

You Can Raise



Your Child's IQ

A study shows that there are "risers" and "downers"
in intellectual abilities—and parents determine which is which

WOULD YOU LIKE to raise your child's intelligence quotient? It's quite possible to do just that. Your child's ability to think, like his ability to use his muscles, can change quite drastically. Whether his IQ goes up or down depends to a large extent on the way you treat him.

During the past 30 years scientists at the Fels Research Institute for the Study of Human Development have been carefully watching and measuring the physical and psychological growth of more than 400 normal children. The purpose of the study was to find scientific answers to some questions every parent asks about his own child: How is his personality molded by early experience? What kind of upbringing can give the child the best chance of becoming an intelligent man or woman?

One of the important findings emerging from our study is the fact that a child's intelligence is not the fixed quality so many parents assume it is. On the contrary, IQ can increase as much as 50 points from a normal score to one typically associated with genius. Or it can fall from near-genius levels to mediocrity.

We have found that the children who have large IQ increases—the risers—were all treated in a certain way by their parents and have a

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similar kind of personality. The children who show loss of IQ—the downers—typically had a different kind of upbringing and a different kind of personality.

The life histories of two subjects, John and Paul, show what a profound effect home life has on mental development—and offer some object lessons which you may find useful in raising your child's IQ.

One subject, Johnny, was conditioned to strive for self-reliance and mastery of his surroundings while the other subject, Paul, was conditioned to remain passive and dependent.

For Paul's mother, feeding was a job of getting a certain amount of food into her baby's mouth and making sure he swallowed it. Any attempt to feed himself was firmly discouraged.

JOHNNY'S MOTHER encouraged her baby to handle his cup and spoon and didn't mind when his fingers made a mess. She noticed the gleam of triumph in Johnny's eyes when the dripping spoon of cereal he had been waving before his face finally reached his mouth.

Once when Paul was in his playpen he tried to reach some beads at the top of the railing. His mother jumped up and handed him the

beads: "You know you can't stand yet," she said. "Do you want to hurt yourself?"

When Johnny was the same age, his mother noticed that he started trying to crawl up the stairs. Instead of rescuing him she told a guest, "Let's see if he makes it this time." When the guest regarded her questioningly, she said, "Go on, Johnny. I'm right here behind you." The child scrambled confidently up the rest of the stairs.

In growing up, Paul seldom played with other children. He was reluctant to play alone unless he knew his parents or other adults were nearby. He had few childish enthusiasms, and his feelings were easily hurt. He was given to sulking and temper tantrums.

ON THEIR FIRST IQ TESTS given when they were three, Paul scored 145 to Johnny's 123. At four, Paul started a gradual decline in IQ while Johnny began to rise. At six, when they entered the first grade, Paul scored 134 to Johnny's 131. By 12 years of age, Paul had fallen to 113 while Johnny had soared to 152.

What did Johnny have that Paul lacked? The Fels researchers found at least a dozen personality traits which are typical of risers like Johnny. They all boil down to the need to solve one's own problems. The drive to independence is found in every normal baby. It starts almost from the moment of birth. It is the infant's way of coping with the primitive, undefined anxiety that comes from complete helplessness.

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COVER:



Kids love to ham it up, whether they're being funny, frantic, or just wistful—like this charmer caught by Phoebe Dunn. Children's IQs are discussed in story above.

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