# For Children, Education begins at Home, with the right cues

**Source: Kartik Bajoria, Writer, Educator & Moderator**

As parents, it is our constant endeavour to make the best education available to our children. This requires hard work, sacrifice and immense effort. However, we sometimes tend to undermine our own personal role in our children’s education. Before school, it’s the environment we create at home, and our interaction, the amount of quality time we devote to our kids and stimuli we provide, serve as the primary and first education of a child. It is a duty, a responsibility and an opportunity that begins, quite literally, from the time a child is born and remains, with varying objectives, a lifelong, unwritten contract of care.

So how can we, as parents, ensure that we too, at a personal level, are being role-model educators to our children?

**A safe, positive environment**

At the very outset, a parent would do well to create a loving, caring, nurturing, peaceful atmosphere at home. Children are highly perceptive beings. Any kind of unrest is sensed immediately, and can severely hamper a child’s development. Any [stresses and tensions](https://indianexpress.com/article/parenting/health-fitness/parents-fights-effect-child-mental-health-and-behaviour-5384029/), be they marital, financial, familial, can prove to be an impediment to a child’s growth. We must therefore be extremely careful that a child at home never gets a whiff of anything negative. What the child should witness and experience is only good vibes and vibrations. A loving home atmosphere will instinctively enable a child to be free, uninhibited, explorative and expressive.

**Stimuli and exposure**

At various stages of a child’s growing up years, starting from the very beginning, parents are best advised to provide appropriate stimuli. This can be in the form of music playing in the house, [reading stories out aloud](https://indianexpress.com/article/parenting/learning/world-read-aloud-day-childrens-authors-share-top-picks-5564788/) (even before the child has reached an age where they can comprehend language), activities that promote and encourage development of kinesthetic and motor skills–all this, that we usually tend to leave to the schools to do, can be, and should be, done at home. As the child grows up, we should tailor these activities and exposure to suit the child’s age, with different pursuits such as exposure to gardening, nature, painting, pets and animals. This makes a child aware of what is out there in the world, and begins to sensitize the child as well. Socializing is also chiefly the responsibility of the parent and contributes immensely to a child’s education. Education isn’t only about academic or scholastic knowledge but rather the evolution of an overall, holistic development. With shrinking families, it is even more important that kids are socialized from the beginning so that they learn a certain sociable etiquette as well as qualities such as sharing, co-habiting, and develop an accommodating, sensitive, and aware personality.

**Observation and encouragement**

If parents provide a slew of activities and pursuits at home, and put in the time and effort to be with the child for quality spells of time, we will soon begin to notice patterns, preferences, talents, and natural leanings. To be able to identify what one’s child is interested in, passionate about, or seems to be developing an interest in and skill for, is a large part of a parent’s educational duties.

**Friendly guidance**

As children become older, we have to find it in ourselves as parents, to view them as their own individual, distinct, unique people, who may well be very different from us. They may not, for instance, want to tow the family line as far as subject choices, higher education and eventual vocation goes. And that should be perfectly fine. If anything, it should be encouraged. There is absolutely no merit in fighting the choices our children want to make, especially when it concerns their education. If the son of a lawyer is demonstrating a real skill for theatre and wishes to pursue the latter, the parents should support and encourage that. This is not to say that as a parent, one doesn’t communicate one’s feelings. Sure, one must. But it should never be with a view to restrain, thwart or discourage. Too many parents have lost that vital bond with their children, one that is difficult to resurrect, over differences between college programs and career choices. It is a tragedy that can be easily averted if only we as parents can develop the wisdom that our children are not who we are. They are their own people!

**Set right examples and validate**

It would be remiss to conclude this article without mentioning two more important factors that are related to parents’ role in a child’s education. First, that kids see parents as role models and emulate their behaviour and actions. So as parents, we must conduct ourselves in a manner that we would be alright seeing our children adopt. If we are, for instance, impatient or violent, then that is likely to come into our kids too. To then suddenly turn around and reprimand them for it, and not be alright, will be like a pot calling the kettle black. Second, people spend their entire lifetimes seeking validation. It is simply, the human condition. Even if I am nearly 40, I still crave, consciously or unconsciously, my parents’ validation. So be mindful of this and always be there for your children, and try and support them through their decisions and choices.

Parents play an absolutely critical role in a child’s education. The sooner we become aware of this, the better chance we will have of giving our kids the education they deserve.