

Preston Ridge Pediatric Associates, P.C.

Parenting, environmental, and educational changes in our society have influenced the behavior, attention span, and learning potential of many children. Because of these concerns, I have given new parents the following advice, and the results have been amazing. Teaching certain parenting skills and changing the home-care environment early may help prevent future learning difficulties in some children. Consequently, educational achievement may be advanced, family stress reduced, and the need for more drastic intervention such as medications eliminated.

Ten ways to improve learning and prevent attention problems in children©

1. Touch and hold your child as much as possible during the first six months of life.
2. Limit television exposure until your child is 20-24 months of age. After 2, restrict TV to one hour per day which includes computer time, videos, and video games. Never have a TV in a child's room.
3. Encourage toys that stimulate the brain to work such as puzzles, blocks, stuffed animals, chalk, and crayons. Eliminate toys that provide noise, sounds, and words without language used by the child.
4. Limit choices and chaos by rotating toys in play areas or playrooms. With the exception of books, more is not better.
5. Promote independent play by giving your child time (15-20 minutes) by themselves when awakening from sleep. Encourage make believe self play when older.
6. Encourage activities that stimulate verbal interaction with parents or caretakers such as interactive games, (London Bridge, Ring around the Rosey), grocery shopping, bath time, and family meals.
7. Provide physical limits to over-activity by using a playpen, play area, gates, or Dutch doors.
8. Beginning at birth, include 30 minutes of nonverbal, soft music each day. Continue as long as possible. Lullabies and singing are also needed.
9. Provide sleep that is never interrupted by activities. This includes nighttime, mornings, and naps.
10. Encourage dietary habits that provide good nutrition and balance. Eliminate most juices, sports drinks, and soft drinks between meals. Minimize exposure to excess sugars and additives.

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