A well-balanced milk 'formula' must duplicate the essential elements of mother's milk.

Breast-feeding for at least six months to a year is generally recommended. Then you can start adding solids such as instant rice, barley or corn cereal; cooked and pureed vegetables; pureed fruit; and then finely grated or mashed meats – important for their iron supply.

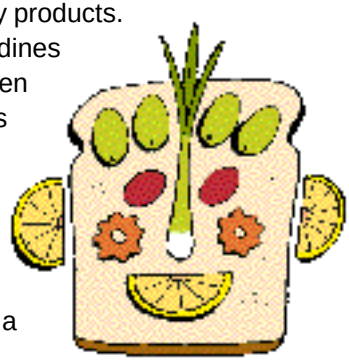
Alternatively, of course, you can buy prepared baby food at the supermarket.

From the age of one onwards ensure that your toddler's diet includes:

- A balance of fish, beans, peas, lentils, soya and dairy products. An adequate supply of fish oil (the type found in sardines and salmon) and linoleic acid (as found in leafy green vegetables, fruits, dairy foods and vegetable oil) is important.

  Research now shows that children – with their 'nutrition hungry' brains – should NOT be put on a low fat diet.

- Foods rich in zinc, such as chicken and fish. Even a mild deficiency in zinc can cause reduced memory.



- A breakfast cereal fortified with vitamins and minerals and milk followed by half a banana or a sliced apple or orange.

  The banana provides potassium – vital for brain function. The milk provides vitamins, minerals, calcium and protein. The cereal provides carbohydrates for energy.

- Snacks of whole wheat bread and fresh fruit instead of sugar-laden foods such as chocolate biscuits.
- Complex carbohydrates such as bread, pasta and potatoes in their lunch.
- Keep the chocolates, soft drinks and candies to a minimum – the excess sugar actually robs the body of key nutrients.

"All you need is love"

It's impossible to spoil a young child with too much love.

That's the most vital ingredient of all: the knowledge that you're loved by the person you love most. The need to feel secure and safe is basic to any child's development. Studies show children who are hugged often and feel loved grow up more optimistic and confident. And on that base you can build the pyramid of abilities.

No put-downs, only put-ups: Use positive praise for tasks attempted; positive encouragement to tackle more. Never, ever, tell your baby she's stupid or silly.

A child is not his actions: There's a world of difference between, "You're a bad, naughty boy", and, "I love you, but I don't like what you did".

Love is an active verb

Of course you tell your child each day how much you love her, but demonstrate it as well. That way she can see for herself how love is shown by little acts of kindness. Then she can create such moments of thoughtfulness in later life for the people she loves.

Write 'love you' notes every now and then

Write special notes and make them a surprise. Slip them in her pocket, under pillows, on the refrigerator.

Stick notes on her door. Encourage your child to write them, too.

If she can't read, read them to her. It'll encourage her to want to read.

Children need physical security – the physical contact of cuddling and hugging.

Say you need a hug whenever you feel depressed, and let her know it's made you feel better.

Try to give your child undivided attention. So when you are with him, clear your head of home or work problems and focus on him alone. Pay close attention to what he is saying, so that he feels that what he's saying is important.

If you have to be away, try out these ideas:

Leave a photograph of yourself in her bedroom with a message saying, 'I love you,' or a surprise note that your partner can put on the breakfast plate the first day. Or put separate messages in envelopes marked Monday, Tuesday and so on, to be put on the breakfast table each day.

You probably bring home a little gift anyway, but don't overlook the fact that a miniature shampoo bottle, a hotel pen or an airline souvenir can be an exciting gift.

'Thank you' notes: When your child has done something especially helpful, write out a blank postcard with a simple 'thank you,'such as, "Thank you for looking after Catherine."

Mark special occasions: The day he first rode a bicycle unaided, a particularly impressive effort at writing, the day he could read 100 words, or draw a house.

Put them in his own special ***Book of Me*** (see the section on Building Self-Esteem). Try and bring back a memento of each major visit, trip, day out or holiday – also for the ***Book of Me*** – theatre tickets, programs, flowers, photos, postcards. It provides lots to talk about and remember as you look at them later.

Mail her something small: About once a month post her a crayon, a colouring book, a badge. Children love to see their name on letters.

Let him choose photos for the family album

– and give him the spare photos to make up his own album.

Have a wall space for all her new artwork

Actually frame the outstanding ones.

Each of these activities may be small in itself. But each helps your child absorb a very important lesson: that love needs to be nurtured actively; it must be shown as well as felt.

Your child's eight intelligences

Brain research has shattered forever the myth about fixed intelligence.

We are not born with a single fixed 'intelligence quotient' or IQ. Each of us has the potential to develop at least eight different 'intelligences'. They are:

Linguistic intelligence

The ability to read, speak and write well – highly developed in authors, journalists and poets, eg Churchill, Martin Luther King, Shakespeare and Jane Austen.

Mathematical-logical intelligence

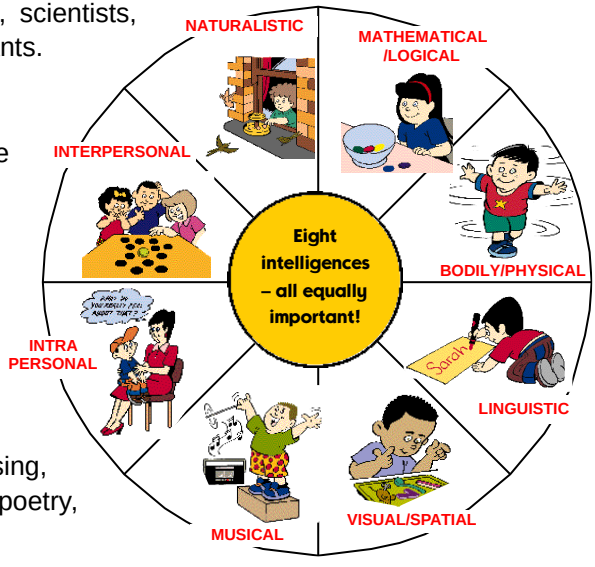
The ability to reason, calculate and think logically – highly developed in economists, scientists, engineers, lawyers and accountants.

Visual-spatial intelligence

The ability to paint, draw, take imaginative photographs, create sculptures, or to visualise three-dimensional space. Highly developed in navigators and artists eg Picasso , Frida Kahlo Michelangelo.

Musical intelligence

The ability to compose songs, sing, play musical instruments, create poetry, use rhyme and rhythm.



Interpersonal (or 'social') intelligence

The ability to relate to others – strong in sales people, teachers and natural leaders.

Intrapersonal (or 'reflective') intelligence

The ability to focus on inner feelings, draw conclusions from experiences and make plans.

Bodily-physical intelligence

The ability to use one's hands or body, strong in gymnasts, dancers, craftsmen and sports people.

'Naturalist' intelligence

The ability to understand and be in tune with – developed in biologists, farmers, conservationists.

Working with all the intelligences

Learning becomes more effective when you can try out a range of methods involving several intelligences. For example, when he's learning to read and write, try blending these intelligences:

Linguistic Let her dictate a story, then write or type it in large letters and tape record it. It's her own words.

Visual/spatial Use whole words, words in different colours, coloured letters, outline type that can be coloured in.

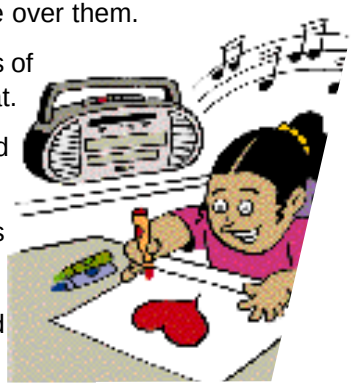
Musical Write out songs or jingles and let him trace over them.

Mathematical/logical Include sentences with lots of patterns – the fat cat sat on the mat with a rat in a hat.

Physical Make words from clay, paint, sand, bread dough and link words to actions.

Intrapersonal Let him talk and write about his feelings.

Interpersonal Let her teach her teddy to read and write.



Your child almost certainly will respond better to some of these ideas than others – that's the early emergence of a 'preferred' learning style.

Making the most of the activities

It's not just the activities and games you play with your child that develop her. The **way** you play them makes a big difference. The following ten principles will help you to help your child become an independent-minded, thoughtful, self-motivated, 21st century child.

1 Try to ensure success

That doesn't mean setting up games and activities which are too easy. It means you should gradually extend the challenges. Challenges she can solve, often on her own, with a bit of thought and effort.

If your child can remember three objects in a memory game, but not four, play the game again using three things, until she is ready to try four.

If she's getting restless or inattentive, she's becoming overloaded – stop immediately or lower the difficulty. Your aim is for her to do a little bit more each time. "Look, Diana, you've read four new words today, that's better than you've done before. Well done."

Success breeds a positive self-image and a willingness to keep trying and learning.

Break jobs down into small steps and accept that mistakes are part of learning.

Failure is demotivating. If you try to play a game before she is developmentally ready, she may become uninterested in learning. That is why 'hot-housing' is so dangerous.

2 Give 'just enough' help

If you take over saying, "Here let me do it", you convey a strong hidden message that he is not competent. On the other hand, never leave him struggling. Give as much help as needed to succeed – and no more. It's an important and delicate balance.

Be sensitive to help him break a big task down into small steps – and then stand back. That builds self-confidence and independence.

It's also very important to constantly emphasise that mistakes are part of learning. Use phrases like:

"We all learn from mistakes."

"What can we learn from this?"

"Well, that didn't work out quite right, let's see why."

All said in a positive and matter of fact tone of voice.

Let her do as much as she can on her own – help only as much as is needed for success.

3 Practise 'Show and Tell'

Too much verbal instruction swamps and confuses children.

Equally, to demonstrate something without an explanation doesn't work either. They often misunderstand the steps involved.

Tell him how to do it as you show him how to do it. Then stand back and let him try.

So show and tell him at the same time. Then let him experiment himself.

He learns most, not when you are his teacher, but when you are his fellow-learner and guide.

4 Give her time to work it out herself

Avoid rushing in to help. If you ask a question, leave a long enough pause for her to think of a **good** answer – not just the first thought.

Encourage her to think things out for herself. Let her correct her own efforts if possible. Help her put her thoughts in her own words. Use "What do you think?" regularly and "Let's think about this a bit more".

5 Give encouragement rather than praise

If your response is "Good boy" he will come to want to do things to please you rather than himself. Trying to succeed in order to please himself, however, is self-motivation.

Self-motivation lasts and is what he will need in later life.

So give encouragement that contains helpful advice like, "Well done, you succeeded because you looked carefully". Or "That was a really good idea, you could use it again." Or "You got on well that time because you did it a bit more slowly".

To pay individual attention to what he's doing and to provide advice that helps him know what to do, is much more motivating than indiscriminate praise.

6 Encourage methodical thinking

Think things out aloud yourself. For example, "I wonder why that is?" Then wait for her explanation.

If you provide the answers, she comes to assume answers lie in what adults and teachers think – not in what she thinks. So she becomes passive – waiting for an answer, rather than thinking it out for it herself.

If you prompt her to think for herself, deliberately and methodically, helping with the words she needs, you create self-confidence.

Give encouragement that contains specific advice. "You're writing well because you're holding the pen correctly and concentrating hard."

"What do you think?" should become a key phrase. With such support, children of four and five can typically tackle tasks that they may otherwise not tackle till seven or eight.

Here are three simple yet powerful thinking steps.The example is doing a jigsaw:

a Help him see what's important.

"Now let's look carefully. What do you think we should do first?" Pause.

"Well, let's put the box lid in front of us, so we know what the picture will be like when it's finished. Then let's turn all the pieces face up."

"Then let's get all the pieces of sky together. That makes the job easier."

b Help him take time and plan.

"Let's stop and think. Where shall we start? Do you think we should do all the outside edges first? What do you think?"

"It's easier to start with the outside pieces, because they all have straight edges – see? It makes a frame for the picture."

"What about starting at the corners? There's only four of those. So it's a good place to start."

Children are naturally impulsive. Keep using the phrase “Let’s stop and think”. Point out that making a plan saves time later, rather than just rushing in. Ask him often to say what he’s thinking, and help him express his thoughts.

c Encourage him to take care.

“Now let’s take care so we do it right. Let’s keep looking carefully. What shape are we looking for?”

7 Avoid rewarding learning with treats

That’s external motivation. The effort disappears when the bribe disappears. Your aim is for internal motivation where the feeling of success in meeting a challenge is its own reward. A sense of self mastery.

Say, “I bet you’re proud that you can do that”, rather than “I’m proud of you”. He should want to please himself with his own efforts rather than please you.

8 Take your lead from her interests

Suggest games, provide options, but let her choose what she wants to do.

9 Encourage curiosity

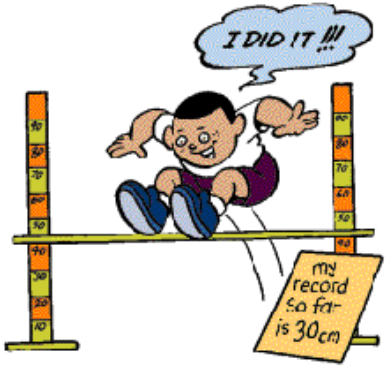
Encourage her to look around at everything – to wonder, to ask why, how, what? You encourage it best by being curious and questioning yourself.

10 Avoid comparison with other children

First of all, children progress at quite different rates in many different fields of endeavour. Einstein hardly spoke until he was four!

Secondly, people who come to compare themselves with others set themselves up for disappointment. There’s always someone richer, more clever, more artistic, or more attractive.

The only comparison that matters is how well he is doing against his own previous performance.



Encourage him to try to do better than last time – to enjoy beating his own previous best – and you will have created a sound basis for inner satisfaction and self-motivation.

Putting these 10 principles into practice helps your child towards self-esteem, and a sense of competence. So in the future he will say, “I like tackling problems. I can learn on my own and I enjoy it”.

This bit is just for Dads!

FUNdamentals is for both parents. But here's some important points just for Dads.

1 Play mental as well as physical games

Girls outperform boys during the first ten years of school. One reason is that dads tend to play more rough-and-tumble games with sons than with daughters. So girls have more chance to experience pre-school activities that involve sitting down, quiet concentration and persistence – and that prepares them better for school.

Don't stop the rough-and-tumble games with either your son or daughter. But be sure to also play thinking games, memory games and do lots of reading too.

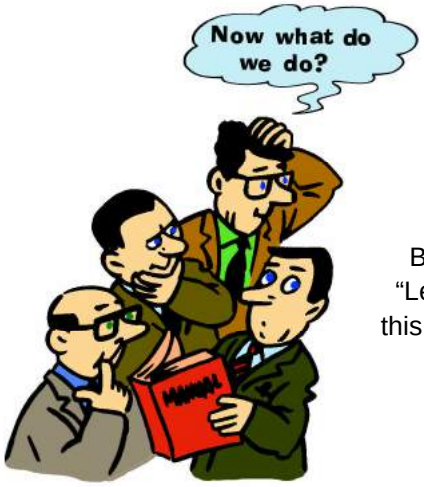
It shows, by example, that you value mental games as well as physical games – and your son learns that they are fun too.

2 Talk to other Dads

You wouldn't dream of tackling an important job at work without taking as much advice as you can. Being a Dad is probably the most important job you'll ever do. So talk to other fathers. Talk over problems, ideas, activities, games and advice.

In general, men create far fewer opportunities to talk over personal and parenting issues than women.

So take the initiative to talk to colleagues about the development of your children.



3 Become a good listener

Good listening is an art. Children, like adults, don't always say what they really mean. They often have worries, concerns, doubts and emotions that they don't know how to express, or that they hesitate to express.

Become sensitive to your child. Use phrases like, "Let me see if I really understand how you feel". "Is this what you mean?" "How can I help?"

Sons, as well as daughters, need to be able to express concerns and feelings openly.

4 Show, by your actions, that your child is your first priority

When you get home, leave your work preoccupations behind. It isn't easy, but enter the door ready to make a full commitment of time, love and attention.

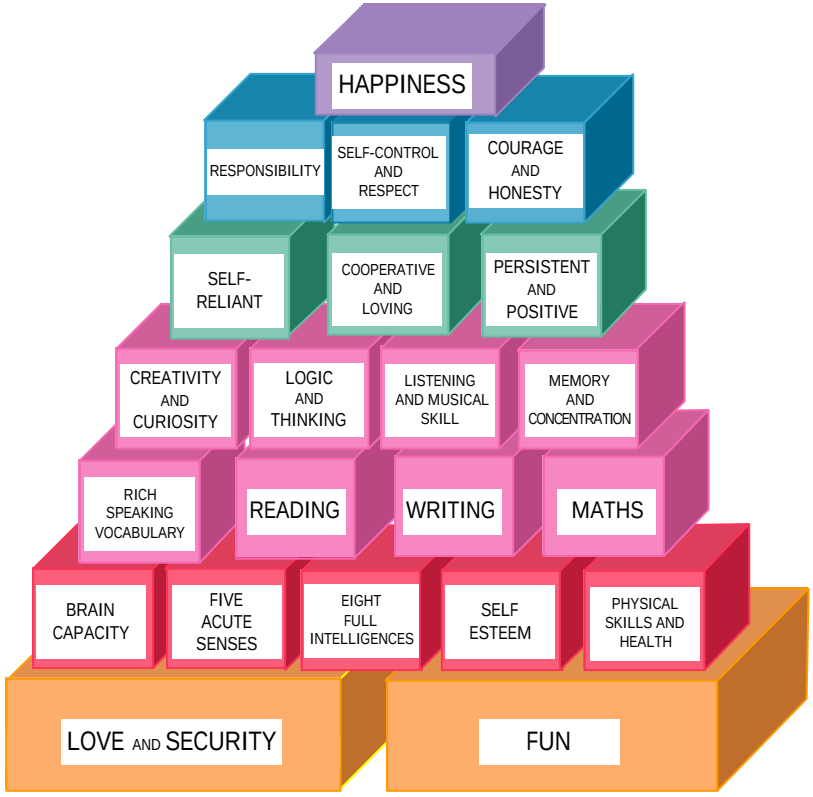
Your child's early development will take a lot of your time. It probably means giving something up. There's no way round that. She needs you to play, support, love, guide, laugh and listen. Wholeheartedly.

If time is sometimes limited, take encouragement from child experts Tizzard and Hughes:

"It may be that one episode of real concentration on a child each day, or one question seriously answered, is as valuable as hours of less focused attention."

Enter the door ready to make a full commitment of love and attention!

THE BUILDING BLOCKS



Sensitive periods

Dr Maria Montessori, the great Italian educator, believed children go through six very sensitive periods, identifying them as:-

- Sensitivity to language
- Sensitivity to learning through the senses
- Sensitivity to order
- Sensitivity to walking
- Sensitivity to small objects
- Sensitivity to the social aspects of life

The sensitive period for language begins at birth. It continues for the first three years of life.

Sensitivity to learning through the senses develops from birth, starting with the sense of sight and hearing and then, as movement develops, the sense of touch, taste and smell.

Sensitivity to order also appears in the first year, even in the first few months, and continues through the second year. It is particularly strong from about 18 months, when a child starts to move objects about and expects to find them in the same place.

Sensitivity to walking begins between 12 and 15 months. And once he is mobile he is constantly on the move.

Sensitivity to small objects starts around one year, when a child will be drawn to insects, pebbles, stones and grass.

Social sensitivity starts about two and a half to three, when your child becomes aware that he part of a group, and starts to show strong interest in playing with children of his own age.

The conclusion? Catch the sensitive periods and build on them.

Five Acute Senses

Throughout his life, your child will take in all new information through his senses.

Like you, your child has five main pathways into his brain. He learns by what he sees, hears, touches, tastes and smells. The more you help him develop five acute senses, the more effectively he will lay the pathways on which all future learning will be based, and the more you build the 'motor', auditory and visual skills that lead to reading, writing and enjoyment of the arts.

From his very first days he develops the parts of his brain that deal with vision, smell, hearing. Then, as he develops other brain pathways in sequence, he learns to talk, sing, draw, read, write, think and create.

For the first eight years of life, and especially the first four, a child has a truly absorbent mind. He simply soaks up experiences. So provide as many sensory experiences as possible.

You should certainly add games and opportunities to crawl, because many experts feel that the action of crawling – where the child uses all four limbs in a cross pattern sequence – is an important way to strengthen the pathways that link both sides of the brain.

Healthy body, healthy mind

Different parts of the brain control different parts of the body. The more movement and tactile experience a youngster gets in the first few years of life, the more thorough the base for later all-round education. Those physical and tactile experiences actually grow new branches on the billions of active cells that make up the human brain.

Jerome Hartigan, who has a Masters degree in physical education says, “If children learn to love physical exercise, that physical activity will greatly increase their ‘academic’ learning skills. Without ‘motor’ learning, the brain simply will not develop.”

Hartigan says specific movement patterns ‘wire up’ the brain. So, certain walking, running and clapping exercises lead to coordinated counting, and that in turn leads to arithmetic.

When, for example, a child can follow patterns of physical movement, it leads to making patterns on paper, and that in turn leads to writing.

The Activity Cards include lots of appropriate ideas. The common sense approach is to create a variety of activities. Hold your child in your arms, dance to music, turn her upside down, roll her over and spin in both directions.

Hartigan recommends exercises that involve grasping and stretching: swinging on safe ‘jungle gyms’ or ‘monkey bars’.

Learn plenty of action songs and rhymes that involve marching, jumping and hopping. Have fun with music, and with colour and dance, moving in rhythm to music while holding coloured ribbons or coloured paper strips.

“Get your child to do combinations of things they can remember,” says Hartigan. “Get them to throw a ball first into a red hoop, then a blue one, then a green.” Or select three different objects and say, “Can you run around the tree, jump over that little rock and crawl under the table?”. In this way, memory is developed along with physical exercise and fun.

Moving into the top 10 per cent

Dr Lyelle Palmer, Professor of Education at Winona State University in Minnesota, USA, has completed extensive studies with kindergarten five-year-olds who attend a gymnasium daily as a key part of early schooling. They carry out a simple series of routines: spinning, rope jumping, balancing, somersaulting, climbing, rolling and walking on balance beams.

In the playground, they swing on low 'monkey bars,' climb, roller-skate and perform somersaults and flips. In class they play with a wide range of games designed to stimulate their sight, hearing and touch. At the end of each year, the children undergo a test to measure whether they've developed enough to start first-grade schooling.

Nearly all have passed the tests in the top 10 per cent for the state – and most are in the top five per cent. Nearly all come from low income backgrounds.

Dr Lyelle Palmer's exercise recommendations

A regular sequence of physical activities which includes:

- log rolls
- helicopter spins
- ball catch
- upside down hanging
- forward rolls
- marching

The slow controlled movements of Tai Chi are very effective in developing body control.

He sounds a warning note, however, "We are heading for a health and fitness crisis with even young growing children adopting a more sedentary lifestyle".

Palmer, a former president of the International Alliance for Learning, emphasises that the children are not simply walking, running and skipping – the normal 'motor' activities.

"The stimulation activities we recommend," he says, "are specifically designed to activate the areas of the brain we know will promote their sense of sight, touch and hearing – as well as their ability to take in knowledge."

It is these activities we have included in FUNdamentals.

A rich speaking vocabulary

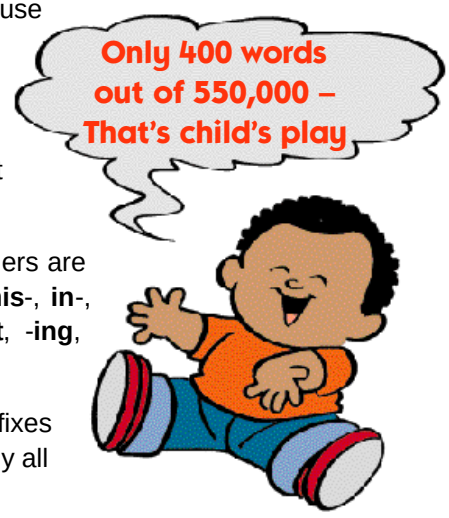
Words let us think, create ideas and reason. A poor vocabulary leads to a poor level of reasoning.

Children with poor language skills can later hit out at the world because they have no way to express themselves other than physically.

A rich vocabulary, in contrast, leads to higher levels of reasoning, creativity and communication skills. Skills that are valued highly in later life.

It all starts with a love of words, which is one of your top priorities in these early years.

Although there are over 500,000 words in the English language, something like 3,000 make up the great majority of the words we use in everyday conversation.



About 400 make up 65% of the words that a child is likely to meet in children's books. The activities and games in the Activity Cards will help develop that speaking and reading vocabulary.

Apart from the 3,000 main words, thousands of others are derived from them, using prefixes such as **dis**-, **mis**-, **in**-, **re**-, **un**- and **pre**-; and suffixes such as -**ed**, -**er**, -**est**, -**ing**, -**ly**, and -**ful**.

Once a child has grasped the meaning of these prefixes and suffixes, he's well on the way to unlocking nearly all the secrets of the language.

Talk, talk, talk to him!

To learn to speak the basis of a language before starting school is a fantastic achievement. It is achieved largely from good interaction between you and your child: speaking to him, reading books, telling him nursery rhymes. Above all, tell him what is happening, **when** it is happening.

The brain stores information in groups of ideas. So when you see a new subject – a dog, a horse, a tractor or a flower – try to build on your child's existing knowledge.

Some examples:

- "Look, there's another flower. That's a daffodil. And it's yellow."

- There's a cat. It's a fluffy, grey cat. It's a Persian. Ours is a tabby."

  The more you link ideas together, the more she will learn.

- "What a big dog! It's black, isn't it? That's a spaniel dog. What a lovely shiny coat. I think it must have been brushed a lot this morning."
- "It's time for an ice cream. Would you like a strawberry ice cream or a chocolate one? No? Alright, you point to the flavour you want in the ice cream cabinet."

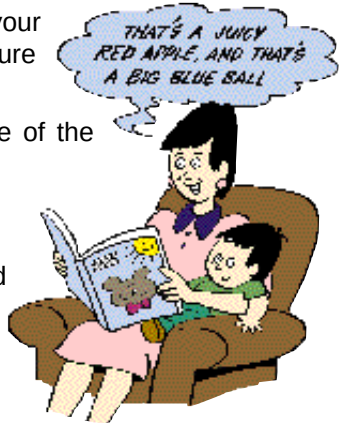
  "That one's pistachio. It's green and it's got pistachio nuts in it. Or would you like that one with all those lovely cherries in it? That's called cassata. A cassata, fine."

  Later you can remind her of the ice cream, tell her that cassata comes from Italy and point out Italy on the map. Or tell her that pistachio nuts come from Iran. So you can re-live the taste, flavour and excitement of an ice cream earlier in the day and turn it into an interesting learning lesson.

  Better still, you can make ice cream together, chopping up your own cherries or mashing up pistachio nuts so the whole episode can involve language, science, mathematics and geography combined. And fun.

- "There are some more birds. We call them seagulls. And those birds over there are sparrows." In this way, your daughter builds up the bird 'file'in her brain, and all future bird information will be linked to that base.

  The more she links the more she learns. That's one of the biggest keys to learning and recalling anything.



Read to your child every single day

Look for children's stories filled with vivid language, and introduce your family to some of the classic literature from quite an early age. But don't force this. Build on your child's interests.

Opportunities to introduce new words

Find a natural way to repeat a new word in a slightly different context within a few minutes.

Talk about what you're doing as you're doing it: "I'm going to make dinner now. Do you want to help me? Right, let's scrape some carrots. Here they are. And these are parsnips. And this is a cabbage."

Talk about the different colours and the different textures. Then as soon as she knows the difference, ask her to bring you some parsnips or carrots.

- "Now I'm dressing you. I'm putting your right sock on. Remember: this is your right leg, and this is your left. Which is your left leg? Which is your right?"

Positive encouragement

If she says, "I goed to grandma's," don't tell her that it's wrong. Instead, try: "You went to grandma's yesterday didn't you? And I went, too. Tomorrow we'll both go again."

Nursery rhymes are easy to remember

The rhythm and rhyme in these age-old stories makes them wonderful ways to acquire vocabulary. So are rhymes in books like the Dr Seuss series.

Play word games – and invent stories

As you are driving around play lots of games like Rhyming Words and My Grandmother's Cat, in which members of the family take turns in finding words that start with the same letter:

"My grandmother's cat eats munchy melons."

"My grandmother's cat eats munchy melons, meatballs and mandarins".

One of the best activities of all, however, is to regularly make up stories. One person starts the story, and others take turns at adding one sentence at a time to the communal tale.

You can also write down some of your best stories and read them back to him.

Mastering language naturally

By deliberately asking a child about what happened earlier on in the day or yesterday, you naturally develop his mastery of the past tense. Ask him to describe what happened in a book or a video.

Use photos or mementoes to trigger his recall of past trips and add to his own account with even more descriptive words.

By asking what will happen when Mummy or Daddy comes home or when Grandma visits, you get him naturally speculating, and therefore using the future tense and using words like 'probably', 'perhaps', and 'maybe'.

Foreign languages at four or five

There is no better time to learn a foreign language than in the pre-school and early years, because children master accents more easily then.

Audio tapes of songs and nursery rhymes in the foreign language start to accustom your child to the music, rhythm and sounds of the foreign language.

> "Who's the idiot who decided that children should learn foreign languages in high school? We're not paying attention to biological principles. The time to learn these is in pre-school or elementary school."
>
> **Harry Chugani**, *Los Angeles neurologist, who has studied how the brains of young children respond to new languages.*

Recording on a mobile phone or other device

Speaking is the most fundamental of all human communication tools, yet most adults list public speaking as one of their main fears. So try and help your child overcome that fear early.

Recording is an excellent start. Record sounds for your child to identify. Let him watch you as you do it; this way he understands where the sounds come from.

Record interesting voices, your child's clock ticking, water running, the refrigerator door being shut, footsteps, an egg whisk, electric shaver, an alarm clock going off, a telephone ringing, dog barking, a horn blowing.

As he progresses in speaking, encourage him to record himself, interview his friends and grandparents.

You'll be amazed how a recording improves one's own diction, and overall speaking ability. Recording helps you pick up any slovenly speech habits. It helps you correct any glaring faults or unnecessarily repeated words and phrases.

These days almost all homes have the ability to capture videos, so video him saying a nursery rhyme or even a short story and play it back – perhaps on the TV. It will help him become less concerned about public speaking in later life.

Poetry

Poetry teaches children about rhythm and is a great pre-reading activity because the rhymes help them predict the coming words. Find an appropriate anthology in print or online.

Reading – the basics for all ages

Read! Read! Read!

This is the Number One factor for him to become a successful reader. Reading then becomes associated with warmth and cuddles as a joyful part of his life.

Here are some simple tips to keep your child actively involved as you read to him.

- Stop every now and then and ask:

  What do you think will happen next? Why do you think that happened? Why do you think the little pig's house fell down? Why is baby bear's bed broken?

  Prompt her with "Because …"

In other words keep him actively involved, rather than just passively listening.

- Run your finger underneath the text occasionally so she realises reading is left to right.
- Re-read a book with simple large text with your child, rather than to your child. Let him retell the story by looking at the pictures.
- Re-read nursery rhymes and stories and hesitate before a key word so he can supply the word and 'read' it at the same time, eg Jack climbed the … (beanstalk).

Interactive reading

By stopping regularly during a storybook, you can recap together what happened and predict what might happen. Recapping and predicting are excellent future comprehension skills. eg:

- What size were the Billy Goats Gruff?
- Why did the troll let little Billy Goat Gruff past?
- If you were crossing the bridge how would you get past?
- What would it be like to be a troll?
- Was it right for Billy Goat Gruff to knock the troll off the bridge?

The keys to reading early are simple

1 The start point of reading is for your child to recognise the letters of the alphabet. We've created games for that.

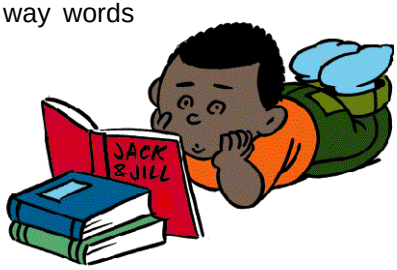
2 As we've seen, up to 90 per cent of everyday language is comprised of 3,000 words.

If he can read the first 400 of those 3,000 words, he has mastered about 65 per cent of the words he'll meet in most children's books.

3 Introduce him to written words in the same sequence as spoken words: nouns first, then verbs, then adjectives and adverbs.

And introduce those 400 beginner words in large type. Starting at 6 cm and down to 2.5 cm at about four years.

4 Play games to introduce him to phonics – the way words sound – so he can decipher thousands more.



Make games of these steps, and most children will be reading confidently before school.

We say this because there is absolutely no difference between the way the brain interprets spoken or written words.

If your child HEARS the word DADDY, then nerve pathways from his ears flash that sound to the part of his brain that translates speech.

If he SEES the word DADDY, then two nerve pathways from his eyes transmit that message to the part of his brain that interprets vision.

The brain can decode each signal equally well, except for this: in the very early years a child's visual pathways cannot pick up a word this small:

Daddy

But they can decode a word this big:

Daddy

Building on these facts we have created a series of games that progressively introduce your child to pre-reading and then reading activities. They are:

Noun Cards to label objects and as flash cards plus **Verb Cards** to be used in games. They look like this:

Phonic Fun card sets – Phonics cards look like these examples. These cards are used with the phonic games.

bat	cat	fat	hat
rat	sat	mat	pat
bet	get	met	net
pet	set	wet	yet

Key Word card sets – These cards, which look like the following example, are made up of the 400 most common words in the language and are used with the Key Word Bingo game.

above	across	against	almost
always	animal	another	around
basket	beautiful	because	began
behind	being	better	between

The Sentence Game – This is a series of beginnings, middles and ending phrases which can be combined to make a large number of intriguing sentences eg:

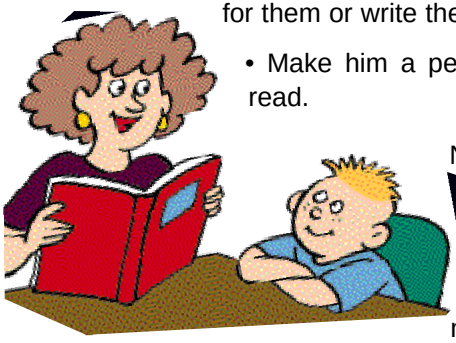
who	does what
Our family	eats dinner
The big girls	like to swim
My friend	loves to play

All these word card games are designed to be used as a background to the dozens of reading games in the FUNdamentals Activity Cards.

The cards can be printed from within your online program. Details for access are printed at the end of this guidebook.

In addition we recommend that you:

- Install a blackboard or whiteboard by your kitchen table or in your child's room.
- Write words regularly on it or a Magic Word to appear magically every morning.
- Go through a new book and pick out a few new words and then make new cards for them or write them on the blackboard.



- Make him a personalised dictionary of words he wants to read.

Natural readers tend to come from homes where reading is part of everyday life. Homes where people leave notes for each other, keep bulletin boards, telephone notes, write out shopping lists and recipes, read newspapers and refer to encyclopedias, maps and brochures frequently. When this happens, a child sees that reading is a central and relevant part of life.

In a survey of children who succeed at school, the top predictor of success was the amount of time parents spent talking with their children and the quality of that dialogue.

The second top predictor was that the child should be reading independently of school at an early age.

TV/video versus Books

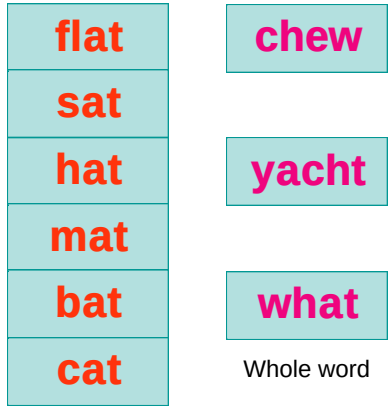
Why are books so much better than TV? Because TV only uses dialogue. It doesn't need to use descriptive vocabulary for situations and feelings. They are shown.

So a child who learns mostly from TV misses out on the vivid descriptive and sensory words which 'paint pictures' if they are read stories.

Phonics or whole words?

Forget about the argument as to which method is better: learning by phonics or the so-called 'whole-word' or 'look and understand' method. It's a pointless argument.

The 'whole-word' teachers are quite right. And the alphabet-and-phonics teachers are quite right. For a child needs to be able to see words in two quite different ways, for two quite different purposes.



He needs to be able to see the word as a meaningful symbol, so that he can understand it. (That's whole-word.) And he needs to be able to see it as an arrangement of sounds, so that he can translate it. (That's phonics.)

Only about half the words in the English language are spelt phonetically. So phonics alone will not provide anyone with the tools to pronounce or read words like cough, through, enough, bought, drought, or even key, sea, threw or chief.

So whole-word identification is vital.

So are phonetics.

As soon as children learn to read simple words such as mat, bat, cat, rat and sat, they should find it easier to recognise flat, spat and brat. But, of course, a phonic reading method alone does not help them understand what or yacht.

Phonics is about translating language. So when she knows that unsmiling means not smiling, she can work out what unmade or untied must mean.

How to read together

When your child shows he may be ready to read his first book, choose one with big print. Read it yourself first. Then sit beside him and try this sequence of reading together:

1 Give him 'the big picture' first: "This is a story about a friendly dinosaur that travels around town looking for a bunch of flowers to take to his mother for her birthday." Getting the big picture or overview first helps all learning.

2 Read the first passage, with plenty of expression, at a normal pace for about one minute – running your finger under the print.

3 Talk about the story, explaining any points, encouraging any questions.

4 Now suggest he reads the same passage with you – again with you running your finger under the words as you read them together.

5 Praise him for his effort, and suggest you read it again.

   Continue to run your finger under the words, but pause a few times for the child to provide the next word or phrase. If he hesitates or makes a mistake, pause, then supply the correct word and let him carry on.

6 At the end, praise him for reading so well. And the next time you try that section, suggest that you start and he carries on reading, with you using your finger and picking up any words to keep the pace going.

The '**pause**, **prompt**, **praise**' technique is one that also works well when older children are helping their younger brothers and sisters to read.

Schools use this method of 'peer tutoring' to help slower readers. Even though the 'tutors' are only slightly better readers, tests show reading gains of up to four years in six months, while the slightly slower readers on average gained on average two years in the same time.

From learning to read to reading to learn

One of the key steps to lifelong self-learning is to realise how easy it is to find out almost anything – from reference sources, libraries and the internet.

Even if you can answer your child's questions, it's more important to show her where she can get the information.

Start with a good children's dictionary. Make word-finding a game. When you come across a word whose meaning you don't understand, look it up together.

Talk about what you've found. You might even write the word on your whiteboard, with the meaning under it.

Invest, too, in the best children's encyclopedia you can afford – although there is a good free children's encyclopedia at DKfindout.com.

Plus a children's world atlas – there is a good app at barefootworldatlas.com.

Get your children used to using the public library. Visit it with them from early on.

All libraries have children's sections, with books, DVDs, recordings and often story-telling sessions too. Make it a place you go to often.

Using electronic devices

Help him write stories in big bold type incorporating his own name regularly. The feeling of control is a powerful motivator for him. The words appear like magic.

The earlier he can use a computer, the better. You'll find plenty of free reading games online. Recommended are:

teachyourmonstertoread.com for phonics-based pre-reading games

gb.education.com/game/ for whole word recognition

pbskids.org has a good selection of games but with an American accent

There are some online videos that read a book aloud, but normally the type size is too small to be a reading aid for your child. See justbooksreadaloud.com

So in this Guidebook we have emphasised reading games you play with your child using physical letters and words and books. Young children benefit from these most.

Writing

Learning to write is almost as easy as learning to read. In fact, some children find it easier.

The reason is twofold:

1 Children can explode into writing, virtually without any instruction, if they have the equipment and activities to develop pre-writing ability.

2 They find writing easier because they are expressing their own thoughts, while in reading they have to understand the thoughts of others.

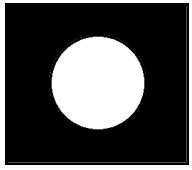
There are three aspects to writing:

How you write: the physical ability to use crayon, pencil or pen to print words, or later to write them in a flowing, linked script – and later again, to type them on an electronic device.

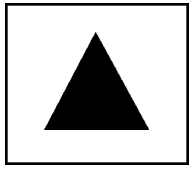
What you write: the ability to put your thoughts on paper or screen.

Getting it right: the ability to spell, punctuate and link sentences so they make sense.

All three skills can be developed naturally. Most children can master the physical skills of writing before starting school. The **FUNdamentals** program makes this easy.

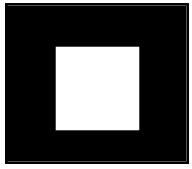


Writing starts with the coordination skills a child can learn from very early play.



The materials we recommend are designed to prepare each child **indirectly** for future writing.

Knobs on puzzles encourage the child to lift and manipulate them, coordinating his finger and thumb.



The templates that we provide via the website guide her movements and help the child to develop the ability to use a pencil. Details at the end of this book.

Making letters

Buy some of the excellent plastic letters which are available, often with raised stippled surfaces or with magnetic strips for leaving messages on refrigerator doors.

Or you can make the letters yourself by cutting them out of sandpaper.

By tracing sandpaper letters with his fingers, he develops a 'muscle memory' of the pattern for forming letters.

Make each letter about 7.5 cm (3 in) high, and glue on to cardboard squares approximately 15 cm x 15 cm (6 in x 6 in). Make two of each lower-case letter, one of each capital letter and one of each numeral from 0 to 9.

You can introduce your child to stippled or sandpaper letters at any time between three and four years, or even earlier if you'd like to associate the feel of letters with learning the alphabet.

So, when you're telling your child the letters that spell 'ball', guide his hand over the letters, in the same direction he will later write them.

Make the sandpaper letters in the same style as we have created for the early Noun or Verb Cards. It's called the cursive style. You'll notice that the letters have little 'tails' as in n or q. This makes it easier for your child to make the transition to 'joined up' writing at school.

Making shapes

From two and a half years, introduce your child to geometric insets – squares, circles, oblongs and triangles – all with knobs for easy manipulation.

Tell him the name for each shape, and use the three-step lesson sequence:

1 "This is a triangle, and this is a square."

2 "Give me the triangle."

3 "Which one is this?"

Play letter games

Have fun playing pre-writing games: tracing letters in the air with big hand movements, or tracing them by holding your child's finger and directing him to show which way the letters go – even before he starts to write.

Between three and four years, it's time for a moveable alphabet: a box with all the letters of the alphabet, preferably with the consonants in one colour and the vowels in another.

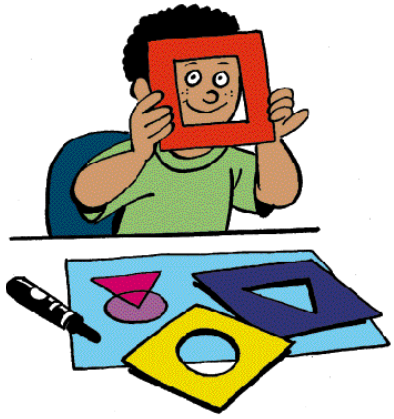
You should ask the child to tell you which words he would like to spell. Or you can suggest words that cover all the sounds of the English language.

These sounds are **all** contained in these words: *cat, dog, fish, pig, sun, bed, rabbit, leg, three, man, snake, bar, jump, hand, wagon, yard, moon, kite, zip, straw, smoke, turtle, chair, house, oil, horse, wheel, uniform, book* and *butter*.

As well as making words like this with your moveable alphabet, you can write each word on a separate page of a scrapbook, and play a game to find and write down words that rhyme with those on the list.

Using the writing templates

At the same time as you introduce sandpaper letters and the moveable alphabet, introduce the last pre-writing step: the templates that are accessed via earlychamps.com.



The child selects the frame and inset he wishes to use, a piece of paper and three coloured pencils.

Show him how to use one coloured pencil to trace inside the 'stencil'or frame. Then place the inset over the same area, and draw round it with the second colour. This means the triangle, oval or circle is now outlined in two separate colours.

Using the third colour, now show him how to draw vertical and then horizontal lines inside the shape.

Then leave him to it, encouraging him later to superimpose different shapes on each other. Such activities are designed to develop the muscular control needed for using a pencil, to stay within an outline and to move across the page in controlled movements.

The 'explosion' begins

If you start the pre-writing exercises while the child is also being exposed to big noun and verb words and labels, he will almost certainly 'explode' into writing at his own pace. His writing will develop as naturally as his spoken language did at an earlier period.

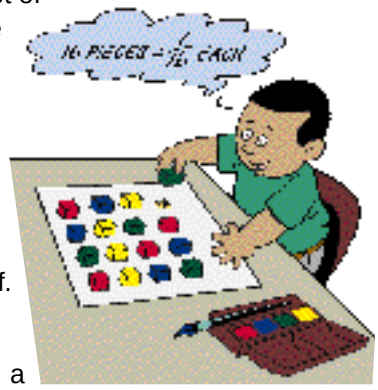
When the explosion into writing begins, make sure to have plenty of sheets, or a large roll of white paper on hand, and lots of coloured pencils and crayons.

Once your child masters the physical act of writing your priority will be to encourage him to want to write. There are ideas on the activity cards.

Making maths fun

Counting is the start point of almost all mathematics. So get into the habit of counting everything with your pre-schooler. The buttons on his coat, potatoes on the plate, steps, jumps, red cars passing on a journey, birds on a tree.

Clapping is an ideal way for her to record the concept of numbers in a physical sense. Clap and count at the same time.



Cooking is also an ideal time to talk naturally about numbers. “Let’s cut this pizza into four quarters. Let’s cut it in half first. Then cut it in half again. That’s four pieces.”

Or, “We need three potatoes. Let’s cut each one in half. That makes six halves. One, two …” .

Weigh her regularly and mark down her weight on a chart. Measure her height in the same way and talk out loud about how much extra she has grown. Ask her to weigh her toys. Which one is the heaviest? How many toys weigh a kilo?

Give him directions to find something in the garden. “Take four big jumps forwards, now turn to the left and take six big strides. Now turn and do nine hops forwards.”

This type of game is especially valuable as he is learning through his physical senses – and this ‘muscle memory’ is very strong.

Mathematics is about concepts too – like longer, shorter, more, less, heavier and lighter, nearer and further.

Maths is about sorting and classifying.

Let her experience the concepts – “This is the cold water. Let’s put some hot water in and make it a bit warmer. Now a bit more, see it’s hotter still.”

Mathematics is also about sorting and classifying. So let her help to match up socks by colour, separate shirts from blouses and sort the knives, spoons and forks.

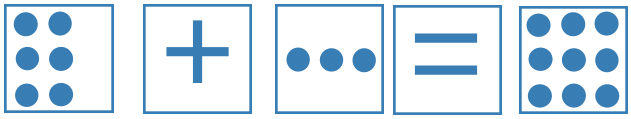
And make shell or stone collections that she can sort by size, shape or colour. Seeing patterns is a very important mathematics concept.

Get used to talking about shapes all the time. You can make shapes with a glue pen and sprinkle sand over the glue. She will come to recognise the shapes quickly because your are teaching in a multi-sensory way. You can do the same thing for the numerals – and also trace them on her back.

Only when she understands that two means 'two of something' should you introduce her to written numbers.

Do so with the special number cards described in the activity cards, which can be printed from earlychamps.com. They have dots on one side and the equivalent numeral on the reverse, so she can count or add the dots first, and then check out the number symbol on the back. Access details at the end of this book.

Teach this



before this

Play with numbers

Once she knows her numbers, playing shops or simple board games like Ludo and Snakes and Ladders is great practice.

From two years to four years make sure you and he both use the scales regularly, in the bathroom and in the kitchen, to demonstrate words such as light, lighter, heavy, heavier, heaviest, as well as to show exact measurements. And get him to weigh his toys, too. And his friends, so they can work out who's heavier and who's lighter.

Look for physical ways to demonstrate mathematics.

To teach weights, get him to lift a kilo of butter in one hand and half a kilo in the other or a kilo of flour and a half kilo. He then knows one weighs twice as much as the other and one weighs half as much as the other.

But don't turn it into a classroom maths lesson. Make it a fun part of daily life.

Cooking and baking, incidentally, also teach science, as a youngster learns what happens when you blend, heat or freeze ingredients, or turn them into liquids, and that some changes can be reversed (freezing) and others cannot (boiling an egg).

Use building blocks for stacking, and also to demonstrate words that indicate size, shape and position: on top of, under, big, bigger, biggest; small, smaller, smallest; long, longer, longest; next to, behind, under, over.

Use a sandbox or sandpit, for general play but also for pouring sand into containers, to demonstrate the meaning of words such as less, more, some, none, most, the same.

When you're doing things together, or have other children around to play, use direction words: above, below, up down, under, over, in, out; left, right, forward, backward, sideways, before, after. Suggest experiences. "See how many of you can crawl under the rug. Now go under the table, around the sofa, over the rocking horse, on to the step."

Compare opposites whenever the choice arises: up and down on the seesaw, left and right, open and closed, short and tall, on and off.

Play 'ordering' games: such as putting measuring cups in a row from the smallest to the largest, packing toys away neatly, from smallest to biggest.

Keeping it concrete applies to counting as everything else. Get him to press the floor for the lift, and count the floors as the lift lights flash on. Get her to telephone Grandma, sounding out the numbers as you touch them.

Professor Lyelle Palmer of Winona State University, Minnesota, teaches four- and five-year-olds basic mathematics by using giant white cards with big black dots – like dominoes but much bigger.

The youngsters 'play' mathematics with these giant dominoes. He stresses that all learning activities must be presented in the context of fun.

Even when your child is good at using a system like the number rods we provide, reinforce the learning with practical 'muscle memory activity', like hopping up two stairs, and then hopping up three more to make five; and reversing the process to teach subtraction.

Getting to grips with numbers

And as soon as he can count from one to nine show him how to write down the numerals.

Start with the set that you will print out from earlychamps.com, or you can trace over those numbers and cut duplicates out of sandpaper and have him trace over them with his index and middle fingers. Start with only one number at a time. Then use the three-step learning process to teach three numbers together.

1. "This number is one, this number is two, and this is three."
2. Point to each number in turn and say: "Which number is this?"
3. Say: "Can you hand me number 3?"

This is a good time, too, to introduce the concept of zero as a number. You can start by playing a guessing game, such as: "How many marbles am I holding in my hand?" And when your hand is empty, say, "None – but we can also say 'Zero,' or 'Nought.'

It all adds up

From the fourth birthday or even third, elementary counting and subtraction should be coming fairly easily, and most children should be able to count at least to 10. Many will also be able to add and subtract these simple numbers. Encourage the use of fingers or marks on paper to keep it physical.

Your own street is also a great place for youngsters to practise number skills. If she is just learning to recognise double-digit numbers, point them out to her as you are going up and down the street.

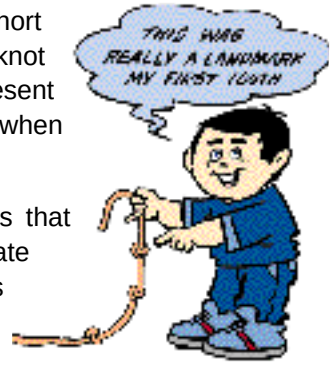
An introduction to time

One of the best 'toys' is a stop watch which lends itself to all sorts of games.

Another good introduction is an egg-timer. Let your child first watch a one-minute egg timer while the sand runs through it. Tell him that took one minute.

Then while he closes his eyes, you reverse the timer. Tell him to guess when a minute is up. When he's confident about a minute, start estimating five minutes, as in, "We'll be leaving in five minutes to catch the bus".

To give youngsters a concept of history, make a short 'timeline'. Take a long piece of rope or nylon and tie a knot every 30 cm (1 foot), one for each birthday up to his present age. Talk to him about what happened in each year (when he first crawled, walked, got his first teeth).



Get out the family photo album and find photographs that represent milestones and major events. Try and relate your family's history to key dates, "When Grandma was born in 1951, television pictures were all black and white!".

Showing timespans like this helps create an early understanding of history and time. A good alternative is to divide a large piece of paper into five sections – if he's five – and have him draw a picture of a main event for each year of his life.

The activities on the **FUNdamentals** cards will be more than enough 'grounding' so that when she reaches this stage at school, she will truly understand all the key principles of mathematics.

And that's the point. The aim is not to 'hot house' your child to be ahead of other children. The aim is to give her the confidence **and interest** in the principles of mathematics, so that she tackles all future mathematics with understanding and an expectation of success.

But even with all the numeracy games we've provided, there is no substitute for interacting with your child in the kitchen, the supermarket, the laundry, the bank and almost anywhere you happen to be.

For the basis of mathematics, like everything else, is exploring real life with all your senses – and having tons of fun along the way.

Once your child has understood the basics of numbers, there are age apprpriate on-line maths games. See especially number games at uk.ixl.com

Creativity

One of the major factors for success in the 21st century will be creativity. Huge amounts of information are now a few key strokes away on the internet. It's the people who are able to analyse that information logically and see fresh implications in it, who will have a head start.

So to encourage and extend the natural inventiveness of your child is to give her a gift that will last a lifetime.

The first five or six years will determine much of your child's willingness to create, invent, question and above all to see common situations in different ways.

Creativity spans the whole field of human endeavour. It's not just in music, art or writing, it's in cooking, laying out a garden, inventing new products and ways of doing things.

Seeing what everyone else has seen, but seeing it in a new way. That's inventiveness.

All it takes is to give your child an environment that encourages imagination.

Try any or all of the following.

- Ensure that his **room is stimulating** – are there prints and posters on the walls? Lots of art galleries and online websites sell quite cheap prints.
- Regularly **explore the countryside**, actively turning over stones and logs and seeing if you can identify different trees, tracks, crops and types of cloud.
- **Build models** together from old boxes, yoghurt pots, toilet roll tubes, bits of wood. The fact that they are not ready-made for a pre-planned model encourages imagination.
- Play games that **involve the senses** – identifying perfumes, colours, textures, tastes.
- Have daily sessions that go beyond colouring books, and include finger painting, foot painting, **play-dough modelling**, painting with bits of sponge, making prints with cut vegetables.

- Encourage **dressing up games**, stage shows and role play games – make-believe restaurants where she feeds pets or toys, schools where he teaches his teddies to count, shops where she can count money and practise her writing for price tickets, and jobs like train driver, vet, submarine captain, nurse, fireman, detective, farmer.
- Have **puppet plays** – which are especially valuable to help him put feelings into words.
- **Make up stories** together while you are travelling or just sitting together.
- Use lots of **sensory words**. So a colour isn't just green, but lime green or pine needle green. The hero in your story doesn't just stop her car, but "skids to a halt with squealing, smoking tyres".

  Your use of words like these will bring out his creative use of language when he comes to write stories.
- **Visit museums** and art galleries. These days many have excellent free activity sheets for children.
- **Make impromptu music** with items from the kitchen cupboard.
- Show her how to take a **good photograph**.
- **Plant a window box** or small patch in the garden.
- **Display his artwork** on a special board in the house or on the fridge.

A child whose parents are always wondering why and how and

"If we did that I wonder what would happen?"

has a great role model for creativity.

Thinking skills

It's surprising, but the skill of thinking logically to solve problems or to make good decisions is rarely taught in schools. Yet what skill could be more important? You are your child's best chance to grow up as both a logical and creative thinker. You will, however, need to guide him consciously.

Model problem-solving

In adult life, of course, most thinking goes on silently in your head. So it's important that you remember to talk through the decisions you make **aloud** so that he has a model to follow. As with other things, children learn by watching, listening and imitating.

In the same way, encourage him to talk out loud about how he is going to solve a problem.

The activity cards will give you plenty of ideas but if you want to develop a 'thinking' home that likes tackling problems, make sure you:

Ponder a lot

- Frequently use phrases like "What if we did this?" or "Suppose we tried that?" Good thinkers ponder a lot!
- Ask "Why?" frequently.

  Why doesn't the earth fall down if it's so heavy? Why are Daddy's eyes blue and yours are brown? (Don't worry if you don't know an answer – it's good for him to see how you look things up.)
- Visit museums and speculate what life would have been like without the inventions.
- Talk about the lives of inventors like Alexander Graham Bell (the telephone), Thomas Edison (electric light), Grace Hopper (computer programming) and Mary Anderson (windscreen wiper) and the persistence that was the key to their success.
- Speculate on things like "Do animals think? How do we know?"

  "How could you weigh an elephant?" "How does a magnet pick things up?"

  "How does a flower grow?" "Why do we need to eat three times a day?"

  "How do they make cornflakes?" "How does the water get into our taps?"

Invite her to think for herself

If she asks you a question, first ask your child, "What do **you** think?" It's thinking that develops thinking. Let her figure things out for herself. If you always supply the answer when she asks, she comes to see problems as things that other people can answer, rather than rely first on herself.

Encourage questions

When a child asks a question, praise it, "That was a good question. I like it when you ask questions."

Encourage her to justify opinions

"Was that a good film?" "Was it better than the previous one we watched?" "In what way?" "Is the wolf in The Three Little Pigs bad or just behaving the way that wolves do?"

Involve your child in family decisions

Encourage her, too, to make reasoned arguments for what she believes in. Also ensure she makes a habit of thinking through the consequences of her actions. "If I do this, this will happen. And, if this happens … this will happen", etc.

Make TV an interactive experience

When she's watched a programme, ask questions like, "What was the story about?" Why do you think (the character) behaved like that?" "How else could the story have ended?" "Shall we find out more about …?"

In other words, switch the brain on when the TV is switched off! And remember that by the time she has left school she will have watched an average of 22,000 hours of TV versus 11,000 hours of school.

The problem with too much TV is that its language is oversimple and rarely builds vocabulary. It is also passive, requiring little thinking, and research indicates it may be reducing children's attention spans.

Encourage collections

When a child makes a collection, eg of stones, shells, leaves or anything – she develops observational skills. She also starts to think about differences and similarities and putting things in groups.

Other points of view

Children naturally see themselves as the centre of the world. It's important to encourage them to imagine what it would feel like to be someone or something else.

What would it be like to be
a tiger or elephant?
How would you move?
What would you see?
Where would you be?
What would you eat?

For example, what would it be like to:

- Live in an igloo or a desert tent?
- Be a bus driver, an artist, a sailor?
- Have no food, no shelter?
- Be Cinderella when her sisters went to the ball?

Play mind games

Play lots of games that use mental imagery. Almost half the brain's capacity is taken up in processing visual images.

The more you help your child picture things in her mind, the better she will be able to remember information in later life. So ask her to picture and describe her toys as you drive along – or Grandma's front door or what we had for lunch yesterday.

Encourage lots of ideas

When you are playing a game that calls for an indeterminate number of answers like “How many types of birds can we think of?” don’t settle for the obvious. Keep going and you’ll find that you’ll eventually get to sea birds and from there to albatross, puffin, cormorant – as well as the more obvious seagull.

Creative people don’t necessarily have better ideas than others, but they usually have **more** ideas.

Use the dictionary and encyclopedia a lot. Show her that she can answer her own questions. Use reminders and check lists so he sees the value of being systematic**.**

Set goals

Set out goals and break them down into small achievable chunks, so she sees how to plan. Model a goal-achieving framework that:

1 Agrees on the goal.

2 Identifies the obstacles.

3 Thinks through the obstacles.

4 Finds a solution to each obstacle.

5 Puts the solution in the order they need to be done in order to achieve the goal.

Science and Nature

Your 21st century child will be at an advantage if he learns the basics of scientific thinking early.

Indeed, all you need to do is provide some thought-provoking ideas, because the essence of science is wondering and experimenting. And children are naturally good at that.

Your child is thinking scientifically when he:

- Becomes good at close observation, seeing small objects and insects, new types of leaves or flowers.
- Becomes good at comparing and classifying – sees the similarities and differences between, say, ants, spiders, woodlice, or different types of flowers.
- Does experiments to see, for example, why things float, which objects magnets pick up.
- Wonders how things work and (with your permission!) takes them apart or asks to see them demonstrated.
- Sustains a long term interest in a particular subject like farming, dinosaurs, weather, birds.

It's worth looking back at that list again. How can you foster those interests?

Probably the most important thing you can do is to constantly wonder aloud and experiment yourself.

"Let's look at it through the magnifying glass."

"Let's feel it (taste it/sniff it/ look at it)."

Science is asking questions

Science is asking questions – questions that mostly start with: “I wonder why …” or “I wonder how …”, then finding out and thinking.

Here are some specific ideas to spark others of your own.

- I wonder if we could grow seeds in just water? Do they need earth?
- How does a tap work?
- When the kettle boils, where does the steam go? (look at the window for a clue).
- If we breathe on a mirror we get steam. Does this mean we have water inside us?
- How much does Teddy weigh? How many Lego blocks weigh the same as Teddy?
- Does the sun always rise in the same part of the sky?
- Do all bees look alike? How do they find their way back to their hive?
- Which will float – a hair grip or a cork? Is it the size that makes things float?
- How much water does the teapot hold?
- What happens to the petrol we put into the car?
- What happens when you mix blue and yellow together?

Science is basically an enquiring mind – supported by an urge to explain things.

There are some good online science activity resources for pre-schoolers at:

funlearningforkids.com/science-activities-preschoolers

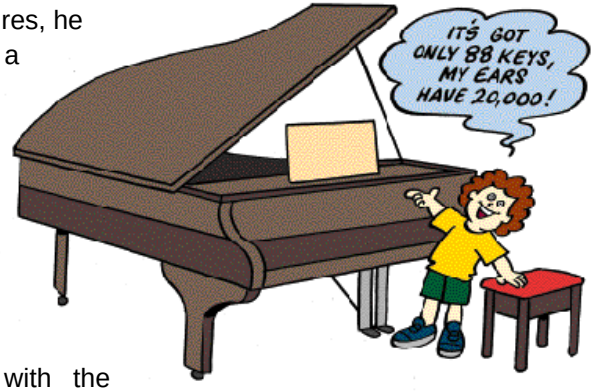
rigb.org/families The Royal Institution website

gb.education.com/activity/preschool/science

Music

Of all the languages a child could learn in life, probably none is as universal as music.

If your child is exposed to a wide variety of music from an early age – including the baroque, classical and romantic eras – and with singing from a wide variety of cultures, he has the best chance of developing a good level of musical intelligence.



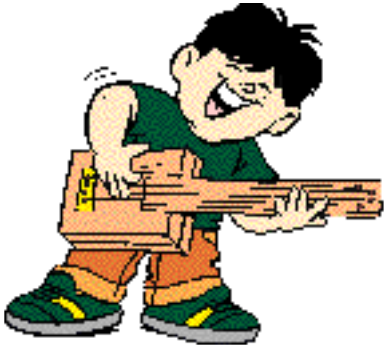
The ability to develop listening skills is also a key part of learning; and both listening and musical abilities are closely linked with the development of a child's brain.

Life is a process of organising and interpreting patterns. It starts with the patterning of movement. And very early on, from about five months before birth, the emerging brain starts to pattern its ability to process sound. The hearing system is virtually complete by four months after birth.

Movement and rhythm stimulate an infant's frontal lobes, which are the parts of the brain that will enable it to think and speak.

Those frontal lobes grow massively in the first six years of life. So stimulating the frontal lobes during these years will lay down a solid foundation for pattern recognition and fluent speech.

That's why researchers have detected a connection between musical skill and mathematical skill. They both involve the interpretation of patterns. The same area of the brain is active when a human is reading music or playing a musical instrument, as when he is working on a mathematical problem.



We've already seen how youngsters will have less difficulty learning a foreign language if they regularly hear the 70-or-so sounds of all the world's languages. In a similar way, youngsters can develop perfect pitch if they are exposed early to a wide variety of good music, and taught how to listen with concentration.

Introducing music

There are several activity cards to develop musical skills – here are some more ideas.

Scales

Sing the tonic sol-fa scale together ie: doh, ray, me, fah, so, la, te, doh. As you sing it go from crouching low down to tip toe, to dramatise the difference in notes.

Rests

Play some music and freeze whenever there is a rest to emphasise that periods of quiet are part of music.

Recognising tunes

Hum a song she knows (or sing la, la) instead of the words. Can she recognise it? Now stop when you get to a particular word. Can she say what it is?

Reverse the roles – let her stop and challenge you.

How many ways?

Take a short simple song. How many ways can you sing it? Softly, loudly, fast, slow, in a whisper, high, low. Can you hum it, clap out the rhythm, stamp the rhythm?

Rhythm

Beat out a rhythm on your steering wheel – can he copy it?

Ask your librarian

Your local library has lots of music for children – from many different countries. Use it extensively.

Some good online music activities are at:

cornerstoneconfessions.com/2012/08/the-ultimate-list-of-online-music.html

This is a collection of some of the best free musical games

learningliftoff.com/12-educational-music-games-and-apps-for-kids

This summarises several musical apps – some free, some at a minor charge.

Memory and concentration

The ability to store and recall information can be greatly aided by simple tips learned early in life. A good memory is a vital building block for success.

Here is a guide to developing a good memory.

We remember things more easily if they are associated with something we already know.

The brain appears to organise itself by linking. So when we think of cats we also link that word to other ‘cat associated’ words like lion, tiger, lynx, paws, whiskers, stalking, feline, etc.

Get your child used to seeing the connection between things. Many of the Activity Cards do that.

The brain stores information best when that information is linked to several senses.

We can remember a Golden Delicious apple more easily if we can see it, smell it, touch it, taste it and eat it, while someone tells us its name and a little of its history.

Concentrate to remember

Get your child used to looking hard and making strong mental pictures of what he’s trying to remember. For example, imagining objects balanced on top of each other will help his recall later.

Developing Memory

We remember well when we’re emotionally involved.

Almost everyone can remember the pleasant atmosphere of a family kitchen from early in life. In scientific terms, that is because the emotional centre of the brain is situated very close to the part of the brain that helps transfer information to long-term memory.

That’s why reading together cuddled up in bed builds positive associations with reading. And why it helps to make up a story to remember a group of words.

So teach him to make up amusing stories to remember a word list.

Words plus music aids memory

It is easier to remember the words of a song if you also hear the tune.

That's because the ability of the right brain hemisphere to evaluate rhythm and music is linked to the ability of the left brain to process words. Which is why poetry and nursery rhymes are easy to remember. And why we can remember the number of days in each month through the rhyme which begins: "Thirty days has September …"

So teach her the use of rhythm and rhymes and chants and jingles to remember things like her phone number or the days of the week.

The subconscious mind is important

Scientists who scan people's brains tell us that, in the period between full consciousness and sleep each night, our brain switches to a different wavelength.

They call that stage REM sleep (from Rapid Eye Movement). It's almost as if part of your brain is 'running a movie' of the main events of the day, ready to add them to the brain's existing connections.

If you can learn to relax just before you go to bed, and start thinking about the main lessons of the day, you will help that storage process.

That's why it's preferable for a young child to 'wind down' at the end of the day, and to talk softly to her about the interesting things that have happened, but in a relaxed way, so the subconscious can take over the 'sorting' process.

What shall I be? Brain surgeon? Rocket scientist? Sculptor? Why not all three?

Register it to remember it

Two of the keys here are attention and repetition.

Teaching your child to really concentrate and look hard is the first step in building a good memory.

The Cup Game and other games in the Activity Cards will encourage these skills.

Check out some online memory games – eg memozor.com/memory-game-online-free

Building self-esteem

Henry Ford put it neatly: “Whether you think you can, or whether you think you can’t – you’re probably right!”

An expectation of success is important in achieving success. A child’s self-image is a big influence on his success at learning or indeed anything else. We tend to become what we think we are.

A child’s self-esteem depends overwhelmingly on three interlocking factors:

1 Feeling loved, without reservation, for what he is, not simply for what he accomplishes.

2 Success in achieving goals she sets herself. A feeling of accomplishment.

3 The positive encouragement he receives, particularly from parents.

All too often children become what others expect. And when negative expectations are telegraphed daily through attitude, word, atmosphere and body language, then those expectations become the youngsters’ limitations.

In a 1982 study by Jack Canfield, an expert on self-esteem, one hundred children were assigned a researcher for a day.

On average, each child received 460 negative or critical comments and only 75 positive or supportive comments. Over six times more negative than positive comments!

Imagine absorbing the message, day after day that, “You’re wrong”, “That’s stupid” or “Don’t do that!”

Your child’s self-concept is composed of all the beliefs and attitudes she has about herself. And that self-image conditions him or her for success or failure.

The following guidelines will help you to build a ‘success-expecting’ self-image for your child.

A child is not his actions

Criticise the action, not the child. There's a world of difference between, "You're a bad boy," and, "I love you, but I don't like what you did". The first is a negative label, the second provides reassurance of your basic love and support, but makes clear that you disapprove of the deed.

Criticise the action, not the person.

Model positive attitudes

Most tasks in life can be viewed as problems or opportunities. Nobody likes setbacks, but how you react to them will have a profound affect on your children's attitudes. Two simple ways to encourage a positive outlook are:

1 Ask her not, "What happened today?" but "What **good** things happened today?" It starts a habit of positive thinking.

2 After a setback or mistake, ask him: "What can we learn from this?" Mistakes that are learned from are part of growth.

A recent study showed that three key elements were common to the families of individuals with high self-esteem:

1 **Each family consistently demonstrated respect, concern and acceptance –** *'love with no strings attached'.* Each child was accepted for his strengths and abilities as well as for any limitations and weaknesses.

2 **Each family had clearly defined standards, limits and expectations.** The children felt secure inside these guidelines. In other words there were known rules and they were enforced.

3 **Each family operated with a high degree of democracy.** The children were encouraged to participate, to express views, to bring up ideas, even if they differed from the parents.

The simple – but not always easy – principle of discipline: **set the guidelines firmly and don't argue about them, enforce them.**

Let her know what is required and insist that she suffers the consequences. In her eyes, arguing or explaining gets the kind of attention she's seeking.

If she breaks the rules, make sure she knows that she is choosing the consequences, eg being confined to her room for five minutes.

Let your children learn that they are capable – from their own experience

Generally don't rush in to rescue them from the consequences of their own actions unless those actions place them or others in danger.

If something goes wrong, encourage her to analyse the 'chain of events' that led to the unwanted results. "Because I did this, that happened. And because that happened … that happened", etc. Teach children cause and effect logic.

Try not to direct them into specific activities

Provide a choice and then encourage participation. Every adult in the future will need to be a self-acting manager, capable of making their own decisions. So every child needs to develop that ability early.

Encourage independence

Try not to impose your own goals, nor criticise when those are not met. Children get frustrated when adults encourage them to be independent but then object to their way of doing things.

In every activity, every game, your thought should be, "What's the **minimum** help I can give him to ensure he feels successful?"

Expect obedience and you get it

Children tend to do what you expect. If you **don't** expect them to tidy up – they won't. If you **do** expect reasonable behaviour, and communicate that in words, tone of voice – they will behave reasonably. Eventually!

Look for every opportunity to reinforce good behaviour, rather than nag at bad behaviour.

It's vital throughout the growing-up process that children receive tons of positive encouragement.

If you need to correct your child, phrase the advice positively so she knows what to do, not what not to do. A **Downer** is negative criticism while an **Upper** is positive criticism.

Downers are usually generalisations, which are are rarely true and cause resentment and defensiveness.

In contrast, **Uppers** help the child to know what to do.

Setting values

A high self-esteem needs a strong set of values. And happiness needs a strong set of values, which is why values come close to the top of our Pyramid of Happiness.

The only person who can successfully teach your child values is you. It's not on any school curriculum. Besides, your child will have spent over 40,000 hours of her waking life at home by the time she's eight, versus just 4,000 hours at school.

The initial question is "What values?"

With young children the rule is always to keep it simple, so we propose you concentrate on just five values:

- **Responsibility** – to the home, for yourself.
- **Self-Control** – for temper, for eating, for TV, for work.
- **Respect** – politeness, caring and sharing.
- **Honesty** – telling the truth, playing by the rule, not cheating or stealing.
- **Courage** – doing what is right, even when it's hard.

Here's how to make the intangible idea of values real to a child.

1 **Read or tell a story that illustrates the value.**

Aesop's Fables were created for the purpose! Then discuss the story and emphasise the value that it illustrates.

2 **Define the value in simple language and discuss why it's important.**

Often you can make the point dramatically by showing what happens when people do **not** follow the value. For example, when people are dishonest, irresponsible, or cowardly.

3 **Invent a catchy phrase that sums it up.**

For example, "We care and we share" sums up most aspects of respect quite neatly.

4 **Look for examples in day to day life.**

When you see an example, point it out. It also means you must provide a model for the value, too!

5 **Reinforce with immediate praise.**

The secret is to be lavish with praise whenever you see the behaviour you seek, and award some bonus points.

6 **Concentrate on one value at a time.**

Each value should become a 'theme of the month'. It means that every five or six months you can go back and reinforce each value. Over the years that's a lot of positive attention.

7 **Promise that you will follow the value and have her make the same promise to you.**

People make more effort to achieve a publicly announced commitment. So will your child.

Teaching values

1 **Emphasise rewards rather than criticism.**

Nagging spoils your relationship and doesn't work. Look for every single opportunity to praise and to reward good behaviour – or even the beginnings of good behaviour!

2 **Explain why each value is important.**

It's important that it's the value they obey and not you. That's ultimately the difference between the sort of internal motivation that lasts, and external motivation that ultimately breaks down.

3 **Your child learns most from you.**

Not from what you say, but from how you act.

No-one is perfect. We all get tired, depressed, overwhelmed and angry at times. Many of us swear when we shouldn't.

But when we do, we send a signal to our children that this is acceptable behaviour, because we are doing it.

There's a very telling phrase, "Your actions are so loud, I can't hear what you say." Children will do what you do, not what you say.

If you do fall below the standards that you want your child to set, don't ignore it. Apologise. Refer specifically to what you did and say, "Daddy shouldn't have done that. I'm sorry and I'm really going to behave better."

Saying 'sorry' provides an important model in its own right.

4 **Use the words for the values you are teaching over and over again**.

Words like responsible, honest, respect, caring, teamwork. And use their opposites to make things clear – irresponsible, dishonest, disrespect, uncaring.

Children need to experience the values, be reinforced in the values and have the correct words to name the values.

The reinforcement

This is the key. Make out a simple Daily List, as in the template we provide. Explain that grown-ups use the idea of a 'To do list' at work, so it's very grown-up.

When you've decided on your own list, you'll need plenty of copies – and make them look cheerful. Most copy shops do coloured copies or print them out from your computer.

You'll notice several features on the Daily List:

Something special

This can be doing something special for someone else (like looking after the baby), or a job done over and above the list, eg dust the furniture, feed the cat, or tidying up a messy cupboard. It could also be making a specially big effort at something.

Here's where the **Effort Coupon** can be 'cashed in'for say double points. (Each tick or check mark is a point.)

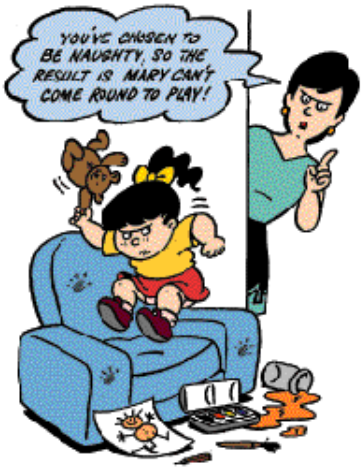
The star system

Making ✔ marks is the first motivation, but to award a star when five or more points are earned in a day is great extra visual reinforcement. Stars are cheap to buy. The aim is to get all seven stars in a week.

Total points target

The maximum number of points in a week is 35 (7 x 5) **before** the award of good behaviour points. But you can earn plenty of good behaviour bonus points.

If the target is reached, he gets the reward you've agreed in advance. That can be a visit somewhere, a favourite meal or, at your discretion, a bonus on top of his pocket money, which you could encourage him to save.



We have no problem with a cash bonus for the jobs done – after all adult work is rewarded that way, and a child then feels he has earned his pocket money.

What about bad results?

Keep the Daily List focused only on rewarding good behaviour and responsibility.

You already have a way of dealing with bad results, so don't deduct points. If you keep reinforcing good behaviour, that gradually becomes the norm.

Administering the Daily List

Like so much in child development, consistency is critical. He should fill in the chart with you **each evening** as a ritual and that gives you another chance to praise and, therefore, reinforce good behaviour or a special effort.

At the end of the week the points are totalled and the reward is made as soon as possible. Keep praising his achievement and emphasising the word 'responsibility'.

Making it memorable

Try a little ritual after each successful day like, "You're working well" with a grin and thumbs up sign.

All your child can be

This programme can help you support your child's full potential.

There are four identifiable phases in a child's life when his or her development can most positively be influenced.

The **first** phase is in the period from birth to about six. Never again will there be such a clear opportunity to create the stimulating environment that will help optimum brain development and help create the foundation for 'rounded' abilities. The added benefit is early reading, writing and maths skills.

The **second** phase is between 6 years to 12 years. The brain is still immature but begins to be able to comprehend abstract concepts. In this phase it is possible to create vital habits of logical thought.

The **third** phase is from 10 years to 15 years when a child can be taught how to learn effectively and how to retain more of what he or she has learned – critical skills that will help immediate academic success and indeed benefit a person for the rest of his life.

The **fourth** phase is from 16 years of age through to university or college. In this period students can be taught advance learning and examination skills and the ability to solve problems creatively.

At each of these ages it is absolutely vital to support your child to ensure that he or she reaches full potential. We have programmes designed to coincide with two of these four critical 'window-of-opportunity' periods'. They are:

1. **FUNdamentals** – helps you develop your child's intelligences and brain capacity.

   Ages 2-6 years – the age when the majority of his or her brain connections are being built. (Online on earlychamps.com)

2. **CHAMPS** – lets your child assess his or her preferred learning style and then teaches him how to learn in the way that best suits that learning style and retain more of what he has learned. (Also online at learntolearn.org)

   Ages 10–15 – the time when they most need to know how to learn effectively and tackle examinations with confidence. Endorsed by leading educators.

In addition we strongly believe that learning a foreign language confers many advantages in today's interconnected world. So we also offer a range of language programs in print, audio and video – and internet delivered versions.

For details of these, please check acceleratedlearning.com or contact us at the address below.

Website Activities

We have tried to make **FUNdamentals Online** as comprehensive and 'user-friendly' as possible.

If you are reading the Guidebook first, then you should know that in addition to the Activity Cards and printable Word and Number Cards and Writing Templates – listed on the opposite page – you will find these extra features:

- An activity of the day
- World Calendar – an item of interest or a festival to talk about from around the world – one for every single day of the year! Introduces even a pre-schooler to other cultures and countries.
- Travel Games – keep them purposefully entertained!
- Interactive reading and counting games
- A progress check-list – so you can spot any areas of development to which you may want to give more attention.

Accelerated Learning Systems Ltd, 12 The Vale, Southern Rd, Aylesbury, Bucks, UK, HP19 9EW
Tel (+44) 1296 631177

e-mail: sales@acceleratedlearning.com

Accessing The Word and Number Cards

When you are ready to print off support materials, follow these instructions:

Word Cards: Simply click on *Reading* from the home page. At the bottom of the full list of reading activities there is an area that says 'Downloads'.

Click on that and you will be presented with an index of all the printable Word Cards and Word Games for use with this FUNdamentals program.

They include: Noun and Verb Sets, Alphabet Bingo, First Letter Snap, Sentence Game, Key Word Bingo, Phonic Snap, Phonic Fun, Phonic Ladders.

Number Cards: Simply click on *Numeracy* from the home page. At the bottom of the full list of numeracy activities, there is an area that says 'Downloads'

Click on that and you will be presented with an index of all the printable Number Cards and Number Games for use with this FUNdamentals program.

They include: Dot and Numeral Cards, Number Rods, Number Dominos, Maths Grid 1 and 2, Number Bingo, Hundreds, Tens and Ones and Number Shuffle.

Writing Templates: Simply click on *Writing* from the home page. At the bottom of the full list of writing activities, there is an area that says 'Downloads'

Click on that and you will be presented with an index of all the Writing Templates for use with this FUNdamentals program.

We hope you and your child thoroughly enjoy all the games and activities that we have devised. We always welcome feedback from parents, so feel free to e-mail us at the address on the opposite page.