

Brain Compatible Education Strategies for Parents and Teachers.

Derek Pugh



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Significant adults are important figures in the lives of children. Here are 25 simple strategies that adults can use to help children develop their brains:

1. Believe in your children as learners – everyone can learn.
2. Celebrate their successes and the joys of learning.
3. Tell them your strategies for learning experiences you found hard.
4. Let them fail sometimes, but reassure them that setbacks are temporary to build resilience.
5. Listen, watch and learn. Parents are learners too.
6. Allow your kids to teach you or others. Teaching is a powerful way for them to learn.
7. Allow a child to take ultimate responsibility for learning.
8. Help through questioning, demonstrating and careful explanations.
9. Use questions like: “what were the two most important things you learned at school today?” Or ‘the two most enjoyable moments?’ Or ‘what was the most interesting?’
10. Encourage reading. Read to and talk to young children about books from an early age.
11. Watch TV shows *actively* rather than passively – talk about characters, situations, allow them to interpret social cues. Avoid letting them see inappropriate shows.
12. Encourage them to analyze and critique their favourite books or TV shows.
13. Encourage participation in the arts - music, drama, visual arts as these exercise the imagination, spatial skills, build empathy with others, express emotion, challenge as all these are critical elements of learning.
14. Talk and talk often - have a regular daily talk time with the kids. For example over breakfast, in the car, before bed.

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15. Do not use baby talk with small children, model good language for them to emulate.
16. Use longer sentences, larger vocabulary and various contexts. Talk about what you are doing using the correct terminology.
17. Encourage children to learn a second language. Language learning ability is at its peak up till about age 10. (Adolescents find it harder to start a second language).
18. Teach children to 'focus their hippocampus' – ie playing games and rehearsing learning tasks during high distraction times teaches them to filter out the distractions. Also knowing how activities affect their brains adds to the motivation for learning.
19. Congratulate them when they improve.
20. Have regular eye and ear checks for your children. Eye and ear problems may take months or years to be noticed otherwise.
21. Provide positive emotions support: - Minimize threats, maximize encouragement.
22. Set clear boundaries/rules based on explained rights and responsibilities. Use logical consequences, avoid anger.
23. Model good positive strategies and positive thinking, for example by saying *"How can we fix this?"* rather than *"You never do what you're told!"* and not *"I can't do this"* but *"I'm going to try this challenge"*.
24. Never threaten or predict a poor future for kids – they might rise to your expectations.
25. Use positive words rather than negative. Even the *reading* of negative words affects the emotional centers of the brain.

Visit www.braincompatibleeducation.com for more free information booklets about brain compatible education.



Derek Pugh is an experienced Principal and teacher in both Australian and International Schools. He now runs workshops in Brain Compatible Education for students, teachers, parents and corporate groups worldwide. Workshop participants discover the latest in neuroscience and why

knowledge of the brain is a powerful tool in education; the 'SEWBaD model' of preparation for learning; what brain 'plasticity' means to education; individual learning profiles and how to use them for effective learning and teaching; how to teach or learn efficiently; and models of brain operation and function.

He is the author of "The Owner's Guide to the Teenage Brain"

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