



**JANUARY 2007**  
 THE BABY COLLEGE®  
 2037-39 7th Avenue  
 New York, NY 10027  
 (212) 665-9832  
 Marilyn Joseph, Director

# HARLEM CHILDREN'S ZONE

# the Baby College® connection

## LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Greetings, Graduates!

Best wishes for a healthy new year!

As many of you know, the Harlem Children's Zone offers free tax-preparation services for local residents. As part of that effort, we make sure that those who are eligible for an Earned Income Tax Credit get theirs. Last tax season, HCZ helped Harlemites get back millions in tax refunds. Many of our graduates have been among those who received this free service.

There are no requirements—just drop by to make an appointment to complete your taxes with Mr. Clark.

We are accepting applications for our Cycle 23 series of The Baby College. If you know anyone who is a parent or guardian of a 0-3 year old child or is expecting, please have them contact The Baby College office at 212-665-9832. It is at PS 197, which is at Fifth Avenue and 135th Street.

Our Cycle 21 group was the second-largest class we have graduated yet—103 parents!

Congratulations to all our graduates—and we hope we continue to hear from you.

Our Fathers Group started up again on Dec. 14th and will meet every other Thursday at PS 197, 135th Street and Fifth Avenue. The group meets for one hour, where fathers come together for support and the exchange of information. Those interested can contact Abasi Clark at The Baby College office, 212-665-9832.

Again, best wishes for the new year. All of us at The Baby College hope that you will remain in contact with us. Feel free to let us know if there is any activities or groups you would like us to organize, or if there is some issue you would like us to address. Just stop by or call our office at 212-665-9832.

MARILYN JOSEPH  
 Program Director



Kelly Hooper

KIDS HAVE A BETTER CHANCE WHEN PARENTS ARE INVOLVED

## *Will my child succeed in school?*

**By T. Berry Brazelton, M.D., and Joshua Sparrow, M.D.**

Now that we are right in the middle of the school year, children are feeling the full weight of the pressure to keep up and succeed. Parents are sometimes just as worried as the students, wondering, "Will my child succeed?"

Studies have shown that when parents are involved with their children's school and know what their children are learning about, the kids have a better chance at success. It's also clear that parents who understand how their children learn—and what they need in order to learn—can more easily help them do their best.

Learning starts long before a child enters school. In fact, children are born learners. A newborn quickly learns how to keep herself alert and pay attention to important cues around her while shutting out unimportant information. She learns to single out her mother's voice from all others.

By 6 to 8 weeks of age, infants have already learned to respond differently to their mother and father. An 8-week-old will play gently with her mother, but will reach out to her father with a look on her face that says she is ready for the jumping and bouncing she does with daddy. This is an first sign of her development: She has learned to expect different behaviors from each parent and is

# Children are born learners

learning to respond.

A child's first and most important learning happens in the area of emotions. "Emotional learning" in the early years is a relatively new concept described by psychologist Daniel Goleman in his 1995 book *Emotional Intelligence*. Infants learn about emotions early. They discover how to recognize feelings (their own and those of others), what sets them off—and how to handle them. The development of this emotional intelligence is necessary in order to enter into relationships, where this important learning continues.

We now know that children's brains grow more in the first three years of life than at any other time. This means that there are many chances for learning, not only once a child enters school, but especially in these first three years.

To learn, a baby needs enough self-confidence so that they can face something they do not know or understand. Every time a parent mirrors a baby's smiles or gurgles, the baby learns a crucial lesson: "I'm important!" The self-esteem a child forms in the early years will motivate her to learn from her environment as she goes through life. Infants that don't get this kind of reinforcement can catch up later—but at a great cost.

Professor Howard Gardner of Harvard University believes there are actually several kinds of intelligence. In addition to emotional intelligence, Gardner believes there are intelligences for language, music, logic and math, as well as understanding space and movement. Although most of us can process information in more than one of these areas, each of us may be especially suited to taking in one or two kinds of information.

A related idea is that of "learning style." Some children find it easier to take in and remember what they see, others what they hear. Still others learn

more easily when they can move around while they work.

To discover a child's learning style, watch her as she works. Does she fidget, constantly repositioning herself in her chair? She may be telling you that she needs something to hold in her hands to help her focus, or that she needs to get up and move around during frequently scheduled breaks in class. Does she need you to repeat spoken instructions, but understand written ones the first time? She may be telling you whether she is an auditory or a visual learner. When teachers and parents understand this, they can present the same material in different ways to fit each child's learning style.

For example, by about fourth grade, some math will require a kind of thinking that involves logic and spatial relations. But some children's minds simply don't work well in those ways. These children can do better if they learn to apply words, sentences or recipe-like lists of instructions to the math problems.

When a child is having difficulty learning, parents naturally want to help. It may take psychological testing to figure out what exactly the problem is. However, if a child avoids her work or gives up before she starts, the problem may be a mismatch between the child's learning style and the way she is being taught. Does she do better if you start her off by breaking down the problem into smaller pieces? Look for the areas of learning that come more easily to her and compare these with those she dreads. Often there will be a pattern that suggests her learning style.

Remember, you know your child best, and you can have a big impact on how well she learns.

## TIPS FOR PARENTS

Here are some tips that may help you to help your child succeed:

- Read to your child early and often. Children whose parents read to them from the very beginning are more likely to value reading and pursue their own learning later.

- If you like your work, or like reading or learning about new things, let your child know. Parents can use their own interests to show the importance and excitement of learning.

- Stay involved in your child's school. A national survey found that children whose parents participate in

the PTA, coaching and other school activities are more likely to participate in after-school activities themselves. They are also more likely to be in the upper half of their classes for academic performance and are less likely to have learning and behavioral problems.

- Ask about schoolwork because you are interested in what your child is learning. If she senses that you are only trying to sniff out problems or apply pressure, she'll surely shut you out.

- Talk to your child openly and supportively about whatever difficulties he has with learning. The most successful learners are those who can face what they don't know.

- Avoid using pressure or bribes to promote learning. Learning should be its own reward, and the ultimate goal is self-motivation for learning

## FOR MORE INFORMATION

The following books and website offer more information on learning:

### BOOKS

- *One Mind At a Time*, by Mel Levine

- *Magic Trees of the Mind: How to Nurture your Child's Intelligence, Creativity, and Healthy Emotions from Birth through Adolescence* by Marian Diamond, Ph.D, and Janet Hopson

- *Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences* by Howard Gardner

- *Emotional Intelligence* by Daniel Goleman

- *The Growth of the Mind—and the Endangered Origins of Intelligence* by Stanley I. Greenspan, M.D.

- *The Children's Machine: Rethinking School in the Age of the Computer* by Seymour Papert

- *Children in the Classroom Ages 4-12* by Chip Wood

- *Running in Place: How American Families are Faring in a Changing Economy and an Individualistic Society* by Nicholas Zill and Christine Winquist Nord

### WEBSITE

National Center for Infants, Toddlers, and Families: Zero to Three ([www.zerotothree.org](http://www.zerotothree.org))

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## WORD PUZZLE

Can you unscramble these? The first 10 people to bring in the answers to The Baby College Office will receive a gift. Hint: All the words can be found in the lead article.

GLNINRAE

NFTANIS

NOITMOES

NITGSTE

CECEDUS

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John Stahle Graphic Design, New York

# Babies and birthdays

**Bryceson Marselles  
Aaron Elise  
Born: Sept. 18, 2006**



**Zaniya Duskin  
Born: June 2, 2006  
Mother's name:  
Simone Morgan**



**Mikhia Noelle Ramos  
Born: Jan. 26, 2006  
Mother's name:  
Nakia Hendrix**

**Zari Linton  
Born: Nov. 14, 2002  
Mother's name:  
Omega Linton**

