

How to Create a Musical Pathway to the Brain

GUIDEBOOK FOR PARENTS OF CHILDREN AGED 0-6

By Magda DeLara



Special THANKS

We would like to thank Michelle Heck and Frank Mauceri for their help in editing this Guidebook.

Your work will impact parents and children around the world. It means a lot to us.

Thank you from the bottom of our hearts!

Talents Garden

Table of CONTENTS

- 03. INTRODUCTION: WELCOME TO TALENTS GARDEN
- 05. CHAPTER 1 WHY TALENTS GARDEN
- 08. CHAPTER 2 THE FIVE STAGES OF TALENTS GARDEN GROWTH
- 12. CHAPTER 3 OUR METHODOLOGY
- 14. CHAPTER 4 EXAMPLES OF GENIUSES
- 17. CHAPTER 5 UNDERSTANDING THE BRAIN
- 25. CHAPTER 6 MUSICAL PATHWAY TO THE BRAIN
- 28. CHAPTER 7 TIPS FOR CREATIVE TEACHING
- 37. CONCLUSION EMBRACE YOUR TALENTS GARDEN

Welcome to Talents Garden!



Our MISSION

It is my pleasure to introduce you to Talents Garden: to tell you about the incredible capabilities of your child's brain and give you creative teaching tips.

It all started when I became a Suzuki piano teacher. During this teaching, I was fascinated by how children can learn different subjects, such as music and math, in the same way they absorb their mother tongue.

Following this passion, I gathered materials and learned the most effective ways to create a learning environment in early childhood.

Together with talented and passionate friends, we created Talents Garden. Our mission is to help parents of children aged 0-6 discover and develop their child's inner genius.

For this purpose, we have developed a unique curriculum that every parent can use at home. This guidebook will help you use this curriculum.

Magda DeLara FOUNDER & LEAD EDUCATOR

Why Talents Garden



NATURE & NURTURE

We celebrate the potential of every child as we do a garden, with the possibility to flourish and produce abundantly. This potential, the child's hidden talents, needs to be nurtured and cultivated just as the seeds in a garden need care to bear fruit.

For decades, it was believed that our brain and intelligence were genetically programmed, and its capabilities and structure were fully dependent on hereditary and biological factors. It was believed that a child's brain potential was not dependent on its environment. Neuroscientists have now discovered that the brain can be "exercised like a muscle" and that environmental conditions influence a child's brain development.

The Talents Garden team is fascinated by the possibilities of developing inner genius by stimulating the brain of each child. Like modern neuroscience, in our Talents Garden, we see the interplay of genes and environment. Therefore, we view NATURE and NURTURE as two factors working together.

Recognizing the interdependence of NATURE and NURTURE provides the foundation for Talents Garden!

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Every child is born with seeds of wonderful potential. The seeds are in the child. These are gifts, talents, skills, and abilities given to a child by God that must be nurtured in order for them to grow and be fully developed.

NATURE in Talents Garden



Parents provide an environment conducive to the development of this potential. Our simple, fun, and multi-sensory activities, based on The Five Stages of Talents Garden Growth, will help you provide this essential environment.

NURTURE in Talents Garden

The Five Stages of Talents Garden Growth

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Parents' INVOLVEMENT

Talents Garden distinguishes five areas of parents' involvement in discovering and developing their child's potential. We describe each stage in terms of the growth of plants in a garden - including YOU, the parent! YOU are the GARDENER. By providing a child with a fertile environment, their talents have the best opportunity to blossom.



1. Cultivating CURIOSITY

As soil provides an environment for seeds to grow, parents create an environment that supports and nurtures a child's gifts and talents by encouraging their interests and willingness to learn.

🗻 2. Watering COGNITION

As seeds require water to grow, a child's talents and brain must be regularly "watered." Visual, auditory, and tactile stimulation provide multi-modal motivation to develop learning and cognition.



3. Rooting CREATIVITY

Like plant roots branching throughout the soil, connections made in the brain form a network that is the foundation of creativity. Creativity provides the ability to solve problems and generate new ideas quickly.



4. Sprouting COMMUNICATION

Sprouting occurs whenever a new growth pushes through the soil, presenting a new plant. This occurs when a child begins to communicate what they are learning and expresses their enthusiasm. This is an opportunity to reinforce their strengths, encourage their interests, and show them how much they are loved and respected.



5. Blooming CARE

As your child grows and blooms into their potential, you learn to value and celebrate their growth physically, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. You continuously support and care for their growth. Your child will inspire others, too!

Gardener's INVOLVEMENT

As the Gardener, you are responsible for **1. Cultivating CURIOSITY** and **2. Watering COGNITION.** This means you create an environment for development, ensure the right learning **atmosphere**, and provide appropriate stimulation.

In the case of **3. Rooting CREATIVITY**, you accompany your child, observing and admiring the development of their creativity that marks your child's independent growth. The developmental paths created in the brain connect with your child's personality, temperament, and preferences. Together they begin to form a beautiful, unique individual.

4. Sprouting COMMUNICATION results from your child's willingness to share what has grown inside him or her. The time and intensity of this sharing also depends on individual predispositions. You should not force your child to "show off." Your child has the right to decide when they are ready. It's not up to you, Dear Parent. Observe and respect your child, learn his uniqueness, and nurture it.

5. Blooming CARE is about you and your child as a unit, or a team. This is your work together, which is a process. This is the time to admire the beauty of this unique garden and the influence it has on those who encounter it. Enjoy and be grateful for this time with your child and all you are accomplishing together.

Our Methodology



Fertilizer in TALENTS GARDEN

Effective teaching methods are like high-quality fertilizers. Talents Garden developed its uniqueness thanks to the inspiration of the Suzuki Method and the Doman Method. And there are many more! We also understand Dalcroze, Kodaly, Gordon, Orff, Vygotsky, Montessori, etc. Our methods are informed by our understanding of pedagogical theory and child development. This research indicates some of the most effective paths to foster creative learning.

Talents Garden CURRICULUM

Talents Garden has followed a similar path. We offer a multi-dimensional curriculum that includes structured activities and games to play with your child; fun and easy music-making involving singing games and beginning piano; and a mobile application to guide your musical listening.

Tonality - a simple application for listening to music in 24 keys. The application is easy to operate with a few basic commands. With this, you and your child can listen to a prepared dose of musical examples every day. We also offer a supplementary YouTube playlist with musical selections in all 24 musical keys.

Musicality - is a collection of audio-visual activities that you perform together with your child. Every activity is demonstrated and explained in a video guide.

Baby Piano - Baby Piano is an easy-to-follow parenting activity that allows parents to start playing the piano and introduce babies and children (from 6 month to 6 years) to the instrument. Every activity is demonstrated and explained in a video guide. We recommend using a grand piano, an upright piano, or a good-quality digital piano. Other electronic keyboards don't do their job of exploring the world of sounds. That's why we don't recommend them.

Any parent can play these three curricular areas with their child. You do NOT have to be a musician!

Examples of Geniuses



Immersion in the ENVIRONMENT

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart could not have been a famous composer if he had not been raised in the home of a violinist father. A house full of instruments, music, and the desire to make music. Even his sister experienced the same immersion in the environment.

My dear sister! I'm amazed to discover that you can compose so delightfully. In a word, your Lied is beautiful. You must compose more often.

WOLFGANG AMADEUS MOZART - Classical composer

Igniting FASCINATION

When many of us think of "genius," Albert Einstein might come to our minds. Albert was raised by a family of engineers (who also happened to love music). As a small child, he spent long periods of time in bed due to illness. His father wanted to make this time more enjoyable, so gave young Albert a pocket compass.

And what happened? Albert became interested in the compass needle and its dependence on something in "empty" space. He later described this as one of the most revealing events in his life.



ALBERT EINSTEIN - Influential scientists

Innate CURIOSITY and Freedom to DISCOVER

Leonardo Da Vinci was taught to read and count by his father and grandfather. Then he could pursue any interest he had. Nobody bothered him. He didn't stumble upon the educational system. He didn't have to comply with system standards, assessments, and tests.



LEONARDO DA VINCI - Renaissance painter, draughtsman, engineer, scientist, theorist, sculptor, and architect

Your Little GENIUS

Talents Garden believes in the potential of every child, which is why we encourage all parents to consciously engage in the development of the genius of the new generation. Saying your child is a "Little Genius" is no exaggeration!



Understanding the Brain



How The Brain GROWS

Research shows that until the age of six, a child's brain cells are more active than an adult's. During this time, the brain develops quickly and dynamically. Visual, auditory, and tactile stimulation helps the brain in this development. According to Glenn Doman, to aid the child's development this stimulation should be increased in intensity, frequency, and duration. Interactions with loving adults encourage the development of neural connections.



How The Brain LEARNS

Nowadays, most people know how to use a computer. We know what "files" are and how to organize them by dividing them into selected categories and placing them in a folder for later use. A similar process of acquiring knowledge and applying or using it takes place in the brain.

The brain learns by naming the elements we encounter. The brain needs less explanation and more examples when building neural representations. These are created after receiving sensory signals alongside associations with words and emotions. This means that when your child encounters a musical instrument, he or she can see it, touch it, smell it, or try to taste it. (No, we don't eat the instrument!) However, the child learns associations through rich, multi-modal experiences.

After the experience presented through the senses, the brain creates a category, like a chest of drawers. If we present the child with more details about different instruments, for example, the brain will accept this information willingly and without limits, and place it into the right category.

The brain learns by categorization.

This is a fantastic teaching principle for whatever we want to teach a child. Your child will learn everything he grows up with through a method of trial and error, checking, touching, and experimenting.

In California, I met a mother who told me about her son, and how he was punished at school. The mother was called to the principal to discuss her son's inappropriate behaviour. She learned that he had destroyed a pen in class. After talking to her son, she immediately realized that he did not intend to vandalize anything. He just wanted to know what was inside the pen!

The brain learns by experience.

How the Brain RESPONDS TO MUSIC

Through music, we learn many different skills that are useful in every area of life. Examples include time management, the ability to deal with obstacles, and the ability to listen to others.

According to two professors from the University of Central Florida – neuroscientist Kiminobu Sugaya and world-renowned violinist Ayako Yonetani - MUSIC:

- Changes your ability to perceive time
- Reduces seizures
- Helps you become a better communicator
- Makes you stronger
- Boosts your immune system
- Assists in repairing brain damage
- Makes you smarter
- Evokes memories
- Improves your thinking, decision-making and planning
- Helps in processing what you see, hear and feel
- Triggers emotions
- Regulates body movement and coordination, thirst, appetite, sleep, mood, heart rate, body temperature, metabolism, and growth
- Enables the left and right hemispheres to communicate

How the Brain FEELS DELIGHT

Learning is a basic function of the brain. Your child's brain loves to learn through the pleasure of discovery, the enthusiasm for absorbing new things, joy, and perseverance.

The brain needs positive emotion to learn. It also needs a challenge. Children enjoy challenges because of the satisfaction that comes from learning something new.

The brain's built-in motivational system is primarily managed by tiny chemicals called neurotransmitters, which promotes the desire to develop. Neurotransmitters released in the brain during the learning process produce feelings of happiness. This again motivates the child to improve skills and be persistent. By remaining patient and supporting this internal motivational system, you will enable your child to take on challenges and experience the joy of learning.

The brain develops depending on what and how it stimulates its delight.

GERALD HÜTHER - a German neurobiologist

How the Brain NEEDS RELATIONSHIP

Your child's brain has mirror mechanisms; the child imitates those in the immediate environment. Children perceive patterns in adult behaviour that have a huge impact on learning about life. The attitude you present to your child is important. Your attention, communication, patience, enthusiasm, and care are patterns that will be imitated.

Such an experiment was once done. Two groups of children undergo a year of teaching by teachers who were told two different descriptions of their students' "abilities." The first group of students had teachers who were told that the children were "very talented and unique." The second group of children had teachers who were told that they were "averagely gifted and showed no interest in learning."

After a year, the effect of this experiment showed a clear difference in the achieved teaching results. The first group of children was more advanced than the second. Teachers' attitudes influenced outcomes, not children's ability or inability. The children had the same expectations, similar abilities, etc. The teachers did not know about it.

This demonstrates that when you believe, support, and appreciate your child, you give him or her a chance for unlimited development. If you build a relationship with your child from the very beginning you give him or her a chance to observe your actions and learn from you.

The biggest obstacle to learning is pain and aggression. It's not just about physical pain. Emotional feelings of abandonment, neglect, or lack of acceptance are the most common reasons for demotivation and reluctance to learn.

The brain needs a relationship in which it finds security, love, and POSITIVE role models.

How the Brain ASKS QUESTIONS

Why does the sun shine? And why isn't it there at night?

You sometimes don't know what questions your child will ask. You will not always have the answers ready. By listening to children's questions we understand their interests and enthusiasms. By finding the answers and learning together your child understands that you are also a learner and that you value their curiosity.

Your child doesn't need any more toys. He needs more fun and an environment that will make him so interested that he wants to ask more questions. Our answers should be short and direct, without unnecessary details, and specific, as if assigning the label to the appropriate category.

An interesting environment for your child is everything you like and are interested in. These are joint activities in which you can invite your child to act as an assistant. You can invite your child to cook, collect, do laundry, and shop. You can take your child for walks, connect with nature, look at birds, plants, etc. Everything is new for your child.

You can also encourage your child to listen to music, learn about music, and live with music, even if you are not a musician. Talents Garden can help you with this.

The brain asks questions through constant curiosity, and the desire to experiment and learn new things.

How the Brain NEEDS TO FOCUS

Multitasking is processing two or more tasks simultaneously, which is technically impossible, and an unproductive habit, too. Thus, it is important to learn how to concentrate on one task, which may include multiple sensory inputs but only one "piece" of each type of sensory stimulation; for example, one piece of auditory input and one piece of visual input, simultaneously.

Imagine situations in which your child does not listen to you. Before you decide to react, check if there are other sound stimuli around the child, e.g. loud music, television, etc. Multiple sound stimulations at the same time cause chaos in the brain. Similarly, visual information should be singular.

Thus, Talents Garden has designed exercises to focus on only one piece of each type of sensory information to be sent to the brain. This connection and association of sensory and visual stimulation is appropriate, healthy, and pleasant for the baby's brain.

The brain needs to focus on only one thing, avoiding overstimulation and multitasking.

The Musical Pathway to the Brain



Tonality - LISTENING TO MUSIC

Our first musical activity is a daily dose of audio stimulation that develops musical hearing. For this purpose, the Tonality application supplies 24 Tracks of music in the 12 major and 12 minor musical keys for ACTIVE and PASSIVE listening modes, or ALM and PLM for short. Additionally, we recommend well-known music repertoire in every key from the Playlist on our YouTube channel.

This consistent development of listening skills prepares your child for language learning, expands and enriches the brain's memory capacity, and prepares your child for math, reading, art, and more.

Musicality - LEARNING ABOUT MUSIC

Our second stimulation used in creating the Musical Pathway To The Brain is a set of 48 simple, fun, and multi-sensory activities based on The Five Stages of Talents Garden Growth. In these activities, we use audio-visual stimulation, which will allow you to see many benefits for both you and your child.

You will notice that, among other things, you can:

- Be musical even if you are not a musician
- Sing for your child even if your voice is not perfect
- · Find your favourite music and enjoy it with your child
- · Emotionally connect with your child

And Your child will:

- Develop perceptiveness, concentration, early reading skills, attention, musical vocabulary, and the ability to read signs and symbols
- Learn about different instruments and composers
- Awaken imagination and creativity
- Feel the rhythm of the music, distinguish between short and long sounds, memorize the pitch of sounds, and become acquainted with the scale of C major along with the scales specific to several songs

During the course, you will learn how to recognize your child's readiness to learn a new activity. Developing your child's musicality with us will become easy, pleasant, and engaging for you and even for other family members.

Baby Piano - LIVING WITH MUSIC

The third stimulation we use to create the Musical Pathway To The Brain is BABY PIANO, a collection of 24 activities with children and piano, which we were able to create based on my many years of teaching experience.

This time we use sound, visual, and tactile stimulation. With us, you will start playing the piano and understanding music theory. You will also find that you can feel real pleasure and satisfaction from improvising on the piano. It's not just about you! Your child will accompany you on this fantastic journey!

You'll learn a new activity every week. If your child is interested at this stage, you will use very simple tactile activities prepared specially for your child. After some time, your child will imitate your way of playing. So it's supposed to be great fun and pleasure.

Keep what children are born with – freedom.

VICTOR WOOTEN - American bassist, songwriter, record producer

Tips for Creative Teaching



Prepare Your DAILY ROUTINE

We recommend doing our activities as a daily routine. Try to practice at the same time and under the same conditions every day. Of course, this commitment to developing your child's brain applies to days when you and your child are healthy, rested, and ready for a journey of discovery. This should be a fun activity that you look forward to doing together.

The most constant, repeated activity every day is eating meals. Therefore, we suggest that you arrange your daily routine around breakfast, lunch, and dinner.

Each day of the week should have the following number of repetitive activities:

- Tonality PLM & ALM 2 x day
 - one set of 24 tracks in Passive Listening Mode (PLM)
 - one track selected by CHOICE in Active Listening Mode (ALM)
- Musicality 3 x day
 repetition of the same activity
- Baby Piano 1 x day

Weekends should look a little different:

- Tonality Playlist 1 x day
 - 1 x piece of music from the Playlist
- Musicality 2 x day
 - the child teaches the parent a selected activity that he or she already knows and likes. Just for fun!
 - the parent preparation of 2 new activities
- Baby Piano 1 x day
 - the parent preparation of I new activity

We will provide you with a checklist of all of our activities that will help you perform them simply and easily.

Sample DAILY ROUTINE

TIME		ACTIVITIES	DESCRIPTION	DURATION
WeekDays				
Before	BREAKFAST	Musicality	One activity	3-5 min
During		Tonality PLM	One set of 24 tracks	40 min
After		Baby Piano	One activity	10 min
Before	LUNCH	Musicality	Activity repetition	3-5 min
During		Tonality ALM	One track selected by CHOICE	2 min
After		Musicality	Activity repetition	3-5 min
WeekEnds				
Before	BREAKFAST	Musicality	Your child teaches you	3-5 min
During		Tonality Playlist	One piece of music on YouTube	3-6 min
Anytime		Baby Piano	Your preparation of 1 new activity	5 min
		Musicality	Your preparation of 2 new activities	5 min

Follow Your CHILD'S INTEREST

Observing the child and his interests is very important. Children wake up with the expectation of new experiences. Suggest to him, for example: "Be ready for a new activity," but if you see that the child is not interested, leave it. Finish and put it aside for later. Do not force your child to do any activity.

It is also good to finish an activity before the child wants to stop. This is how your child stays motivated and interested.

Children can only focus for a few minutes at this early age. Remember that. Do not extend the time of any activity. Take a break for a minimum of 5 minutes before trying to repeat the activity.

To maintain your child's rapid learning pace, use short and quick stimulation.

An important note: we do not compare children's progress. Each child is unique and learns at their own pace.

Create JOYFUL ATMOSPHERE

A joyful atmosphere is the basis for teaching your child.

If you are having a bad day, or if you are sick or worried, don't force yourself to do activities with your baby. Explain that you changed your plans that day.

The same is true if your child is feeling unwell. Save these activities for the next opportunity when they can be fully enjoyed. There is no obligation to learn when we are not feeling good. Don't force anything, as a matter of principle.

Repeat your daily routine and habits with the mindset of creating an atmosphere full of joy and wonder.

Get Involved with the WHOLE FAMILY

When I worked at a music school, I noticed an interesting pattern. The oldest children from a large family encountered certain challenges and difficulties at music school. The next child from this family had fewer problems. And when it came to the youngest offspring, everyone was delighted with his abilities, skills, and inexplicable talents.

What's the explanation? The youngest child obtained his education through the efforts of older siblings. He/she simply grew up in a home where playing an instrument was the norm. The youngest child knew no other life. There was no life without an instrument, music, and time spent with the instrument.

This generational "inheritance" applies to every large family. It may be similar in your family. You start with your first child as an example to follow. You can then apply the same activities, rules and habits to your next child. At some point, the oldest child will want to teach the younger siblings.

Exercise the BRAIN

Now I will tell you some teaching secrets. It's always about the brain. When I teach piano, I don't train my students' fingers. I train their brain. I cultivate their imagination, understanding, sense of pleasure, and everything that gives satisfaction. And I must say, my experience in teaching children how to learn piano has proven to almost always be transferable to all other areas of their learning.

I divide acquiring new skills into two areas: **Treasure COLLECTION**, and **Starting & Ending JOURNEY.**

• **Treasure COLLECTION** means practicing the piano.

During this time we practice and eliminate errors. How? By setting only one goal and achieving it. Sometimes this requires breaking down the problem into small, manageable parts. Once this small part is accomplished, it must be consolidated through repetition. The student can then focus on another part until everything starts to come together.

To understand what the goal, or "treasure" is, I play two examples of the section to be learned for the students. One example is played correctly, and sounds beautiful and pleasing, while the second example is played incorrectly, and sounds "ugly" or displeasing. I exaggerate the difference between the examples.

The child chooses the preferred example (always the good one) and finds a way to repeat or imitate the example – what we call, the "treasure." After the child plays the example well, we roll dice to see how many repetitions to practice. We build a collection of good repetitions, our "treasures." Children like rules to follow, so doing repetitions is usually not a problem.

The following rule applies:

I say: "Ask the dice how many times." I use a large dice so that the numbers of dots are visible to the child. When there are only 2 times, the child repeats 2 times. When it's $1_{\rm m}$ the child throws the dice again and adds the number, so sometimes there can be a total of 7 repetitions.

When a child encounters obstacles while collecting treasures, the teacher comes to the rescue by completing the missing repetitions and collecting treasures for the child. Thanks to this, treasures are always collected, which leaves the child and the teacher feeling happy and satisfied.

• Starting & Ending JOURNEY means performing piano pieces.

Mistakes can be made. We don't correct them at that time. We don't care about them. Our only goal is to start and continue playing music until the end, without taking breaks, similar to a journey. Sometimes there is even improvisation. Just don't interrupt the performance. Be patient, finish, and enjoy this time. Believe me, this trained attitude is useful in life. We don't blame ourselves for the mistakes we've made, we simply move on.

You'll start to notice which skills really interest your child. If your child wants to improve these skills, you can use Treasure Collection and Starting & Ending Journey. Use a dice and the above rules for this. Provide two examples to help your child understand the purpose of this exercise. Always focus on only one goal. And then create opportunities to demonstrate this skill where mistakes may happen.

Remember that we do not criticize the child during the performance. We express our enjoyment of our activity together regardless of success. We always appreciate a child by pointing out a truly beautiful achievement. However, our child knows when we tell the truth, so we strongly recommend avoiding giving our children false praise.

Don't test your CHILD

The educational system requires testing. There is a saying that no one has ever grown taller by measuring. Talents Garden is against testing. You are teaching your child to be ready for their own life, not ready for school!

I believe that it is just cruel and as useless to give examinations as it is to dig up plants to see if their roots are growing. Sometimes the plants die as a result of such digging.

WINIFRED SACKVILLE STONER - Mother of a child prodigy

Learn by TEACHING

As your child's first and best teacher, you will also learn. Knowing this, sometimes reverse the roles; allow your child to become the teacher. Children love imitating adults. Sometimes, let your child be the leader and imitate them in the activity. Demonstrate that we all have fun learning and teaching!

Use a story about SPONGE AND STONE

As a teacher, I often tell my students about Sponge & Stone. The sponge reacts to water with openness. It easily soaks up the liquid. The stone is hard and closed. The water only flows down it and has no chance of reaching the interior. Then I ask the question: What do you want to be? Do you want to soak up all my energy and ideas or do you want to be hard and closed to the things I say?

This story always works. It keeps me engaged as a teacher through the open and cooperative ears, eyes, and hearts of my students. It provides me with intensive work, but also great satisfaction. And, of course, it results in the cooperation of every student who decides to be a Sponge.

This comparison will also work for your child. You will know when you can use this story. What I like about it is showing the student and the teacher and quality of their relationship, which depends on both parties.

Embrace Your Talents Garden



Dear Parent, How Can We Support You?

We offer many different tools. Choose what you need most. Visit our website **www.talentsgarden.com/Course/How to Access Talents Garden Course** to see what you can start using right away. For example, our **Tonality** app is free, so don't hesitate to download it from our website to your phone.

As we wrap up this Guidebook, thank you for joining us on our journey of discovery. Thank you for wanting to reach out to your child to lift him higher, further, and better.

We are excited about your commitment and the effect of your creative teaching, which culminates in your beautiful, unique, and valuable CHILD - YOUR TALENTS GARDEN!

Magda Defara