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Parents' and Teachers' Role in Enhancing a Child's Cognitive Development for Sound Education in the Digital Era

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Highlights:

Discovers threatens essential cognitive skills like attention, critical thinking, problem-solving as digital transformation exposed children to vast information.

Discovers both parents and teachers play a crucial role in early enrichment activities that shape a child's intellectual and emotional development.

Discovers early cognitive enrichment through proper nutrition, good health, exercise, and language acquisition.

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Abstract: The digital era has transformed learning, exposing children to vast information while also threatening cognitive skills like attention, critical thinking, and problem-solving. The enhancement of a child's cognitive holds the key to the child's future. Today a good parent and teacher want their children to succeed in school and thrive intellectually. They struggle to achieve and maintain the strong family structure that can withstand negative pressures so prevalent in our society, therefore, the importance of early enrichment activities that can help parents gain the skills that are so important to their child's future success cannot be overemphasized. Research has shown that a child's early life experiences and environmental surroundings are closely linked to cognitive enhancement and the foundation for future development. It is known that parents create the first learning environment for their children, and the parents are their child's first teachers. This Paper therefore seek to unravel what the parents and teachers should know and do to help this young school child enrich their brain through providing information and services that will aid in the children's physical, social, emotional, and intellectual development, in order to improve their learning and educational achievement. This could be realized through proper nutrition, good health condition, good exercises, and acquisition of language. A child should be assisted early enough in the cognitive enrichment activities for better performance that will leads to sustainable development.

keywords: Parents, Teacher, Cognitive development, Digital era, and Sound education

Introduction

The enhancement of a child's cognitive holds the key to the child's future. Today good parents and teachers want their children to succeed in school and thrive intellectually. They struggle to achieve and maintain the strong family structure that can withstand negative pressures so prevalent in our society. Families today have a lot on their tables. Based on the demands of work, home, and other responsibilities leaves many families feeling like they do not have nearly enough time with their children without knowing that even small acts of kindness, protection, and caring even a hug, a smile, or loving words can make a big difference to children. Studies consistently show that babies who receive affection and nurturing from their parents have the best chance of developing into children, teens, and adults who are happy, healthy, and competent while all these is difficult to achieve without the supports of the teachers. Teachers build thinking, not just memory, they enhance digital literacy, reduce cognitive overload, blend tech wisely and personalized learning (Sprenge, 2019).
Research also shows that a relationship with a consistent, stable and caring adult in the

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early years is associated in later life with better academic grades and healthier behaviours and when the parents provide attention develop best when families work to understand and meet their needs for love, affection, and stimulation, or provide comfort and good nutrition when they are hungry, bored, tired, wet or cold. On the other hand, neglectful parenting can have a negative effect on brain development of their children. Research has also shown that a lack of contact or interaction with parent can change the child's body function, resulting in a reduction in the growth of hormones essential for brain and heart development (MacDonald, 2022).

The digital era has transformed learning, exposing children to vast information while also threatening cognitive skills like attention, critical thinking, and problem-solving. This paper examines the complementary roles of parents and teachers in enhancing children's cognitive development to ensure sound education. Teachers foster cognition through structured, interactive pedagogy, integration of educational technology, and teaching digital literacy and critical evaluation skills. Parents contribute by providing stimulating home environments, regulating screen time, ensuring adequate nutrition and sleep, and modeling positive learning behaviors. Findings suggest that collaboration between home and school is crucial: neither can singlehandedly counter the cognitive challenges posed by digital distractions, misinformation, and passive content consumption. The study recommends joint parent-teacher strategies, including digital literacy training, balanced technology use, and emphasis on active play and reading culture. Strengthening this partnership is essential for raising children who are not only tech-savvy but also capable of deep thinking, creativity, and lifelong learning in the 21st century.

Concept of Cognitive Development

Cognitive development is the process by which human beings, acquire, organize and learn to use knowledge (Fischer, 2018). Cognitive development means how children think, explore and figure things out. It is the development of knowledge, skills, problem solving and dispositions, which help children to think about and the world around them (Marianne, 2019). That the brain undergoes physical changes in response to life's experiences seems at once glaringly obvious and endlessly surprising. How could we possibly adapt to different situations if our brains stayed the same. Yet it's still easy to find actual descriptions of these changes arresting and almost alarming. Changes that can count or measure, changes in number and length of dendrites, creation of new neurons seem to finite, too well, insubstantial to account for the subtle alterations in thought, behaviours and knowledge with which we respond to change (Jonah, 2024). The idea that the primate brain is constantly creating new neurons, and that these new neurons are not only functional but responsive to changes in the environment, was unimaginable. Indeed, the fact that neurogenesis did not exist was one of the modern neuroscience's founding principles. This theory, first articulated by Santiago at the start of the 20th century, held that brain cells, unlike every other cell in our body, do not divide. They do not die, and they are never reborn (Jonah, 2024).Often times, students are given special assignments, independent research or study, or mini-courses to undertake on the weekends, before or after the school day, or in replacement of a regular school during the week (Jensen, 2022). Jensen asserts, that challenging problem solving is the single best way to enrich the brain that is problem solving involves reasoning, critical thinking and other higher-level thinking skills.

Cognitive enrichment is a positive biological response to a contrasting environment, in which measurable, synergistic, and global changes have occurred within the brain. Jensen, a leading expert in the translation of train research

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into education, argues, in enriching the brain, that teachers/parents greatly underestimate students' achievement capacity. Drawing from a wide far more dynamic and malleable than we earlier believed. He offers us a powerful new range of neuroscience research as well a related study, Jensen reveals that the human brain is far more dynamic and malleable than we earlier believed. He offers us a powerful new understanding of how the brain can be enriched, across the board to maximize learning, memory, behaviour and overall function. The bottom line is that parents have far more to do with how their children's brains turn out than they previously thought. Enriching the brain shows that lasting brain enrichment does not occur randomly though routine or ordinary learning. It requires a specific and persistent experience that amounts to a formula for maximizing brain potential (Jensen, 2022)

Parents and teachers should do well to memorize this formula. In fact, the lifelong potential of all school age kids depends on how they use it. Offering an inspiring and innovative set of practices for promoting enrichment in the home, the school and the classroom, this paper is a clarion call on all, from teachers to parents to educators all must take their role as 'brain developer' much more seriously. He posits that in enriching the brain, students' achievement capacity should not be underestimated. Drawing from a wide range of neuroscience research as well as related studies, Jensen reveals that the human brain if far more dynamic and malleable than earlier believed. The suggested a powerful new understanding of how the brain can be base line is that families have far more to do with how their children's brain turn out than they previously thought (Jefferson, 2023). Jensen (2022) asserts that challenging problem solving is the single best way to enrich the brain, that is, problem solving that involves reasoning, critical thinking and other higher-level thinking skills. Enriching the brain highlights the brain's extraordinary capacity for positive change. He calls for an enrichment-based educational framework that emphasizes customized schooling for every learner from underachievers to the gifted. He goes on to show that how teachers teach, parents, run their homes and schools respectively can dramatically enrich brain capacity. In fact, teachers can now enrich over 90 percent of all learners, including those in poverty, with special needs, in pre-school, and of course, the gifted. On the other hand, enriched animal environment that simulate the complexity of a natural habitat often lead to dramatic increases in both neurogenesis and the density of neuronal dendrites, the branches that connect one neuron to another as complex surroundings create a complex brain he opined (Jonah, 2024).

The Role of Home and school in Cognitive Development

Research has shown that parent and teacher involvement with a child during his early years is directly related to the child's vocabulary development, reading readiness and eventual academic achievement. In fact, a baby's brain begins development in the early embryo when cell division proliferates into millions of neurons in the brain. Soon after birth, billions of neurons begin making connections with each other to create neural pathways within the nervous system. Each neuron has the ability to make as many as 15,000 new connections. In a strong healthy brain, these connections become the wiring or circuitry that defines the child's experiences and capabilities. It is through these connections that human brains grow in knowledge and skills. It is also through many forms of enrichment that the teacher can foster rapid dendrite growth with minimal effort or direct instruction (Sprenge, 2019).

An infant's brain at birth has 100 billion neurons. If the brain is not stimulated from birth, these neurons wither and die, impeding the child's ability to learn and develop properly. The brain of a 6 month

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old infant is at least 25% the size of an adult brain. By 3 years, a child's brain proliferation that the brain is most neuroplastic. This means the brain is most malleable and formative during these early years (Benasich, 2021). Parents know their children best, their unique behaviours, interests, and abilities. But no parent can be an expert on all aspects of infant, child and teenage development or the most effective ways to support a child at each stage. When parent is not aware of normal developmental milestones, interpret their child's behaviours in a negative way, or do not know how to respond to an effectively manage a child's behaviour, they can become frustrated and may resort to harsh discipline or emotional withdrawal. There is extensive research linking healthy child development to effective parenting. Burnes (2021) stressed that children thrive when parents provide not only affection, but also respectful communication and listening, consistent rules and expectations, and safe opportunities that promote independence. Successful parenting foster psychological adjustment, helps children succeed in school, encourages curiosity about the world, and motivates children to achieve intellectually. Parenting skills are not static, a children grow and mature, parents need to change the way they respond to their children's needs. It is against this background that this paper tends to remind us some areas through which families can employ in enriching their children's cognitive for future academic performance, moral development, skills development, mental and social development and leadership enhancement.

Nutrition and Cognitive Development

Nutrition according to Agulanna and Nwachukwu (2019) posit that the quality of food one eats is very important factor in brain and cognitive development. Severe malnutrition during prenatal development is very problematic because it results is reduced production of neurons and glial cells (Byrnes, 2021). After birth; malnutrition hinders cell growth, myelination, and performance on intelligence tests. However if the period of impoverishment is short it can be corrected through better diet later on (Agulnna & Nwachukwu, 2019).

Good feeding enhances dendrites branching which in turn facilitate learning. In addition, good food is necessary for myelination at the appropriate stages. Children should therefore be fed with not just any food but food that is rich in those items that satisfy brain learning requirement. Such food items as leafy green vegetable, nuts, lean meat and fresh fruit are particularly good for the brain (Siegel, 2019). Yoghurt, green vegetable are the best sources of certain vitamins and mineral supplement which clean synapses and make them more efficient for neutral transmission and learning (Sprenger, 2019). In as much as the teacher does not directly influence the nutrition of students, he or she could engage in parent education to inform them on appropriate nutrition for learning.

Brain development is most sensitive to a baby's nutrition between mid-gestation and two years of age. Children who are malnourished not just fussy eaters but truly deprived of adequate calories and protein in their diet throughout this period do not adequately grow, either physically or mentally. Their brains are smaller than normal, because of reduced dendrites growth, reduced myelination, and the production of fewer glair (supporting cells in the brain which continue to form after birth and are responsible for producing myelin). Inadequate brain growth explains why children who were malnourished as fetuses and infants suffer often lasting behavioural and cognitive deficits, including slower language and fine motor development, lower IQ, and poorer school performance. A baby's birth weight and brain size-do depend on the quality of his or her mother's nutrition during pregnancy (Burnes, 2021). After birth, brain growth depends critically on the quality of a child's nutrition. Breast milk offers the best mix of

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nutrients for promoting brain growth, provided that breast-fed infants receive some form of iron supplementation beginning and around six months of age (most infant cereals are fortified with iron, and breast-fed babies require this supplementation at six months whether or not their mothers are iron-deficient). Iron deficiency has been clearly linked to cognitive deficits in young children. Iron is critical for maintaining an adequate number of oxygen-carrying red blood cells, which in turn are necessary to fuel brain growth. Bottle-fed babies should receive formula that contains iron (David, 2021).

Because of the rapid pace of myelination in early life, children need a high level of fat in their diets some 50 percent of their total calories until about two years of age. Babies should receive most of this fat from breast milk or formula in the first year of life, and breast milk remains an excellent source of liquid nutrition into the toddler ears. Also since brain is made up of about 78 percent water, an essential food item. Dehydration can result in loss of attentiveness and lethargy which could impair learning. Children should therefore be encouraged to drink enough water throughout the day for maximum brain functioning. Michel, (2025) urges the parents to care so much about the essential nutrients that should contained in every food given to their children starting from pregnancy to the stage that a child can stays on their own.

Parent and Parent Presence in Cognitive Development

Constant presence of parents and teachers is another important part of the developmental equation. Infants prefer human stimuli, your face, voice, touch, and even smile-over everything else, they innately orient to people's faces and would rather listen to a speech or singing than any other kind of sound. Just as newborn babies are born with a set of very useful instincts for surviving and orienting to their new environment, parents are equally programmed to love and respond to our babies' cues (Eric, 2020). Most adults (and children) find infants irresistible, and instinctively want to nurture and protect them. It is certainly no accident that the affection most parents feel towards their babies and the kind of attention they want to shower them with touching, holding, comforting, rocking, singing and talking to provide precisely the best kind of stimulation for their growing brains (James, 2020).

Because cognitive development is so heavily dependent on early experience, most babies will receive the right kind of nurturing from their earliest days, through our loving urges and parenting instincts (Michel, 2025).In spite of all the recent publicity about "making your baby smarter," scientists have not discovered any special tricks for enhancing the natural wiring phase in children's brain development. Normal, loving, responsive care giving seems to provide babies with the ideal environment for encouraging their own exploration, which is always the best route to learning. The one form of stimulation that has been proven to make a difference in language: infants and children who are conversed with, read to, and otherwise engaged in lots of verbal interaction show somewhat more advanced linguistic skills than children who are not as verbally engaged by their caregivers. Because language in fundamental to most of the rest of cognitive development, this simple action talking and listening to your child is one of the best ways to make the most of his or her critical brain-building years (National Center for Infants and Toddlers 2011).

In the past, debates about acquisition of language centered on the same theme, debates about how the acquisition has incorporated the understanding that acquiring language really involves a natural endowment (Lightfoot, 2023). For example, the social environment, in which the infant uses their social capacity to interact with others, provides one source of information

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of language acquisition (Santrock, 2021). Thus, the approaches to studying of language acquisition now revolve around discovering what abilities are innately termed "innately guided learning (Jonah, 2024).The "prime time" for language development and learning to talk is from birth to 10 years of age. Children are learning language during this entire period. However, the "prime time" for language learning is the first few years of life. Children need to hear you constantly talk, sing and read to them during these early years. Respond to their babbling and language efforts, children vary in their language development during these first years, so parents should allow for some variation in children's abilities at different ages. They should encourage language development, be patient and seek assistance from a qualified professional if concern arise about a child's progress in this area (Burnes, 2021).

Parent and Teacher Attention on Physical Activity

The role of home and school in engaging the children in physical activity cannot be down played. Physical exercise helps higher brain functions-study; the word exercise derives from a Latin root meaning "to maintain, to keep, and to ward off." To exercise means to practice, put into action, train, perform, use, improve. Before enrolling in the trial, and four months later, the cognitive abilities of the participants were tested in four areas: memory, execute functioning, attention/concentration and psychomotor speed (Hopson, 2022).

Parent and Teacher Dedication and Enrichment for Cognitive Development

Cognitive development according to MacDonald (2022) posits that child's cognitive matures in stages, as seen in the gradual building of skills, for instance walking, few moments are as exciting as a baby's first step. One may view this moment as a whole new stage in the child's development (and or course it is), but it is also the end of a long developmental journey deep within his or her brain. Newborns' movement has a jerky, spastic quality to them. But by the second or third month, babies will be grasping objects and may seem more in control of other movements. As the months pass, infants can lift their heads and look around when placed on their stomachs. They will kick and rock and finally learn to sit up. They will learn to crawl, then to "cruise" by holding on to furniture and taking steps. Some babies prefer to scoot along the floor instead of crawling, and some stand up later than others (especially those in large, busy families). Almost all children pass through these stages as part of their natural human urge to reach further and move under their own power. And finally the big day arrives: children take those first shaky but unsupported steps (MacDonald, 2022).

Baby's brain has been building toward this moment for a while. Those months of learning to sit up and crawl have helped build synaptic connections. Circuits have linked the visual cortex and motor cortex, helping the baby assess space and move within it. Muscle strength and control have improved, and has balance. The basal ganglia and the cerebellum are also involved, relaying messages back and forth. Toddlers use their legs to walk, but they also rely on their brains (Fischer, 2018). Higher-level skills also appear to develop in stages. Memory first emerges as a very simple function involving only the hippocampus, the part of the brain that receives and organizes new information. Infants as young as two months can recognize when they see something new as long as they keep staring at it. Marianne (2019), asserted that a child's ability to consciously recall information at will does not begin to develop until his or her first birthday, however, and this system must mature during the next few years. One reason that people typically cannot remember much that happened to them before the age of 3 or 4 is that the parts of the brain necessary for recalling such memories are not "agitated" then. The

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synaptic connection that link the hippocampus to the cerebral cortex has not yet been made. These connections become circuits as your child enters preschool.

Meanwhile, other parts of the brain, notably the prefrontal cortex, are also developing. This enables a growing child both to understand why it is important to remember certain things and to develop tricks and strategies for recalling those things (Marianne, 2019).People also see how children's minds develop in stages by looking at what they can do at different ages. Following the discoveries of psychologist Jean Piaget in the mid-twentieth century, development experts have recognized many ways in which children do not think like adults. For instance, preschoolers consistently believe that a tall glass can hold more than shorter one, even if the shorter glass is significantly wider, and that there are more books and toys if they are spread all over the floor than if they are stacked away. Not until about school age do, children realize that different people can have different knowledge of the world. And researchers are still debating when children can clearly sort out the real world from what they vividly image (Fischer, 2018).

Experience plays a role in moving children to the next level of cognitive development, but it seems that the brain has to be ready for that step as well. Parents and teachers can hurry a young child along only so much. In movement, memory, and other functions, therefore, you will see your child develop preliminary skills, refine them, and then build on them to achieve more advanced skills. Inside your child's brain at this time, neurons are firing signals, selected synaptic connections are growing stronger, and myelin is coating the nerves to make them more efficient. What educators see is potential: the more the child uses his or her brain, the more it growths. How can parents facilitate this process? They can enrich their children's environment and encourage them to explore it even if that results in a few mistakes (Purtilo, et al., 2019).

Many researchers have seen the importance of enrichment is clearly rats' brains. Rats that live in an "enriched" environment (full of toys and other rats) are better able to navigate mazes than rate raised in more austere environments. Furthermore, autopsies show that the enriched rats develop more synapse in the parts of their brains that control memory and vision. Intriguing research on people shows a similar pattern: learning particular skills changes the brain. One often-cited study of violinists found that the part of their somatosensory cortex devoted to controlling left-hand movement is larger than the area that governs their right hands. This is significant because violinist use the fingers of the left hand on the fingerboard which requires more motor control than their right hand needs to hold the bow. Furthermore, the change was largest in musicians who had begun taking lessons before the age of 10, suggesting that parts of the young brain literally grow with experience (Sprengel, 2019).

Parent and Teacher Early Attention towards Cognitive Development

One of the cognitive-related issues that is interesting to the teachers in the place of "enrichment" in early education. A science writer Hopson and Diamond (2022) have written about research conducted since the 1960s establishing that rats allowed playing with toys and other rats have thicker, heavier brains than rats keep in isolation. The extra weight and thickness is mostly because their brains have formed more connections among neurons. Researchers have also found that the growth of rats' brains in response to experience (and apparent shrinkage from lack of it) occurs not just in the weeks following birth, but at all ages. Even more interesting, the same is true for humans. Food scientists know that certain nutrients and other key chemical compounds are essential to human brain function. Serious deficiencies in some of these, such as vitamin B12 and iron, can lead to impaired cognitive function due to

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neurological, or nerve fiber complications (Glenitnma, 2024). Cognition can be defined as the ability to use simple-to-complex information to meet the problems with nerve cell signals involved in memory and cognition? In researching the nutrition-brain connection, new technologies are being used, such as those that take images of the brain or actually count individual brain cells (MacDonald, 2022).

Parents and teachers should be aware of early brain development in their children. However, it is also important that they should not worry too much about it. What they need to do is to follow very simple methods and guidelines to make their children's brain smarter and efficient. Just remember that children are actually born smart and intelligent. It is just that they are yet to go through that elusive brain nurturing process (Purtilo, et al., 2019). Young children are yet to learn a number of skills. Brain boosting is an intricate process of transforming an already equipped brain into a full-pledged and efficiently working system. At six months, babies may bubble and babble. At nine months, they have progressed to "dada" or "mama." By the time they are a year old, they may voice those sounds when they see their parents, connecting sounds and meanings to make actual words. Language is a skill woven from many threads: hearing sounds, mimicking them, speaking words, learning their meanings, stringing them together into sentences. Some aspect of language seems to be innate to human but most has to be learnt. Mastering one se4t of skills leads to the next. And when language does not develop normally, the fault may lie in a problem with any one of the basic skill involved. Long before a baby learns to speak, he or she is literally learning to listen, at least in a very basic way: distinguishing the various sounds of speech that add up to words and sentences. Therefore, consistent exposure to only one language, especially from hearing their parents and other family members, makes infants' brains focus on the sounds that are meaningful in that language (Purtilo, et al., 2019),

Conclusion

Cognitive enhancement is a very critical brain functions in children that seem to be far more important than any other activities. As parents touch, sing lullabies, hold, hug, and sing to their children, they can expect their brain functions to improve in a remarkable manner, these simple actions will help their children develop highly critical network of brain cells, neurons and nerves fibers. How quickly and efficiently these network connections occur can significantly influence the rate of efficiency with which the brain acts and functions that makes a child so creative, making sound judgment, and functioning well in every aspect of life.

Recommendation

Below are some recommendations that are generated from this paper:

i. Parents and teachers play a vital role in the brain enrichment of their children from conception to school age; nothing should be left to change. Parents therefore need to acquire knowledge on proper cognitive and brain enrichment activities. Systematic programme for effective brain enrichment is therefore recommended. Some tips on how parents can nurture healthy brain development are suggested.
ii. Giving children consistent and loving care, providing balanced and nutritional feeding;
iii. Listening and talking to infants and young children, that is, positive self-talk to boost their self-esteem should be encouraged.
iv. Using positive remarks not negative remarks that can damage their self-image, make use of positive reinforces like praises or smile, to encourage them when he performs well. Always advise them to behave well instead of comparing them with

others, keeping children safe and healthy always, providing a stable and consistent environment.

v. Providing age-appropriate activities and maintain a positive physical exercise with children, for instance if an activity is too easy for a child he will be bored and will not learn from it. Also if it is too difficult he will get frustrated and abandon it. Children do best with activities and books designed for their age groups.

vi. Parents should be aware of the importance of furnishing a healthy and nutritious diet, giving love and nurturing, providing interesting and varied everyday experience and giving children positive and sensitive feedback.

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