

How to increase your child's and your chances for success in just a few minutes daily

This is possible because most people ignore prepping for success. Success does not just happen. It must be prepared for and sought after. Opportunities are most often created by ones and others actions. Good parenting can benefit both the child and the parent. Why not wisely invest in a few minutes a day of preparedness for success.

I bring you lots of experience being a college professor (Information Technology) and having also taught at every grade level and also being a great grandfather. I have other experience and qualifications but will forgo this in order to get down to what is important to you which is your and your child's success.

Let's start at the beginning which before birth the mother should avoid drugs and emotional upset as much as possible (which would be nice but sometimes unavoidable.) Consulting authoritative books on child rearing is a good idea and presents the ideas of good physical and emotional health being most important. They also suggest that reading to, singing to and even playing nurturing music to the baby has value. This shows up years later as emotional background. The first few years of a child's life are very important and are often the determinators of future success or failure.

The baby has almost everything automatically given to it in the womb 24/7 except emotional support. Then it has an often traumatic birth and faces a cold strange world outside without language or ability to state its needs and wants other than to cry. It learns about discomfort, and hunger and hopefully a caring mother who helps alleviate these. Psychologists tell us that the first two years are critical to emotional development. Parents are not perfect nor available every minute of the day nor do they always understand what is bothering the child. But most good parents are usually able to mitigate most problems and should do so in a timely manner. Neglecting issues may cause emotional damage if done repeatedly. The child may sometimes pick up negative feelings of the parent and adopt a negative self concept. Good parents and caregivers best present on average positive attitudes and feelings and provide happiness whenever possible. Of course showing displeasure with bad behavior is a natural consequence and learning tool for children generally over 3 years. Consult child development books for more info on this aspect.

Playing good music like baby Bach or melodious or soothing music has been shown to be of some value in mental and emotional development.

Self concept is all important thing and is formed mostly in the early years. Persons with negative self concepts are often involved in negative behavior including crime. Persons with positive self concepts are usually better achievers and successful. Avoid telling children **they** are bad or stupid. Instead criticize the behavior. When both parents and siblings and peers tell a child that they are dumb, or stupid or no good it hurts the self concept. Many a criminal or failing person is fulfilling the parents opinion that they are bad. Compliment good behavior as often and as much as possible. Tell children that you love them and care about them and that they are smart and able to do many things on their own. When they do something good tell them you are proud of them.

It goes almost without saying that caring child care is essential to wholesome emotional development. Many of the persons with mental disorders and criminal behavior were abused or neglected as children. Consult psychology and child development research for more on this. The few minutes a day idea does not begin until the child acquires language ability which caregivers facilitate by talking to children and asking them questions. You will find that asking positive questions of children is a good way to get them to think and to learn as soon as they begin to comprehend language and continues all the way thru 12 grade by asking them what they learned in school in each class. In my Masters and Doctoral classes in teaching we learned that questioning then pausing for them to think about it, are great learning tools since Socrates and is called the Socratic method.

Educational toys and Public Broadcasting Service educational programs like Sesame Street are certainly great teaching tools and buy the parent some time off. PBS in general is one of the few areas

of television programming that is of positive educational value to children. So much of the rest is junk and has negative content or values or is simply just a waste of good learning time.

When going out and the child of course accompanies the parent this provides many potential learning opportunities. The caregiver can point out things to the child and ask questions. A firetruck goes by with siren blaring. There is a chance to explain several ideas to the child. Then later to ask them about it. Tell daddy what you saw today that had a siren. This give learning reinforcement and practice in stating ideas. Field trips to places like the zoo are great learning experiences. Band concerts or seeing people play musical instruments and using a musical instrument can have positive value in mental development just like learning a second language. These things should not be forced on children but can at least be introduced. Once children enter formal grade school introducing them to a musical instrument or second language (other than one spoken at home) may have greater effect. We know that Chinese children learn Chinese, German children learn German seemingly easier than adults but it is really because they have thousands of hours of exposure to language. Some children pick up musical skills because they find it enjoyable. Forcing them may create a lifelong aversion to that instrument. Again learning a language or how to play a musical instrument are good for mental development and maintenance and even past middle age.

OK once the child has entered the first grade the parent can ask them what they learned that day. But this has to be done in a positive way. This is not an interrogation or a test if they paid attention rather a reinforcement ow what was learned. Sometimes the parent or grandparent can add additional information from their experience.

Picking a favorable time to review what was learned is important. When you get home from work you don't want to talk about work, you want to relax. It is the same with children. Pick a later time to ask. Make it a mutual learning experience in that you can add to their learning.

Keep a lookout for special educational TV programming. Example the Cosmos educational TV specials were very informative. These special programs may have good side effects like opening up new interests.

As a grandfather I had an attached garage where a table was set up for educational items. The biggest success was the HO (inexpensive small cars about six inches long enabling it to be set up in a small area) train set where the children learned about how track was set up and how cars were hooked to one another. We learned about electricity and that the engine had an electric motor in it. And if the wires were not hooked it did not run. Of all of the voltages were safe anyway. They liked the little HO set up so well that we ended up making a bigger set up. One grand child really got involved with understanding everything about it the other one just so so but still learned a lot of useful science information which may have helped in school. Their experience with real life like objects was a valuable learning experience. Even some adults who came over wanted to play with the train set.

Other things we showed the grand kids were magnets, a rock and mineral collection, robots, weather station, short wave radio, AM radio broadcasting kit, dinosaurs, microscope and slides. (they now have one that fits on a cell phone). There are now many educational kits for children that can inspire their learning. We got a small telescope and looked at the moon and planets and a comet.

We put a bird feeder outside and got a picture identification bird book.

We got a guide to plants and learned about common plants. We even learned about edible plants in case needed for survival.

Speaking of survival we encouraged the to join the Boy Scouts where they learned safety, first aid, survival, how to survive, camping, hiking, They safely learned how to swim with supervised swimming lessons. And most important they learned good values and leadership skills. If you do nothing else get a Boy scout Handbook for both your boys and girls. (Because the girls need to learn survival skills also and the girls scout handbook is lacking much of this)

We visited a planetarium and also bought an inexpensive star chart. We had to drive out to the country to get away from the city lights but they saw the true night sky and Milky way and shooting stars for the first time.

Another valuable tool is a one volume picture encyclopedia. This proved to be a great learning item. There are smaller picture dictionaries and picture encyclopedias of nature, history etc available which are summaries and are great learning tools. The World Book Encyclopedia is expensive but is a wonderful educational reference worth having in every home. I speak from educational experience. Also there are children's encyclopedias on DVD. A great little 40 page booklet for a child over 12 or young adults is "Be a Success with proven Success Practices" by Professor Wesley Arnold free at <http://dogoodforall.today> or on amazon.com. It has the best success practices from research.

Online learning is a huge resource for children and adults.

The site with the most videos is of course youtube.com All are free and there are millions of useful videos. Some are so so but most are informative. If you want college level best to so an online search and also look at what the many colleges offer. I took two courses at Harvard for free. But vanity got me and I wanted a certificate so I had to pay for that. There are hundreds of free classes online from colleges. Most have video lessons. You can save them and re-watch them. Then go to a college and pay for a test and get actual college credit for much less than attending classes. udemy.com has many courses for small fee.

Great educational websites for kids include:

Brain Pop and Enchanted Learning. Brain Pop is great because it offers an interactive experience with two characters and always offers a 10 minute segment followed by a short quiz in order to test if the child learned anything. Scholastic is one of the more unique educational websites for kids. 4-H Stem Lab is a great first stop on your kid's science journey. There are dozens of experiments in areas such as chemistry, biology, math, and engineering. You'll find activities clearly marked for the intended grade level, as well as how long each one takes.

How Stuff Works is very informative. <https://www.exploratorium.edu/>

Science Toys has instructions for crafting all manner of amazing gadgets from a solar-powered marshmallow roaster to the "World's Simplest Steam Boat."

Bill Nye, the Science Guy.

Science News for Students keeps kids up-to-date on scientific trends.

Fun and Free Educational Websites for Kids Sesame Street, PBSKids.org.

CoolMath.com calls itself "an amusement park of math and more." Children can play online math games that help them with addition, subtraction, multiplication, division, decimals, money and more.

CoolMath is geared toward ages 13 and up,

sister site CoolMath4Kids.com is appropriate for ages 3 through 12. CoolMath Games offers "brain training" games for all ages.

TIMEforKids.com From the publishers of TIME magazine

Kids.NationalGeographic.com.

Starfall.com offers learning games and activities for kids in pre-K through grade 3, covering math, reading, writing, and music, plus seasonal options.

TheKidzPage.com has more than 5,000 pages of learning games and activities. Online coloring pages, jigsaw puzzles and word games are just a few categories on this massive site. Each holiday has its own section of activities and games to enjoy with your children.

Fun Brain

NickJr.com

Highlights for Kids

The magazine for kids that's been around for more than 60 years also offers online ways to play, read, and craft with your children.

Learning Games for Kids

Old Farmer's Almanac for Kids

According to The 8 Best Educational Apps for Kids in 2021 By Rebecca Bodenheimer

Best Overall: [Khan Academy](#)

•**Best for Toddlers:** [Busy Shapes](#)

•**Best for Preschoolers:** [ABCmouse.com](#)

•**Best for Elementary School Kids:** [Prodigy](#)

•**Best for Teens:** [Google Arts and Culture](#)

•**Best for Teens:** [Quizlet](#)

•**Best for Social Emotional Learning and Kids with ADHD:** [Stop, Breathe and Think](#)

•**Best for Teaching Kids Coding:** [Hopscotch](#)

The 7 Best Online Home school Programs of 2021

•**Best Overall:** [K12.com](#)

•**Best Budget:** [ABCmouse.com](#)

•**Best for Structure:** [Time4Learning](#)

•**Best for Community:** [Connections Academy](#)

•**Best Free:** [Khan Academy](#)

•**Best for College Prep:** [edX](#)

•**Best for Math and Science:** [CK-12 Foundation](#)

If you invest a little time looking at the above sites you will find goldmines of value for your child but there are many more on the Internet. Do a Google search on educational websites for children for more.

Games

Games do have value but not when they are used to excess taking away time from more productive things. Avoid the common violent games or games that teach negative values.

Free time. Children need some free time and must learn how to decide what to do with it. And children should have their own job to do as part of a family perhaps after age 4 or so. This can be as simple as picking up their toys and putting them in a toy box. As they get older chores can be assigned. For example teenagers can put out and bring in the garbage cans. Chores should not be excessive but they instill responsibility and a sense of being part of a team. Teaching children to be responsible for their actions is important. Natural consequences of not being responsible teach valuable life lessons. Parents waiting on every child needs (after perhaps age 6) teaches entitlement. Better to teach self sufficiency and responsibility. The values put out in Scouting have great value. The Scout law lists some of them. Motto Be Prepared. Slogan Do a good turn daily. A scout is Trustworthy, Loyal, Helpful, Friendly, Courteous, Kind, Obedient, Cheerful, Thrifty, Brave, Clean and Reverent. Above all scouting teaches youngsters to think, act with responsibility and they learn leadership first of self than of others in a goal centered environment such as learning safety, First Aid, emergency preparedness and camping and learning survival knowledge. They learn to find water, food, build a fire without matches, cooking, sewing (even the boys) finding directions, reading maps and practicing good common sense. Along the way they mature, learn to be self sufficient and to make important decisions on their own.

They also learn to swim in a safe environment with safe instructors. It is worth mentioning again get a Boy Scout Handbook for your boy or girl. (As it has survival information girls also need.) Do I sound prejudiced. Perhaps I should note a boy scout saved my life when I was young.

When you go on a long trip include a single volume visual encyclopedia. They can also lookup things. Cross a bridge ask them to find out about kinds of bridges. Point out things you see along the way and ask questions. What do cows eat? Do brown cows make chocolate milk?

Avoid only playing games on screens. How about what different animals can you spot on the trip? What is the speed limit? Why is that important. What many kinds of buildings can you spot? What is that tall round thing next to barns?

Emphases here is on a few minutes daily not taking over every waking minute. Asking questions in a positive manner not in an exam manner. What do horses eat? What is electricity? Be the humble inquirer. The object is to get the child to think, learn and to reinforce learning.

A few minutes a day can make a big difference in child development and learning for success.