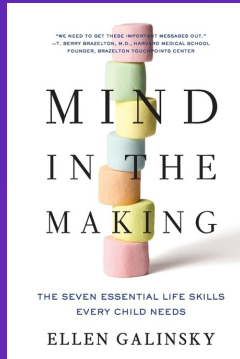




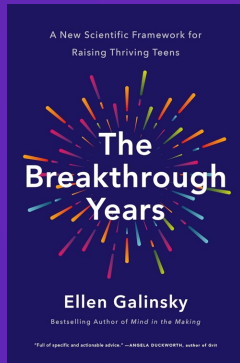
# The Breakthrough Years

Ellen Galinsky

# From Early Childhood to Adolescence



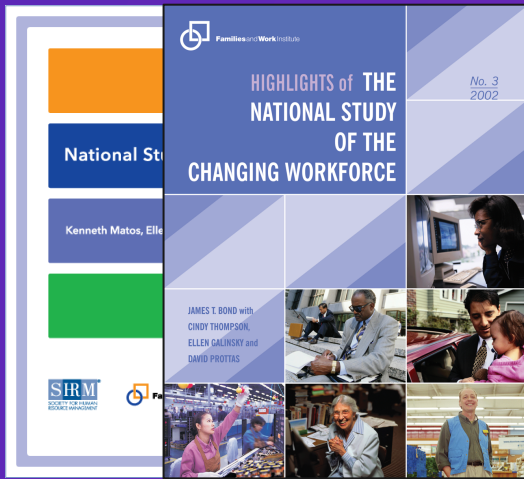
*“It is well known that early childhood comprises a period of **high plasticity**, when young children’s brains and bodies are rapidly developing and particularly sensitive to environmental influences.*



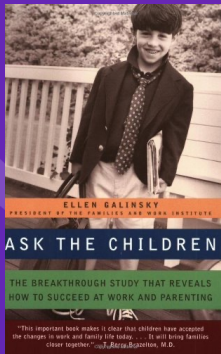
*Adolescents exhibit heightened **brain plasticity**, making adolescence a sensitive period of development during which life-course trajectories can be changed for better or for worse.”*

Source: National Academies of Sciences, Engineering and Medicine, *The Promise of Adolescence: Realizing Opportunity for All Youth* (Washington (DC): The National Academies Press, 2019), 43, <https://doi.org/10.17226/25388>.

# Breakthrough Years Studies: A Tradition of Civic Science



- Focus groups/interviews with 38 14-18 year olds.
- Interviews with 45 leading researchers.
- A Time 1 nationally representative survey with 1666 9-19-year-olds and their parents.
- Interviews with 52 adolescents and 56 parents from this sample.
- A Time 2 follow-up survey with 1115 of the same adolescents and their parents nine months later, during the pandemic.
- A behavioral study of executive function and decision-making skills with 223 6th, 9th, and 12th graders in 9 schools in 6 states.



*What would you like to tell the adults of America  
about people your age?*

**Five Messages  
Research Findings  
Implications for Practice**



**What young people  
across America said.**





Message 1:  
**Understand Our Development**  
**(21%)**

**“We are smart and try our best, but we still need love.”**

**—Nine-year-old girl**

**“We are difficult, but sometimes all we want is to be understood.”**

**—Fourteen-year-old girl**

**“We are young adults finding our way thru life, we should be treated with respect and hopefully understanding as to what we are going through.”**

**—Thirteen-year-old girl**



Lisamarie, 17

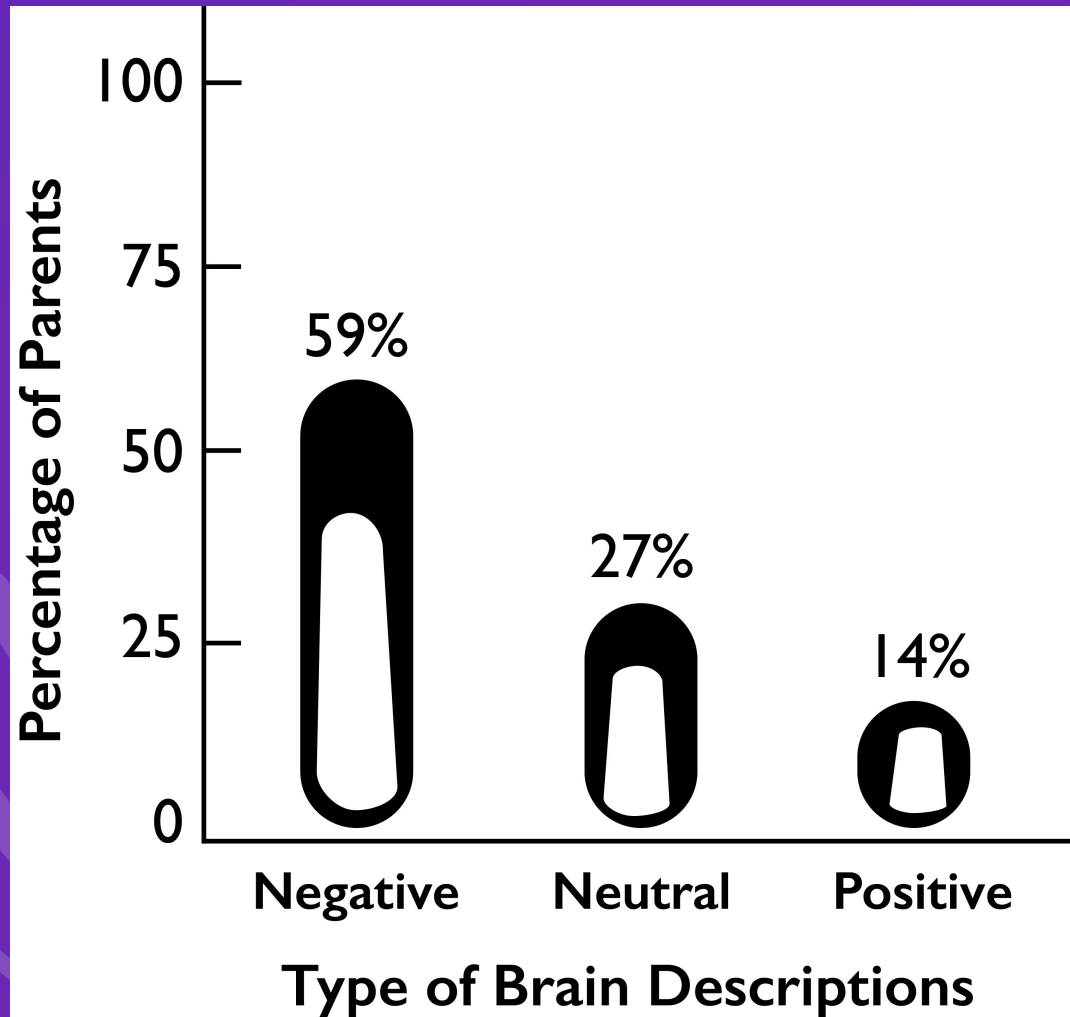
## RESEARCH

**When you hear the phrase “the teen brain” or “the adolescent brain,” what one word comes to mind?**

## RESEARCH

The Most  
Frequent  
Word

Try Guessing



## IMPLICATIONS

Instead of saying things like  
“Stop being such a teenager,”

we can pause....

What we see is what we do.



Message 2:  
**Listen and Talk with  
Us, Not at Us (9%)**

**“Don’t ignore kids our age just because we are young. Sometimes we have very important things to say.”**

—Fifteen-year-old boy

**“Each person wants to be heard even if you don’t agree with them.”**

—Sixteen-year-old girl

**It might be hard to understand teens, preteens but we go through stuff that might sound dumb, but it is important to us at our age.**

—Eleven-year-old girl






Gideon, 16



RESEARCH

**How do we best deal  
with challenge?**

A decorative graphic consisting of numerous light purple, elongated, rounded rectangular shapes radiating outwards from the bottom center of the slide, creating a sunburst or starburst effect.



Autonomy Support  
Stephanie Carlson



Autonomy Support  
Wendy Grolnick

## IMPLICATIONS

# An Autonomy-Supportive. Skill-Building Approach

- Check in on yourself
- Listen and understand children's perspectives
- Share expectations, limits and reasons
- Ensure that children and adolescents have some say and problem-solve together.

A skill-building approach is not about adults fixing things for kids but helping them gain skills to eventually learn to solve problems for themselves.

## IMPLICATIONS

# Shared Solutions

- Step 1: State the Problem and Determine the Goal.
- Step 2: Generate as Many Solutions as Possible
- Step 3: Consider the Pluses and Minuses of Each Solution.
- Step 4: Select a Shared Solution as an Experiment.
- Step 5: Evaluate the Solution as Necessary, and if It Isn't Working, Repeat the Process and Arrive at a New Shared Solution.

Ashley, 14



RESEARCH

**Talk about a time when  
you lost it.**





**Adversity Mindset:** 1) Things can't change, 2) I see this problem as a threat, and 3) I don't think I can change.



Adolescents reported more stress, more negative moods, more conflict with parents, less positive views of their future, and worse grades.

**Possibilities Mindset:** 1) Things can be different, 2) I see this problem as a challenge, and 3) I think I can figure out how to solve it.



Adolescents reported less conflict with parents and parents reported using a disciplinary approach that involved listening and problem-solving with child.

## RESEARCH

A large sunburst graphic with many white lines radiating from a central point, creating a starburst effect. The text 'POSSIBILITIES mindset' is centered within this graphic.

**POSSIBILITIES  
mindset**

## IMPLICATIONS

**We can shift the way we  
see problems by dialing  
up Possibilities or  
dialing down Adversity**





Message 3:

## Don't Stereotype or Label Us (38%)

**Taking drugs:** "Not all of us fall under the umbrella of being problematic drug addicts."

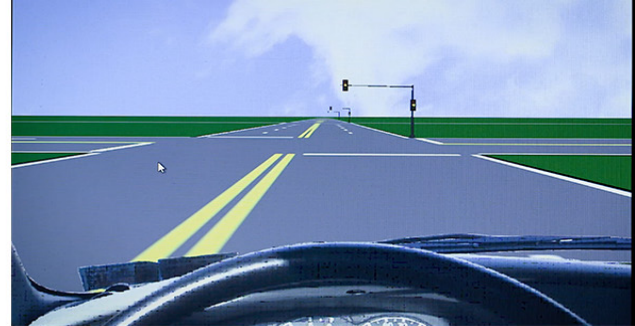
**Being entitled:** "We have a lot more to offer the world than many of you see. Sometimes it feels like every adult thinks my generation is nothing more than a bunch of entitled brats that want everything given to them."

**Being troublemakers:** "All kids aren't troublemakers or irresponsible."

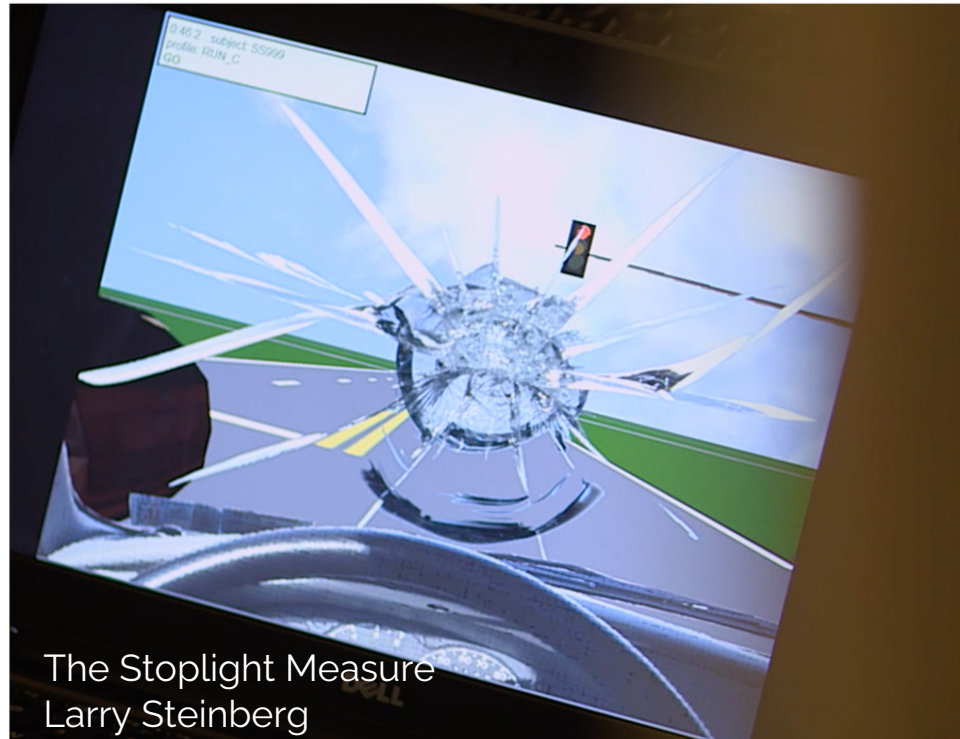
**Being addicted to technology:** "We aren't social media obsessed, we aren't extremely self-involved, our phones don't define us, and the internet is not going to be the end of us."



Natalie, 17



Risky Behavior




The Stoplight Measure  
Larry Steinberg



# IMPLICATIONS

## Promoting Positive Risks

- **Activities**, like taking a class where they know nothing about the subject, or it seems challenging;
- **Actions**, like standing up for what they believe is right even though someone might disagree; and
- **Relationships**, like starting a friendship with someone new when they're not sure how their other friends would react.



Message 4:  
**We Are Trying to  
Understand  
Ourselves and Our  
Needs (24%)**

**“We are also still trying to figure out who we are and who we want to be.”**

—Seventeen-year-old girl

**“My generation would like more acceptance and respect from our adults. After all they were once our age and wanted these same things.”**

—Seventeen-year-old boy

**“We aren’t as lazy as you portray us to be. We are just trying to figure out this world and how we can make a difference.”**

—Sixteen-year-old girl

**“Give us a chance to figure things out.”**

—Eleven-year-old boy



Krisalyn, 17

RESEARCH

# What helps people thrive?



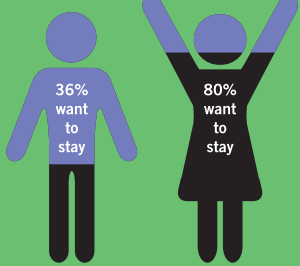
## COMPARING OUTCOMES IN HIGH AND LOW EFFECTIVE WORKPLACES

Keep your best people

More employees report excellent overall health

Low

High



High



Low

They're more engaged at work



60%

High

4%

Low

Get more sleep



34%



More people with low stress

10%



33%



## WHEN WORK WORKS

### When Work Works

*When Work Works*, a project of Families and Work Institute and the Society for Human Resource Management, is a nationwide initiative to bring research on workplace effectiveness and flexibility into community and business practice. Since its inception in 2005, *When Work Works* has partnered with an ever-

expanding cohort of communities from around the country to:

- share rigorous research, such as the National Study of Employers, and employer best practices on workplace effectiveness and flexibility;
- recognize exemplary employers through the *When Work Works* Awards, formerly the Alfred P. Sloan Awards for Excellence in Workplace Effectiveness and Flexibility; and
- inspire positive change so that increasing numbers of employers understand how effective and flexible workplaces can benefit both business and employees.

Visit us at [www.whenworkworks.org](http://www.whenworkworks.org) or follow us on Twitter @WhenWorkWorks.



**Families and Work Institute**

**FWI** Families and Work Institute (FWI) is a nonprofit, nonpartisan research organization that studies the changing workforce, family and community. As a preeminent think tank, FWI is known for being ahead of the curve, identifying emerging issues, and then conducting rigorous research that often challenges common wisdom and provides insight and knowledge. As an action tank, FWI conducts numerous studies that put its research into action and then evaluates the results. Its purpose is to create research to live by. For more information, visit <http://www.familiesandwork.org>, like us on [Facebook.com/FWINews](https://www.facebook.com/FWINews) and follow us on Twitter @FWINews.



SOCIETY FOR HUMAN  
RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

**SHRM** Founded in 1948, the Society for Human Resource Management (SHRM) is the world's largest HR membership organization devoted to human resource management more than 275,000 members in over 160 countries.

# WHEN

# WORK

# WORKS

# THE Effective Workplace

## RESEARCH



Advances in Motivation Science  
Volume 6, 2019, Pages 111-156

Chapter Four - Brick by Brick: The Origins, Development, and Future of Self-Determination Theory

Richard M. Ryan,\* & Edward L. Deci†

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https://doi.org/10.1016/bs.adms.2019.01.001

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**Abstract**

**Self-determination theory** is a broad and widely applied theory of motivation, personality development, and wellness. The theory began with a narrow focus on intrinsic motivation but has expanded over time to encompass both intrinsic and extrinsic motivations and spanned new perspectives on well-being, life-goals, relationship quality, vitality and depletion, and eudaimonia, among other topics. In this overview of SDT, we first discuss the value of broad theory for psychological science. We then describe the strategy behind SDT's development, and the unfolding of its core mini-theories and topical models, from early studies on intrinsic motivation to the enormous body of research being produced today by a global community of SDT scholars. Throughout we highlight evidence for the critical role of supports for autonomy, competence and relatedness in human development and thriving, and the strong practical and translational value of a functionally-focused, and empirically-supported, theoretical framework.

**Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being**

Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci  
*University of Rochester*

*Human beings can be proactive and engaged or, alternatively, passive and alienated, largely as a function of the social conditions in which they develop and function. Accordingly, research guided by self-determination theory has focused on the social-contextual conditions that facilitate versus thwart the natural processes of self-motivation and healthy psychological development. Specifically, factors have been examined that enhance versus undermine intrinsic motivation, self-regulation, and well-being. The findings have led to the postulate of three innate psychological needs—competence, autonomy, and relatedness—which when satisfied yield enhanced self-motivation and mental health and when thwarted lead to diminished motivation and well-being. Also considered is the significance of these psychological needs and processes within domains such as health care, education, work, sport, religion, and psychotherapy.*

**Self-Determination Theory**

SDT is an approach to human motivation and personality that uses traditional empirical methods while employing an organismic/metatheory that highlights the importance of humans' evolved inner resources for personality development and behavioral self-regulation (Ryan, Kohl, & Deci, 1997). Thus, its areas of investigation of people's inherent growth tendencies and innate psychological needs that are the basis for their self-motivation and personality integration, as well as for the conditions that foster these positive processes. Inductively, using the empirical process, we have identified three such needs—the needs for competence (Harter, 1978; White, 1963), relatedness (Baumeister & Leary, 1995; Ryan, 1994), and autonomy (deCharms, 1968; Deci, 1975)—that appear to be essential for facilitating optimal functioning of the natural predisposes for growth and integration, as well as for constructive social development and personal well-being.

This work was supported in part by research Grant MH-53361 from the Human Motivation Research Group at the University of Rochester who have contributed to these ideas and research, and to Jennifer La Guardia, Charles Coakley, and Pravin Joshi for their specific help with this article. Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to either Richard M. Ryan or Edward L. Deci, Department of Clinical and Social Science in Psychology, University of Rochester, Rochester, NY 14627. E-mail: r.ryan@rochester.edu or edec1@rochester.edu

January 2000 • American Psychologist  
Copyright 2000 by the American Psychological Association, 0893-3200/00/\$12.00

Source: Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, "Brick by brick: The origins, development, and future of self-determination theory," in *Advances in Motivation Science*, ed. A. J. Elliot (Cambridge: Elsevier Academic Press, 2019), 111–156, <https://psycnet.apa.org/doi/10.1016/bs.adms.2019.01.001>.

Source: Richard M. Ryan and Edward L. Deci, "Self-determination theory and the facilitation of intrinsic motivation, social development, and well-being," *American Psychologist* 55, no.1 (2000): 68–78, <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>; and of B. Bradford Brown of the University of Wisconsin as cited in Institute of Medicine (US) and National Research Council (US) Committee on the Science of Adolescence, *The Science of Adolescent Risk-Taking: Workshop Report* (Washington (DC): National Academies Press (US), 2011).

# RESEARCH

## Five Basic Psychological Needs

1. Caring Connections
2. Agency
3. Mastery
4. Identity
5. Purpose

### Outcomes of Having the Need for Belonging Met

Belonging	Follow-Up Outcomes							
	School Engagement	Grades (P)	Grades (A)	Future	Negative Mood	Positive Mood	Stress	Conflict (A:P)
Family	↑			↑	↓	↑	↓	↓: ↓
Friends				↑	↓	↑	↓	↓:
School	↑		↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓:
OSA	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	:
Online				↑		↑		:

A = adolescent report, P = parent report, OSA = out-of-school activities. Arrows indicate the direction of an association (i.e., up arrow for promoting, down arrow for protecting), controlling for demographics. An empty cell indicates there is no statistically significant relationship. Significant relations are  $p$ -values < .0005, meaning these correlations are very reliable and unlikely to have occurred by chance.

### Outcomes of Having the Need for Respect Met

Respect	Follow-Up Outcomes							
	School Engagement	Grades (A)	Grades (P)	Future	Negative Mood	Positive Mood	Stress	Conflict (A:P)
Family		↑		↑	↓	↑	↓	↓: ↓
Friends		↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓: ↓
School		↑		↑	↓	↑	↓	↓: ↓
OSA		↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	↓:
Online		↑		↑				:

A = adolescent report, P = parent report, OSA = out-of-school activities. Arrows indicate the direction of an association (i.e., up arrow for promoting, down arrow for protecting), controlling for demographics. An empty cell indicates there is no statistically significant relationship. Significant relations are  $p$ -values < .0005, meaning these correlations are very reliable and unlikely to have occurred by chance.

# RESEARCH

### Outcomes of Having the Need to Contribute Met

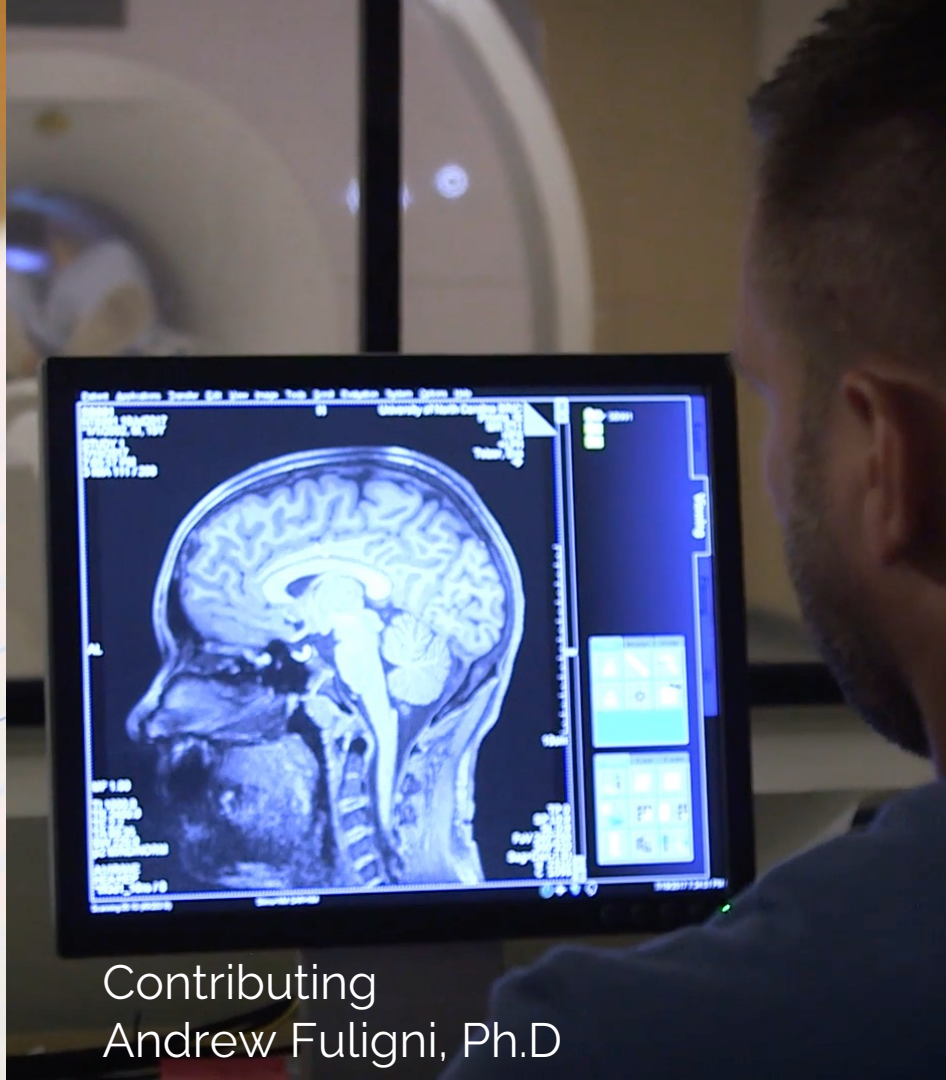
Contribute	Follow-Up Outcomes							
	School Engagement	Grades (A)	Grades (P)	Future	Negative Mood	Positive Mood	Stress	Conflict (A:P)
Family	↑			↑	↓	↑	↓	↓:
Friends	↑	↑	↑	↑		↑	↓	:
School	↑	↑	↑	↑	↓	↑	↓	:
OSA	↑	↑		↑		↑	↓	:
Online		↑		↑		↑		:

A = adolescent report, P = parent report, OSA = out-of-school activities. Arrows indicate the direction of an association (i.e., up arrow for promoting, down arrow for protecting), controlling for demographics. When there is no statistically significant relationship between the need being met and the follow-up outcome, we leave the cell blank. Significant relations are  $p$ -values < .0005, which means these correlations are both very reliable and unlikely to have occurred by chance.

# IMPLICATIONS



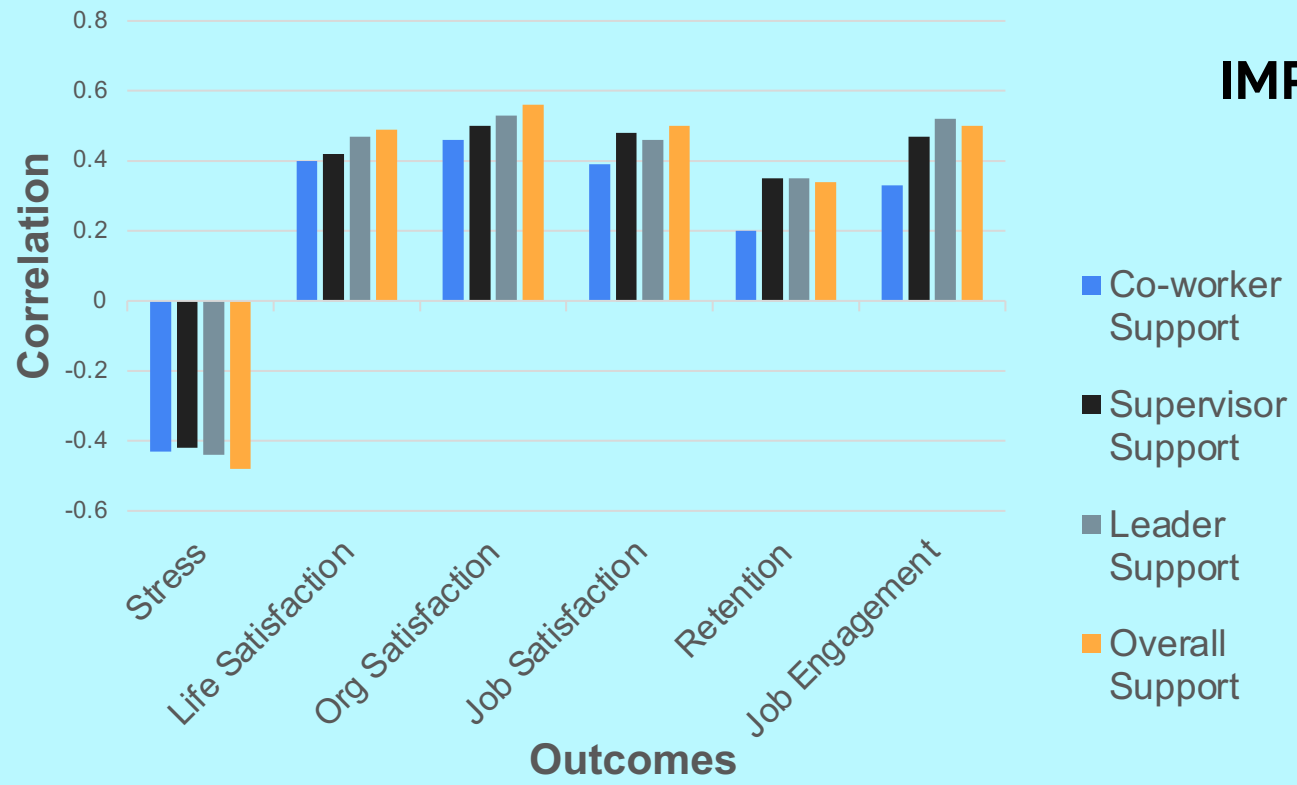
Social Belonging  
Greg Walton, Ph.D.



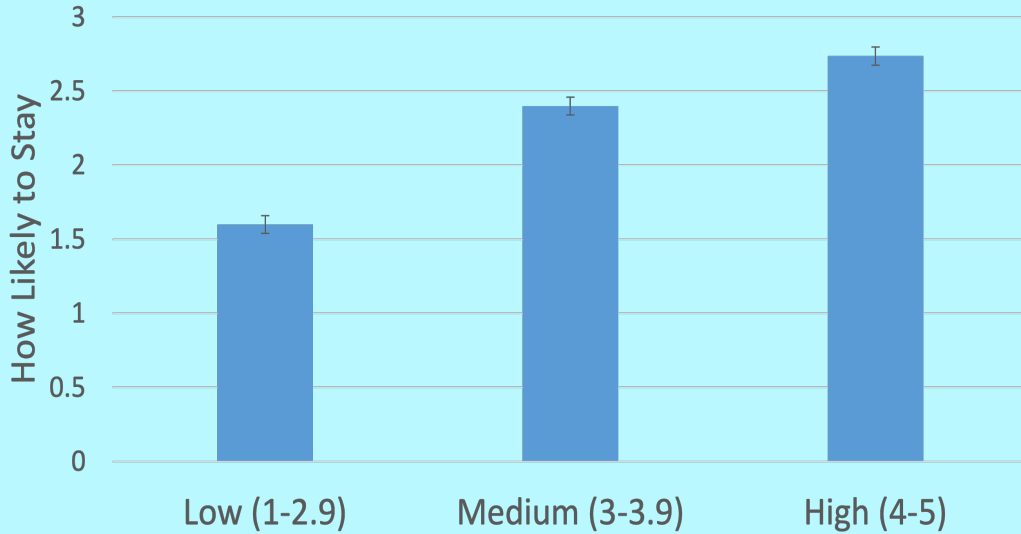
Contributing  
Andrew Fuligni, Ph.D.

## Head Start Workplace Support x Outcomes

## IMPLICATIONS



## Head Start Job Retention



### Supervisor Support for Psychological Needs

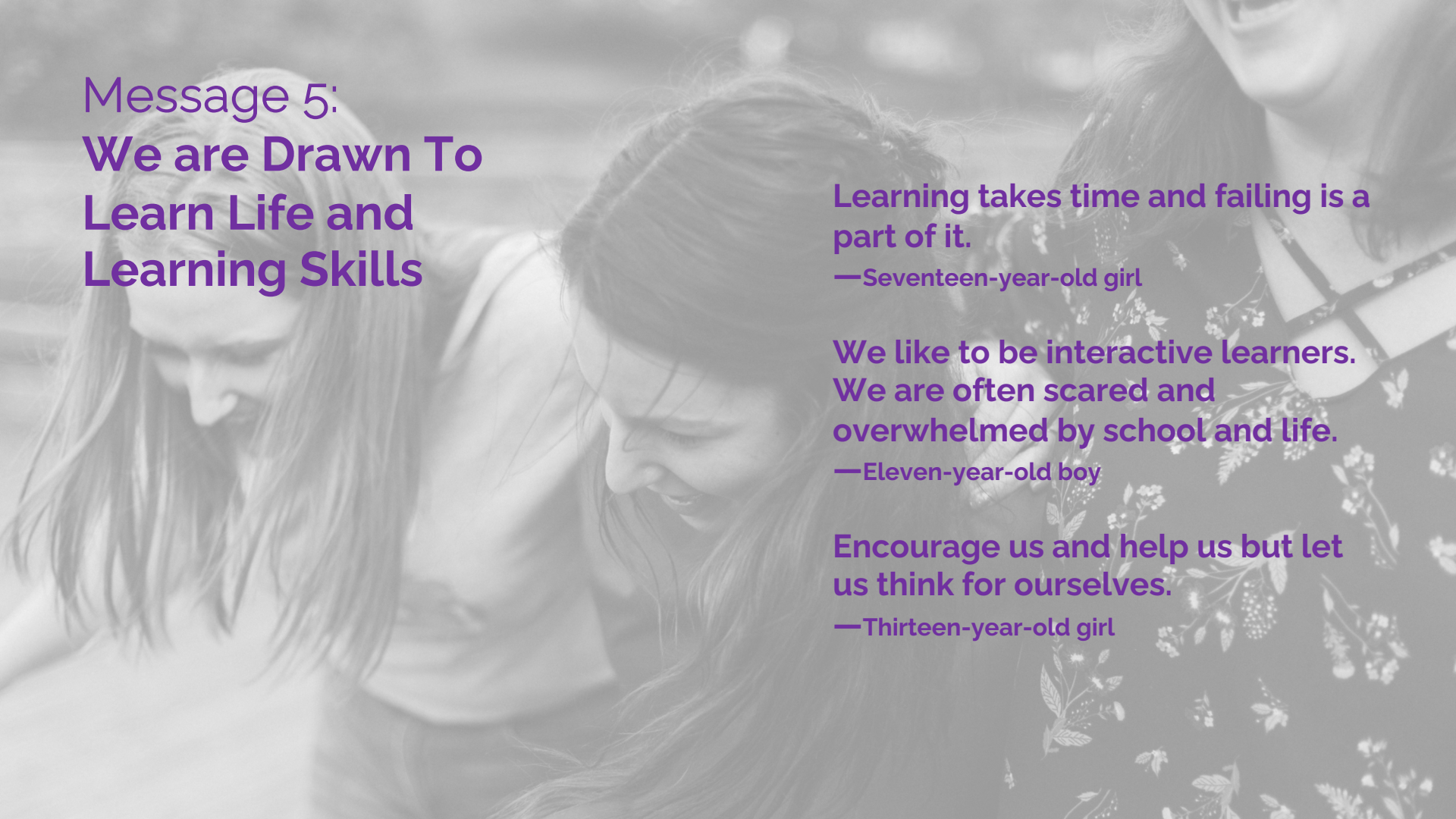
Taking everything into consideration, how likely is it that you will make a genuine effort to find a new job within the next year?

1 = Very Likely, 2 = Somewhat Likely, 3 = Not at All Likely

## IMPLICATIONS

**Results Show Thriving Workplaces Affect Retention**





Message 5:  
**We are Drawn To  
Learn Life and  
Learning Skills**

**Learning takes time and failing is a part of it.**

—Seventeen-year-old girl

**We like to be interactive learners. We are often scared and overwhelmed by school and life.**

—Eleven-year-old boy

**Encourage us and help us but let us think for ourselves.**

—Thirteen-year-old girl



Imani, 15

RESEARCH

# What helps children learn?





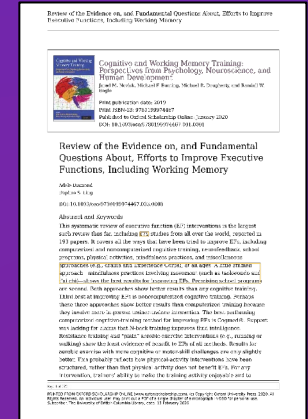
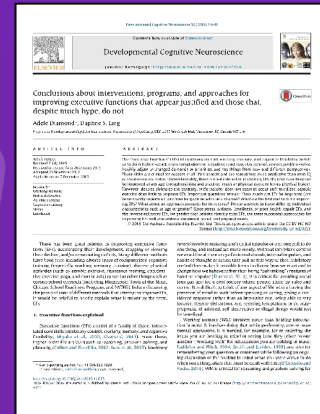
Executive function skills are “predictive of achievement, health, wealth, and quality of life throughout life, often more so than IQ or socioeconomic status; and are more critical for school readiness than IQ or entry-level reading or math.”

There is abundant evidence that EFs are crucial for:

“success in getting and keeping a job, career advancement, making and keeping friends, marital harmony, weight control, staying out of jail, and resisting substance abuse.”

“Adults with better executive function skills report that they are happier and have a better quality of life.”

# IMPLICATIONS



Source: Adele Diamond and Daphne S. Ling, “Review of the Evidence on, and Fundamental Questions About, Efforts to Improve Executive Functions, Including Working Memory,” in *Cognitive and Working Memory Training: Perspectives from Psychology, Neuroscience, and Human Development*, eds. Jared M. Novick et al. (Oxford University Press, 2020).

Source: Adele Diamond and Daphne S. Ling, “Conclusions about interventions, programs, and approaches for improving executive functions that appear justified and those that, despite much hype, do not,” *Developmental Cognitive Neuroscience* 18 (April 2016): 34–48. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.dcn.2015.11.005>.

## RESEARCH

What are the components of the foundational executive function skills?

### Foundational EF Skills

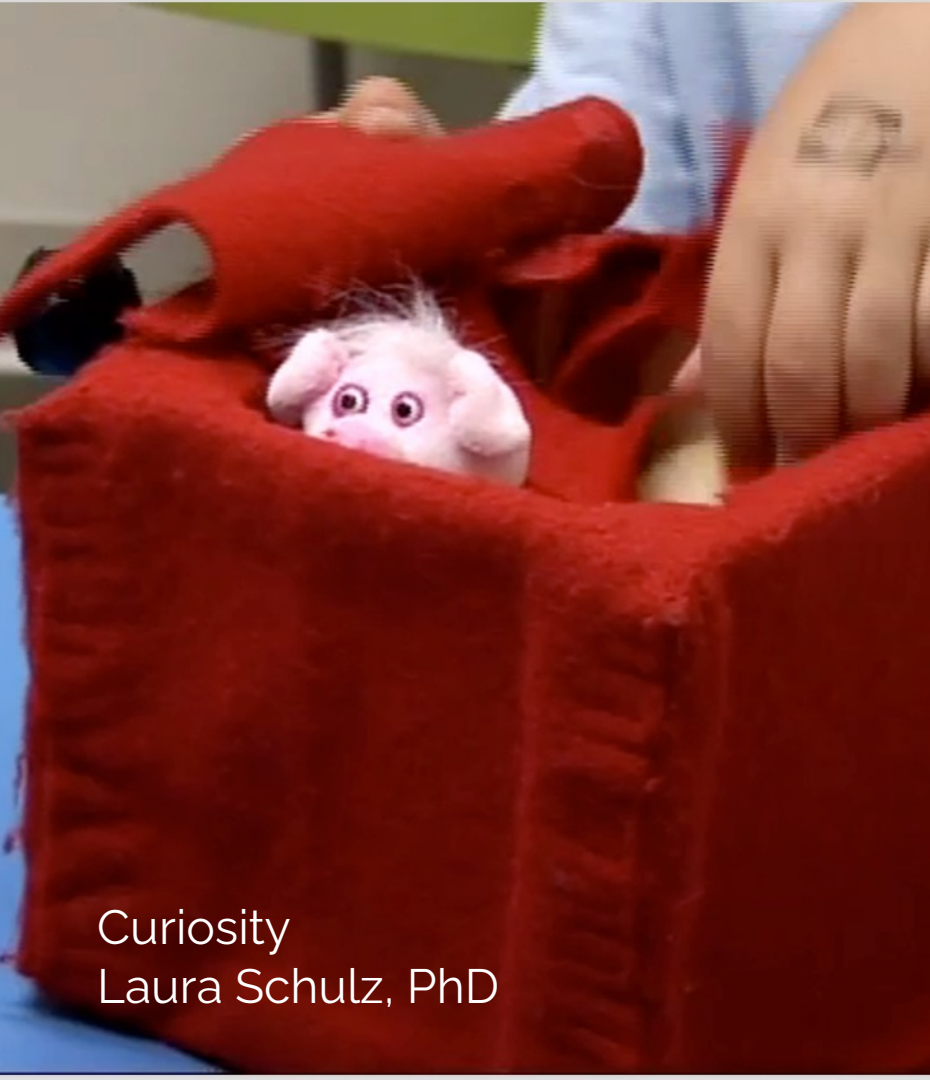
- **Use what you know:** Keep information in mind so it can be used (working memory)
- **Think flexibly:** Consider alternative perspectives and think flexibly in response to changing circumstances (cognitive flexibility)
- **Reflect:** Notice challenges, pause, step back, consider options, and put things into context before responding (reflection)
- **Use self-control:** Resist automatic and impulsive behaviors (inhibitory control) so you can engage in goal-directed reasoning and problem-solving and persist in reaching goals

## RESEARCH

### What are Life and Learning Skills?

**Life and Learning Skills** build on the foundational executive function skills:

- **Goal Setting,**
- **Perspective Taking,**
- **Communicating and Collaborating,**
- **Problem-Solving (meaning making, creative thinking, relational reasoning and critical thinking)**
- **Taking on Challenges.**



Curiosity  
Laura Schulz, PhD



## IMPLICATIONS: PROBLEM SOLVING

Meaning Making  
Mary Helen Immordino-Yang, PhD

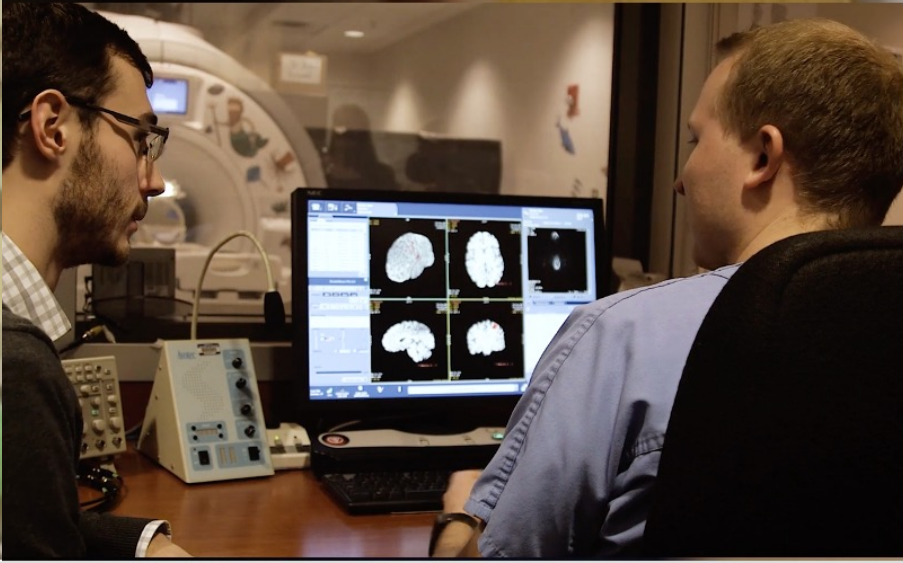


Psychological Distancing  
Stephanie Carlson, PhD



## IMPLICATIONS: TAKING ON CHALLENGES

Psychological Distancing  
Ethan Kross, PhD



# My Question To You

**If you walked into a classroom where a teacher was promoting EF and EF-Based Life Skills, what would the teachers be saying or doing?**

**<https://forms.gle/ov1tn5wCMUrtc8Qg6>**

**Please be as specific as possible, including the behavior or the teacher or the teacher's actual words as well as the ages of children in the classroom.**

**Write your response in the form or in the chat.**



# DISCUSSION

<https://ellengalinsky.com/the-breakthrough-years/>

[ellen@ellengalinsky.com](mailto:ellen@ellengalinsky.com)

<https://www.familiesandwork.org>

<https://www.mindinthemaking.org/>

<https://www.linkedin.com/in/ellen-galinsky-2512a95/>

[@ellengalinsky](#)



# The Breakthrough Years

Ellen Galinsky