Dr. Fawzia: Education & Parenting

# Schooling and Fun

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 I once tried to convince a neighbor of mine to let her grandchild join our newly opened weekend school. Her answer: “His father refused. Other children suffer all week already. That’s enough. Why must his son suffer also on weekends? Let him have some fun.”

 This is a common concept: many parents consider “schooling” a torture but “fun” good.

 They are right on both counts. All babies are born with a love of learning. They are curious and taste everything they can grab. They successfully learn to creep, crawl and walk with no fear of failure. Then they go to school and suddenly, the bright curious child becomes either a successful subdued sponge or a naughty failure.

 The problem therefore lies in schools. What have schools done to our children?

 When a baby is born, its brain is only one quarter its adult size. By age three, the brain has already reached 80% of its full size. By age five, the brain is almost all grown up: 90%. The human brain grows through use, and atrophies through disuse, just like any other part of the body.

 So when should a child start learning? After its brain is almost fully formed? Or before that?