

Donata Elschenbroich
A Seven-Year-Old's
Knowledge of the World

Voyages of Discovery

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The Knowledge of the World Project, created by Donata Elschenbroich, describes an optimal range of experiences – intellectual, emotional, social, physical, aesthetic – a child should encounter in its first seven years of life, and provides both a guide for parents and teachers and a challenge for education policy makers at the beginning of the 21st century. Her account is based upon a large scale investigation, in the course of which she put this question to »experts« of all kind, from all strata of society, from all generations and from the most diverse educational backgrounds. Her investigation began by providing her informants with a provisional wish list of the desirable elements of knowledge of the world for a seven-year-old. As a result of talking with parents, teachers, teenagers, neuroscientists, developmental psychologists, business men, immigrants, shopkeepers and jobless people about the »basic skills« and the educational foundations desirable for the next generation, many new ideas and emphases emerged to extend and modify the original list. This book is an invitation to continue this endeavor.

The book is not intended as a checklist of children's »skills« to be tested, but rather as a panorama of opportunities that adults – parents, teachers, neighbours, politicians – should feel obliged to provide children during their early years of life. Donata Elschenbroich also looks beyond the limits of familiar educational assumptions by presenting examples of »best practice« in countries like England, Japan, Hungary and the USA. In fifteen »early education vignettes« she presents a wealth of ideas on how to develop and deepen our children's knowledge of the world – an open-ended game, in which we could all be winners.



Donata Elschenbroich

Donata Elschenbroich works at the German Youth Institute in the field of comparative international childhood research and is considered an expert in early years education. In collaboration with the documentary filmmaker Otto Schweitzer, she produced a number of films on »A Seven-year-old's Knowledge of the World«. Her book of the same name, published in 2001, has spent over two years on the German bestseller lists.

Other titles of the author

Natural Wonders 978-3-88897-398-7