

Develop Your Child's Genius – Right-Brain/Left-Brain Coordination

By: Esther Andrews

No matter how old your children are, you have an immense power to affect their growth, development and success in life. By actively pursuing activities that contribute to the better development of their brain, you provide them with an advantage over all other kids, and increase their chances to be successful in life. By doing that, you also make sure they will have plenty of experiences of success and achievement, so that they become self confident, positive and optimistic.

There is a lot of talk recently about the “Right Brain/Left Brain” issue. Basically, researchers have found that the human left brain is “responsible” for completely different functions than the right brain. Researchers have concluded that in every person, one of these hemispheres of the brain is dominant. According to this theory, the left brain is the analytical one, responsible for measurement, logic, math, analysis and the right brain is responsible for creativity, art, intuition and the use of words. Some people even claim that men are left brain dominant, while women are usually right brain dominant, and proceed to explain that men think in pictures, while women think in words. No wonder, they claim, there is such a big gap in communication between men and women!

Research has shown that it is very important to increase the communication, or the connection between the 2 hemispheres of the brain. If we do that, we increase the functionality of the brain. This can be done in all ages, and has proven to be beneficial. Improved balance between the two hemispheres, improves peace of mind, harmony, reading and comprehension, and develops better concentration and focus.

The activities that have been shown to develop and improve the brain hemisphere connectivity are usually the ones that use both sides of the body in concert. The cross pattern we all use while walking or swimming and babies use when they crawl, develops and strengthens the connection between the brain hemispheres. By cross pattern, I mean the movement when we bring the right arm and the left leg forward, and then the left arm and the right leg. It has been shown that some brain injured children who did not crawl, developed severe handicaps, and by practicing the activity of crawling, they have shown surprising improvements.

If you have a very young baby, and you want to help it develop strength in both sides of the brain, you can massage both feet or both hands, for a few minutes, several times every day. When you gently massage your baby's feet, and stimulate both feet at the same time, and then each foot – one after the other, and watch your baby's face, you will notice that your baby enjoys this activity very much. It is not necessarily a calming activity, because massaging the baby's feet is actually stimulating.

I recommend doing this a few minutes every day, before or after changing the baby's diapers. This activity also forces you to take a few minutes a day to look into your baby's eyes, smile to the baby, and massage its feet and hands. You will notice that it strengthens the bond you are creating with your baby, and this is a priceless bonus.

Another activity that has been proven to greatly contribute to higher intelligence as well as better health is swimming. This activity can be done at any age, and if you swim with your baby or your child, it will contribute to your health too. If you have a baby, find a “water babies” affiliate in your area. If you have an older child, there are many ways to involve them

in swimming. Encourage them to participate on a swim team, or to get involved with a school swimming activity. Practicing every day will improve their health tremendously.

Very young babies enjoy being in the water, kicking their legs and use their arms for swimming. If you have a swimming pool at home, or you belong to a club, you can take your baby with you into the water, and hold it in the water. However, make sure that the water they swim in is warm. Babies need a higher temperature than adults need. Also make sure the water is clean. The quality of water is important to children of all ages, and I have to remind you to watch your child at any time when they are in the water, to prevent drowning. Please use caution.

Be aware, that very young babies have a very heavy head compared to their body, and they cannot by themselves keep their head above water. So make sure that your baby is supported at all times.

Another activity that improves the brain connectivity and balance is crawling. If your baby is still young, and does not crawl yet, swimming is preferred. You can also team up with a friend or a partner, and “imitate” crawling movement holding the baby’s arms and legs, in cross pattern. You stand on one side of the baby, while the baby is laying on its tummy, and the partner on the other side. You hold a hand and a foot, and so does the partner. Then while you bring the arm forward, the partner brings the leg forward, and visa versa, creating a rhythm. Do it just for a few minutes, while having fun. You can repeat it several times a day.

For all children who know how to crawl, make sure your child has room and opportunity to crawl. You might have to clean the floors, and make sure that the floor is free of little objects your child can choke on, but encourage the child to crawl as much as possible.

For older children, chasing each other while crawling can be a fun and enjoyable game. You can get on your hands and knees too, it will do you good! If you have several children, encourage them to play “catch” while crawling. This is good exercise, and it contributes to their intelligence.

Walking and running are natural activities, that utilize the cross pattern, and are great at balancing right and left hemispheres of the brain.

As we know, most people have a dominant hand. Statistically, most people are right handed, but there are many left handed people. In the past, (a few generations ago), it was common practice to force children to use their right hand for writing, tie their left arm behind their back, if they attempted to use it for writing. Children were punished for using their left hand for writing, cutting with scissors, playing ball etc.

For school age children, an exercise has been shown to create wonders: practice writing using your weak hand. If you are left handed, practice writing with your right hand, and if you are right handed, practice writing with your left hand. This can feel very awkward at first, and takes some practice. So I recommend turning it into a game. Do it with your child, take turns and compete. The person who writes clearer, or faster, wins. For example, every word earns a number of points, and whoever earns most points gets an award. Invent some games, and turn it into a fun activity.

Only a few minutes of practice a day, will make a big difference. And remember – by doing this you are giving your child an advantage many other children do not have.

Another activity that is amazingly productive for your child: drumming. I know, this is not for everybody. If you cannot stand the noise, maybe it is not the right activity for you. However,

when your child learns how to drum, he is using both hands in turn, and is also learning a pattern. It will be a lot of fun to play a game, in which one of you invents a pattern and “drums” it (you don’t need a drum for this) and the other(s) have to recognize the pattern and imitate it. You can provide an award, and use it as an incentive. The pattern can become more and more complicated as you get better at this game. This game strengthens your child audio memory, improves the brain connectivity and improves pattern recognition.