

Brain growth theory may affect teaching

A new theory on brain development could affect how youngsters are taught in the future. The theory says that since brains grow in two-year spurts, youngsters should be taught new things during a growing spurt and these things should be reinforced during the "non-growing" plateau.

Herman Epstein, a Brandeis University biophysicist, believes the human brain undergoes most of its growth in two-year spurts, not through continual growth as has long been the belief. Epstein bases his conclusion on studies of both human and dead brains.

That concept has now been translated into theories on how a youngster learns by Conrad F. Toepfer Jr., associate professor of middle school education, University of Georgia.

"Up to this time, the process of schooling has been organized on the assumption that the human brain grows on some sort of continuum, and that the task of education is to challenge the learner," says Toepfer. "Although regarded as fact, no data exists to support the reality of this assumed brain growth."

According to the new theory, the brain develops in spurts between the ages of 2 to 4, 5 to 8, 10 to 12, and 14 to 16-plus years.

During each period the brain grows between 5 and 10 percent in size in most humans, according to Toepfer.

Just as the brain grows during two-year periods, there are two-year plateaus where no significant growth is found. These plateaus come between ages 4 to 6, 8 to 10, and 12 to 14 years.

"During these plateau periods, it becomes almost impossible for youngsters to initiate and develop new and higher level thinking skills," contends Toepfer.

What this means for parents and educators is that higher level thinking skills should be taught children during the growth periods and reinforced during the plateaus.

Two early thinking skills are learning to name an item and recall its name. According to this research, it would be appropriate to introduce these skills during the 2- to 4-year spurt.

When the next growth spurt comes, between 4 to 6 years, higher level skills, such as explaining and discussing, should be introduced.

Wife, 32, needs transplant Funds raised for heart patient

A 32-year-old Livonia mother who is waiting in Minnesota for a heart transplant has had her spirits buoyed by the folks back home.

Mrs. Sharon Jahns, an outpatient at the famed Mayo Clinic in Rochester, Minn., reports through friends that her spirits are bright.

Mrs. Jahns has been at the clinic since April waiting for a heart which can be transplanted to her body.

She suffers from cardiomyopathy, a relatively rare heart-muscle disease. Doctors say her only hope is a heart transplant.

Mrs. Jahns has a son, 12, and a daughter, 10. Her husband Bill, whom she met in high school, is employed by Staff Industries in Redford Township.

Her plight came to the public's attention through a story in Observer & Eccentric newspapers. Since then many area residents have sent Mrs. Jahns cards and letters of encouragement. Others have organized fund-raisers.

About a week ago, Mrs. Jahns got to see her children for the first time since she went to Mayo Clinic through the kindness of people who had read about her.

Don Duff, owner of a rebuilding company in Livonia and a pilot, flew the Jahns family to Minnesota in a Beechcraft Bonanza airplane owned by James Halleran of Plymouth Township.

It was a generous act since it usually costs \$55 to \$75 per hour to fly the plane.

FRIENDS HOPE to raise \$30,000 to cover post-operative expenses that are related to Mrs. Jahns' illness. The Mayo Clinic Board of Governors and insurance will pick up the cost for the surgery.

The friends say the family will have to pay the cost of keeping Mrs. Jahns in living quarters near the hospital and nursing services for at least six months after the operation.

Several fund-raisers have been held and more are planned. Mrs. Jahns' plight has aroused the concern of many, from businessmen to cub scouts, from housewives to government officials. High school students have put on car washes to raise funds and cub scouts and elementary school youngsters in Livonia have conducted canister collections.

Livonia Mayor Edward McNamara declared "Have a Heart for Sharon Week," which runs through Saturday. Neighbors are collecting donations at a booth in the Livonia Mall shopping center on Seven Mile and Middlebelt roads through Saturday.

Saturday is "Have a Heart for Sharon" day at Oasis Golf Center, National Car Wash, Top of the Cong, Sheehan's on the Green bar and McDonald's restaurant, all on Five Mile just west of I-275 in Northville Township.

THE BUSINESSES will donate half of all proceeds between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. that day to the fund for Mrs.



Sharon Jahns

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Jahns. Entertainment at the golf center will feature Deja Vu, a local band organized by John Gazotte, 1-5 p.m. in front of Sheehan's on the Green. Singer and restaurateur Jamie Coe also will perform.

A \$100 prize will be awarded to any golfer who makes a hole in one on the 15th green of the Oasis par-three golf course.

McDonald's will feature a special family dinner consisting of a Big Mac, french fries and a soft drink for \$2.14 per family member.

Throughout the day, area children will pass out the "Have a Heart for Sharon" lapel emblems in appreciation to all patrons.

A benefit dinner on Saturday in Roma's of Livonia on Schoolcraft Road just west of I-275 will cap the fund drive. Tickets are \$15 for the 7 p.m. benefit dinner, which includes roasted chicken, vegetables and cannoli. They are available by calling the Livonia office of community resources at 421-2500, ext. 351. A cash bar will also be available.

A FUND HAS been established for Mrs. Jahns at Manufacturer's Bank of Livonia on Five Mile and Newburgh. Those who wish to contribute may send donations to, "Have a Heart," c/o John Landis, Manufacturer's National Bank of Livonia, 37601 Five Mile, Livonia 48154.

Corresponding with Mrs. Jahns has been Ann Miller of Redford Township. Mrs. Miller said that even though she didn't know Mrs. Jahns, she felt she "wanted to reach out and be close to Sharon, let her know I was thinking about her, let her know I care."

"In the beginning, I never expected an answer back," said Mrs. Miller, who sends cards and letters every day to Mrs. Jahns.

"I write about my tulips that are blooming, my own family and my job at Michigan Bell. I write anything that might brighten up Sharon's day," said Mrs. Miller, a telephone operator for 29 years.

"But Sharon wrote back short notes telling me her spirits were high. Now her mother, Clara, answers my notes," Mrs. Miller said.

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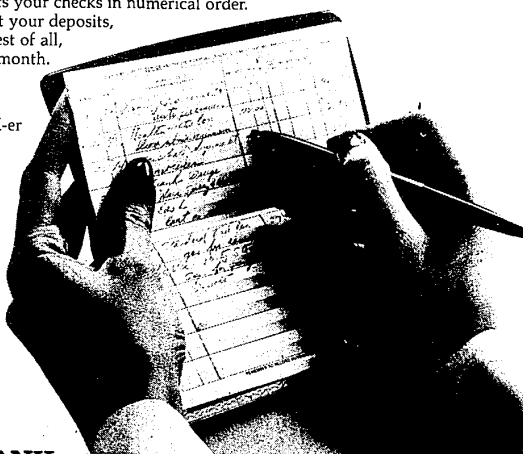
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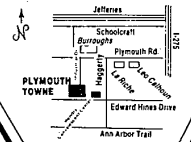
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Combine trips whenever possible to avoid unnecessary use of your car. If each car owner could eliminate one short trip a week—the nation's gasoline bill could be cut by 7%.

save energy

Take military showers where you turn the water off after you are wet, then lather up and turn the water on again to rinse. Or install a special water-saving shower head that gets you just as wet with less water.

save energy

Short showers use only about half as much hot water as tub baths. Turning the water temperature down gradually toward your shower's end will also save on the amount of hot water used.

save energy

Switching off unneeded lights should become habitual with all family members. This can be one of the greatest energy savers of all.

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