

INSIGHTS

by Michael Grose - Australia's leading parenting educator

Which would you choose for your child - I.Q. or persistence?

It will impact heavily on your child's success at school, his future levels of achievement and eventually income as an adult.

Imagine at the birth of your child you are given a choice between bestowing great intelligence or great persistence on your baby. Which would you choose?

Take your time and think about it!

Your choice will make a profound difference.

It will impact heavily on your child's success at school, his future levels of achievement and eventually income as an adult.

Smarts or persistence? What would you choose?

If you chose persistence then you are on the money. You are giving your child a significant leg-up for future success.

This is the finding of the ground-breaking research into factors determining children's achievement levels by Professor Charles Desforges from the University of Exeter in the UK.

Desforges found that the greatest individual characteristic that determined children's success at school was persistence. It was number one by far.

In fact, persistence was a staggering seven times more significant than intelligence as a determinant of a child's achievement.

SEVEN TIMES!! THAT'S HUGE!!

Now the good news is that persistence is not merely an inborn trait. It is the one aspect of a child's temperament that can be impacted by people.

Desforges found that **parents**, rather than teachers, are the people most likely to impact on a child's persistence.

This is consistent with many other studies in the area.

What does a persistent child do?

Persistent kids do some or all of the following:

- ✓ They stick at tasks until the end.
- ✓ They set goals and work toward them.
- ✓ They are not easily distracted.

- ✓ They don't let failure stop them.
- ✓ They are more likely to take risks as learners.
- ✓ They can sometimes be seen as stubborn or unwilling to bend

There are heaps of ways you can encourage your child to persist. But the BIG strategies all revolve around MODELLING, ENCOURAGEMENT and VOCABULARY.

As a parent think how you:

1. **Model** persistence on a daily basis so your child sees what persistence is
2. Actively **foster and promote** persistence so your child sees it is possible
3. Develop a **set of words and phrases** about persistence that your child hears routinely so that persistence becomes part of your child's frame of reference.
4. **Make a fuss** when your child sticks at a task regardless of their success so they know that it is something you value.



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