

[IMAGE]

Start Smart, Stay Healthy

Getting children off "on the right track" has been shown to positively influence educational achievement and overall fitness in later life. In other words, start smart, stay smart, and start healthy, stay healthy. But did you know that starting your children off smart might actually help them stay healthy?

Researchers at the Harvard School of Public Health interviewed 633 adults, ages 30-39, whose parents had enrolled them (from birth up to age 7) in a health study more than 30 years ago. After performing a variety of tests, and comparing the results of an IQ test administered to each subject at age 7, the researchers reached an interesting conclusion: "Higher cognitive performance at age 7 was related to a significantly reduced risk of serious illness in adulthood."

Specifically, they noted that a 15-point increase in IQ correlated with a 33 percent reduction in the risk of illness. This association was independent of parents' socioeconomic status and study participants' attained level of education. The researchers suggest that smart children may acquire better skills to help avoid illness, particularly with respect to successful management of their health care.

Put in simple terms: Start smart, stay healthy. These findings underscore what you should already know - the inherent value in exposing your children to a wide variety of stimulating experiences that help develop their cognitive skills.

Reference:

Martin LT, Fitzmaurice GM, Kindlon DJ, Buka SL. Cognitive performance in childhood and early adult illness: a prospective cohort study. *Journal of Epidemiology and Community Health* August 2004;58:674-79.

To learn more about ways to maximize your children's health and wellness, visit www.chiroweb.com/find/archives/pediatrics.

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