

HOW CHILDREN FAIL - John Holt
 HOW CHILDREN LEARN - John Holt
 WHAT EVER HAPPENED TO RECESS AND WHY ARE OUR CHILDREN FAILING IN KINDERGARTEN? - Ron Miller Susan Ohanian
 THE SELF-ORGANIZING REVOLUTION - Ron Miller Susan Ohanian
 WHAT DO I DO MONDAY? - John Holt
 DUMBING US DOWN - John Taylor Gatto
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 FREE TO LEARN - Peter Gray

Ten Basic Ideas for Raising Children

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1. Growth is inevitable, however the brain may take over 20 years before it's fully developed. Until then, thinking, feeling, and behaving will be immature at times and will improve in fits and starts. Most babies are born easygoing; a few will take extra thought.

2. We are programmed by our genes to become independent, social, and cooperating creatures who need other people. Bossing little kids around too much or subjecting them to put-downs can damage the cooperative instinct, while too much guidance can also slow the process.

3. Given the eight inborn temperamental traits that can be measured, it is very convenient to assume that the personality is, in a sense, fully developed on the day of birth. But decent, responsive, and respectful handling is needed for its smooth unfolding. Play and physical activity are also vital, while television may be the major cause of attention deficit disorder.

4. Meeting children's needs — which at first has to be almost always on their terms — will happen if we listen, respond, and see that they're satisfied. After that, if they just *look* happy most of the time, we're doing O.K. even if the behavior is sometimes obnoxious. Cuddling is vital. Patience and understanding will develop gradually. Brief crying is inevitable.

5. Setting limits on unacceptable behavior is relatively easy since the parent can always win. Then the goal is to *help* them think about doing things differently. But we can't *make* children speak, agree, eat, do, listen, learn, or pick up — short of a scary threat — while "Let's clean up *together*, right now!" works very well. Other things can often get done when politely asked, possibly rewarded and when they're given a bit of choice and control over exactly how, when and where. So set a good example and encourage them in a dignified way.

PS The #1 Rule - Never ask a child a question if you already know the answer -- except, of course, in emergency situations Google WebMD--Is Your Child too Busy?
 PPS Look into Choral Reading, Cooperative Learning, and Invitational Education

and NO HOMEWORK AND RECESS ALL DAY - Jerry Mintz LetGrow.org

PPPS "He eats no meals, but nibbles all day long"--newspaper article re losing weight by R.E.Kay and The Best Thing We've Ever Done for Kids In School; A.O., Getting Through K and Grad School -- available for a SASE

6. But we can force children to bathe, get dressed, and move on or stay in their rooms. We just can't make them sleep. And, while giving them the reason, we generally shouldn't try to "reason" them into things — or get upset about their initial "No!"

7. They learn to speak the language *when the brain is ready* without being actively taught and will learn everything else the same way. Converse, answer questions, stimulate, enjoy, show interest, and have a few simple games. Play with numbers and read to them out loud.

8. If they separate easily they might not be harmed by day care. Peer group socialization has been vastly overrated. Home-educated children are more confident, more sociable, and eight times more likely to become National Merit Scholars.

9. Only a few things are apt to slow down integrated learning. These include the television set, video games, and perhaps the computer. The other is the typical school — which could, however, become a useful place were it to concentrate on basic skills and teaching through interests.

10. It is important to help kids understand reality, cope with information overload, and know the basic rules, but these are learned naturally in the course of living. It boils down to: Try not to annoy other people. Meanwhile, despite immature behavior and experimentation, the need to survive keeps most of 'em alive when outside the front door.

So, remain the benevolent despot, vary your errors, spank little, sit-on if necessary, scream infrequently, threaten rarely, groan often, question organized activities, support their interests, control television watching, and act silly on occasion while trying to ignore snotty words as you attempt to read their feelings. Trust them to imitate us — 30 years on down the pike.