

FOREWORD

What is the world our children will face 25 years from now when they enter the workforce? How different will that world be from the rapidly evolving world we face today? By all accounts, people will move from job to job as independent 'e-lancers', sticking to one job about as long as their loyalty to a brand of toothpaste. Many will work from home as the trend away from centralised offices continues. This calls for a different kind of education. This future calls for an education that emphasises thinking on one's feet, flexibility and creative thinking.

The educational establishment of today is not equipped to provide children with the skills they need. Until that establishment slowly crawls in the right direction and morphs into the butterfly we need, today's parents should understand how the world their children will face demands a different kind of experience than the one we had as children. Where can parents find the secrets of raising children with the qualities they will need for success?

Go to any random page in *Pre-school Parenting Secrets: Talking with the Sky* and you will find these nuggets. Take this quotation on creativity:

In an ideal 21st Century curriculum, the quality and creativeness of a child's thought processes are seen as a more highly valued outcome of education than the mere acquisition of given information.

The authors are so right. With information doubling every 2.5 years, the last thing we need our children to do is slavishly memorise content that will be outmoded before they can use it. This is not to say that memorisation by itself is bad; indeed, children need to learn the strategies required to a) select the most important information; and b) commit it to memory. But we are no longer talking about just *retrieval* of information; what is needed for tomorrow is the ability to retrieve and then transform. Our children will be judged on their ability to combine information in new ways to solve problems that haven't yet emerged.



Pre-school Parenting Secrets: Talking with the Sky is a parent's guide to providing children with the skills they will need for the future. It is a delightful compendium of ideas and practices and social strategies that can help children reach their fullest potential. Written in a delightful and highly approachable style, this volume can help any parent do a better job in raising well-adjusted, happy and intelligent children.

What David Chiem, Brian Caswell and Kylie Bell appreciate is that *brains* are not enough. Brains only get children ahead when they are embedded in a social body that understands itself and others. Brains only matter when they can do more than 'spit back' information unchanged — when they can communicate ideas effectively.

In our 2009 book *A Mandate for Playful Learning in Preschool* we touted the 6Cs™ — **Collaboration** (the ability to work with others), **Communication** (the ability to transmit one's ideas orally or in writing; to be persuasive), **Content** (mastery of the subjects taught in school, including the arts), **Creative Innovation** (the ability to go beyond what is known), **Critical Thinking** (culling from among the vast amounts of information now available to us, to find the kernels we need), and **Confidence** (not stopping in the face of failure) as the skills children need for a 21st Century world. *Pre-school Parenting Secrets: Talking with the Sky* addresses the 6Cs™ without calling them by this name. It invites parents to see how children can develop these skills naturally and without tutors or special classes.

Parenting styles that take a child's perspective into consideration will always be more effective than those that impose adult thinking on the child before the child is ready to comprehend. As the authors write:

In order to make and maintain relationships, solve problems and resolve conflicts successfully, humans need to develop the ability to see the world from others' perspectives.

But they don't just stipulate. This book provides numerous examples, explanations and activities that parents can use to help children develop the capacity to see 'others' perspectives'.

Parents who use this book will find their lives made infinitely easier, as their children's sometimes inexplicable behaviour is explained to them. Further, parents are offered insights, games and tactics that are generalisable

and go beyond the specific situation in which they are showcased. In short, the best way to conclude this endorsement of a book I thoroughly enjoyed is to quote its authors on the subject of parenting:

Our role as parents is not to teach, but to facilitate. Our responsibility is not to control, but to assist — to provide the flexible structures within which our children can be creative and develop their unique understanding of the world and their place in it.

Roberta M. Golinkoff
Wilmington DE, USA



Roberta Golinkoff is the H. Rodney Sharp Professor in the School of Education and Departments of Psychology and Linguistics, and Cognitive Science at the University of Delaware. She is the co-author of: ***Einstein Never Used Flash Cards: How Our Children Really Learn and Why They Should Play More and Memorize Less*** (Rodale) and ***A Mandate for Playful Learning in Preschool: Presenting the Evidence*** (Oxford).

Roberta is also a recipient of the coveted **American Psychological Association's Distinguished Service Award** for her dissemination of information on educational research.