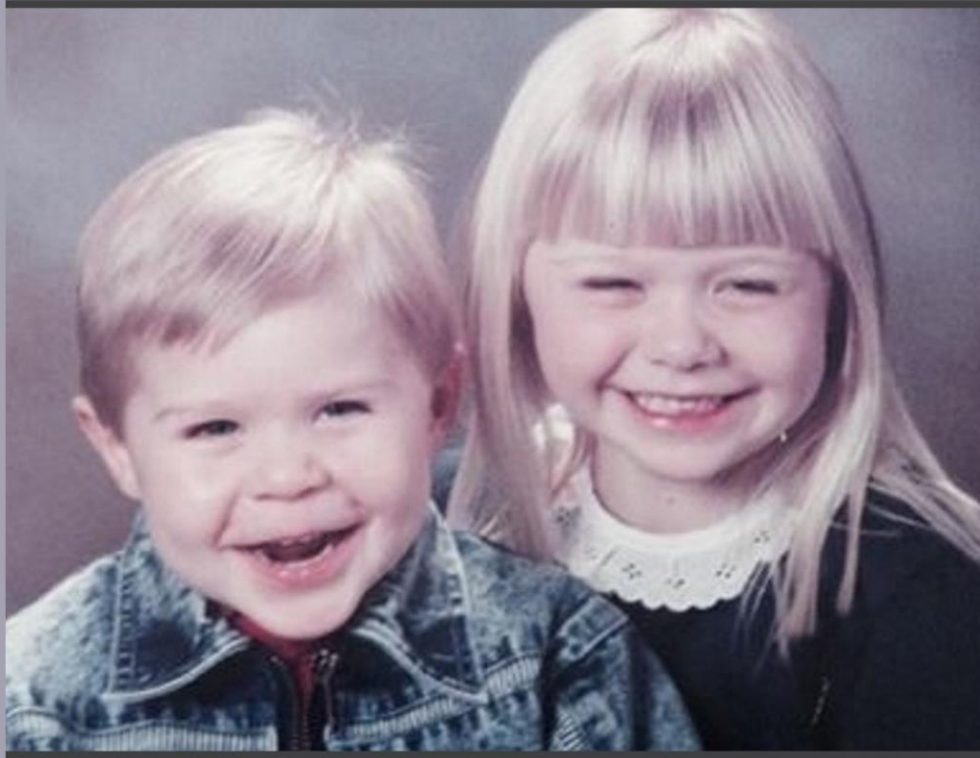


**Have Fun  
Be Good  
BE Happy**



A simple guide to  
successful parenting

by Peter Hoult

# **Have fun, be good, BE happy**

**A book about Parenting**

**Author: Peter Hoult**

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## Preface

Welcome to the "Have fun, be good, be happy" guide to parenting. This book has been a long time in the making. It did not take long to write, but the practical part of education, research and application went on for many years. My decision to write the book was prompted by Anthony Robbins advice that everyone has to make their long-time something they "should do" into a right now they "must do".

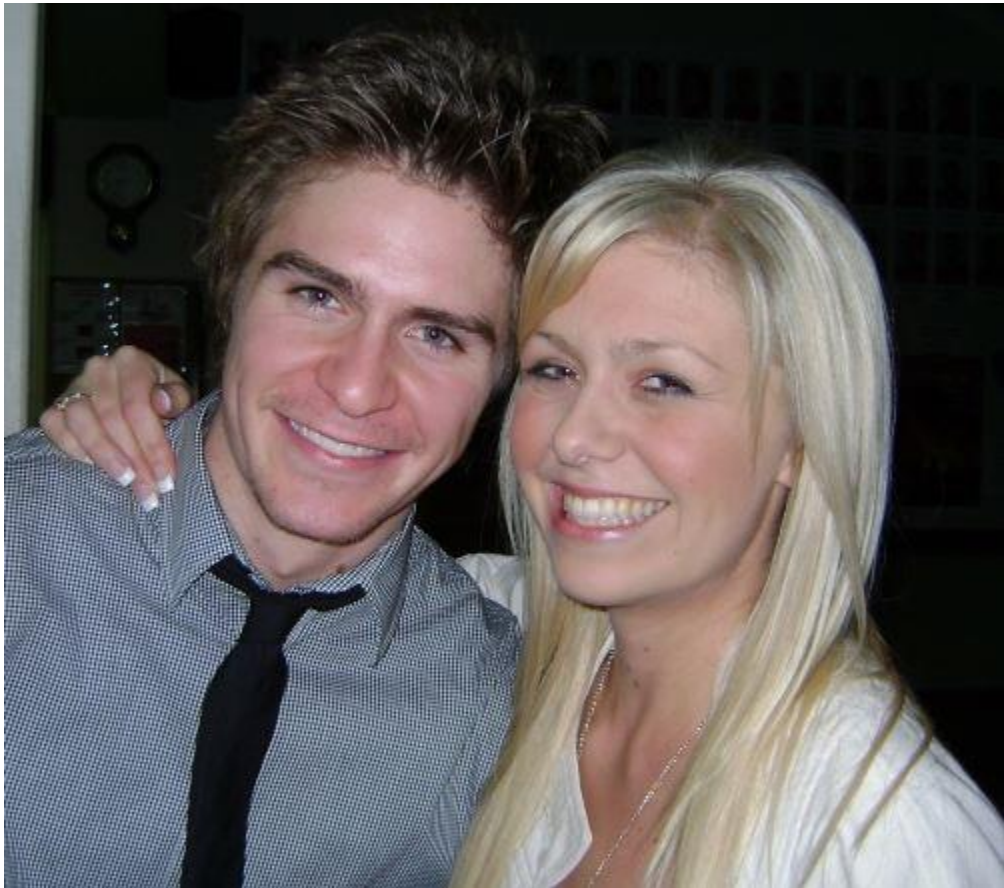
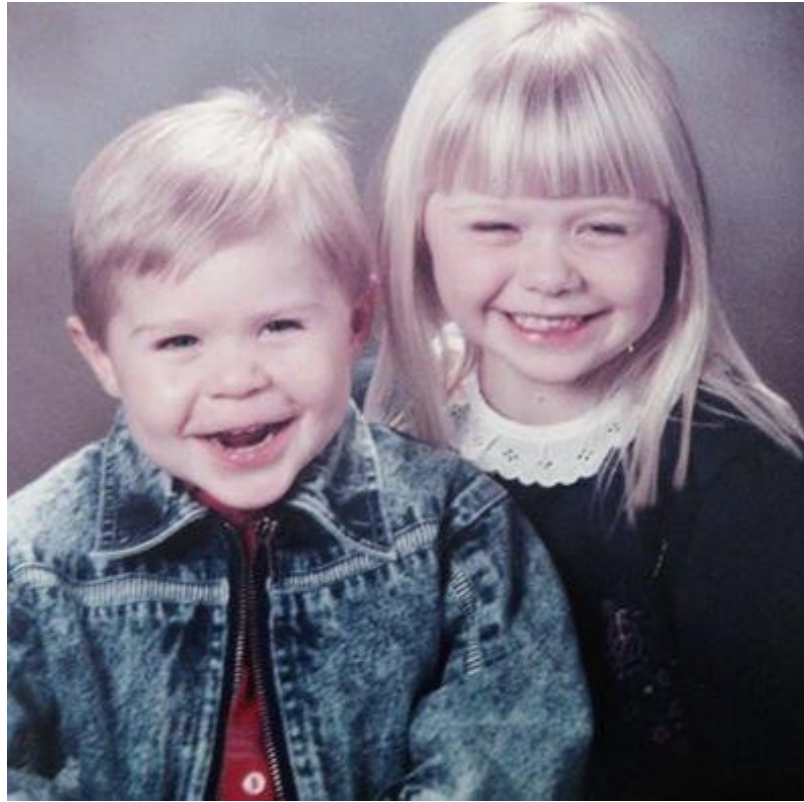
The book is not a step by step guide on how to be a perfect parent. There probably never has been such a person, and I don't pretend to have been one. But I had spent nearly a decade studying sports psychology and the psychology of human performance when our first child was born. The aim of this eBook is to provide you with information that I believe is essential for a parent to know, with some suggestions for strategies you can employ to help in the development of your children. I sincerely believe they were valuable in the development of mine.

Your children will look like one or both of their parents. That is genetic; their looks will be based on what they inherit from your genes. But their personality will not be genetic. Instead it will be formed by the programming of their subconscious mind starting from the time they are born, if not before. YOU will be primarily responsible for their personalities.

My daughter is now 31 years old and runs a successful sales and marketing business. She is a brilliant sales person and an outstanding public speaker. Based in Melbourne, Australia, she regularly flies interstate to be a guest speaker at sales conferences. She has run several half marathons and is about to take on her first full marathon.

My son is 28 years old and into the final year of a PhD in civil engineering at Melbourne University. He has been the engineering tutor at one of the live-in colleges at the university, and has also been teaching classes at the university for the last few years. He is highly regarded as well as very popular with the undergraduates he tutors and lives with, and likewise with his post graduate colleagues and lecturers at the university.

They are both happy, outgoing, friendly, confident and competent in the things they do in their lives. They both have many friends and make friends easily. I am very proud of them both. This book is dedicated to my daughter and my son.



## Background

One of five children, my own upbringing was totally controlled by my father. He had been a chief petty officer in the Royal Australian Navy for 12 years and his approach to parenting was based on rigid discipline. If you did something wrong, you were belted; simple as that.

We had very little contact with other children in the small town that we grew up in. The whole of the time I was growing up, I never once spent a night staying over at a friend's house or had a friend come to stay over at ours. Weekends were spent working under the control of my father. Usually the three boys worked outside with him, while my two sisters worked inside with their mother.

There were very few open signs of affection in our family environment. I have never given or been given a hug by my father. I cannot ever remember seeing my father kiss my mother. As far as I know my father will go to his grave without ever telling any of his five children that he loved them.

Receiving a "well done" or any other form of congratulations for anything done well was also very rare. I can only remember receiving a "well done" once in my life. That was when my final year high school exam results were released in the "Sun" newspaper and I had scored first class honours in physics, chemistry, calculus and applied mathematics, and pure mathematics. This was pretty much a perfect score, and it was the only time in my life that my father even privately conceded to me that I had done something well.

Criticism for not doing well was freely and frequently handed out. I remember when I had to make a speech at my high school graduation ceremony because I was the school captain. As I walked off stage the deputy principal quietly said "well spoken" to me. When I saw my father afterwards his only comment was "you didn't say very much".

Throughout my early childhood another lesson we were taught was that "children should be seen but not heard". If we were out at a social function as a family we would be expected to sit quietly most of the time while the adults did all the talking.

I could continue on with this but I do not want to suggest that I was very badly done by in my upbringing. What I have written here is probably typical of the way many parents brought up their children at the time. But I think it is important for

you to understand why I later became totally committed to being a good parent when my turn came.

This was just the foundation that I started from, and I think that I was very lucky to have the other learning experiences that allowed me to believe and see there was an alternative way to raise your children. The point is that, even as a naïve young man, totally ignorant in the ways of the world and the nature of people in it, I was already sure that the parenting I was brought up with was a long way from ideal.

Many people believe that you grow up like your parents, and that you *inherit* your behaviour from them. I have no doubts this is totally false. I believe that, in the absence of any definite decisions that you make regarding the way you want to behave in any given situation, your behaviour will "default" to those of your significant role models when you were young. That is usually your parents.

But this is not genetic; you are just copying their behaviour. Many people do not make decisions to act differently; most probably do not think much about it at all, and they seem content to simply act the way their parents did. That is the reason why a lot of (the same) people believe that you inherit your behaviour from your parents. You don't and you are free to choose the way you behave in any given situation.

## Role models

During my first year at university I had been offered the chance to try out with the Hawthorn Football Club. Hawthorn is one of the AFL football clubs, then it was the VFL, Victorian Football League. Hawthorn has been one of the most successful football clubs in Australia during the past fifty years. At the time I first went there they had only won one premiership. But during the previous few years they had begun to show signs of significant improvement and it was a great time to be offered the opportunity to try out at this club.

In the three years and four pre-seasons I spent there I did not play a game in the senior team, only playing in the Under 19's and the "reserves" team. But I still regard it as the second best experience of my life, second only to being the father of my two children. It is the only time in my life that I have belonged to, or been associated with, a group of people who were nearly all, almost completely committed to a common goal, where it was mandatory to put any selfish goals you might have aside and do what was best for the team.

The coach, John Kennedy, was the main reason it was such a great experience. He set a standard of expectations for performance that was very high. The training often pushed you to your limits physically to a point where it became a test of mind over matter. The game plan was very simple - attack the ball, win the contest, never stop competing and never give in. He created a culture at that club that remains strong nearly fifty years later, and in doing so he laid the foundations for the years of success that has followed.

This is something that very few people experience in their lives. Most people work in organisations and companies where nearly everyone only has their own interests at heart. There is never a time when individuals are prepared to sacrifice themselves for the greater good, rather they will do everything they can to see that someone else is sacrificed if that is what has to happen.

During my first year at this football club I met a player who was to become one of the two role models for my children. They never met him but I spoke to them about him many times. He was *quite simply the happiest, friendliest person I ever met*. A champion player, he was small of stature but very determined, very courageous and full of fighting spirit.





His name was Peter Crimmins, and he was successful, both on and off the football field. He was respected universally by everyone, admired and loved by many, and the most popular player at the football club. The lasting memory I have of him is how he used to bound into a room, full of energy and enthusiasm and how he would greet everyone. It was almost like the room would light up as he entered. There is a little bit of irony here in that he and I were the same size, similar build, were competing for the same position, and even looked a little bit alike. But that was where the similarity ended. Apart from the fact that he was a much better footballer, he also had this amazing personality and later in my life it became my hope that my kids could grow up to be the same. But the big question was "but how do you do that", or even "is it possible to do that?"

Peter Crimmins captained Hawthorn in 1974 and 1975, but had to stop playing in 1976 while he faced a battle with cancer. Sadly, he died of cancer towards the end of that year, 3 days after Hawthorn won the premiership and a group of players took the premiership cup to share with him at his home. When that happened, the world lost a true champion in every sense of the word.



The other role model was a friend of mine who I met at University. Since then he has gone on to achieve outstanding success in his career as an executive in IT marketing and management. His name is Gary Jackson, and he has probably been the most successful person Australia has ever produced in the IT industry. He has been CEO or Vice President at some of the biggest IT companies in the Asia Pacific region.

Back in his days at Uni Gary was without a doubt the most popular student in our Faculty year; he got on well with everybody and was liked by everybody. He had an interesting personality mix in that he was intelligent and serious about his studies, a fierce competitor when it came to most things and especially sport, but he also always maintained an attitude of fun towards life in general, and was never too upset if something went wrong. He had a good sense of humour and was always able to see the funny side of things, and this included the ability to laugh at himself.

Gary had an unshakeable, unbreakable self esteem which allowed him to take on new challenges with confidence and, again, nearly always with a sense of fun. He spoke easily and confidently to everyone, whether it was a social function or a presentation he had to make at Uni. I have always believed that having these character and personality attributes would have played a large part in the success he has had.

I only met his family maybe half a dozen times, but his family was clearly very different from my own. His father's love for his family was obvious, especially for his wife, and there were always clear and open signs of affection. His father had a good sense of humour and joked a lot. He was a man clearly happy with his place in life.

Gary's father had told him when he was young that "he was as good as any person on the planet" and I believe that may have been one of the keys to his high level of self esteem. When you think about this advice you soon realise that it is totally true, and yet most people probably won't appreciate the power in this statement. Everyone is as good as any other person on the planet; we are all created as equals in the eyes of god. This is regardless of how much success you have or don't have in your life. If you fail a maths exam that doesn't make you any lesser a person; it might just mean you are not good at maths or you need to study more!

How good it must be to believe in yourself as a person, completely independent of your successes or failures. This later became one of the fundamental concepts in the development of my kids. They must have high self esteem.

My "profile of a winner" is included at the back of this book. [here](#) The first draft of this was written shortly after I attended Gary's 50th birthday party celebration in Sydney, about 15 years ago now. It was based on my personal assessment of him.

## Learning experiences

We all go through many learning experiences in our lives, with every one of us having different learning experiences. It's one of the things that make us different. Some will miss out on important experiences, and just like in school, some will simply learn better than others.

In 1981 I was teaching electronics at a RMIT technical college in Melbourne. In order to continue teaching there I had to obtain a teaching qualification and so I undertook a 12 month Graduate Diploma of Education course at a college just outside of Melbourne.

One of the subjects taught was psychology and in that class we were shown a British documentary called "Give me the child until he is seven, and I will show you the man". This documentary followed the lives of fourteen British children, starting in 1964, when they were all seven years old. The participants were filmed individually and as a group, answering questions about themselves and about life in general. The plan was to have follow-up filming sessions every 7 years. So In 1981 when I saw it, the participants were 24 years old, and there had been two follow-up interviews.

These children were selected to represent the range of different socio-economic backgrounds in Britain at that time, and I think the aim of the film was to research the hypothesis that each child's social class predetermines their future. In other words, the environment you are born in determines the person you will grow up to be.

I watched this film with a lot of interest, and thought that it provided very convincing support for the theory that your personality is formed by the time you are seven years old. You could see the same personality traits in nearly every one of the participants when they were young adults, as you could when they were seven. Whether this was determined by your socio-economic environment, or something else was the key issue for me. There was nothing in the documentary about how these children had been raised.

At the time I saw this documentary it had been ten years since I had left the Hawthorn Football Club. I left there without playing a single game in the senior, 'A', team. This was nothing short of failure for me, and failure at anything was not something I was used to. And after finishing University I had travelled around Australia playing football in the major competitions in most of the other states. In the jobs that I worked in, one thing became very clear, that being

successful in the "real world" was a completely different ball game than being successful in school. It didn't really matter how smart you were. If your IQ puts you in the top 5% of the population, that just means that 95% of the population don't want to know that you are smarter than they are. It didn't take long for me to realise that what really counted was your ability to create rapport with and work with other people. It required people skills and life skills that I didn't have. And my impression was that having a good personality, that was attractive to other people, was almost a guarantee that you would be successful.

So I did one of the things I do best; I went "back to school". I set out to learn as much as I could about sports psychology, human behaviour and the psychology of personal improvement. The aim was to discover more about what made me tick; to find out why I had not been able to get the best out of myself as a footballer, and also to discover the "secrets to success".

I bought and read the book Think and Grow Rich by Napoleon Hill. This book is essential reading for everyone. The book was written in 1937 and was the result of more than twenty years of research based on Hill's close association with a large number of individuals who achieved great wealth during their lifetimes. But it is not just about creating wealth, the principles apply equally well to any area of personal achievement. It is one of the best selling books of all time. When Hill died in 1970, Think and Grow Rich had sold 20 million copies. If you haven't read it, you can get a free copy of the original book [here](#).

I became a big fan of Anthony Robbins way back in his early days before he was the mega-star that he is today. Somewhere, I still have a cassette tape of his "Awaken the Giant Within" which I used to listen to regularly in the car going to work. more on that [here](#)

Brian Tracy was also a favourite. I first bought and read his book "Maximum Achievement: Strategies and Skills That Will Unlock Your Hidden Powers to Succeed". And over the next few years I also bought several of his DVDs on self improvement. more on that [here](#)

I thought the book "Sportsmind", written by an Australian, Jeffrey Hodges, was outstanding, and should be essential reading for anyone interested in improving their ability to control their own mind, not just sports people but everybody. In particular, the book had a section called the "Sportsmind 6 day Mental Mastery program" which was a simple course you could follow to gain control of your own thoughts. more on that [here](#)

Chris Howard was another favourite. His book "Your Personal Breakthrough: Breakthrough to Success in 7 Days" was a good read, and I attended a 3 Day

"Breakthrough to Success" weekend where he did this amazing demonstration which was about leaving your personal baggage behind. He took a small suitcase out into the audience and tried to get through the rows of seats and even climbed over seats, showing how difficult it was to make your way through the crowd (life) if you were always going to take your personal baggage with you.

The message was loud and clear - leave all your personal baggage (problems) behind. This actually had an element of mass hypnosis to it, and I remember it had a profound impact on me at the time. more on that [here](#)

These people were all strong advocates of NLP, so I did some research into NLP. I bought a book that I think was written by the original developers of NLP - Richard Bandler and John Grinder. Personally I didn't get a lot out of this. While I thought it was very interesting, there were some things that I just could not master. For example I could not tie an emotional state to a "trigger" and I could not visualise the timeline in my life going backwards, and a few other things. But that doesn't mean it doesn't work; more likely I should have done a course in NLP rather than just reading this book.

These people all played a part in the personal development of my children, initially through me using what I had learnt from them in the way that I interacted with my children. Then, as soon as the kids became old enough to understand what I was talking about, I would talk to them about the concepts and principles I had learnt. From her mid teens and onwards my daughter became a keen follower of the same people, as well as selecting other personal trainers to follow. She came along to a few one day seminars with me, including one with Brian Tracey, and has also gone to other seminars on her own. She did a 3-day weekend with Tony Robbins, and followed that with a \$5000, 5-day week with him, and also took courses in NLP to become an NLP Master Practitioner. Jeff Hodges, of Sportsmind, also graciously agreed to have coffee and a chat with us when he was in Melbourne one time. He is a very interesting person and there is a lot he can teach you about NLP, especially with regard to it's use in sport.

## Fundamental concepts

Your children will look like one or both of their parents. That is genetic; their looks will be based on what they inherit from your genes. But their personality will not be genetic. Instead it will be formed by the programming of their subconscious mind

Before I go any further I would like to say what I think your personality is. It is what other people perceive about you by way of your consistent behaviour, including all of the small things like the way that you smile, whether you smile a lot, how positive your attitude is, how happy you are, how friendly you are, and a whole lot of other personal attributes that I am sure you can think of.

If you want to have a great personality you need to consistently behave in such a way that you display these personal attributes all of the time. So, the question becomes more about *what determines your behaviour* than anything else.

Your personality is determined by your consistent actions, which are determined by your consistent thoughts, which are impacted greatly by your beliefs about yourself and the world you live in.

Quite simply *you become what you think about most of the time*. Your success or failure in anything depends on your programming, and that comes from what you say when you talk to yourself, and what you accept from others. The brain simply believes what you tell it most, and what you tell it about yourself, it will create.

I had already started doing the research into personal development when I saw the British documentary, and in the years following that documentary these fundamental concepts were also starting to take shape for me:

- ◆ A child's brain is not pre-programmed for inherent behaviour. We do not inherit our personalities from our parents.
- ◆ During the early years of a child's life, particularly the first five years or so, the child's brain is like a sponge, soaking up everything in the world that the child experiences.
- ◆ Your beliefs about yourself are formed by the interactions you have with the world around you and especially the significant people in it during this time.
- ◆ Children are too young at this age to critically evaluate interactions with other people and simply automatically accept everything without evaluation.

- ◆ Your beliefs about yourself are well formed by the time you are around seven years old.
- ◆ A child learns to do nearly everything by copying.
- ◆ A child sees, responds to, and copies the behaviour of the significant people in their environment. Usually this is their parents.
- ◆ Your personality is therefore usually determined by the behaviour of your parents and any other significant people in your life and especially by their interactions with you.
- ◆ Your personality is at least substantially formed by the time you are about seven years old.

If you believe these things to be true, then you should also understand that, as a parent, you have an opportunity to exercise substantial control over the personal development of your children. Their personality and attitude to life is going to be determined mainly by you.

## Birth

I do not intend to spend much time on this although, especially for the mother, this is obviously a very important aspect of raising your children. But it is something that I have very limited experience with and have not researched much so I will leave expert advice on this to others more qualified.

Giving birth is supposed to be a natural process, and the majority of women go through birth without any complications. If you would like some useful information on preparing for your first childbirth there is a link at the end of the book. [here](#)

But whether or not the birth of your child is complication free or a near total disaster, as ours was, it does not seem to have any bearing on the later development of your child. But, just to ensure yours is as stress free as possible best make sure you engage the services of a good doctor to oversee your preparation for the birth and to be available on the day to handle complications if they arise.

I will never forget the words of the doctor chosen to manage the birth of our first born. To everyone else the birth appeared to be overdue, but our doctor did not seem overly concerned. But finally the birth did have to be induced, which he did, and then he left my wife in the hospital while he went off somewhere else for a few hours. When he came back and saw the trouble my wife was in, his exact words to me were "I cannot do this" and so the gynaecologist who was considered the best in our area was called in. I won't describe what followed, but both my wife and daughter survived and the trauma of the birth clearly had no after effects on my daughter, except for having to spend two weeks in a humidicrib.

Make sure your doctor is qualified and experienced. We don't pay them to supervise the easy births that anyone could manage. We pay them to be there to professionally manage and solve problems if and when they occur.



## [Getting an early start after birth](#)

According to a study published in the magazine JAMA Neurology last year, the human brain grows most rapidly just after birth and reaches half its adult size within the first three months. The areas of the brain involved in movement develop at the fastest pace, while those associated with memory grow more slowly. The most rapid changes occur immediately after birth - newborn brains grow at an average rate of 1% a day, slowing to 0.4% per day by the end of the first three months.

If you want to read more about this there is a link at the end of the book. [here](#)

According to "Ask Dr Sears", these and other insights into how a baby's brain grows shows that parents can have a profound effect on how smart their child later becomes.

The brain grows primarily through the growth of new nerve cells, called neurons. These resemble miles of tangled electrical wire and when the child is born much of this "wiring" is unconnected. During the first year, these neurons grow larger, learn to work better, and connect with each other to make circuits, which enable the baby to think and do more things. If you want to read more this there is a link at the end of the book. [here](#)

During the early months it might seem that your baby does nothing much while they are awake, but drink milk, later eating some soft foods, cry a bit and make a horrible mess of its nappies. But the fact that its brain is growing so quickly means there is a lot more going on, and the opportunity for you to create a life-long lasting bond with your child probably starts not long after day one.

The most important things you can do during this period is to have a lot of physical contact with them in the form of carrying them around and cuddling them, and to do whatever you can to introduce them to as many different things that will stimulate their brains. Spend time with them, get to know them and let them start to get to know you. Take them for a walk in a pram. Carry them around and show them things. Talk to them as if they can understand you; this is how we all learn to talk. Play with them as much as you can, and when you can't do that any more, leave them with a toy to play with.

There is a link to a great article about the milestones in a baby's early life at the end of the book. They make the comment several times that "you cannot spoil

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