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GRANDPARENTING

Music Can Raise Kid's IQ

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In past generations, singing and playing instruments was an integral part of family life. It was a great way to express and entertain yourself and others.

We did not realize it, but we were also exercising our brain while we played, causing us to be creative, more vibrant and smarter.

Today's young people tend to be passive listeners and consumers of music. As a result, the mental development of our children and grandchildren has been shortchanged of the opportunity to reach their mental potential. Humans are "wired" for music. Advancements in technology have allowed scientists to actually "see" brain activity via PET scans and MRI imaging scanning the brain's blood flow. Our brains are "wired" with neural pathways.

Most activities only cause a portion of the brain to "light up" with activity. There are actually four parts to the brain and music makes all areas "light up." New neural pathways are created as a person learns and plays an instrument. Those neural pathways remain in tact and can

ity. You can physically and visually see the growth and changes that happen inside the brain. The implications for music therapy and music education are profound.

If you are still skeptical about music making children smarter, look at music's other benefits. Socially, music is an ageless hobby creating interaction with great people.

Take a look at any school band or orchestra or top-ranking choir and you will find a huge percentage of the members are in the top 10% of their class and college bound. Striving for excellence is a given in a musical group. Everyone has to perfect their part for the group to perform at its best. Nobody "sits on the bench."

Creativity is developed, honed and embraced. Who couldn't use more creativity in their workforce? Creativity is what makes the difference and gives any company the cutting edge. There are many benefits of being involved in making music. I can't think of a single reason how learning a musical instrument is detrimental, can you? Grandparents want to give their grandchildren every opportunity and advantage.

Encourage music programs in their schools and churches. If you play an instrument teach them to play along with you. Encourage their parents to enroll them in music lessons and watch them grow and mentally develop as they play, create, express and learn the discipline of mastering an instrument.

You will discover a more creative, brighter and mature person in the making.

Ms. Burch is a nationally regarded music education teacher, advocate and author.