

# ENHANCING YOUR CHILD'S EDUCATIONAL PERFORMANCE

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We all wish we could produce little Einsteins. Some of us think we have the smartest kids on the block. Whether we actually do or not, there are ways in which we can improve our children's educational performance from their earliest years. A child is learning from the time he is born. One of the very first things he learns is trust or mistrust and it relates directly to whether or not he is getting his physical and emotional needs met.

When a child is fed promptly and feels warm and dry he will settle quickly. When he is handled in a gentle manner and spoken to in a loving way he feels secure. As he becomes mobile he very quickly learns the safety boundaries (e.g. what is hot and what is not). His comprehension is enhanced by his parents' expression and their tone of voice. His understanding is heightened by stories being read to him and by you pointing out numbers, colors and shapes. He knows he is pleasing his parents when he is praised for reaching progressive milestones. The more a parent talks to a child the more quickly that child gains understanding in all areas of life.

When the child reaches school age he receives instruction from another source. This does not mean the parent hands over the responsibility of training to the teacher alone. The parent should still have direct input into the child's learning. So, how can a parent endorse what their child is learning at school? By being involved. Through regular communication with the teacher, the parent will be able to oversee the child's homework with greater understanding as to what is expected and what the outcome should be. The parent will be able to extend the child's learning through related activities out of school e.g. getting library books out, studying bugs under a microscope, doing fun experiments at home, being involved in projects, but not doing it for them. The parent may discuss with the teacher how best their child seems to learn ... some learn best by hearing, some by seeing and some through hands-on activity.

There are other aspects that enhance learning. One is to live in a stimulating environment. When our children were in Middle School we, their parents, were doing university study. They were so used to seeing us studying to improve our educational level that they modeled after us without any coercion. To them it seemed like the natural thing to do. We were all learning at the same time so we supported each other. It is important to encourage our children to be inquisitive and to experiment. It is important that they use their imagination as much as possible, and be encouraged to dream big. Imagination is enhanced through reading and through free play. They need to understand that we live in a country where we can do anything we set our minds to. When it comes to educational opportunities, we can have it all.

What children do not often understand is that the way they apply themselves in their early years will surely affect them for the rest of their lives. We need to be sure they are not lagging behind at school. If this happens, they start to lose confidence in their own ability and want to give up. We need to be in tune with their performance enough to be able to head off those feelings of failure. If they need extra help, then get it for them.

Kids will not perform well at school when they are tired, bored or being distracted. They need a structured home routine, which includes rest and exercise, a healthy diet, chores and fun activities. They need a peaceful, encouraging home environment free of stress and inconsistencies. They need praise and encouragement along with direction, training and correction. They need to see that you, as parents, highly regard education and that you require them to do the best they can while they are in school. Those early years shape the rest of their lives.

If you have any comments or questions on this subject, please do not hesitate to contact us at [sally@forefrontfamilies.org](mailto:sally@forefrontfamilies.org). We invite you to also check out our website at [www.forefrontfamilies.org](http://www.forefrontfamilies.org) and our blog site at [www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com](http://www.forefrontfamilies.blogspot.com) for further assistance.