

Question: Some people think that children should begin their formal education at a very early age and should spend most of their time on their school studies. Others believe that young children should spend most of their time playing. These two views compared, which view do you agree with?

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Response to question

Surely I think that children should spend their time playing.

Children need to learn basic knowledge, in subjects like arithmetic, the national language, social studies, and science.

But they need not (?? Or, they do not need to... ??) start to

learn formal education and have special classes, (?? Please

see my note. ??). There is the ordeal of children preparing for

highly competitive entrance exams in Japan. Some mothers

try desperately to send their children to valuable

kindergartens, elementary schools, high schools and

colleges. They think that by doing so, their children will get a

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(?? This sounds a little more natural to me. ??) good life.

Studies do not always bring good lives to us. (?? Or, Studies do not always lead to a good and happy life. ??) Actually we need powers of making a living. (?? Or, We do need the

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ability to make a living. ??) Children can acquire it by playing, participating in sports, reading novels, and joining a group of friends. Sports can give their fortitudes and their vitalities. (??

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Or, Sports can give children strength and energy. ??) A child will practice many times to score a basket and if he or she comes to be able to do it, he or she will gain confidence. If a

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child read novels, he or she comes to be able to imagine the world he or she still doesn't know. Playing with other children can give a child sociability. He or she can learn how not to hurt others and so on.

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Coach comments

This is a very nice essay. The examples about sports,

reading novels, etc. are strong. The verb tenses are appropriate. You did a good job.

I have a few suggestions:

- About the phrase “special education” – I think you might mean “special classes,” such as piano or art lessons. Here in the US, “special education” means teaching students who are handicapped. They may have a hard time remembering what they read, for example.
- The phrase “he or she” is correct, but sometimes it can sound awkward. One solution is to use the plural “they.”

For example:

Instead of “If he or she is able to score a basket, he or she will gain confidence” --

You can say “If they are able to score a basket, they will gain

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confidence.”

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You can say “If children read novels, they are able to imagine the world they still don’t know.”

Using “he or she” once or twice is all right. But if you need to use it more often, try using “they” instead.

- You write that studies don’t always mean we will have good lives. Can you tell me more? Do you think that studying can make children anxious? Do you think that children can get sick because of too much pressure?

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