

Transcript

Hidden talents

INSTRUCTOR:

Let's take a walk down the street. We see the usual types of houses on a typical street. The houses are nice enough. They have neat gardens, front doors, and proper windows. They were built using standard tools and building materials.

And now let's continue walking down the street. Is that really a house? Yes, of course, it is. If you find the door, you can go in and see that it has many of the features of a typical house and also some more original elements.

This unique house is Ailin's. She built it herself with the tools she had available. Ailin applied her skills and abilities, let's call them her hidden talents, in an exceptional way. You may wonder how this came about.

Ailin made the most of the hand she was dealt, even though she received little support from others. She grew up in a troubled family in a violent neighbourhood where many people struggled to make ends meet. At school, Ailin wasn't always familiar with the words her teachers used. This sometimes led to misunderstandings.

It was also difficult for her to sit still at her desk and concentrate on abstract maths problems, which seemed so far away from her actual life. At times, she would lash out at others for no apparent reason. Most teachers viewed her as a problem child.

Children like Ailin seem to be constantly in survival mode. The stress they grow up with can have serious effects on their bodies. It encourages the release of hormones that can result in an increase in blood pressure and heart rate. There can also be harmful effects on their brains, which can ultimately affect their ability to learn.

The learning performance of children living in adverse conditions depends on the context and setting. Even though Ailin struggled with maths class, it turns out she was actually quite good at applying her numerical skills to other activities, such as selling goods at the market stall she ran on weekends and counting out her earnings to buy food for her siblings' dinner.

Ailin's life changed for the better when she met Miss Jones, her new teacher. Miss Jones noticed that Ailin had trouble concentrating while sitting at her desk, so instead she allowed her to move around in class. This made it easier for Ailin to focus. Miss Jones also realised that Ailin struggled with abstract concepts, so she tried to relate these to problems that Ailin was solving in her everyday life.

This approach allowed Ailin to unleash her hidden talents and gave her the confidence to apply her skills to solving problems that really mattered to her. Over time, Ailin also became more aware that she was creative and good at working collaboratively with others.

Researchers, teachers, and social workers increasingly acknowledge that children like Ailin might have strengths that have previously gone unrecognised. These children may have developed their hidden talents as a way of adapting to the harsh and unpredictable environments they grow up in. There is evidence that children from troubled backgrounds can be good at dealing with changes in their environments, for example, by switching from one task to another, especially under stressful conditions, or by keeping track of changing information.

They may also be good at using novel strategies for solving mathematical puzzles, such as relying more on pictures rather than words. Some of these children are especially sensitive to other people's emotions and feelings and are good at offering wise advice. In addition, they are skilled at spotting danger and

remembering negative situations, which can be a useful defence mechanism in potentially dangerous situations.

Wouldn't it be great if more children could benefit from their own hidden talents? But first, we need to know more about what those hidden talents are. Then teachers and researchers can work on ways to harness them to improve learning in school. Although this research has only just started, evidence suggests that making learning materials concrete and relevant and creating a dynamic classroom environment can improve learning for children like Ailin. Maybe such a well-rounded approach could lead to more children making their own unique houses, just as Ailin did.

[MUSIC PLAYING]