

EINSTEIN NEVER USED FLASH CARDS

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- **Introduction:** Much of what the media reports about research on child development contains only a grain of scientific truth. News stories and advertisements tell parents that toys build better brains and that infants and toddlers are mathematical geniuses. We are here to set the record straight.
- Many experts have talked and written about the undue stress on children and parents in today's fast-paced world. This book does more than just sound the alarm: It suggests a remedy. **PLAYING – LEARNING.**
- **The Roadrunner Society:** Once babies are born, the push to move them quickly as possible toward adult competencies intensifies. The baby-educating industry has found a receptive audience of parents eager to enrich their offspring. **FASTER, BETTER, MORE IS NOT THE SOLUTION.**
- **Whatever happened to play?** It has become a four letter word. In 1981, the typical school-aged child had about 40% of her time open for play. By 1997, it was down to 25%. Now, almost 40% of the school districts in America have eliminated recess.
- There is a better way to grow “smart kids.” The key predictors of healthy intellectual and emotional development are “responsive, nurturing relationships with parents and caregivers.”
- The new parenting mantra should be: **REFLECT, RESIST, AND RE-CENTER . . .** against the “adultification” of children. The true center of childhood is play, not work; the best way to re-center is to **PLAY** with your child . . . “instead of schlepping to and from the car, and paying for what?”

- Childhood is about making discoveries and those discoveries do not take place in the context of structured lessons – nor do they come from boxes or on computer screens.
- Unless you are living in extreme isolation or poverty, the natural, every day environments in which families and children find themselves promote strong brain development.
- The research is clear that you are unlikely to create an abundance of synaptic connections that build a bigger brain by exposing your children to early enrichments and mind-building toys.
- Parents are not the sculptors of their children’s brains, nor do they have the responsibility for deciding which particular sorts of experiences to provide to make the synaptic connection happen. Relax! We don’t need to overenrich the environment for young brains to develop.
- Chapters 3-9 end with a section called: **Bringing the Lessons Home**. These sections provide very practical, everyday activities and suggestions in which parents/caregivers and their children can interact (e.g, “plan a field trip ... to your own back yard” or “move from city malls to tennis balls”).
- To fully master skills like addition and subtraction, children must understand, for example, that five is greater than four by one unit and greater than three by even more – two units. But remember, you can play “math” games with toys, cars, teacups and any other everyday item you have in your home. You don’t need to buy anything special.
- Think blocks, not videos; find the numbers everywhere; encourage your child to learn in context. If you just do what comes naturally in your day, you will build number skills in your home.

- Research shows that your common, ordinary, mundane daily interactions with your child are all you need to promote excellent language development. Talking, listening responding, reading interacting . . . that provides all the help with language skills they could possibly need.
- Language gets learned in the context of interaction – in the context of eating and playing and asking for the names of things, not passively looking at a computer model.
- Language development begins way before the baby’s first birthday. In fact it begins in the womb. Seven months into pregnancy, “babies are already eavesdropping on their mothers’ conversations.”
- Research shows that babies who are better at following a parent’s gaze at six months have larger vocabularies at 18-24 months.
- The more opportunities we take to talk with children, the more data they have to analyze, and the better their foundation for language.
- What children need from adults is time, not tricks. In other words, the key to how children learn to talk – and whether they will have a big vocabulary – is talking with them.
- Children who are involved in conversation know more letters, colors, and shapes at age 3 than children who are not addressed as frequently.
- Build on what your child says; be a conversation elicitor, not a conversation closer; don’t be afraid to use baby talk; limit TV time to small doses; if you’d like to introduce a second language do so in a real world situation.
- The National Academy of Education Commission on Reading declared that “reading aloud to children is the single most important activity for ensuring success in learning to read.”
- Building Blocks of Reading: Vocabulary, Storytelling, Phonology, Letters that make up the words. Much space was dedicated to the

discussion of “emergent literacy” (Chapter 5) and the role of the parent in developing literacy.

- What do children need in order to develop their natural intelligence to it fullest? One of the key features of intelligence is language ability; it’s how you ask questions and get answers.
- The size of one’s vocabulary is a very large component of what IQ measures. And the primary thing that helps vocabulary develop is ordinary, everyday talk, directed to children.
- Stress effort, not achievement: Your children will miss 100% of the shots they don’t take. If we are critical and fact-driven, we are teaching our children not to take those shots. What we need to teach them more than anything is that it is OK not to be perfect, that we make mistakes too, and that we love them for their effort.
- Focus on developing your child’s creativity and independent thinking – true 21st Century skills.
- Emotional Intelligence is critically important. A report from the Society for Research in Child Development stated that “children who have difficulty paying attention, following directions, getting along well with others, and controlling their negative emotions of anger and distress do less well in school.”
- So children must learn two skills from their parent/care givers: the ability to recognize an emotion and the ability to label it; talking about emotions is critically important.
- Pay attention to how you talk about your children in front of them; treat your child as an individual; let your children know anything is possible; talk with your children about feelings; and recognize that emotional intelligence correlates to success in life. In the day-to-day world no intelligence is more important than the interpersonal.
- Social skills do need to be learned and they are best learned through meaningful interactions with others in life. Children learn from how

their parents treat them, and how their parents treat others. Then they practice on their peers.

- Look for opportunities to discuss other people's feelings; watch your language; explain to your child that there are causes for people's feelings; stop bullying in its tracks; make space for social time; and try to see the world through your children's eyes.
- **PLAY: THE CRUCIBLE OF LEARNING:** The evidence is very clear. Play promotes development and in a number of domains. Play promotes problem solving and creativity; it builds better attention spans, and encourages social development. Based on the research evidence, a new equation is in order: $PLAY = LEARNING$.
- Through our years of research, we have come to the conclusion that "play is to early childhood what gas is to a car." It is the very fuel of every intellectual activity that our children engage in. In essence, play is the key to nurturing, happy, intelligent children.
- Become an advocate for play; provide the resources for stimulating play (but remember almost anything can be a toy); join in the fun; let your child take the lead, and encourage your child to use his imagination.
- The last Chapter is entitled The New Formula For Exceptional Parenting, restating much of what has come before. It begins with Albert Einstein's life from birth to his teen years. His parents and family paid attention to his interests and fed them with toys, and lessons and books. "If Einstein's mother never used flash cards, why is that modern day parents have come to believe that they must drill their preschoolers on obscure facts, teach them to read before they enter kindergarten, and have them doing arithmetic before the age 3?" Remember, the "latest advice" is not based on the best scientific research!
- The new 3Rs: Reflect, Resist, and Re-Center is the goal.

