

## Child Development

Chuck Belanger

The whole thing started, thirty years ago, when some researchers announced to the press that playing Mozart to infants seemed to grow their little brains, turn them into prodigies, shortcut them to Yale or something.

Now, I am a front edge Baby Boomer, and typical of my breed, know that nothing that really matters came before me. So the Rolling Stones struck me as a vast improvement on Mozart to grow our newborn Penelope's brain, the *Flowers* album specifically. I mean, what kid's mind wouldn't be expanded by early doses of "Let's Spend the Night Together," or "Have You Seen Your Mother, Baby, Standing in the Shadows?" Seminal stuff for seminal brains, don't you know?

My wife agreed about the Stones, but she's a few years younger and held out for *Beggar's Banquet* with "Street Fightin' Man" and "Sympathy for the Devil."

The ensuing argument damn near broke up the marriage. Since we could not afford to divorce, we compromised on the live, original cast album of *West Side Story*.

Getting those bulky 1970's stereo headphones on our daughter's little skull was tricky, but it was finally achieved with generous use of good old fashioned black electrical tape, the sticky kind.

Her head looked like a softball with two teacups taped to it. The only real problem arose when we took the headset off a couple of times a day to preserve her hearing. Little swatches of hair stuck to the tape, though the little bald patches all filled in nicely by the time she marched off to kindergarten five years later.

So thirty years later, Penelope's no genius, but she is a functional, self-supporting adult, albeit with a marked affinity for slicked back hair-do's and black leather jackets.

And when she sings, there is just the faintest trace of a Puerto Rican accent.