How to Improve Your Child’s IQ

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Enrich Your Mind

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Abstract: How to Improve Your Child’s IQ

"Mother Nature has plainly not entrusted the determination of our intellectual capacities to the blind fate of a gene or genes; she gave us parents, learning, language, culture and education to program ourselves with."

Ridley, 1999, p. 77

Rarely was a truer word spoken. Less than a half of what our children’s intelligences are made up of can be attributed to parental genes.¹ Developing this born-with intelligence to its fullest potential is very much up to each one of us: Parents, Expectant Parents and Parents-to-Be. It is a many dimensioned process that starts before conception and lasts until adulthood.

“How to improve your child’s IQ” very briefly explains what intelligence is, what IQ is all about, and offers you, the parents, thirty-eight different ways you can employ to boost your children’s brainpower. It takes a holistic view on child development and covers parental interventions from pre-conception until teens.

Perhaps this is the one report that no parent can afford not to read.

¹ Daniels, Devlin and Roeder (1997)

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How to improve your child’s IQ

“All recent philosophers appear to have given their moral support to the deplorable verdict that the intelligence of an individual is a fixed quantity which cannot be augmented. We must protest and act against this brutal pessimism. . . . A child’s mind is like a field for which an expert farmer has advised a change in the method of cultivation, with the result that in place of desert land we now have a harvest. It is in this sense, the only one that is significant, that we say the intelligence of children may be increased.”

Dr. Alfred Binet, the inventor of the first IQ test.

When Dr. Binet devised a test with which to measure the intellectual capacity of school children in 1904, he did not begin to imagine how far reaching the effects of his invention would turn out to be. There have been very few developments over the past hundred years or so, that sparked as much controversy, received as much scrutiny, inspired as much research and piqued as much curiosity as Dr. Binet’s IQ test.

As indicated in the quote above, Dr. Binet was opposed to the notion that IQ is fixed. He was a passionate supporter of the concept that IQ is a variable and that by being a variable, IQ could be influenced – both for better and for worse.

He compared the minds of children to farmlands … and the parents to farmers. This means that it is up to us, the parents of these children, to prepare the soil, to sow the seeds and to nurture and care for the seedlings. It is up to us to produce plants that reach their fullest growth potential. A heavy burden this may be on the one hand, but a worthy gift for our children it certainly is on the other.

The bottom line is that intelligence can be increased and that working towards augmenting our children’s IQ is and remains the responsibility of each and every parent.
What is intelligence?

Comprehending the true and full extent of human intelligence is literally not humanly possible. It would require a being at a much higher evolutionary level than our own to accomplish this with any measure of accuracy.

Many definitions have been offered over the years - nearly as many as there are experts on this subject. These include:

“Intelligence is a property of mind that encompasses many related mental abilities, such as the capacities to reason, plan, solve problems, think abstractly, comprehend ideas and language, and learn.”

and

“Intelligence is the capacity to absorb, classify and draw inferences from the environment.”

Together, these two definitions summarise the question of what intelligence is quite well, although the subject continues to be hotly debated. Suffice to say, intelligence is essential for realizing the optimum potential of every human being.

What is IQ?

Intelligence Quotient or IQ is considered the ideal measure of intelligence. Debates abound about the comprehensiveness, exclusivity, reliability and efficacy of IQ scores as a measure of intelligence. But there is agreement that in the absence of any better tool, IQ reflects the ‘knowledge potential’ of a candidate at a specific moment in time.

2 http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Intelligence
Lewis Terman (1916) devised the following scale for classifying IQ scores, which is still in use today:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IQ Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Over 140</td>
<td>Genius or near genius</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>120 – 140</td>
<td>Very superior intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>110 – 119</td>
<td>Superior intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90 – 109</td>
<td>Normal or average intelligence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80 – 89</td>
<td>Dullness</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70 – 79</td>
<td>Borderline deficiency</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Under 70</td>
<td>Definite feeble-mindedness</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An interesting and inexplicable phenomenon is the fact that IQ is increasing – generation after generation. James Flynn was the first person to notice this and the first person to make cross-generational comparisons. The Flynn-effect has subsequently been confirmed by many different studies. An average increase of more than three IQ points per decade was measured through a variety of intelligence tests, in almost every type of group.

As parents, we realise that today’s children will need to operate in an increasingly competitive environment and that a ‘survival kit’ would definitely be welcome! Perhaps then it would be better to expend our energy on looking at the variety of factors we can influence in pursuit of increasing our children’s intellectual capabilities.

There are four basic principles that we as parents need to subscribe to when working with our children towards achieving a higher IQ:

- Every child is born with intelligence. It cannot be otherwise. Only the ability to utilize or showcase the intelligence varies.
- Intelligence can be increased.
- You cannot achieve results without the child’s consent. So, take him or her into your confidence.
- Use a step-by-step approach and be patient.
- Intelligence is not determined by genetics only. No child is an exact replica of either parent. He or she is a little more than both.
Thinking creatively is humanity’s built-in capacity for unlimited improvement. The limit of human development can never be found. If we think of IQ as biologically fixed, then those thoughts (a) violate the facts and (b) have the unintended consequence of discouraging too many of those who may wish to improve themselves. I see Inventive Quotient, I.Q. as a giant step forward in helping parents look at their children through fresh lenses.”

Preston King, Distinguished Professor of Political Science, Morehouse College and Emory University, Atlanta

Is intelligence multifaceted?

There are several multiple intelligence theories, some simple and some highly complicated.

For the purposes of this report, we will work with three types of intelligences – visual, auditory and kinaesthetic. The entire complex of human intelligence draws from these categories and forms interesting connections between them:

- Visual intelligence represents the capacity to identify objects, their placement, and interrelationship in the physical context.
- Auditory intelligence denotes the capacity to identify sounds, to classify them according to source, to replicate them and to discriminate between similar and dissimilar sounds.
- Kinaesthetic intelligence means the capacity to use mechanical action by hands and feet to feel the structure, texture and shapes of objects.

Sub-classifications are spatial, verbal, logical and mathematical intelligence.

In every human being, one type of intelligence predominates. Over and above the fact that this diversity ensures that life remains interesting; it is also nature’s way of preserving the biological basis of survival and functioning.
Intelligence is expressed early

As a parent, you need to study your child closely from a young age, because the predominant intelligence is often expressed as early as infancy. A child that calms down to a mother’s soothing lullaby, or shows an interest in musical toys or rattles, tends to have auditory predominance. A child that smiles very easily - even at strangers -, who is attracted to bright colours and always seeks visual stimulus in the surroundings, generally has visual predominance. A child that handles toys and explores by touch often has kinaesthetic predominance.

Biologists have theorised that the development of predominant intelligence starts in the mother’s womb. Perhaps what we used to consider as old wife’s tales on eating and lifestyle habits during pregnancy, should not be scoffed at anymore: A calm temperament, a pleasant and happy home environment, plenty of positive stimuli, harmonious music and a nourishing diet have been scientifically proven as contributory to brain development during the antenatal period.

The 38 things we can do to increase our children’s IQ

The brain consists of millions of nerve cells that communicate through a biochemical mechanism at the synapses. Therefore, anything that influences the physical structure or the chemical pathways will also directly influence brain function.

1. Watch what you eat
Food has an immediate impact on the brain. The brain uses nearly 20% of the body’s requirement of glucose and oxygen. When deprived of both for even a few minutes, the effects can be disastrous, or even fatal. Free radicals play havoc with the brain’s connectivity, whereas anti-oxidants and omega-3 fatty acids improve alertness.³

Include fresh fruits and vegetables that are rich in trace elements. Besides green leafy veggies, offer your children a variety of colours in foods like capsicum, pumpkin, cabbage, tomato and mangoes. These are excellent sources of anti-oxidants and they

³ http://www.ajcn.org/cgi/reprint/80/6/1650.pdf
stimulate the secretion of neurotransmitters, which improves concentration and memory. Excessively sugary foods and high salt should be restricted.

2. The power of music

Ultrasound studies have shown that at 16 weeks gestation, the foetus can respond to outside sound (Hepper, 1994, Shahidullah & Hepper, 1992). The results of a number of studies suggest that playing music to babies in the womb helps build the neural bridges along which thoughts and information travel. Music influences both the left and the right side of the brain. For this reason these babies tend to show better spatial and mathematical development, as well as creative ability after birth.

Music is not only beneficial during the antenatal stage. E. Glenn Schellenberg from the University of Toronto, conducted a study on the effect music has on the IQ of children. They selected 144 first graders who had never had music lessons before, and offered them free music lessons over the course of one year. This was the music group. They also made use of a control group, which they called the non-music group. The IQ of the non-music group rose by about four points from pre-test to post-test. The IQ of kids in the music group rose by seven, a significant improvement.

3. Nurture the intelligences

Brain function is not fully established the moment a baby is born. Human existence would be simple if this were the case! From his or her first cry, the baby’s brain reaches out, inviting stimuli and developing responses. Initially this is a simple quest. Even feeding is a lesson in developing an appropriate response to hunger.

From the time your baby is born, provide a variety of experiences that will stimulate the growing brain. By employing visual, auditory and kinaesthetic stimuli, you will be offering your baby the opportunity to develop these multiple intelligences. By being patient and gentle, you will ensure that your baby’s experience is positively reinforced.

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4. Get the whole picture
The brain has specific areas that perform particular functions. It is obvious that activities aimed at honing a certain area will result in that area being better developed.

For this reason, experts suggest the need for holistic development of the whole brain, as opposed to focusing on specific areas only. Studies have shown that holistic development leads to improved performance, whilst preventing the brain from aging prematurely.

Look for fun activities that meet these criteria. In addition to being hugely beneficial for your child’s vestibular system, dancing, martial arts and outdoor activities stimulate auditory, visual and kinaesthetic development. Martial Arts go even further, but more about that later on in the report.

5. The Vestibular system
This deserves more than a passing reference. The vestibular system serves as the foundation on which you build your child’s higher processes. The vestibular system governs our sense of balance and position in space. It integrates the various sensory inputs the child receives via his or her senses. The vestibular system processes these inputs and offers the result to the higher processes in the brain for interpretation, response, classification and so forth. That is why the information put forward by the vestibular system must be ‘correct’ and ‘appropriate’.

If there are issues with the vestibular system, it can manifest in behavioural disorders, learning disorders (literacy, numeracy), sensory disorders and so forth. It can also hide intelligence. Even if your child has no apparent problems with his or her vestibular system, there is great benefit to be had from exercises that support its development and growth. The outcome may be your child’s intelligence shining through even brighter than before.

Some exercises are offered on the following websites:
http://www.fernridgepress.com/exercises1.html
http://www.fernridgepress.com/autism.exercise.phases.html
6. Avoid raising artificial obstacles
A child’s brain is like a sponge and it absorbs from its surroundings. Similarly, it has
tremendous creativity that does not conform to the strait jacket of ordinary or established
norms. So give your child lots of freedom to explore. Let him or her choose the activities
that interest them most. Besides that, offer a good mix of doing, playing and learning.

7. Try not to curtail thinking in the name of “correctness”
Most parents commit the sin of ‘thinking for their child’. That is, they impose the adult-like
thought process on their child, thereby depriving him or her of the excitement of the
different types of thinking processes. For example, when they hand out colouring sheets,
they often instruct the child about which colour is suitable for which object in the picture.
This means that the child merely follows the instructions and makes no attempt to think.
What a wasted opportunity for creative thinking!

Alternatively, hand out the sheets, suggest they colour objects that they normally identify
with a specific colour and for those which they are unsure, they could use their
imagination. This means the child draws on his or her experience, uses memory to
recall, and also learns the critical skill of problem solving.

Don’t worry about an occasional apple turning blue or the sun turning out to be black. It
is just an expression of the child’s fantasy. Avoid reining in the free flow of fantasies.
Some of the greatest minds in history discovered the truth first as fantasy.

For slightly older children you could ask for an explanation about why they chose a
certain colour.

8. Use age-appropriate play methods
For the first four or five months, the infant brain collects experiences by being in the
proximity of the primary caregiver. Hence, it is important that he or she remains as
physically close as possible. In mammalian species, a mother’s handling of the offspring
has shown to improve overall maturity and early attainment of independence. Therefore,
a new parent should talk softly to their baby when it is awake, play with it, sing to it, and
give it an overall sense of security. An infant whose cries are attended to appropriately
and who receives consistent attention from his or her parent grows up with the desire to learn more.

When your child begins to take an interest in sounds, introduce musical toys and rattlers. Sing lullabies and play CDs containing a wide variety of music. The area of the brain that responds to aural impulses is the earliest to develop. When this section is exposed to enough stimuli, it improves the ability to focus and the capacity to discriminate.

When your child is a little older and can sit with balance, offer toys that improve kinaesthetic abilities. A simple set of stacking rings or toys requiring the placement of shapes in a matching slot enable your child to appreciate different shapes and sizes. Besides toys, try offering as many different types of objects as possible. These could include fabric of different textures, firm and soft fruits, books of different sizes and shapes, and so forth. This experience improves the ability to perceive different textures. Take care to avoid fragile or sharp objects.

9. Visual stimulus - the right companion
Along with audio and handling abilities, your child should receive pleasant visual experiences. So, introduce him or her to colour at age seven or eight months. Even if they are not able to talk yet, ask them to point to the colour when you ask. The colour centre of the brain has critical connections with the areas responsible for higher thought functions. In fact, early exposure to colour improves imagination in children and enhances spatial judgment, lateral thinking and mathematical abilities. These are all right-brain specialties.

10. Do not think maths is equal to intelligence
There is a longstanding myth that intelligence is equal to great arithmetical abilities. Did you know Einstein failed in maths at school? He was a great musician and scientists have postulated his genius could be linked to the area of his brain that appreciated music. His exemplary musical ability reflected in his imaginative thinking process – one that led to the foundation of quantum physics.

Think of mathematics as a tool that guides a logical thought process. Try not to focus purely on improving number crunching skills in your child. Anyone can do that with ease.
What is more relevant and useful to your child is the realisation that mathematics is an exploration of patterns in numbers, shapes and phenomena.

Strive to instil mathematical concepts, such as less and more, big and small, similar and dissimilar, early on. Always use familiar examples from the home environment.

With children over the age of two, you can start teaching them to count. Take care not to scare or overburden them - only do as much as interests them at that point in time. Be patient.

11. Move from concrete to abstract
Children only complete developing the ability to effectively work in abstracts at around the age of eight or nine. For this reason, it is important to make use of physical material to stimulate your child. Using material that the child is familiar with is best.

If you want to teach your child to count, use attractive objects such as coloured balls, toy farm animals or toy cars. When you progress to addition and subtraction, continue using concrete objects to communicate these abstract concepts.

The same holds true when you start introducing your child to geometrical concepts. Allow your child to paste matching cuttings of colourful paper on drawings. This creates consciousness about congruence and exactness. Mathematics is an exact science. One needs to be precise in measurements and calculations. By doing simple exercises, this quality can be developed.

12. Practice makes perfect
Children learn best only when they get the chance to participate in different activities. An infant’s brain is incredibly hungry for new experiences. By allowing your child to learn by doing, you will not only be providing them with an opportunity to explore, but also to sharpen their problem-solving abilities.

For infants, as we mentioned before, the ever-popular stacking rings and cups improve kinaesthetic abilities, as well as judgment on different textures. With slightly older
children, give them the chance to solve jigsaw puzzles and to construct objects according to plan by using building blocks such as Lego etc.

They might not be successful in the initial attempts. Remember, our aim is not to achieve the correct solution but to teach them the pathway to solving a problem. Never thrust the solution on the child.

Constant practice also develops perseverance, an essential quality in surviving competition. Remember Edison’s maxim on inspiration and perspiration? Nothing worthwhile can ever be achieved without regular, sustained hard work. Even when your child starts going to school, this quality will help ensure that things like homework will not be considered a laborious affair.

13. Communicate with your child

This might seem obvious, but the truth is many parents simply do not communicate properly with their children. This results in a disconnect between parent and child.

Never assume that your child would or should see your point of view. Rather, look at the issue from a child’s perspective. After all, your child’s thinking process is not conditioned to work in a uni-dimensional manner. And perhaps it never should be! It is exactly this openness that we should strive to preserve and perpetuate.

The bottom line is: allow your child to articulate his or her views and thoughts. Listen closely to what he or she feels about a certain situation or problem. Empathise with their choices and their reasoning.

By allowing your child to freely express his or her thoughts, you are building self-confidence. A high level of self-esteem is believed to stimulate secretion of positive neurotransmitters that prevent depression, ageing and schizophrenia.

A sunny outlook allows the brain to think clearly. When this cheerfulness becomes part of the child’s temperament, you are sure to have a well-adjusted individual.
14. Verbal skills please
Your child needs to build an excellent vocabulary and the process should begin pretty early. Irrespective of language, verbal skills require a long-term approach. Language learning is a unique ability of the human brain, and research has shown that children have the propensity to learn up to six languages before they reach five years.

Use a methodical approach to expose your child to stimuli first in his or her mother tongue and then – if you so desire - other languages in turn. Too intensive an exposure could lead to loss of confidence and even stammering.

Start with simple words to identify objects. Use flash cards or illustrated books to teach words. Audio resources improve pronunciation. Move at a steady pace and never talk down to your child.

With slightly older children, you could play Junior Scrabble. It is both educational and fun. Also introduce them to graded reading texts. When a child appreciates the joy of reading books, he or she will never be easily bored or distracted. Reading hones the imagination and enables a child to articulate better – both verbally and in writing.

15. Never underestimate memory
These days there is a growing line of argument that teaching memory techniques is not so important after all. Yet we come across so many situations where only our memory bails us out. Scholastic tests for admission to university courses or tests for employment seek to evaluate our memory skills by reproducing information that we have learnt earlier in our lives.

There is no real argument about the usefulness of a good memory! The only point that needs to be made relates to how memory is conditioned. Memory acquired by rote learning is of no use. Memory as a function of critical thinking and the ability to master large volumes of information by applying judgment on what is essential and non-essential, is relevant.

A child’s brain is a fertile ground for teaching memory skills because it absorbs information like a sponge. The author’s son knew the capitals of 26 countries, he could
name all the USA States and identify world leaders by means of their pictures alone by the time he was three. The relevance of the feat or its usefulness at that age is immaterial. What is relevant though is that the child’s ability to focus, when being taught, has improved dramatically. The skill of focusing, which he acquired at the age of three, translated to the ability of being attentive in class in later years.

Good memory comes from repetitive teaching. Repeating from memory improves concentration. Moreover, teaching memory skills by activity-based learning or board games is a panacea to behavioural challenges like ADD or ADHD.

“Genius is nothing but continued attention”

Claude A. Helvetius

16. Mum's the word
Back to the diet … Mothers-to-be can help their children get a head start in an IQ sense, by following a diet that is rich in choline and folic acid.
Folic acid occurs in green leafy vegetable such as spinach. Beans, peas, sunflower seeds, certain fruits and yoghurt are also rich sources. It can prevent anaemia in expectant mothers during pregnancy. If used from before conception, folic acid also helps prevent congenital malformations such as Spina Bifida, in the baby.

The good news is that folic acid is helpful for older children and adults too. The results of a study published in the Lancet\(^5\), showed that short-term memory, mental agility and verbal fluency are improved if sufficient folic acid is consumed. This is a really good reason to stock up on the green vegetables and to encourage the whole family to enjoy a tub of yoghurt instead of indulging in a tub of ice cream.

Choline is a natural amine found in the neurotransmitter acetylcholine. Soy, egg yolks and cooked meats such as beef, turkey and chicken are major sources of this essential nutrient. Some studies have shown that women who take additional supplements of choline while they are pregnant, make it easier for their child to learn later in life, thus effectively boosting their child’s IQ. For this reason, mothers play an important role in raising the IQ of their child before birth.

\(^5\) http://www.thelancet.com/journals/lancet/article/PIIS0140673607601093/abstract
17. The games we play

Children start developing foundational skills for language, maths, reading and problem solving very early in life. Most of the learning at this age takes place through interaction with other children and adults, as well as by playing learning games.

There are various toddler games that have different developmental advantages. Age-old favourites such as skipping and hopscotch, promote coordination as well as counting skills. Dominos help younger children grasp the concepts of matching pairs and basic addition, which are great for memory and cognitive skills.

Colouring and playdoh are excellent for fostering creativity in your child, whereas a simple jack-in-the-box is a fun way to learn cause and effect. Besides being entertaining, playing games are an enjoyable method to use when providing your child with a head-start on developmental skills. Educational toys are a great means of improving a child’s IQ.

Today educational toys and games are being introduced into regular school curricula for lower grades to cultivate a love for learning, through showing children that learning can be fun and exciting. Once a child develops an interest in learning, he or she will probably remain positive towards education for the rest of their life.

18. Encourage curiosity

Encourage your child to explore their environment. Unless what they are doing is potentially dangerous, don’t stop him or her from touching and examining different household items.

Children are naturally curious. To them the world is one big enchanting mystery waiting to be explored and discovered. “Why” becomes the most frequently used word among three year old children. When you are asked the “why” question, try and answer the question the best way you can. Be prepared for follow-on “why” questions! It does not end until finally there are no answers left. Try and remain patient. This will encourage your child to come back with more questions. The “why” stage is essential for: Increasing your child’s knowledge, his or her powers of deduction and ultimately, his or her brainpower.
Children learn about the world and build intellect by exploring and absorbing lessons experientially. Studies show that children progress much faster when they are given the freedom to explore their home environment and examine everything they come across. Preschoolers and toddlers are known to benefit from high levels of adult interaction and encouragement.

Encourage children to ask questions. This is the only way to get answers to life’s most important questions. Do not instil a fear of ridicule in them. This could have disastrous effects later on in life. A child that is confident and open to new ideas, situations and circumstances will be able to face other challenges well.

Another tactic is to ask your child questions. Get him or her to think in logical terms. The answers do not always have to be right. But it will get them to question things around them rather than just accept the obvious. For example:

- Why do clouds appear to move?
- Why does a day only have twenty four hours?
- Where does a rainbow end?

A child who is encouraged to think will be a child who is encouraged to live confidently. The more they question, the more they learn.

“Patience is a necessary ingredient of genius”.

Benjamin Disraeli

19. The power of the written word

Inspire a love of reading in your child. Even when your child is very small, it is important to read to him or her every day. Buy colourful books and keep them in a place where they are accessible to small hands. Encourage your child to pick up any book he or she wants and flip through the pages. Read aloud from billboards and shop fronts, as you drive around town with your child. Read food labels aloud when you are shopping together. Teach your child to associate pictures with words. Your child will quickly pick
up on this exciting game and could soon be on his or her way to becoming a voracious reader.

Good reading skills will serve your child well in their school years. Children who learn to read early are able to better grasp the subjects presented in school. Poor reading skills, on the other hand, have an undesirable effect on almost every subject.

When you read to your child it will open up a hitherto inaccessible universe. Imagine the places you can travel to, the people you can be, the things you can do - all within a few pages. The love of reading will continue to broaden your child’s horizons into adulthood.

Reading is a wonderful hobby that can keep you child occupied for hours: An activity that should be preferred to sitting in front of the TV.

20. The power of the spoken word

Talk to your child non-stop from the time he or she is born. Although no parent can resist the urge to indulge in baby talk, discipline yourself! Don’t forget to talk to your baby in well-formed sentences. Children pick up on words very fast and the wider the range of words you use, the faster your child will start talking in grammatically correct sentences that include multi-syllable words.

Language is one of the most important components of learning. Children, whose language learning is delayed for any reason, are at higher risk for early school failure. The amount of language that a child is exposed to in real life situations is vital to the development of the child’s fundamental intellectual, social and linguistic skills.

It is important to note that it is the exposure to real life language that has a positive influence on a child, not the exposure to radio or television. One of the best things a parent can do to boost a child’s IQ is to expose 12 – 15 month olds to a rich social life with ample interaction between adults and children of varying ages.

When children hear you talk, they learn. They learn about the world around them, they learn how people interact with each other and they learn how to communicate with the world. Today, most of the world’s greatest leaders are expert orators. A child that has
excellent language skills will certainly have an advantage when communicating his or her thoughts in a classroom.

We mentioned a little earlier that children have the ability to pick up several languages while still young. Unfortunately this ability leaves us as we grow older. Adults need to put in extra effort when it comes to language recall – to children the ability to absorb and recall language comes naturally and easily. Consider exposing your children to different languages so they can learn as they grow.

“The limits of your language are the limits of your world.”

Ludwig Wittgenstein

21. Play word games

Children thrive in environments that encourage learning. They learn better and faster, and their brains function at much higher levels than children who live in non-stimulating environments.

Encourage your child to play word games like Junior Scrabble. Doing crosswords also helps keep the mind alert and increases IQ Levels. Many people who are mentally gifted have not necessarily had a formal education. Studies have shown that these people have enhanced their own latent mental talents and abilities by reading, playing word games and so forth.

So, keep the TV away or slot in for just an hour or so a day. It will not really do much for your child’s IQ. The next time you head for the toy store, arm yourself with lots of word games. Ensure that these games are age appropriate, as you don’t want your child to become frustrated with a game that is meant for a higher age group. Select the right game and show an interest in it yourself. This will get your child excited about it.

Word games can also be a lot of fun for the entire family and can provide wonderful bonding and healthy competition between siblings.
22. **Play strategy games**

Encourage your child to play mentally stimulating games such as Sudoku and Chess. Even though these games may not impart any specific knowledge, they are great for developing basic thinking skills.

Chess is a brain exercise and also an exciting and fun way for children to improve their strategic abilities and critical thinking skills. It develops concentration and memory. Every piece is governed by different rules, so players have to keep track of all the potential moves that are possible for each and every piece on the board. This helps them improve their cause and effect, as well as logical thinking skills. Given the amount of variables and the endless possibilities, creativity also plays a large role in any game of chess.

To make it even more interesting, each game of Chess is different from the previous one and potentially requires a child to seek solutions different to the ones he or she used in the previous game. This teaches your child invaluable life lessons in problem solving. Your child will automatically draw parallels between a game of chess and real life and learn that there are numerous ways to approach and find a solution for any one problem.

All strategy and memory games provide precious mental stimulation for your child. Strategy games encourage thinking, as you move to higher and more difficult levels. Memory games force your child to improve memory skills. Equip them with the power to succeed later in life. It all starts when they are young. So don’t let the best learning years of their life slip away.

23. **Breathe!**

Teach your child the art of deep breathing. This is one of the most effective and easiest ways to improve the way in which the brain functions.

Lower levels of oxygen in the blood are known to decrease brain function. When your child breathes deeply, more oxygen enters the blood and the brain, resulting in increased brain performance. Deep breathing also helps your child to relax, which allows the brain to absorb and process information better.
24. Exercise increases brain power

As little as ten minutes’ exercise a day can do wonders for the brain. It pumps up the blood and increases the blood supply to the brain improving brain power by almost 30%. Any aerobic activity is great for boosting IQ levels - be it walking, running, swimming or a robust game of soccer.

So, encourage your child to get some exercise. Though the tendency is to encourage children to sit with their books (which is good), ample attention must also be paid to their physical growth and general health condition. A healthy and active child will be able to grasp concepts and ideas when compared to an unhealthy child.

In other words, the idea is to develop an all-rounder. Encourage your child to be on top of his or her studies, as well as participating in the playground. Some children may have an innate interest in sports, while others may not. The challenge lies in developing interests outside their comfort zone, without pushing them over the edge.

Exercise can be fun! Walking the dog, riding a bike, and skipping games all are excellent ways in which a child can increase his or her physical activity levels. Children quickly respond to playfulness exhibited by a parent. Initiate play whenever you can. Every little bit helps.

25. Tender Loving Care

Children respond to touch. Studies show that babies, who are hugged and cuddled a lot, often have higher IQ levels than children who do not get enough physical attention. This is because the human body is conditioned to be receptive to touching and the brain responds positively to the sensation of touch. A brain that is happy, functions better, and is more open to absorbing any learning experience that comes its way.

Therefore, the best gift that you can give your child is a loving and free childhood. ‘Loving and free’ does not mean that you should encourage poor discipline. Children need the security offered by routine and reasonable boundaries. ‘Loving and free’ means spending quality time with your toddler or child. Encourage them to express their views and opinions. Get them to talk to you about their fears and interests. Tell them that you love them. Children need to hear this.
A room full of toys does not make a child feel loved, but a 10 minute talk undisturbed by TV and other distractions, most certainly does. Give you child a childhood that they can look back on with joy. It will be the best investment you can make for the future.

26. The power of positive reinforcement
Do not underestimate the power of positive reinforcement in boosting your child’s IQ. Have you ever heard the maxim “you get what you expect”? Children who are constantly praised for their achievements, as well as their endeavours, feel encouraged to experiment more in order to earn more praise. Positive reinforcement encourages children to challenge themselves and set higher targets for themselves, leading to improvement in overall performance. They also start developing an “I CAN” attitude!

When your child does well in school you can offer a reward. It doesn’t have to be expensive. A trip to the zoo or even an ice-cream can make a difference. Also set goals so your child knows what to target. Set reasonable goals which are not impossible for your child to achieve. Goals will help them plan ahead and also give them a sense of direction. When the goal is met, the reward becomes significant.

Wherever applicable, rewards can also be set for effort. If you child is weak at maths but has made a significant effort to get a higher grade, offer the reward as encouragement to do better next time. Your child should be encouraged to keep improving skills at every milestone. As a parent, pay special attention to your child’s strengths and weaknesses. This will help you gauge where your child may need help.

27. Reduce stress levels
Make sure the environments at home and school are as stress-free as possible. Studies show that children who are under constant stress tend to academically under-perform. This is because stress affects the hypothalamus of the brain, which is also the seat of learning.

Even if your family situation is not ideal, make an effort to give your child a well balanced, ordinary childhood. A house that is filled with tension and fights will leave its mark on your child.
As a parent, it is also important for you to find out what is happening at school. Is the school right for your child? Do they accept him or her well? Does he or she have friends or is he or she a loner? Moving to a new school can be quite traumatic for an introverted child. Get your child to talk about his or her day. Find out if there is a bully that is picking on your child. These little factors go a long way towards ensuring that your child is not stressed. A stressed child will not be open to learning.

**28. Sleep on it**

Children need a minimum eight hours of sleep every night to achieve peak performance and boost brainpower. Quality of sleep is just as important as the quantity. Make sure your child sleeps in a room that is conducive to a good night’s rest and that the bed is as comfortable as can be. Extensive studies carried out on the benefits of sleep show that too little sleep weakens the powers of recall in any individual.

Children tend to ‘act up’, fidget and become distracted if they do not get sufficient rest. So, although your children would love to watch late night TV, it is up to you as a parent to consistently enforce the bedtime rule. A warm glass of milk will help your child rest peacefully. If your child has difficulty getting to sleep, it may be best to approach a medical practitioner for advice.

**29. Meditation**

Meditation and breathing go hand-in-hand. Teach your child some simple meditations, while focusing on the art of breathing deeply. The state of mind that is achieved (alpha-state) during meditation, promotes creative problem solving. Meditation should be done for a few minutes everyday in a quiet place, free from any disturbances.

You can practice meditation as a family activity. Allot some time every day for this activity. It may seem a little boring to a child, so it’s your responsibility to build excitement around it. Meditation will help your child relax and concentrate better. It also increases the ability to recall information.
There will be many challenges that your child will have to face as he or she grows up. The arts of deep breathing, mediation and relaxation will help your children cope with difficult situations later in life.

30. Increase Vitamin B intake
Vitamin B is appropriately known as the Brain Vitamin. A Vitamin B-rich diet has been proven to boost a person’s brain function and IQ level. Find out from your doctor or a nutritionist which foods you should offer your children to ensure that they obtain sufficient levels of Vitamin B.

31. Decrease salt intake
Try to reduce your child’s salt intake. A teaspoon of salt is sufficient to meet a child’s daily requirement. Too much salt has been shown to slow down an individual’s powers of recall. Children love salty food. All those French fries and chips may be great for the taste buds, but they won’t do too much good for your child's brain. So keep an eye on the amount of salt your child consumes in a day.

32. Gingko Biloba anyone?
Gingko Biloba is a famous herb that the Chinese have been taking for years. Studies show that consuming Ginkgo Biloba increases the flow of blood to the brain and helps improve concentration and memory. The results are almost instantaneous. Gingko Biloba is available in either its natural form or as capsules in health food stores everywhere.

33. Seafood is good
Fish, especially oily fish contain the all important omega-3 fatty acids. This has been proven to promote brain development and enhance the capacity to think, as well as to store and retrieve memories. Seafood can help boost a child’s IQ, even before they are born. Women who eat safe seafood while they are pregnant are more likely to produce offspring with a higher IQ.

There are several creative ways in which you can cook fish. Try different recipes so your children do not get bored. Also, next time you want to head out for a birthday treat, try the new seafood restaurant for a change and give KFC a break!

34. Typing skills
Ever heard of ‘cup stacking’? It’s a wonderful game where there are cup pyramids with letters on them. Those letters need to be typed on a keyboard. Enhancing typing ability will help you child recognize patterns and spatial organization. The game lets you keep score, so it’s all the more interesting and competitive.

After your child has mastered one level of the game he or she can move on to the other levels. This game makes use of bright colours and looks exciting to any child. Make sure, however, that your child does not end up spending all his or her time in front of the screen. Limit computer time in the same way that you limit TV time.

35. Art projects for the young
All children love creating things and very few activities can initiate more excitement than an art project. Art can open up a whole new world of free thinking and expression for your child, allowing his or her imagination to truly run wild.

Both collaborative and individual art projects are beneficial for the minds of young children. Art exposes your child to creativity, patience, culture, concepts, choices, intuition, problem solving and sensory awareness. Art should never be restricted. It is a means through which a child can express what he or she feels or imagines. As a parent you need to encourage your children to be bold and confident in their creations.

To reinforce the trust in their artistic abilities, place the competed projects in prominent places throughout the home – just as you would any other masterpiece!

36. Martial Arts
It is quite amazing how the potential of martial arts has been nearly completely ignored by those promoting a holistic approach towards boosting children’s IQ!
The fact of the matter is that because of the diversity within martial arts, any child can be accommodated – regardless of whether they are passive, kinetic, healthy, ill or a combination of these. Most special needs children can participate too.

So what does all of this have to do with IQ? The information that follows is self-explanatory.

Martial Arts forms such as T’ai Chi, Kung Fu or Taekwondo, amongst others, could quite easily be compared to the brain boosting game of chess. It requires of the student to memorise a wide range of separate and consecutive movements, comprehension and interpretation of the movements, employing the correct movement or range of movements by judging a situation, strategising (anticipating and planning), cause & effect, and complete focus and concentration. It is like chess in motion.

Martial Arts are taught by observation (visual). Movements are executed in the Dojo (studio where instruction takes place) on command (aural) and it involves physical contact (kinaesthetic) during grappling. Martial Arts movements are rhythmic and timed. It reduces stress, it offers exercise, it teaches breathing and it acknowledges individual achievement. The sport of Martial Arts fosters discipline and teaches life values such as respect, etiquette and self-control.

Children can start martial arts from a very early age. It could be worth your while to visit a couple of Dojos in your town or city. Some areas have Little Tiger type Martial Arts classes, specially designed for toddlers and young children.
37. Neurofeedback Therapy

One of the Accelerated Learning Programmes that is fast gaining popularity and clinical acceptance is Neurofeedback. Neurofeedback (or brain wave training) is used to improve the functioning of the brain from both a cognitive and an emotional point of view. It has been found especially effective for children. Hyperactivity, attention deficit, and so forth can be effectively treated – the results are lasting and relapses few and far between. In three controlled clinical studies, average increases of 10, 19, and 23 IQ points in ADHD children were found. This is significant.

Neurofeedback can be beneficial for any child, not only those facing the challenges of ADHD. Thomas Budzynski Ph.D (Affiliate Professor of Psychology, University of Washington), in a study he conducted on college students in 1999, found that these students’ Grade Point Averages rose sharply & continued to improve even after the treatment. The control group experienced neither an increase during the study, nor was there any improvement in their Grade Point Averages after the study.

38. Don’t stop now

Much has been said about the importance of early intervention in boosting children’s IQ. However, neural networks, especially for emotion, continue developing well into the teens. Continue having positive interactions with your teenager. Read reference books together, go to the library or the museum, play chess or sit on the floor together while building together a complicated double-sided 1000 piece jigsaw puzzle.

Just because they are teens, should not preclude them from an IQ boost! As a matter of fact not even you, the parents, are prevented from stepping up your respective scores by

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Books:

Periodicals:
International Journal of Psychophysiology
Applied Psychophysiology and Biofeedback
Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuropsychology

Websites:
Fred Foundation: http://www.fredfoundation.org
EEG Spectrum International: http://www.eegspectrum.com
NeuroTherapy Center for Health: http://www.neurotherapy.us

8 http://sica.stanford.edu/events/brainwaves/clinica...
several points. Perhaps working towards improved IQ could be an aim of your whole family.

**Dear Parent: Are you setting the right example?**

Parents have an immense responsibility when it comes to raising the IQ of their children. As a role model, you need to evaluate your own life too. Are you indulging in the right kind of activities? Are you spending time with your child? Unless you have a positive approach towards leaning and education, your child will be unable to follow you. Try setting the example by creating an interest that is genuine.

Take an active role in your child’s life. Perhaps you can even further your own education to show your child that you value leaning. Even what you choose to watch on TV can make a difference at home. Families that watch the news and read the newspaper will tend to have children who are more interested in current affairs. Children coming out of families like these tend to have good general knowledge - not because of what they learnt in school, but because of what they learnt at home.

**Alternate Educational activities for young and old**

Are you planning a day out with the kids? Instead of heading to a water park, try going to a museum, an aquarium or a zoo instead. Kids love new experiences. If you as the parent seem excited about a certain idea, they will soon be excited too! That’s just how children are. You can encourage them towards being the best that they can be. Educational activities find the right balance between learning and fun. Your child will learn lots of things while being out of home and a classroom!
A few Educational Games, you may want to consider

**Planet Quest Game**

Many children are fascinated by the Solar System and the vastness of the Universe. Aren’t we all? Planet Quest is an exciting game that is based on facts about outer space. It has True or False questions that offer a fun way to learn. Every planet comes with a set of cards. You even have a Black Hole, which isn’t good news for any player, by the way. Ideally it is a game for about four people, ages 7 and up, so the entire family can participate.

**Deep Worlds Game**

If outer space does not interest your child then go deep under. The sea world is a fascinating place. The Deep World’s Game explores an alien ocean. The game lets you compete against opponents. The game has a Dive Zone and a Chaos Space. To get more fuel, questions need to be answered so the vessel can be recharged! The Megaplume Whirlpool and The Trench make it a memorable game for almost all age groups. The end destination is Hydroplane Transport. Your child will absolutely love this game. He or she won’t even realize the amount of knowledge they are picking up on the way!

**Anatomy Game**

If your child wants to become a doctor, this is the right game to buy. Perfect for children between the ages of six and twelve, the Anatomy Game will make your kid a Biology pro! This game consists of 5 small games. It has everything to do with the human body including muscles, organs, bones and more! Your child will be fascinated to learn how the human body functions. With body parts that can be assembled and a variety of question cards, this game will keep you child occupied for hours.

Science can be intimidating - but not so when you make it fun. The idea is to allow the child to get excited about things rather than term something as ‘education’. The approach is all-important. Education doesn’t have to restrict itself to the four walls of a classroom. Your child can learn even at play, in a relaxed environment where they are more open to new ideas and concepts. A child that views learning as fun already has the upper hand, as studies will no longer look boring or scary.
Conclusion

If truth be told, the 38-point list of things that we as parents can do to contribute towards increasing the IQ of our children, is not exhaustive in any way. There is no such thing as one-size-fits-all when it comes to child development, so you may well find that some things on the list will work better for your offspring than others. The mind is a complex unit. It has to be trained to function in the way we want it to ultimately function. If we give the mind adequate energy, rest and stimulation it will not disappoint us.

Children are special. As parents it is our responsibility not only to provide them with every type of tool available, but also to show them the beauty of life. Beauty is in the eye of the beholder though. If your child has been developed to his or her fullest potential in a loving and supportive manner, self confidence will come to him or her quite naturally and life will seem quite beautiful indeed.

"Mankind is slowly discovering that all of us have inside of us the germ of at least one great new idea that will improve the world. This is the ancient dream of Moses and of John Calvin and all the saints and heroes of history."

William Maxwell, Professor of Human Development, the University of Advancing Technology, Tempe, Arizona.
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- **Spatial Awareness** – the process of forming ideas through the spatial relationship between objects
  - Improvements in Spatial Awareness will help your child in the short-term with tasks such as understanding basic mathematical concepts, reading maps and solving puzzles. In the longer term it will give them an edge in professions such as architecture, graphic design and engineering.

- **Problems Solving Skills**
  - Problem Solving is the foundation of all higher learning. With the increase in the role the Internet plays in our everyday lives, the acquisition of knowledge is now less important to your child’s future success than their ability to make quality decisions using the knowledge they access.

- **Pattern Recognition and Short-Term Memory & Agility**
  - Your child’s ability to make sense of their environment and the world around them in this increasingly complex and dangerous world will set them apart from their peers and improve their skills in making timely and important decisions.
The iQube™ Boardgame and Puzzle improves these and many other parameters of intelligence in a fun and easy to understand fashion. No dragging your kids back to their school books or trying to implement complicated educational programs. The iQube™ is something the whole family can enjoy and have fun with.

*The iQube™ Boardgame and Puzzle is also an excellent tool for children with spatial or visual processing disorders, including dyslexia. It is currently being used in Auckland by Child & Educational Psychologists to help address developmental delays in children with these types of learning difficulties.*

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