

Is my child particularly smart?



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On television, there are many advertisements targeting the children's market, including clothing, snacks, formula milk, stationery, and furniture. One of the key points is to make children more intelligent or to help them fully realize their intellectual potential, which is a good selling point. This sales technique captures a key point in the hearts of every parent - that their own child is the best.

Without discussing the truthfulness, logic, and objectivity of this statement, it is a sentiment that most parents, including the author, would agree with. However, in the process of raising children, this "most intelligent" mentality may lead to unrealistic expectations. Therefore, we can take a step back and take a closer look. In our daily lives, here are five behaviors that fathers commonly use to praise their children:

1. "A 2-year-old child knows many functions of the tablet computer."

This is because the touchscreen of the tablet computer is controlled by the resistance of the fingers, so a child's random pointing movements can easily manipulate the screen. Additionally, without the logical constraints of adults, it is not difficult for most children to discover new functions on the device.



2. "A 6-month-old child can observe others' facial expressions and respond with coy or angry reactions."

This type of response has been medically confirmed as one of the developmental milestones for all children. This two-way behavioral response, where the child learns by observing others' reactions, is actually a learning response. Children who lack this type of reaction may be suspected of having sensory issues or early signs of autism.

3. "A 3-year-old child can use adult-like vocabulary."

Research has shown that children in the early childhood period can simultaneously learn up to six languages, which means their brains can continuously absorb the words and sentence structures around them. Even if they don't understand the meaning, they can repeat them like a parrot. When adults realize they haven't directly taught the child, and the child still knows the vocabulary, they may mistakenly think this is a sign of the child's learning genius, which is inaccurate.

4. "The questions that children ask sometimes are even beyond my ability to answer, they are so brilliant."

In Hong Kong, one of the reasons why the complaint culture is so prevalent is that there is no cost involved: as long as one voices a complaint, someone will follow up on it without any effort. The questioning by children is a similar situation. They simply use words like "why", "what", and "how", and the parents have to try their best to answer. In reality, these questions they raise are more a sign of their non-compliance, rather than a genuine learning process. So, this is not related to intelligence.



5. "When they play games, they prefer not to follow the rules and set their own new rules."

Adhering to rules is a social norm defined by the adult world. Children, like people in undeveloped regions, need to learn how to live together and follow the rules. Therefore, if they knowingly do not follow the rules, it is merely an act of rebellion, not necessarily a sign of intelligence. On the contrary, the wiser approach is to first learn the basic rules, and then negotiate to improve them, in the view of the author.

After understanding the above common misconceptions, it is not difficult to grasp what a truly intelligent child is:

1. It is not just about being able to manipulate a tablet or smartphone flexibly, but also understanding how to utilize their functions.

2. The ability to intuit adult psychology is an innate skill in children, and the wisdom to control their own emotions is even more valuable.

3. Language ability is not the sole component in evaluating intelligence; both the "quality" and "quantity" of vocabulary are important.

4. Exceeding one's personal developmental milestones at a certain stage is quite common, but sustained long-term advancement without being pushed is what truly merits attention.

While intelligence is certainly desirable, good character is also very important.