



Growing great scientists

Playing building blocks with your little one could pay off, especially if you'd like a scientist in the family or need help assembling flat-pack furniture, new research suggests.

A recent study has found that kids who play building blocks with their parents are more likely to understand words like 'over', 'under' and 'through', which help them learn how items are arranged in space.

According to research published in the journal *Mind, Brain and Education*, if kids are left to play with blocks by themselves, they might miss out on this early opportunity to build spatial awareness.

It's this concept that helps us tackle flat-pack furniture, cram suitcases into a car boot or even find our way around a new city as adults.

The researchers say it's also important when learning about science, technology, engineering and maths.



BABYTALK

Q IS IT OKAY FOR TODDLERS TO PLAY WITH SMARTPHONES?

With US research showing that almost 40% of two- to four-year-old children have used a smartphone, do you think it's a good idea to let your toddler play with mobile devices? Do you download apps for them – and if so, which ones?

YOU SAY

"I was always really against it – believing that kids should be outside, using their imagination. But now I'm not so sure. My almost three-year-old can navigate my smartphone better than I can. I have downloaded educational apps for him. Now I think I'd be putting him at a disadvantage by not letting him have access to it."

Sarah Williamson

"Anything to get five minutes' peace!"
Nicole Aust

"My two-and-a-half-year-old daughter uses my smartphone when we are out at cafes. It keeps her occupied and entertained. I downloaded educational apps for her to use such as ABCs, animal counting and an app that reads stories to her."

Candice Sinfield

"My 20-month-old can be distracted with an animal noises app during nappy changes – it sure is a sanity saver."

Ashley Charis Burton



"My husband just called me his 'little Fat Controller' (a la *Thomas the Tank Engine*)."
So tweeted Lily Allen, when pregnant with her new baby girl, Ethel.

Tiny baby app

Every day, around 56 babies are born prematurely and a new app from the prem baby charity Life's Little Treasures Foundation has been developed to relieve some of the stress. The Premature Baby Journal app (iTunes, \$2.99) helps parents keep track of milestones, information and questions to ask, as well as record photos and notes.

