

Your Child's Best Life

Beyond the Essentials



As parents and caregivers, we all seek to provide more than the “essentials” for our children. Research has shown that there are key interventions that improve their chances of success later on.

DAILY READING

The American Academy of Pediatrics, or AAP, recommends that daily reading begin in infancy. Reading aloud to children has been referred to as the **SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT ACTIVITY** for building knowledge for eventual success in reading.

Research has shown that the more words that parents speak to their child at 8 months of age, the larger the size of their vocabulary by 3 years of age. Daily reading also fosters the parent-child relationship, and also has a positive impact on a child's social development and on their relationships with others. Studies show that children who are read to have better language skills when they start school and are more interested in reading, and that reading proficiency by the 3rd grade is the **MOST SIGNIFICANT PREDICTOR** of high school graduation and career success.

EXERCISE...

Helps in the development of gross and fine motor skills to perform every day activities increases their bone strength and improves their coordination and has a positive impact on obesity in later years.

It is currently recommended that younger children engage in **active play** as their activity and that children 6 and older have 1 hour of activity daily.

DID YOU KNOW?

There is a positive relationship between physical activity and academic performance.

For older children, regular physical activity has been found to increase self-esteem, and to decrease anxiety and depression.



Character Training

Studies show that the most important predictors of long-term success are not intellectual skills, but **SOCIAL** and **EMOTIONAL** ones. These skills are facilitated by spending regular time together, engaging in meaningful conversation, being a strong moral role model, making caring for others a priority, providing opportunities to practice caring and gratitude, expanding their circle of concern to include their larger community, and helping them develop self-control and to manage their feelings effectively.

Encouraging Responsibility

Providing younger children with chores and other age-appropriate responsibilities teaches them that everyone must contribute to the betterment of the whole.

Chores instill in children the importance of contributing to their families and give them a sense of empathy as adults. Those who have chores as young children are more likely to be well-adjusted, have better relationships with friends and family, and to be more successful in their careers (*Dr. Marty Rossmann, University of Mississippi*).

Teaching Resilience

Disappointments are unavoidable. It is important for children to realize that outcomes do not define them, and that some of the best life lessons come from NOT being on the winning side, but from “picking up” and refocusing on what’s next. In turn, rather than being rescued from their mistakes, children benefit most from seeking solutions to life’s challenges.

Leading By Example

“Children learn more from what you are than what you teach.”

- W. E. B. DuBois

Children who see their parents reading daily, exercising regularly, eating healthy foods, demonstrating gratitude and empathy and caring for others, and focusing more on solutions and less on failures are more likely to do the same.