

## Creating Smart Brains and Amazing Learners

- Recommended foods: Antioxidants such as prunes, raisins, blueberries, spinach, plums, broccoli; omega - 3 such as avocado, green leafy vegetables, herring, lean meats, olive oil, salmon, tuna, nuts; good carbs such as apples, oranges, brown rice, fettucine, nonfat yogurt, sourdough bread, other proteins, water
- Children need to play more and do homework less. When children play they suspend conventional ways of thinking (Jerome Bruner) and invent new ways of thinking which is really quite abstract.
- Children must feel connected in order to thrive. Ask them, “What do you see as your strengths?” AND, “I need your help!”
- Minimize the fear of making mistakes. Tell them everyone makes mistakes and feels bad about it.
- Be playful. Don’t argue as much.  
Story: a teacher told children a whale can’t swallow a human - it’s physically impossible. A little girl said, “what about jonah and the whale?” Teacher got irritated and said, “No. Listen to me.” The little girl said “When I get to heaven I’ll ask Jonah.” Teacher said, “What if Jonah went to that *bad place* (not heaven)?” Little girl said, “Then you’ll have to ask him.”
- Memory masters
  - Actively observe what you want to learn
  - Create a meaningful snapshot in your mind
  - Connect with a visual link (meaning, detailed movement, and action)(Try to memorize: nun, locker, banker, butterfly, cigar, teddy bear, lizard, salad)

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- Stress doubles the risk of alzheimers when people don't have skills to manage their anxiety- teach children how to manage anxiety.
- Exercise - both you and the children. (Exercise increases frontal lobe activity and reduces the risk of alzheimers later in life!)
- Our education system should accentuate curriculum that enhances language and verbal skills. Language is highly correlated with overall intelligence and increasing one's IQ early in life. The neural system for language can be developed prior to oral language, and correlates with IQ. This suggests that all children should be exposed to American Sign Language prior to development of oral language as a health issue.
- Emotional well-being and social skills matter for long-term brain health.
- Continuous learning throughout life must be promoted (not as a fixed stage) from the beginning of one's life to the end of one's life (overwhelming evidence about the importance of learning and brain health).
- Environments should be stimulating, challenging, and nurturing - - NOT THREATENING. Negative and or impoverished environments contribute to brain retardation and possible dementia later in life.
- Teachers should spend less time telling children *what* to think and more time helping children practice *how* to think.