Four Big Questions About Poverty and the Brain

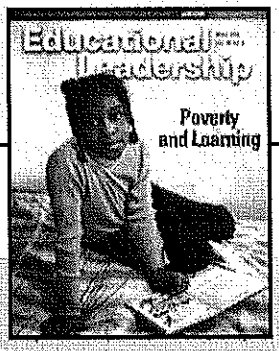
1. What is Poverty?

1. **a.)** the state of one who lacks a usual or socially acceptable amount of money or material possessions **b.)** renunciation as a member of a religious order of the right as an individual to own property
2. **a.)** scarcity, dearth **3. a.)** debility due to malnutrition **b.)** lack of fertility.

synonyms: **poverty, indigence, penury, want, destitution mean** the state of one with insufficient resources. **poverty** may cover a range from extreme want of necessities to an absence of material comforts <the extreme ***poverty*** of the slum dwellers>. **indigence** implies seriously straitened circumstances <the *indigence* of her years as a graduate student>. **penury** suggests a cramping or oppressive lack of money <a catastrophic illness that condemned them to years of *penury*>. **want** and **destitution** imply extreme poverty that threatens life itself through starvation or exposure <lived in a perpetual state of *want*> <the widespread *destitution* in countries beset by famine>.

TAKE HOME MESSAGES

- **Children of poverty have significantly different brains (not better, not worse).**
- **Like all brains, their brains can change for the better in the right environment.**
- **The adults in the school and the community must provide these children specific kinds of experiences that will combat the negative impact of poverty on brain development.**



2014 Poverty Guidelines for the 48 Contiguous States and District of Columbia

Persons in Family	Poverty Guideline
1	$11,670
2	$15,730
3	$19,790
4	$23,850
5	$27,910
6	$31,970
7	$36,030
8*	$40,090

**** For families with more than 8 persons, add $4,060 for each additional person.***

POVERTY is...

A chronic condition characterized by the:

1.) synergistic effect of multiple, adverse, economic risk factors; and

2.) lack of access to basic human resources.

(Atzaba-Poria et al. 2004)

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Basic Human Needs

- Food
- Clothing
- Shelter
- Cognitive Stimulation
- Emotional Support

How significant an issue is Poverty?

According to new Census figures, **nearly one in five children in the United Stated lived in poverty last year,** with a much higher proportion of poverty among African-American and Hispanic children.

Overall, the number of children living in poverty declined slightly from 21.8% of all children (16.07 million) in 2012 to 19.9% (14.66 million) in 2013. Nearly 37% of African-American children and just over 30% of Hispanic children lived in poverty in 2013.

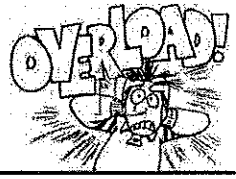
(Source: US Census 2013)

Quick Poverty Stats: USA

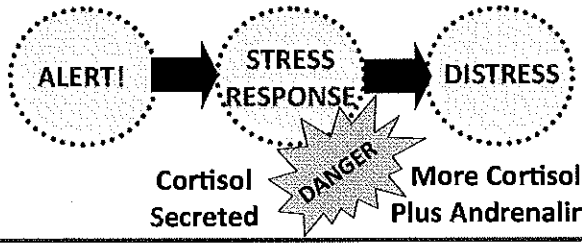
- Children more likely than adults to be poor and ***suffer more from the deprivation of poverty.***
- Poverty is ***largest predictor*** of child abuse and neglect. (Children's Defense Fund, 2006)
- Children in poverty are more likely to suffer from ***mental health problems*** than other children. (National Center for Children in Poverty, 2011)

2. How is the Developing Brain Influenced by its Environmental Experience?

Traumatic Levels of Stress (Cortisol) May significantly Change the Brain



3 Stages of the Stress Response (Amygdala Driven)



The child's stress response system is exaggerated and prolonged.

Amygdala compels you to:

1. ***Solve the problem causing stress.***
2. ***Escape from the problem.***
3. ***Cope with the problem.***
4. ***Defend yourself the best you can.***
5. ***At any cost, survive.***

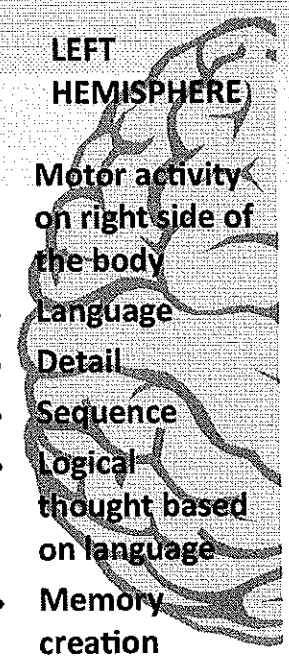
Effects of Too Much Cortisol...

Brain Damage | Poor Social Skills | Low Verbal Skills | Memory Impairment | Aggression | Impulsiveness | Anxiety | Dissociation

CORPUS CALLOSUM

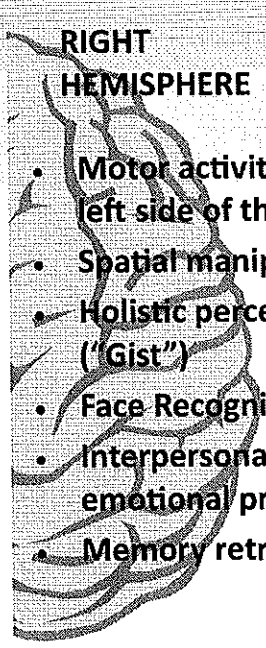
The BRIDGE IN OUR BRAINS

- The bridge between hemispheres
- Facilitates the integration of right hemisphere and left hemisphere functions
- How logic and emotion meet!



LEFT HEMISPHERE

- Motor activity on right side of the body
- Language
- Detail
- Sequence
- Logical thought based on language
- Memory creation

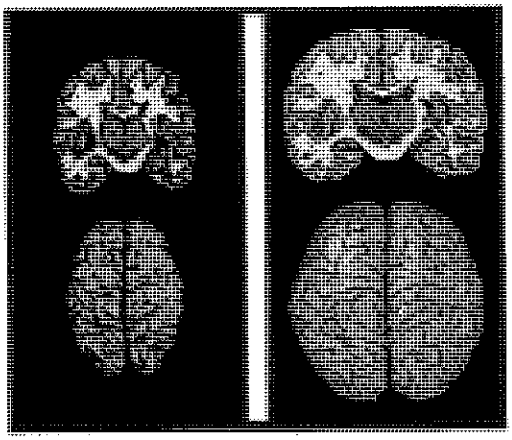


RIGHT HEMISPHERE

- Motor activity on left side of the body
- Spatial manipulations
- Holistic perception ("Gist")
- Face Recognition
- Interpersonal and emotional processing
- Memory retrieval

At what age are the frontal lobes fully developed?

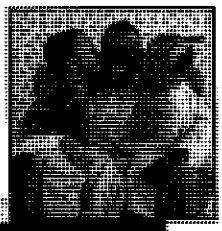
Brains Change as a Result of SES Experience



TAKE HOME MESSAGES

Chronic stress (excess cortisol) is a key issue to address in child experiencing poverty, deprivation and neglect. Until cortisol is reduced to near normal ranges, damage to brain development is likely to continue. Trauma is common — if not dominant — among children living in chronic poverty.

3. Do Children in Poverty Have Different Environmental Experiences than High SES Kids?



Contrasting Experiences ...

When compared to their middle or upper income classmates, what are children of poverty more likely to experience?

AREAS OF CONTRAST

- LESS Emotional Support
- LESS Cognitive Stimulation
- MORE Stress/Distress
- MORE Health & Safety Issues

EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

Lower-income parents are less likely to:

- Know their child's teachers by name.
- Know their child's best & worst subject.
- Know how their child is doing in school.
  (Benviste et al. 2003)

Children of poverty are more likely to:

- Hear less responsive, fewer supportive, less interactive home conversations.
  (Evans, 2004)
- Get less quality time and less total time from their parents or caregivers.
  (Fields and Casper 2001)

COGNITIVE STIMULATION

- Parents are **less likely (3-4X)** to begin conversation just to maintain social contact or build vocabulary. (Hart & Risley 1995)
- Kids in poverty watch more TV and have less access to books and computers (Evans, 2004)
- Children hear very **different vocabulary;** fewer words and less of the complex ones. (Hoff 2003)

EXTRAs for Learning

Poor families cannot afford:

- √ Quality child care
- √ Stimulating toys
- √ Recreational books
- √ Team uniform costs
- √ School supplies
- √ Scouts or camp
- √ Private music/dance lessons

(Posner & Vandell, 1999; Sherman, 1994)

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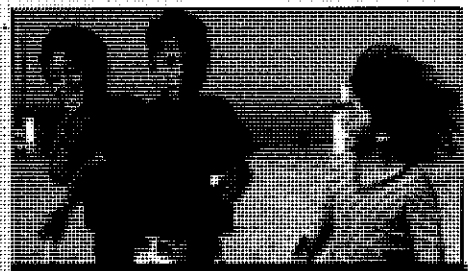
STRESS / DISTRESS

INSTABILITY + STRESSORS

Children in poor families:

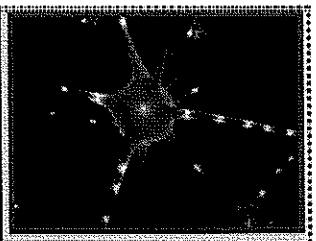
- move twice as often
- get evicted 5X as much (Federman, et al. 1996)
- develop fewer social ties
- experience more chaotic households and separation from family (Evans, 2004)
- parents lose their jobs more
- worry about money more (McLoyd, 1990)



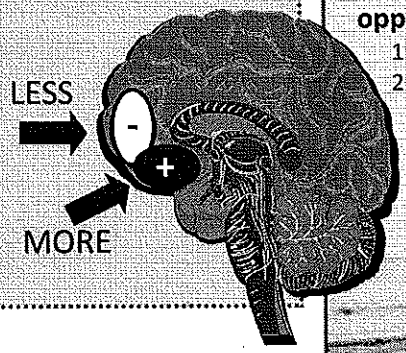
Chronic stress is known as DISTRESS

Poor children are exposed to more stressors, more intense stressors, longer lasting stressors and have fewer coping skills than their High SES counterparts. (Evans 2007)

DISTRESS /THREAT Changes Blood Flow to the Brain



Less blood flow to places in the brain (dorsal area of frontal lobes) that do future planning ... and more blood flow to areas that process emotions, leaving fewer options for more thoughtful decision-making.



Stress, Violence and Distress

- Poor children are more than 2X as likely to report seeing assaults or weapons at school. (Gallup 1993)
- Poor children are more likely to experience crime within one's neighborhood. (Sampson, Raudenbush, & Earls, 1997)
- Household income is inversely related to exposure to family violence. (Emery & Laumann Billings, 1998)
- Domestic violence is associated with lower IQ in young children. (Koenen et al. 2003)

Leisure De-Stressing

Lower SES families are less likely to have opportunities to de-stress such as:

1. longer vacations, fun experiences
2. restaurant meals, catering, splurges massage, spa therapy, Jacuzzi

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HEALTH AND SAFETY ISSUES

More Toxic Exposure

Dangerous Address

- Live on or near toxic waste sites. (Brody et al. 1993)

Air Quality

- Live in areas that did not meet National Ambient Air Quality Standards. (EPA 2000)

Pesticide Exposure

- Have more exposure to pesticides (negative synergistic affects when combined with stress). (Moses et al. 1993) / (Relyea, 2004)

Lead

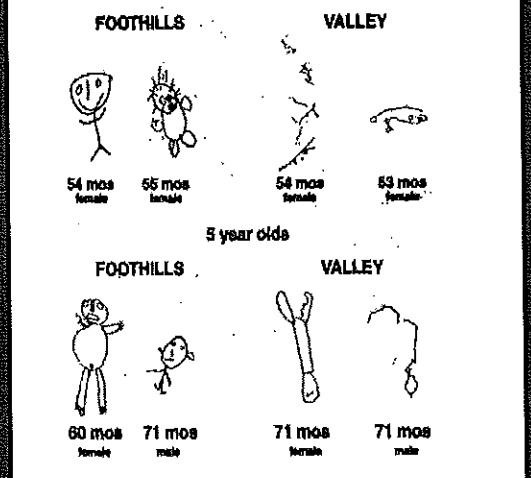
- Poor children are twice as likely to have levels of lead in their blood (NCCP 2011)

Poison

- More than 1/4 of poor children live with someone that smokes everyday. (NCCP 2011)

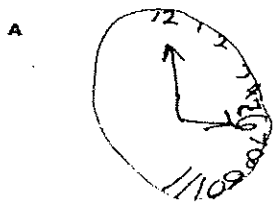
Hazards

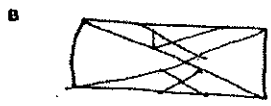
- Greater exposure to environmental hazards (cleaners, tobacco, paint, drugs, smog, etc.). (Suk, et al. 2003)

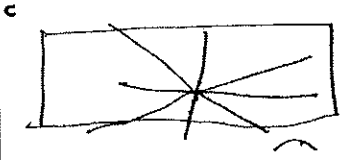


Drawings on the left, healthy brain.

Drawings on the right ... same age plus exposure to local pesticides.







Drawings by a 4th grade student of poverty:

A - Clock

B - Flag

C - Flag

Safety Issues

Traffic

- Get exposure to 50% more street crossings with a 6X greater risk in pedestrian accidents. (McPherson et al. 1998)

Peers

- Have more contact with aggressive peers. (Sinclair et al., 1994)

Impact?

- Dysregulation of stress response system (bad for health). (Evans 2007)

Health and Safety Issues

Families from poverty are more likely than non poor families to live in homes with:

- non-working water heater (2.5X)
- non-working toilet (2.5X)
- rats, mice, or roaches (3X)
- more than one person per bedroom (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2000)
- exposed household wiring (3X) (Scott and Munson, 1994)

VULNERABILITY

Children of poverty are far less likely to get needed medical care for:

- Falls or head injuries
- Physical impairments
- Behavioral disorders
- **Mental illness**
- **Depression**

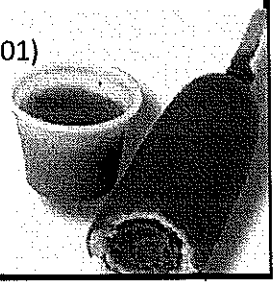
Health Risks

Compared to their non-poor peers, children of poverty have ...

- 1 in 50 infants in U.S are victims of nonfatal child neglect or abuse
  - 87% involved neglect (CDC, 2008)
- Increased pre and post-natal mortality rates
- Greater risk of injuries resulting from accidents or physical abuse/neglect
- Higher risk for asthma (NCCP 2011)
- Maladaptive changes in brain chemistry (Sapolsky, 2000)

Nutrition and Poverty

- The brain is most susceptible to the effects of poor nutrition during the early years of brain development. (Georgieff and Rao 2001)
- 21% of households with children in the U.S. are food insecure sometime during the year. (NCCP 2008)



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4. What Can We Do For These Unique Brains?

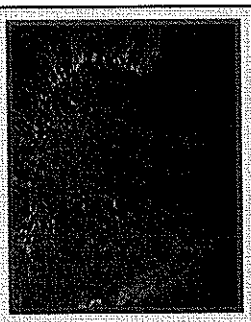
Good News!

Many long-term studies have shown that we can make a significant, lasting and positive impact on children of poverty.

Brains can change for the better!

The Promise of NEUROGENESIS

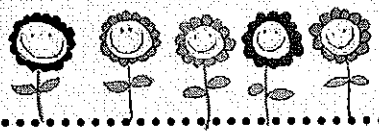
By exposing children to enriched experiences and environments, adults can stimulate the growth of new neurons in a child's brain to repair and eventually expand learning capacity!



Neurogenesis is Your Goal!

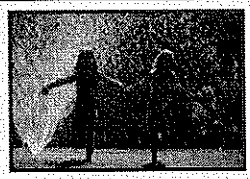
- Vigorous Physical Play *(Regular Physical Activity)*
- Meaningful New Learning
- Enriched Experiences
- Managed Stress Levels
- Positive Nutrition
- Social Support
- Sufficient Time

(Jensen, 2006)



1. Vigorous Physical Play *(Regular Physical Activity)*

- 60 minutes per day x 7 days per week.
  - Outdoors whenever possible.
- Engage in "physical activity exploration."
  - Organized sports can work.
  - Key = Find movement they like!
    - Monitor, monitor, monitor



Play is an essential nutrient of brain development — we NEED it.

2. Meaningful New Learning

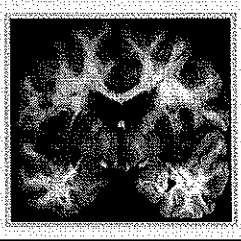
Start with Language Immersion

- *If age appropriate, read to them. A lot!*
- *Use audio books during chores, downtime, bus or car rides.*
- *Teach to "Read with a Dictionary."*
- *Label objects whenever possible.*
- *Expose child to "storytelling opportunities."*

Focus on Skill Building

- *While being highly supportive of school performance, help students find opportunities to build skills outside school.*
- *Skill building accelerates cognitive development and significantly improves a child's confidence and self-esteem.*
- *Cooking, magic tricks, ceramics, martial arts are all good examples.*

3. Enriched Experiences

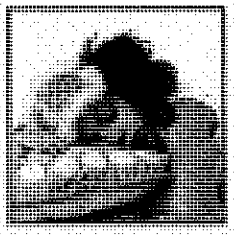


- High Contrast
- Integration
- Connectivity
- Coherence
- Challenge
- Novelty
- Complexity
- Active (not passive)

Jensen, E.; *Enriching the Brain* (2006)

4. Managed Stress Levels

- Vigorous Physical Play reduces stress (cortisol).
- The proper amount of Sleep is essential.
- Increase Predictability whenever possible.
- Remove Threat.
- Teach Stress Management Skills.

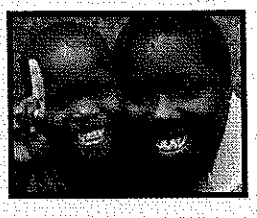


How much learning (encoding) happens during sleep?

5. Positive Nutrition

Blueberries
Milk
Hot Cocoa
Turkey
Whole Grains
Garlic
Almonds and Walnuts
Olive Oil
Concord Grape Juice
Salmon
Vegetables
Brown Rice
Orange Juice w/Zinc
Bananas

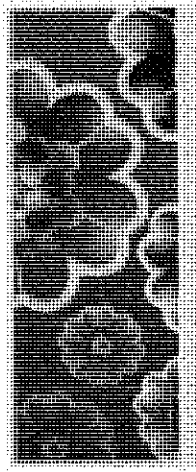
6. Build Social Supports



- ***Show up. Every time.***
- ***Maintain proper boundaries.***
- ***Use old-fashioned mail (or technology) to connect when you have long periods of physical separation.***
- ***Don't personalize the child's behavior. You are in a non-reciprocal relationship!***
- ***Constantly teach relationship skills.***

7. Sufficient Time

- Work to establish consistency in the areas we have discussed today. With enough consistency over time, the brain **WILL** change for the better. It is how the brain is engineered!
- Defend against trauma. Trauma is devastating to young brains and a lot of intervention is needed for recovery. Many kids never recover.



To Get MIRACLES ...

1. get everyone on the same page.
2. create persistent, positive contrasting conditions.
3. do it over time.

The brain WILL change.

Resistance is futile.

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Helping adults help kids
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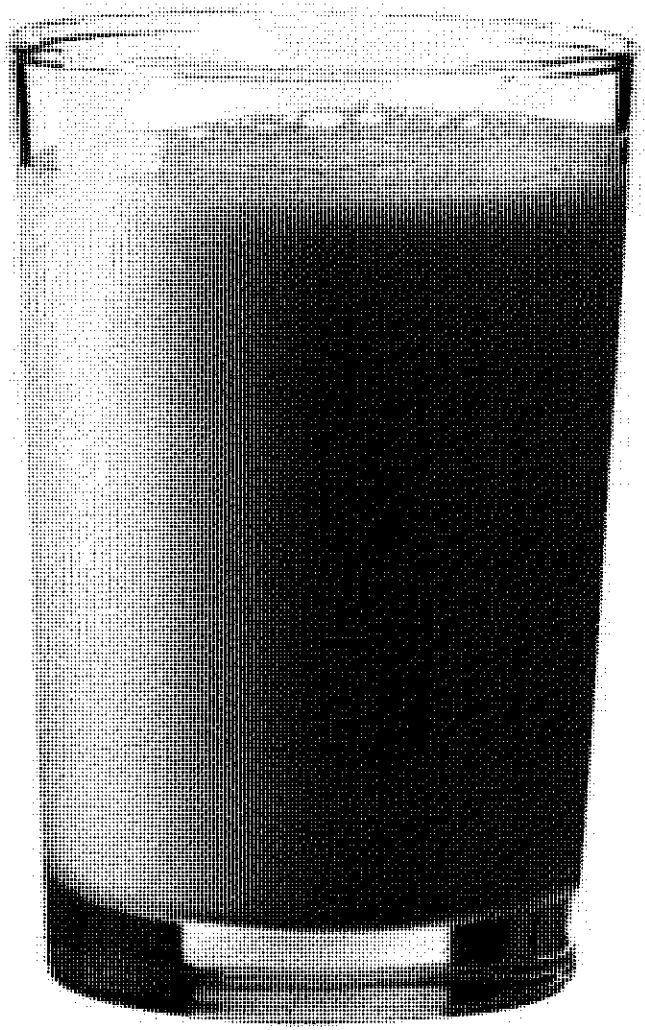
An Important Brain Rule...

Associations in the brain are real, physical brain structures.

It is much more difficult for our brains to **unlearn** something than to learn something new. Adults can build positive associations with learning by using the right language.



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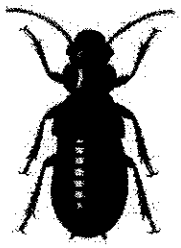
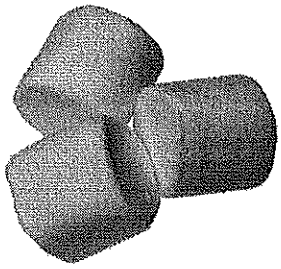
A Research Expedition: Termites and Marshmallows





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"Termites" 1921

Lewis Terman – Psychology professor, Stanford University

- Created the Stanford-Binet Intelligence Test
- Henry Cowell was a young boy raised in poverty and chaos. Unschooled since age 7 and worked as a janitor.
  - Would sneak away from his job and play the school piano. His music was beautiful.
- Terman tested Henry and found his IQ above 140 – near genius level.

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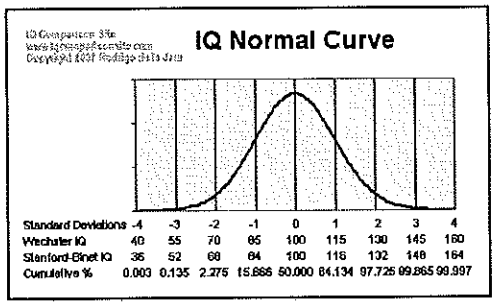
The Termites



100 = Average
>70 = Developmentally Disabled
150 = Albert Einstein

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The Termites

- Beginning in 1921, Terman tested 250,000 elementary students in California.
- He identified 1,470 children whose IQ's averaged over 140 and ranged as high as 200!
- This group of young geniuses came to be known as the "Termites."
- Terman closely followed these geniuses for the next 35 years.

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The Termites

"There is nothing about an individual as important as his IQ, except possibly his morals."

— Lewis Terman

Terman believed that his termites were destined to be the future of the United States. But not everyone agreed...

"Knowledge of a boy's IQ is of little help if you are faced with a formful of clever boys."

— Liam Hudson, British Psychologist

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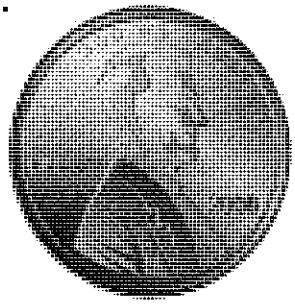
Terman's Hypothesis

Termites would become:

- President(s), U.S. Senators and Representatives
- Nobel Prize Winners
- Supreme Court Judges
- World and National Leaders



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Terman's Error

By the time the "termites" reached adulthood, out of 1,470 genius-level children (99th percentile of the 99th percentile):

- Only 2 Superior Court Judges
- Only 1 Municipal Court Judge
- Only 2 California State Legislators
- No Nobel Prize Winners
- Majority had ordinary careers
- Surprising number ended up failures

(nearly a third of the males...)

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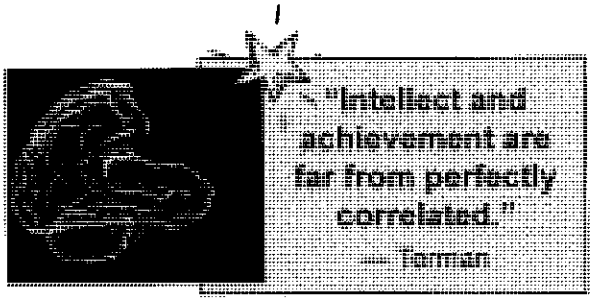
Terman's Correction...



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So, if IQ is not the primary determinant of achievement, what is?

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The Stanford Marshmallow Experiment

(1989) Walter Michel, Stanford University

- 4 year old children tested in the 1960s
- Taken into a room one at a time; room had a one-way mirror
- The researcher showed the child a marshmallow

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The Stanford Marshmallow Experiment

- The researcher told the child he had to leave and:
  - The child could have marshmallow right then; or
  - The child could wait until the researcher returned from his errand and then have 2 marshmallows.
- One marshmallow was left on a plate on the table in front of them.

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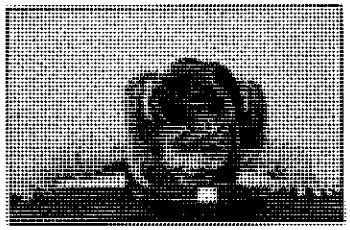
The Stanford Marshmallow Experiment



Some children ate the marshmallow immediately. Others waited up to twenty minutes for the researcher to return.

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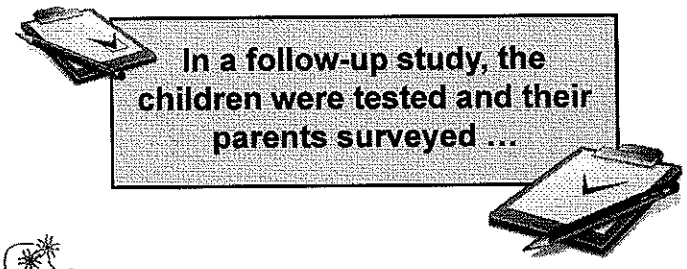
The Stanford Marshmallow Experiment



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The Stanford Marshmallow Experiment

Results

- Parents rated the children who waited "better adjusted" and "more dependable."
- On the scholastic aptitude test, the more impulsive group scored an average of 524 verbal and 528 math.
- The "children who waited" group scored 610 verbal and 652 math.

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The Stanford Marshmallow Experiment

A difference of 210 points predicted on the basis of eating a marshmallow at 4 years of age.

How big is a 210 point difference?

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The Stanford Marshmallow Experiment

- As large as the average differences between that of economically advantaged versus disadvantaged children.
- Larger than the difference between children from families with graduate degrees versus children whose parents did not finish high school.
- Twice as good as a predictor as IQ.
- Poor impulse control is also a predictor of later delinquency than is IQ.

(Block 1995)

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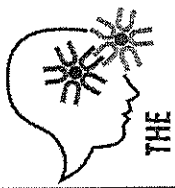
Asking Beats Telling

- *Asking a question, by its very form, elicits answers and within those answers are the strategies for actually carrying out the task.*
- *Asking a question "may inspire thoughts about autonomous or intrinsically motivated reasons to pursue a goal."*

Pink, Daniel, To Sell is Human: The Surprising Truth About Moving Others (Riverhead Books, pp. 98-101, 2013)



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A Little Brain Anatomy

The Frontal Lobes
(Executive Function)

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Frontal Lobe Functions

(Partial List)

- Impulse Control
- Organization (Thought and Action)
- Time Orientation
- Reading Social Cues
- Predicting Behavioral Consequences
- Goal-Directed Achievement

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What EF Problems Can Look Like:

- Laziness
- Lack of Motivation
- Incapable of Being Prompt
- Chronically Unprepared
- Disorganized
- Forgetful
- "You Have to Tell Them Everything"

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Strategy #3:

Executive Function Prompts*

"Self Regulation Executive Function Descriptions With Examples of Teacher Prompts," George McCloskey, PhD, Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine.

Forsee/Plan (Short Term)

Cues the anticipation of conditions or events in the very near future, such as the consequences of one's actions.

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Executive Function Adult Prompts

Negative and Vague (Amygdala)

"How do you expect to find your keys without a plan?"

Positive and Specific (Frontal Lobes)

"Let's make a plan for where to search for your lost keys so we are sure not to miss anywhere or look in the same place many times."

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Executive Function Prompts

EF Skill	Positive and Specific	Negative, Vague, PT
Task Initiation	**"Start walking now."**	**"What will it take to get you moving?"**
Gauge	**"Consider what its going to take to get this job done as quickly as possible. (You might want to write it down.)"**	**"Do I have to explain everything to you ahead of time?"**
Inhibit	**"Try to focus on thoughts that will produce a positive solution."**	**"Don't even go there."**

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Self-Regulation Executive Function Definitions with Examples of Teacher Prompts

George McCloskey, Ph.D., Bob R. Van Divner, M.S. & Lisa Perkins, M.S.

Use this list to prepare for observing and noting Teacher Prompts provided during classroom instruction.

Self-Regulation Executive Function	Examples of Teacher Prompts: (P=Perceiving F=Feeling T=Thinking A=Action)
Perceive Cues the use of sensory and perception processes to take information in from the external environment or "inner awareness" to tune into perceptions, emotions, thoughts, or actions as they are occurring	**Positive and specific:** P: "Everyone look at the board." P: "What do you see when you look in the box?" P: "Listen to this." P: "You'll need to listen carefully to this next part." P: "Feel how rough that edge is?" P: "Feel how heavy this is." F: "How are you feeling right now?" T: "What are you thinking about right now?" A: "Try to notice how you bend your legs when you do that." **Negative, vague and/or poorly timed:** P: "Why aren't you looking up here now?" P: "Why do I always have to tell you to listen?" P: "You have hands don't you?" (i.e., use them and touch it) P: "You're not watching what you're doing are you?" F: "You don't even know what you're feeling, do you?" T: "Do you have any idea what you are thinking about now?" A: "Watch what you're doing."
Initiate Cues the initial engagement of perceiving, feeling, thinking, or acting	**Positive and specific:** P: "Everyone should be looking at the board now." F: "Now would be a good time to express any feelings you have about it." T: "Start thinking about it now." A: "Start walking now." A: "Read the first question now." **Negative, vague and/or poorly timed:** P: "Why aren't you listening yet?" F: "Don't you feel anything when you see something like that?" T: "Don't wait to get started thinking about it." A: "Why haven't you started yet?" A: "What will it take to get you moving?"

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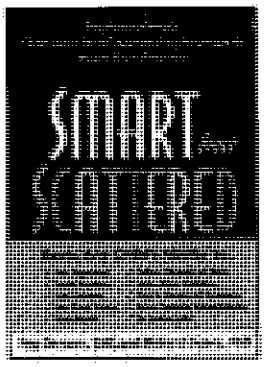
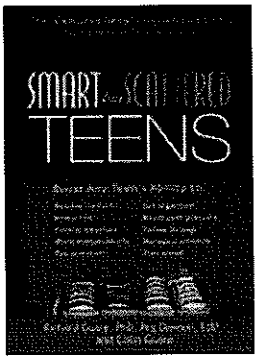
Teach Your Child EF Skills!





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Strategy #4

Developing the Right Mindset about Learning

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Strategy #4: Develop the Right Mindset in Your Kids Around Learning

"Don't tell your kids they are smart (or not smart)."

More than three decades of research shows that a focus on praising effort – not on praising or criticizing intelligence or ability – is the key to building success in school and in life."

— Carol Dweck, PhD.

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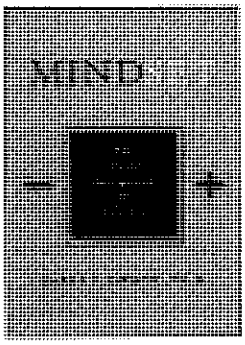
Strategy #4: Mindset Development

"An overemphasis on intellect or talent – and the implication that such traits are innate and fixed – leaves children vulnerable to failure, fearful of challenges, and unmotivated to learn."
– Carol Dweck



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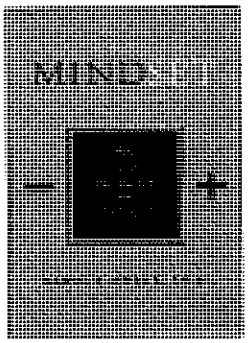
Strategy #4:
Mindset Development

Praise Can Be Very Good for students IF it is given to them in the right way, with the right words.



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What We Say to Our Students Develops in Them One of Two "Mindsets" About Their Ability to Learn.

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FIXED Mindset (Wrong One)

Often developed by children whom are told how smart they are or — more common in our case — told they are not smart!

*Intelligence is a **fixed trait** — you only have a certain amount and that's that.*

Mistakes are attributed to **a *lack of ability.***

"If I struggle or have to work hard, I am dumb."

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The 2 Types of Mindsets

Growth Mindset

Intelligence is **malleable** and **can be developed** through strategy acquisition and selection, hard work and persistence.

Mistakes are attributed **to the wrong strategy, effort or perseverance.**

"If I work hard enough, I can learn this."

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Strategy: Mindset

Adults can engineer a growth mindset in students by:

Praising them for strategy selection, effort and persistence (rather than for being/not being smart, talented, etc.);

a. **Strategy acquisition and selection**. Choosing a successful way to solve a problem.
b. **Effort**. Hard work is good.
c. **Persistence.** Sticking to your goal despite obstacles and even failure.

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Strategy: Mindset

Adults can engineer a growth mindset in students by praising them for Strategy Acquisition and Selection (choosing a successful way to solve a problem).

"I like the way you tried a lot of different solutions (strategies) on that math problem until you finally got it."

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Strategy: Mindset

Adults can engineer a growth mindset in students by praising them for **Effort** (doing his or her very best under any circumstances).

"You worked many hours on that science project. While most of your friends were FaceBooking and watching The Voice, you spent your time on your project. That level of effort will bring you great success!"

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Strategy: Mindset

Adults can engineer a growth mindset in students by praising them for **Persistence** (working toward her or his goal despite obstacles, setbacks and even failures).

"That was a hard English assignment, but you stuck with it until you got it done. You stayed at your desk and kept your concentration. That's great persistence!"

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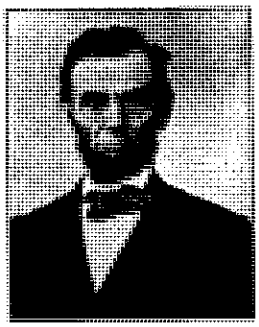
Never Give Up!

- Lost 8 Elections.
- Had 2 Prominent Business Failures.
- Suffered from Depression and ADHD.
- Had a "Nervous Breakdown."
- Son Died While President.
- Publicly Unpopular.



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C-1

The CASA / GAL Volunteer's Relationship with the Child

Establishing a relationship with the child is one of the most important things you do as a CASA/GAL volunteer. The ideal relationship is one that maximizes your ability to advocate successfully for the child. The following guidelines describe the parameters for your relationship and contact with the child.

As a CASA/GAL volunteer, you have direct and sufficient contact with a child to carry out an independent and valid investigation of the child's circumstances, including the child's needs and wishes, so as to be able to make sound, thorough, and objective recommendations in the child's best interest. This contact should occur in person to provide you with firsthand knowledge of the child and his/her unique personality, abilities, and needs. While social contact is permitted with the child to develop trust and a meaningful relationship, you function as an objective advocate for the child and not as the child's attorney, caseworker, counselor, therapist, or parental figure. You do not provide direct services to the child, such as supervising visitation; however, it is appropriate for you to observe visitation. Under no circumstances at all do you take the child into your home, provide shelter for the child, or take the child on an overnight outing.

The Role of the CASA to the Child — By Carmen Ray-Bellmon, M.Ed. MSW

In our training it is easy for us to say what we are not to the child. We are not Big Brothers or Big Sisters. We are not guardian angels. We are not attorneys speaking the child's wishes or social workers planning for the entire family. We are not advocates merely recommending decisions regarding the child's best interests.

That is all well and good for training, but how do we deal with a child who has significant needs? How involved do we become? What criteria do we use to determine if our role is appropriate and legitimate?

I think we look to the child and his or her circumstances to give us the answer. Will we become a meaningful part of the child's life, and then leave, as many other people in his or her life have done? Who are the primary caregivers? Will we usurp their role? Will our interest promote fantasies for the child that can never be in their real world? And most important, whose needs are we meeting, theirs or ours?

Each situation is unique. We are not robots. However, the very best we can do for the child is to ensure that the Court has ALL the facts so that the court order will be in the child's best interests.

Healthy Relationship Boundaries with Families

There is a fine line between developing a caring relationship and becoming enmeshed with the child's family. A balance between involvement and objectivity is required. It is helpful at the beginning to be clear about what your role is. Although every family situation requires some flexibility, it helps to tell the program's guidelines and follow them. Because families have several service providers involved with them, they get confused about who can help with what. You can help to facilitate their needs and questions. The level of emotional involvement may be significant since the CASA is often the one person who has remained consistent for the duration of the case.

Your goal as a CASA / GAL is to remain empathetic to the family while remembering that the child is your focus. It is important to remain detached enough to be objective and clearly see the child's and family's situation, needs and progress.

C-2

Sorting Out CASA/GAL Volunteer Roles and Tasks

If it is appropriate for a CASA or GAL volunteer to perform a task listed below, mark it TRUE (T). If not, mark it FALSE (F). Then, at the end of the list, add the title of the person(s) for whom it would be an appropriate task.

1. _____ Asking a child to draw a picture of his/her family and talking about it to get an idea of the child's perceptions
2. _____ Explaining to a child in a developmentally appropriate way what is going to happen in court
3. _____ Interpreting a child's drawing as part of a written report, assigning meaning to the various components
4. _____ Filing a brief
5. _____ Giving a foster child a ride to therapy
6. _____ Paying for a child to take art lessons
7. _____ Observing a parent / child visit
8. _____ Recruiting an adoptive family
9. _____ Talking with a foster youth about life after foster care
10. _____ Playing catch with a foster child
11. _____ Recommending to the court that overnight visits with the biological family resume
12. _____ Requesting a change in foster placement
13. _____ Supervising a parent/child visit
14. _____ Questioning the educational placement of a child
15. _____ Testing a parent to show a child's medication

C-3

Personal vs. Professional Boundaries

Personal Relationship	Professional Relationship
Limitless	Has limits and boundaries
Equals	Power differential
Does not require formal knowledge and preparation	Requires formal knowledge and preparation
No fee/money	Typically Money, fees, funding etc.
Mutual gain	For purpose of client gain
Mutually agreed upon levels of intimacy	No physical intimacy or emotional intimacy
Mutually agreed upon confidentiality with no legal bounds	Rules of confidentiality/Carries a fiduciary responsibility
Unlimited time frame	Scheduled interaction, Time limit
Anywhere, anytime	Place designated, time limited
Not goal oriented	Well defined focus/goals
Not documented	Documented
No defined roles/no code of ethics	defined roles, licenses, codes of ethics

C-4

Warning Signs of Boundary Crossings!

- Spending extra time with child/family beyond their needs
- Planning other child/family care around one child's/family's needs
- Favoring one child/family at the expense of others
- Giving special attention/treatment that that differs from that given to other child/family
- Feeling colleagues do not understand the child/family as well as you do
- Acting/feeling possessive about the child/family
- Being guarded or defensive when questioned about interactions
- Feeling responsible if the case progress is limited
- Ignoring policies when working with a specific child/family
- Keeping secrets with a child/family apart from the team
- Selectively reporting of behavior (negative or positive behavior)
- Unable or uncomfortable documenting interactions
- Child/family starts talking to only one professional
- You start to take on the role of parent, friend, or object
- Disclosing personal problems
- Sharing work concerns with child/family
- Role reversal
- Dressing differently
- Noticing more physical touching than is appropriate or required
- Thinking about the child/family frequently/worry from work
- Boundary shifts and family shifters
- Spending off time with a child/family
- Giving home/cell phone and address when not necessary
- Giving/receiving gifts
- Continued contact/communication after case closure
- Denying the fact that the child/family is a client
- Denying that you have crossed the boundary from professional to non-professional relationship
- Needs of the professional being met over the needs of the client