

# Children deserve early education

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How early is "early enough" to start teaching your child? Many feel that the first few years are just sort of routine and that what happens during those first years will not affect his life very much. They couldn't be more wrong.

It is foolish to wait until a child gets past his childhood years to begin thinking seriously about giving him instruction on who he is, who the devil is and who God is.

Why not teach the child while he still has those precious qualities of a young child? Why pass up the period of opportunity while the child is humble, pliable, willing and eager to learn.

So when should you begin teaching your child for a life in Allah's favor? From birth onward — there is no time to lose.

Is this practical or realistic? — it certainly is. A newborn baby breathes, digests food, feels, cries,

yawns and sleeps, but already, impressions are being made on its mind.

Its intelligence has already begun to function; at birth its brain is only one-fourth the weight at adulthood, but at two-years-of-age, the brain has reached three-fourths of its adulthood weight. All this time, the child's intelligence is growing, too.

Many medical and childhood education researchers say that the concepts the child learns before his fifth birthday are among the most difficult he is to encounter. One of these concepts is language, which is one of the most difficult intellectual accomplishments a child is ever called upon to perform.

If you doubt this, try learning a new language then you will realize what a marvelous intellectual feat it is when a child learns to speak. And remember, you already know one language to refer to, while a baby does not.

A child has an amazing capacity for learning and Messenger Muhammad

demonstrated that fact right on the rostrum of the new Temple No. 2 during one afternoon of teaching — with the child of a Sister Captain.

But this ability needs use, development and guidance. It is in this vein that Messenger Muhammad proceeds to teach the MGT & GCC (Muslim Girls Training and General Civilization Class) through his captains and the Muhammad University of Islam directors and directresses, exactly how and what to teach these children at specific levels. This teaching also needs the parents' help; so much depends upon the parents.

During the child's first year, its habits begin to form. This is when it shows its willingness or unwillingness to respond to adult demands. Obedience, we are taught, is perhaps basic of all Allah's requirements, next to righteousness. It can mean the difference between life and death. Therefore, we begin molding Muslim children from birth onward. See Eccl. 12:13 and Jer. 7:23.

In an article in *Science Digest* of March, 1969, a Dr. Marvin Ack witnessed that "the major portion of the individual's personality is established before the onset of school. It is, of course, common knowledge that pre-school children are extremely impressionable and malleable.... We have discovered that what they encountered in their childhood in terms of attitudes and experiences often establishes lasting and sometimes immutable behavior patterns."

Another childhood education researcher says: "The child remains quite malleable during his first seven years, but the longer you wait, the more radically you need to change his environment — and the probability of change becomes a little less with each successive year."

Many parents, even Muslim, evidently assume that there is little they could teach their children during these early years — and what a tragic mistake. These parents have not fully understood what Messenger Muhammad has been teaching them.