

OPTIMAL HEALTH UNIVERSITY™

Presented by Dr. Troy H. Peters

Easy Ways to Boost Your Child's IQ

Did you know there are several simple, healthy things parents can do to help make their kids smarter? Dr. Peters has compiled a sampling of recent research on how to boost your child's IQ. Read on to learn more.

Get Attention-Boosting Chiropractic Adjustments

Doctors of chiropractic, like Dr. Peters, care for children by focusing on correcting dysfunctional areas in the spine called *vertebral subluxations*. Dr. Peters does this with gentle and effective maneuvers (*chiropractic adjustments*) specially tailored for children. According to one analysis, chiropractic adjustments designed to remove vertebral subluxations appear to speed mental reaction time, or what researchers term "movement time" (*J Manipulative Physiol Ther* 2006;29:257-66).

And, the more vertebral subluxations an individual has, the more his or her cognitive function may be compromised, according to another analysis of 30 volunteers (*J Manipulative Physiol Ther* 2005;28:502-7).

Other findings reveal that chiropractic adjustments activate "specific neurological pathways." (*J Manipulative Physiol Ther* 1997;20:529-45.)

An additional study suggesting that chiropractic adjustments may boost brain power was presented in November 1999 at the Sixteenth Annual Upper Cervical Conference at Life University in Marietta, Ga.

The study found that "significant improvements were observed in neurocognitive function in the group receiving upper cervical care [adjustments to the upper neck]. The control group did not demonstrate a similar trend. This

study suggests that upper cervical chiropractic care may positively affect neurocognitive function."

Avoid Brain-Shrinking Pain

A further way that chiropractic adjustments may improve cognitive function is by warding off pain. Alarming research shows that chronic pain literally shrinks the brain.

One study published in the *Journal of Neuroscience* discloses that individuals enduring chronic back pain (CBP) suffer brain loss or atrophy.

Scientists at Northwestern University in Chicago used specialized magnetic resonance imaging brain scans to compare the brains of 26 individuals with CBP with the brains of 26 pain-free control subjects (*J Neuroscience* 2004;24:10410-5).

The report uncovers that "patients with CBP showed 5 percent to 11 percent less neocortical gray matter volume than control subjects." Gray matter is the part of the brain that processes information and memory.

Youngsters may be most susceptible to the effect of pain on the brain speculate some experts. So if your child complains of pain or headache, make sure to make an appointment with Dr. Peters.

Make Music for the Mind

Playing an instrument or listening to music boosts intelligence. One study

compared 45 music students with an equal number of non-music students. All students were boys between the ages of 6 and 15. Findings showed that music students recalled significantly more words during subsequent testing than their peers (*Neuropsych* 2003;17:439).

Listening to music also ups IQ. This may be especially true of classical music, say scientists. Researchers at the University of California, Irvine, found that a group of 36 college undergraduates "improved their spatial-temporal intelligence (the ability to mentally manipulate objects in three-dimensional space) after listening to 10 minutes of a Mozart sonata. Results showed that students' IQ scores improved by 8-9 points and lasted for 10-15 minutes." These findings were later dubbed the "Mozart effect."

Read Together

Experts agree that reading with your child, allowing him or her to play with books, and having your child watch you read are some of the best things parents can do to encourage a love of learning.



**Dr. Troy H. Peters, Peters Wellness Chiropractic, Inc. (623) 935-0911
1616 North Litchfield Road, Suite 100, Goodyear, AZ 85395 www.PetersWellness.com**



Get Spiritual

Guiding your kids on a spiritual path may also increase their intelligence. One inquiry of 99 college students revealed that students who reported that they were religious were 34 percent less likely to have mental health problems, compared with subjects who did not engage in spiritual pursuits (*Psychol Rep* 1999;85:1088).

Send Stress Packing

Emotional stress is tied with poorer cognitive function and may inhibit brain development, say scientists. Work to keep your child's environment free of unnecessary stress. In addition, children are never too young to learn stress-reduction techniques, such as meditation, yoga, breathing techniques and t'ai chi.

Unleash the Unstructured Play

Child development experts argue that children who are over-scheduled and constantly shuttling between structured activities may miss out on key brain development triggered by unstructured playtime. Allowing your child to use his or her imagination, rather than focusing on memorization, may actually make him or her smarter.

Take it Outside

Exercise, especially in the outdoors, is essential to optimal cognitive development. Some child development experts even go so far as to suggest that children who lack contact with nature suffer from an array of problems they term "nature deficit disorder."

"Green outdoor settings appear to reduce ADHD symptoms in children across a wide range of individual, residential, and case characteristics," concludes one analysis (*Am J Public Health* 2004;94:1580-6). Year-round outdoor play also wards off childhood seasonal-related depression (*J Am Acad Child Adolesc Psychiatry* 1993;32:264-9).

Seek Out Social Interaction

Social interaction is key to cognitive development. While quiet alone-time play is also important, encouraging children to play together, and build relationships with others, may boost brain development. Conversely, lack of social connections and infrequent participation in social activities speed cognitive decline (*J Gerontol B Psychol Sci Soc Sci* 2003;58:S93-S100.)

Play With Pets

Extensive research shows that owning a companion animal reduces stress and depression while increasing coping skills. Pets have also been associated with "decreased psychotropic medication usage." (*Am J Hosp Palliat Care* 2004;21:285-8.)

Stock Up on Sleep

Proper sleep is vital to building a healthy brain. One study concludes that "shortened sleep duration, especially before the age of 41 months, is associated with externalizing problems such as hyperactivity-intensity and lower cognitive performance on neurodevelopmental tests. Results highlight the importance of giving a child the opportunity to sleep at least 10 hours per night throughout early childhood." (*Sleep* 2007;30:1079-80.)

Breastfeed for Brain Power

An overwhelming body of evidence suggests that breastfeeding your baby increases his or her IQ. The latest study along these lines was recently published in the journal *Archives of General Psychiatry*.

The study followed 14,000 children from infancy to age 6.5. It focused specifically on prolonged, exclusive

breastfeeding for at least three to six months.

At age 6.5, the children in the breastfeeding group scored an average of 7.5 points higher on tests measuring verbal intelligence, 2.9 points higher on tests measuring nonverbal intelligence and 5.9 points higher on tests measuring overall intelligence. Teachers also rated these children significantly higher academically than control children in both reading and writing.

"Our study provides the strongest evidence to date that prolonged and exclusive breastfeeding makes kids smarter," comments head researcher Michael Kramer, M.D. (*Arch Gen Psychiatry* 2008;65:578-84).

Feast on Brain Food

A plethora of research links diet with cognitive function. A healthy diet full of whole foods, with an emphasis on fruits and vegetables and lean proteins, is key for raising smart kids.

And, make sure that diet includes fatty fish like salmon or give your child omega-3 supplements. This fatty acid has been proven to boost children's cognitive function. (However, make sure to choose fish from unpolluted waters free of mercury, as mercury ingestion is detrimental to brain development.)

Turn off the TV

Excessive television viewing, especially in very young children, is associated with altered brain development, which may predispose children to attention and behavioral problems. Too much TV also interferes with sleep, which is also key to cognitive development.

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