

# Enriching the Environment

Marian Diamond and her team of researchers at the University of California at Berkeley have been studying the impact of enriched and impoverished environments on the brains of rats. Diamond believes that enriched environments unmistakably influence the brain's growth and learning. An enriched environment for children, Diamond says,

- ✎ Includes a steady source of positive emotional support;
- ✎ Provides a nutritious diet with enough protein, vitamins, minerals, and calories;
- ✎ Stimulates all the senses (but not necessarily all at once!);
- ✎ Has an atmosphere free of undue pressure and stress but suffused with a degree of pleasurable intensity;
- ✎ Presents a series of novel challenges that are neither too easy nor too difficult for the child at his or her stage of development;
- ✎ Allows social interaction for a significant percentage of activities;
- ✎ Promotes the development of a broad range of skills and interests that are mental, physical, aesthetic, social, and emotional;
- ✎ Gives the child an opportunity to choose many of his or her efforts and to modify them;
- ✎ Provides an enjoyable atmosphere that promotes exploration and the fun of learning;
- ✎ Allows the child to be an active participant rather than a passive observer.

Diamond, M., & Hopson, J. (1998). *Magic trees of the mind: How to nurture your child's intelligence, creativity, and healthy emotions from birth through adolescence* (pp. 107-108). New York: Dutton.