**O'level**

**Foundation**

**Week 7**

**The Write Tribe**

# COMPO PLANNING

## Composition Topic

Nowadays, parents put too much pressure on their children to succeed by enrolling them in various classes outside school. Is this positive or negative development?

| Positive | Negative |
| --- | --- |

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**YES!**
**It is**
**POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT!**

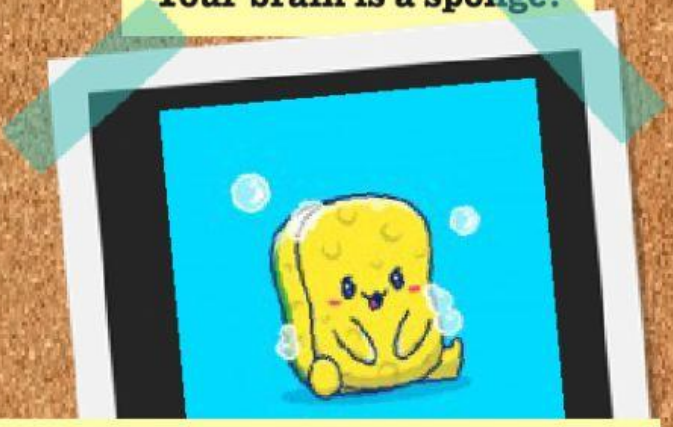
## 1. It has a positive effect on a child's brain

Did you know that 90% of a child's brain develops during the first 5 years of life? Baby brain development sets the stage for the child's intelligence, emotional stability and personality.
It is during these early years of neuronal growth and proliferation that the brain is most neuroplastic. This means the brain is most

NEUROPLASTIC

Neuroplasticity means the brain is most malleable and formative during these early years.

**Your brain is a sponge!**



The brain grows like a sponge as it absorbs input from the world around it. That's why early stimulation is crucial for brain development in children. Children exposed to opportunities for stimulation in early life make more synaptic connections in the brain. Stimulation provides opportunities for these connections to occur. And the more these connections are made, the greater the cognitive and social intelligence of the child.

**Benefits of learning music and languages**

Studies have shown that bilingual children have better socio-cognitive development than monolingual kids. Bilingual children achieve higher scores than monolinguals on a number of tests of cognitive ability, including mental flexibility, non-verbal problem-solving tasks, and a finer understanding of the grammar and use of a language.

Music, for example, stimulates the cognitive, verbal and emotional centers of the brain. Music is vital to brain development in children. Social interaction is critical to brain development in children.

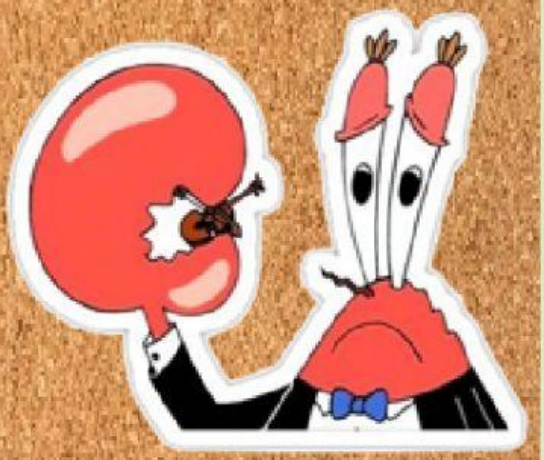
YES!
It is
POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT!

**2. It gives children an all rounded education and helps develop talent.**

## Learn new skills

It helps instill key skills and personality traits that can be helpful in other walks of life.
Sports are key to developing teamwork, leadership, and problem-solving skills.

A musical instrument requires perseverance, hand-eye coordination and, above all, creativity.



## Boost academic performance

Research has been carried out that develops a link between extracurricular participation and better academic performance. In one study by the **Texas A&M University**, important academic outcomes like reading, math achievement and course grades were all found to be positively influenced by children who engage in extracurricular activities.

## Broader social skills

Engaging with other children in a social setting is a good opportunity for them to mix with likeminded children in something they all enjoy. This gives them a chance to develop their social skills, meet new friends and become more confident communicating in groups. It also aids in the development of self-esteem and confidence. Good self-esteem is an essential tool for positive mental health and wellbeing.

**YES!**
**It is**
**POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT!**

## Impress universities

Extracurricular activities are also a great benefit to a students' resume when it comes to applying for universities or jobs. Universities, for example, love to see evidence from a prospective student that they are willing to go above and beyond to develop new skills. Extracurricular activities also demonstrate that your child has varied interests and a curiosity to learn beyond the traditional classroom.

## Jobs that have gone obsolete!

Encyclopedia salesperson
Move projectionist
Typist
Milkman
Video store clerk

## 3. They will have more opportunities in the future

In an uncertain world, the only certainty is change, so young people should be taught how to adapt in a constantly changing working environment
Digital age, adults are reskilling
Children should be taught to adapt to that. By constantly learning new software, programming skills, children will be better prepared for the future workforce.

Nobel laureate economist James Heckman concluded in a study that the children who received a good quality pre-school developmental education ended up doing better in life.
They were more likely to complete their high school education, less likely to commit a crime, would have better hygiene and would have higher IQs than their counterparts that either did not take part in such programmes or were enrolled in low-quality programmes.

YES!
It is
POSITIVE DEVELOPMENT!

## QUIZ TIME!

**1. 90% of a child's brain develops during the first 5 years of life?**

a. True

b. False

**2. A person's intelligence, emotional stability and personality is determined by how his or her brain was developed as a baby.**

a. True

b. False

**3. Bilingual children have better socio-cognitive development than monolingual kids.**

a. True

b. False

**4. Can extra curricular activities like sports and art, boost academic performance?**

a. Yes

b. No

**5. What is neuroplasticity?**

a. The brain's malleability to change through growth, learning and reorganization

b. The brain's rigidity to learning new things. Once something is learned, it cannot be changed.

**6. Kids who got a good quality pre-school development education ended up doing better in life.**

a. True

b. False

**7. What does having extra curricular activities tell about a candidate applying to a university?**

a. They are excellent at participating in wasteful activities

b. They are willing to go above and beyond to develop new skills.

**8. Enrolling kids in enrichment like programming prepares them for**

a. the stone age where they will be carving on stone tablets with other inhabitants from nearby caves

b. the digital age, where new jobs are being created so that they will be better prepared for the future workforce.

NO!
It is
NEGATIVE
DEVELOPMENT!

## 1. Being result-orientated destroys self-esteem

**Singapore's obsession with results!**

The country's school system gearing towards high achievement in exams is affecting children's social skills, health and overall happiness

By harping on grades, young children's sense of self-worth ends up being defined by how well they do in school. Even the "reminder" that if the child does not do well in school, he could end up with a poor job in the future can add pressure.

A parent's show of approval, disappointment or anger are signs of affirmation and acceptance."Children just want to see their parents happy for who and what they are," said Dr Balhetchet. Kids go for these activities not because they want to but because of parental pressure.

## WHY TURNING CHILDREN INTO HIGH ACHIEVERS IS A BAD THING!

High achievers have a lot of admirable qualities: they shoot for the stars, work extremely hard, and don't quit until they've met their goals. However, there are many high achievers who see their achievement and standard of work as the most important part of their personality, which can be both destructive and entirely unproductive.

**They fear failure**

**They hold themselves to impossibly high (perfectionist) standards**

**They often feel lonely at work**

**They believe they are their results**

**They can't relax**

**They may become hypercritical to themselves**

NO!
It is
NEGATIVE
DEVELOPMENT!

## 2. Stress is bad for brain development

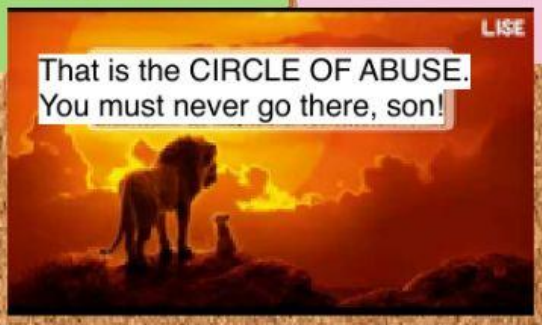
**Do we want our children's brains to age even before they have a chance at life?**

A toxic environment can kill brain cells.
Stress and abuse produces high levels of cortisol ( stress hormones) in the child's brain. Cortisol can cause brain cells to wither, thus reducing the connections between cells in the brain. New research suggests that loss of brain connectivity is the cause of aging.

Neuroscientists are discovering that early **childhood stress** can affect **brain development**. High levels of **stress**, especially in early **childhood**, affect the **development** of the prefrontal cortex. So cognitively, the **brain's** executive functions like working memory and self-regulation may not be fully **developed**

Chronic early stress, or "toxic stress", works on the emotional and cognitive levels. Emotionally, children have difficulty moderating their responses to disappointments and provocations and go through the day looking for the next threat to appear. The fight-or-flight instinct that young children fall back on when raised in a stressful environment is not going to help them succeed in school.

Self-**esteem** helps **kids** cope with mistakes. It helps **kids** try again, even if they fail at first. As a result, self-**esteem** helps **kids** do better at school, at home, **and** with friends. **Kids** with low self-**esteem** feel unsure **of** themselves.
When faced with criticism, we must remember that their neural pathways are getting ingrained. Instead of having a positive attitude towards learning, they may have a negative outlook because of their toxic experiences.



NO!
It is
NEGATIVE
DEVELOPMENT!

## 2. Stress is bad for brain development

# THE WRITE NEWS

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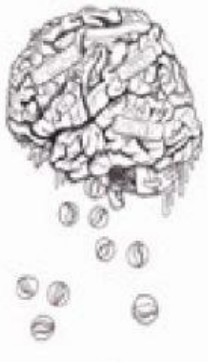
## SINGAPORE'S OBSESSION WITH RESULTS!



One counsellor recalled how a 13-year-old girl scored 83 marks in mathematics but was scolded by her mother for being careless on one of the questions.

"Her mother told her that she could have scored above 85 had she been more careful," said Ms Lena Teo, deputy director of therapy and mental wellness services at the Children-At-Risk Empowerment Association Singapore.

The girl was referred to her because of anxiety, depression and self-harm.

Then, there was a mother who made her son retake the Primary School Leaving Examinations (PSLE), even though he had passed the first time.

"I was shocked," said Dr Carol Balhetchet, senior director for youth services at the Singapore Children's Society.

"I couldn't understand why a parent would put her child through another year of primary school for better grades."The obsession among some parents for grades and exams is putting undue stress on young children here - an issue that has come under the spotlight after a Primary 5 pupil fell to his death.

HELICOPTER PARENTS! OH MY!