



Extract from **Brain Child** by Tony Buzan.

Brain Child's thesis is that the parents, friends, the surrounding environment and the school are the prime factors in the architecture of the child's intellectual, physical and emotional being, and that with the appropriate knowledge the parents, especially, can help direct their child to paradise.

*"Nurture is the primary factor in developing (or not) a child's latent potentials... There is no question in my mind that given the right stimulation and the correct nurturing environment, every child can manifest his or her genius. And, most importantly, grow up to be a fulfilled and happy human being. ... Tony Buzan*

- **Nurture! Take the approach that everything and anything (positive) that you can do for your child can and will make a difference.** Think of yourself as a force for positive influence on your child's life.
- **Make sure your child gets the four brain foods - Oxygen, Nutrition, Love and Information.**
- **Create a home that is rich in different colours and textures**, where music is a constant feature and where people talk to one another, where play for all ages happens around the clock and where there is laughter on a daily basis.
- Encourage the development of your baby's ambidexterity by getting them to **do things with both hands at the same time – such as picking up food and feeding himself, holding and manipulating crayons.** Encourage them to reverse every left/right function, including sporting activities, play and as many other activities as you can think of.
- **Teach them to Mind Map as soon as they can hold a pen.** Mind Maps allow their brains to see known images ('a picture is worth a thousand words') and their associations and interrelationships without the 'interference' of grammar and semantics. The Mind Map has been called '**the Swiss army knife for the brain**' and for the young child is a wonderful tool to allow her to 'open up' and explore the realms of memory, learning, creative thinking, analysis, preparation for school work, review and self-expression.
- Wherever and whenever you can, **allow your baby to go without shoes.** If you do need to cover your baby's feet while she is out of doors, use soft fabric slippers with non-slip soles and loosely fitting socks.
- Expose your baby to a large range of words (both aural and written). You can start by **talking and singing to them, include them in conversations at meal times.**
- **Teach your baby how to read.** Get your child interested in books from an early age. **Sit your baby on your lap and 'read' colourful board books when she is just a few months old.**
- Make sure words are regularly linked to images. A good way to start is to **look at picture board books with your four-month-old, pointing at the pictures as you read or tell the story. Read bedtime stories every night.**
- Make counting a fun part of daily play. **If you are walking down the road, you can count the trees, paving stones, or lamp posts as you go along.**
- Play Mind Sports with your child, especially those such as **jigsaw puzzles, draughts, chess and the Japanese/Chinese game of Go.**

- At a very early stage, **teach your child the directions of the compass** (give them a beautiful one as a present) in conjunction with map reading. When you are out together, ask him to help find the way. This will make him feel useful and purposeful as well as assisting his spatial intelligence.
- Encourage both sensory exploration and expression. You can do this by letting your child **compare different textures that exist in the home. Let him search for the softest-feeling thing in the house** (the sheep-skin rug or your best pashmina), **followed by the roughest** (your nail brush or pot scourer).
- **When you are cooking, let them knead pastry, sift flour with his fingers, or wash lentils under running water.**
- **Play physical games with your baby/child on a daily basis** (this has the added advantage of keeping you fitter as well).
- Play games in which you and your child imagine what it is like to be a rich person, a poor person, a spider, a seagull etc. Such **games increase the child's creative intelligence, by teaching the all-important creative skills of multiple perspectives.**
- Try to have your baby **learn at least one additional language before the age of three**, and make sure that that language is maintained throughout childhood.
- **Eat as balanced and as natural diet as possible.**
- **Encourage your child to notice smells.** Smell flowers when you are walking, sniff the salty breezes when you are on holiday and savour the smell of fresh bread when you are at the bakers.
- **Play discrimination games with different fragrances.** Oils, perfumes and fruit essences make good laboratories - try playing a blindfolded guessing game.
- **Play memory games**, especially those in which you uncover 20 items, leave them exposed for a minute and then cover them again, the task being to remember as many as possible.
- **Provide toys that stimulate, expand and encourage the development of her imagination.** Used yoghurt pots, egg cartons, washing-up bottles, measuring jugs and a plethora of other kitchen items can be used in the child's imaginative play.
- **Play association games.** From quite an early age, your child will delight in 'silly word associations' and this will develop their sense of humour, too.
- **Frequently point out your child's uniqueness to him, in a positive way.** For example "I've never known anyone else with your ..."
- **Make sure that the 'fear of failure' is absent from your child's learning processes.** Parents who say 'be careful' all the time are not helping their child be safe; they are destroying his self confidence.
- **Try to use positive language with your child at all times.** Monitor your own vocabulary for positive and negative effects on the child.
- **Learn to draw yourself and allow your child to mimic.** Supply your child's bedroom/study area with coloured pens, crayons, blank drawing and art paper of all sizes, paintbrushes, little easels, introductory books on art and drawing and beautifully illustrated books of the great artists.
- **Contact your local Suzuki Music School** and allow your child to experiment with different objects that can be used as percussion, wind, string and horn instruments.