

DIRECTOR'S NOTES

The quest to understand and answer the biggest questions we have posed about ourselves is universal: *What makes us, us?* What determines our outcomes? Is it a question of fate? Is it a matter of opportunity or socio-economic status? Does it have to do with our genes or IQ levels?

While no one can argue that education is the greatest source of opportunity to build healthy, thriving individuals, and that our world is in a much better place than before, education as we know it today is not a direct guarantee for success. Success today, has more to do with brain matters.

For decades, an ever-growing army of researchers, educators and scientists have looked into the human brain to study how it's built and wired and what ingredients it needs to thrive and they've made one of the greatest discoveries ever: that much of what makes us who we are is rooted well before we start our formal education, when the foundation of our brain architecture is formed.

In fact, much of our adult behavior reflects the neural circuits sculpted by experience in infancy and early childhood. In other words, we now know that it takes a lot more than education for our brains to develop and thrive.

Although science does not yet have all the answers, there is proof that early childhood development affects the brain and the child's social, emotional and cognitive skills. It determines the health of a child, her ability to learn in school, to perform a future job, to master a skill and to be a happy individual.

If we know this now, we should be encouraged to readdress how we are raising and educating our children. Not only because of the alarming costs to the individual and to society but because we cannot afford to continue missing out on the contributions that children could and should be making to the world.

Brain Matters is a fascinating journey that will shift our understanding of what makes us who we are, why we behave the way we do, how we learn to learn and, what skills and traits are needed to help us thrive, no matter who we are or where we come from.

Our story, supported by an awesome team of the world's leading experts, will demonstrate that the brain and quality Early Childhood Development is a promising answer to some of the very critical questions we ask ourselves and represents a promising solution to some of the problems we face in the world today.

Carlota Nelson