

NATURE VERSUS NURTURE IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

In 1993, the Ciba Foundation organised a conference in London that brought together world experts from both sides of the nature versus *nurture* debate. The consensus among delegates was that *while* genuine biological differences did exist between children, environmental factors played a part in *enabling a child to reach* his or her full potential. The need for parents to really communicate with their children was considered crucial. According to the experts great prodigies such as Mozart, Einstein and Darwin were helped by having special parents. Mozart's father, for example, was a court composer who taught his son to play and sing almost before he could walk. Einstein's father was an electrical engineer who entertained his son with practical demonstrations. Darwin followed in the footsteps of both his physician father and naturalist grandfather.

Nowadays, genetic selection of embryos is possible through a technique called preimplantation genetic diagnosis (PGD). During the process, a single cell is taken from an embryo fertilised in vitro and tested. At present, PGD is normally used only to screen for certain genetic illnesses. However, in the year 2000 there was controversial debate *over* the case of a family who used this technique to produce a baby boy who could provide a perfect tissue match to treat their older daughter suffering from a rare genetic condition. Scientists believe that it will soon be possible to select features such as height, behavioural traits and intelligence. Professor Terry Moffitt of the Institute of Psychiatry at King's College in London believes, in fact, that parents are highly motivated to have the best child possible and that some would consider such a selection technique if it were available.

In the meantime, what can parents do to ensure their child succeeds? It is a known fact that a child learns more during the first three years of life than in all the remaining years put together. The experts agree that pushing children often results in burnout rather than brilliance - children need to be stretched rather than stressed. Furthermore, the experts warn that parents should consider their reasons. Are we encouraging our children to achieve their full potential or are we using them to compensate for our own failings?

adapted from BBC World magazine February 2004

1. This article is mainly about...
 - a. the influence of biological and environmental factors on our children
 - b. a future without childhood illnesses
 - c. the importance of good schooling for our children
 - d. the difficulties faced by children in society

2. Paragraph 1 implies that
 - a. parents are important in influencing a child's future
 - b. biological differences between children are not important
 - c. only the environment will help a child to be successful
 - d. special parents always produce highly successful children

3. In paragraph 1 'nurture' means:
 - a. encouragement
 - b. a healthy diet
 - c. a good education
 - d. care, protection, nourishment and stimulation

4. 'while' in paragraph 1 means:
 - a. during
 - b. because
 - c. although
 - d. when

5. Paragraph 2 is mainly about:
 - a. genetic illnesses
 - b. genetic engineering
 - c. using tissue from healthy children to treat genetic conditions
 - d. choosing the child you would like to have

6. According to paragraph 2
 - a. PGD is a cure for some genetic illnesses
 - b. it is now possible to choose a child's physical features using PGD
 - c. at the moment PGD is used to help doctors detect some genetic conditions
 - d. one family used a cell from their daughter to have a perfect baby boy

7. 'Nowadays' in paragraph 2 means.....
 - a. This time
 - b. Today
 - c. In our day
 - d. This weather

8. Which of the following cannot substitute 'over' in paragraph 2?
 - a. about
 - b. regarding
 - c. above
 - d. concerning

9. According to para. 3:
 - a. the first three years of a child's life are the most receptive
 - b. a child is more receptive after the age of three
 - c. the first three years of a child's life are the least interesting
 - d. to succeed children must learn everything during the first three years of their life

10. In paragraph 3 'in the meantime' means:
 - a. on average
 - b. meanwhile
 - c. in their free time
 - d. normally