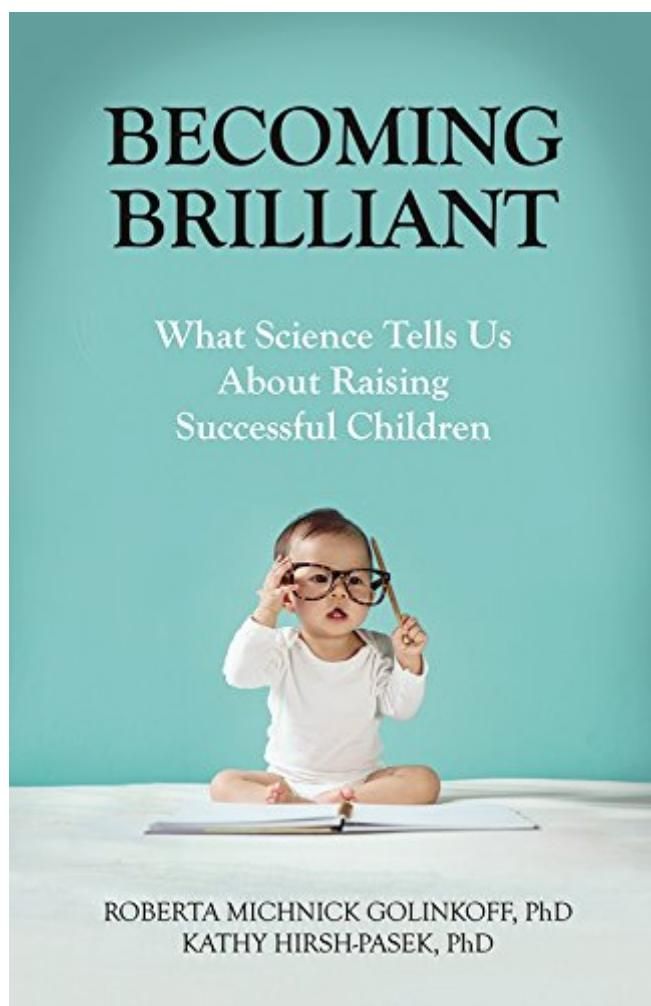


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# Becoming Brilliant: What Science Tells Us About Raising Successful Children (Lifetools: Books For The General Public)



## **Synopsis**

In just a few years, today's children and teens will forge careers that look nothing like those that were available to their parents or grandparents. While the U.S. economy becomes ever more information-driven, our system of education seems stuck on the idea that "content is king," neglecting other skills that 21st century citizens sorely need. *Becoming Brilliant* offers solutions that parents can implement right now. Backed by the latest scientific evidence and illustrated with examples of what's being done right in schools today, this book introduces the "6Cs" collaboration, communication, content, critical thinking, creative innovation, and confidence along with ways parents can nurture their children's development in each area.

## **Book Information**

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## **Customer Reviews**

After 45 years working in the early childhood profession, I can unabashedly state that there are a limited number of books that I would recommend. This is one of those books. All early childhood practitioners, whether they are working in classrooms with young children, or teaching at the college

level, should have this in their collection. The authors have coalesced critical and useful information in a format that is understandable and user-friendly. Many family members would also find the information in this book beneficial because it would enable them to understand the supportive relationship that exists between their children's social and emotional skills and their academic skills. The authors begin by highlighting 6 key skills that children will need to develop in order to be successful in the 21st century. These skills are collaboration, communication, content, critical thinking, creative innovation, and confidence. The world is changing and the education system must change if the United States is to create the kinds of human beings who have the capacity to be successful in a world that will no longer measure accomplishments by test scores alone. The Knowledge Age has produced such a vast amount of information (doubling every 2 and a half years) that individuals will no longer be able to memorize every fact and figure. Instead, children will need to develop the following capacities: working together in supportive and encouraging partnerships; communicating effectively through speaking and writing; researching answers to questions in order to supplement an extensive content knowledge base; critically evaluating specifics in order to make informed decisions-(this means having the expertise that enables them to separate the improbable, nonsensical, and untruthful fluff from the truly significant, meaningful, and reliable information); problem solving by utilizing unique or improbable techniques;; and developing the confidence needed to take risks and learn from experiences that might not have been successful. Chapters 2 to 4 discuss contributing factors that have helped provide the impetus to why we find ourselves in this current dilemma. Educational reform sent us in the wrong direction. From Sputnik to No Child Left Behind and Common Core Standards, the end result has been to focus on the academic selves at the expense of social selves. However, if children cannot use content and skills to become happy, healthy, thinking, caring, and social people, then we have gone off the tracks and society at large will pay a steep price. The Learning Sciences (that would be educational researchers and authors, practitioners, and informed knowledgeable employers) have been shut out of the discussion of how best to prepare children from real success in life- both in and out of school. Instead, and this is the authors' term, the Learning Industry (that would include some policy makers, various toy makers, test-prep companies, a number of text book publishers, and certain advertisers) have been allowed shape society's definition of success. In most instances, it is because hard skills (skills related to cognitive abilities) are easily measured by tests and those scores are certainly conveyed in a way that lend itself to comparison. However, the soft skills (social/emotional competence and well-being, along with approaches to learning such as curiosity, engagement, persistence, joy, initiative, attentiveness, and risk-taking)

are not straightforwardly quantified. Nonetheless, it is these skills which have been shown to enhance the likelihood that children will achieve positive outcomes in their lives. Chapters 5-10 focus on each one of the 6 skills. The authors also provide a chart that demonstrates the type of thinking that happens at 4 different levels. Each chapter concludes with recommendations for what families can do in order to enhance a skill, suggestions for classroom strategies and techniques, and finally proposals for what communities might initiate in order to ensure the development of these skills.

What follows are just a few of the comments and suggestions (there are very many since I had 20 pages of notes) that I found worthy of reflection:  We may be born social but not necessarily with the self-control for collaboration  Level 1  or silo syndrome-means that children are sitting by themselves, not speaking or working with others-no collaboration is encouraged. Level 1 breeds insular thinking, redundancy and sub-optimal decision-making.  Many classrooms continue to support side-by-side learning (desks in rows) with no talking, no collaboration.  Families must check to see if joint projects are encouraged or if children are always working alone.  Is there a block corner in the classroom? It provides an opportunity for significant collaboration.  The single biggest problem in communication is that we think it has taken place (Bernard Shaw).  Speaking and writing are becoming lost arts.  Content alone is not capable of achieving happy, healthy, thinking, caring, and social children who become collaborative, creative, competent, and responsible citizens of tomorrow.  We need deeper thinking-not shallow or surface learning.  Rote learning does not always allow children to apply their knowledge in new situations.  Teaching young children in a FORMAL way represents a  profound misunderstanding of how children learn  (Nancy Carlsson-Paige).  Learning Science has known for years how good learning happens. The 4 keys to learning that promote Level 3 and Level 4 thinking are: Active, Engaged, Meaningful, and Socially Interactive.  Encourage children to ask questions.  If a task can be designed for a robot or a computer, a human will no longer be necessary. Answers to questions in the future won't come in a multiple choice format and typically will not have a single right answer.  Children need to risk and fail in order to acquire an adequate evaluation of their self-esteem. INFORMED RISKS!  Reducing Academic Pressure actually helps children succeed.  How you learn is just as important as what you learn. The last chapter recommends more Reggio-inspired approaches be adopted in our schools and that we once again value play in the lives of children because nested within play are the seeds of democracy and citizenship. Overall, an outstanding book!

Excellent! Easy to read. Great for parents and teachers.

Whether you're a parent, educator, or concerned citizen interested in the future of our world, *Becoming Brilliant: What Science Tells Us About Raising Successful Children* is a must-read! The authors, both distinguished developmental psychologists, use their expertise about how children learn to propose a framework to transform how we teach children in school and beyond. In this accessible and fascinating read, they persuasively argue that the 21st century skills we need to nurture in our children for them to learn and succeed are the interlinking 6Cs: collaboration, communication, content, critical thinking, creative innovation, and confidence. In addition to being an engaging, enjoyable read about these 6Cs and their varied developmental stages, this book is insightful, informative and practical. To make their case, the authors thoughtfully weave together real life examples of child development together with pertinent ideas from great thinkers of our time including Howard Gardner, Sir Kenneth Robinson, Carol Dweck, Malcolm Gladwell, Linda Darling-Hamilton, and Carla Rinaldi. Each chapter ends with a practical "Taking Action" section, with ideas for what we can do to foster the 6Cs in ourselves, our children, and in the world. Although it really wouldn't work as a title, a more accurate name for the essence of the book, using the authors' words, would be "Raising Happy, Healthy, Thinking, Caring, and Social Children Who Become Collaborative, Creative, Competent, and Responsible Citizens of Tomorrow." Let's use this book to make it so!

It an good read. I always want to try to learn and understand how people are.

Good book! I really enjoy their work! Glad I preorder it!

Great book who have young children. I read it as a grandparent and have passed it along tony son. As our world shifts the old skills we depends on to get a good job are quickly changing. This book looks at what is needed today.

Great book!! A must read for anyone that cares about children from parents to teachers to policymakers!!

I bought two copies of this book: one for each of my sons. I want to ensure my grandsons benefit from the wisdom!

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