



10+ Ways to Turbocharge Your Child's Education (No Matter What School They Attend)

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Howdy and thank you for reading this. Just the fact that you asked for this, and are now taking the time to go through it means a lot--and you're the kind of parent who will absolutely want to put this to use, and you'll be able to do so.

Really quickly, before we get into the ways to help get more from your child's education, I'd like to talk with you about how the traditional model of education can be failing our children.

The word education comes from the Latin root "*Educare*," which roughly means to 'pull forth from within,'--and in our case, education means to pull out the very best from within the child. That's what this is all about, and all of the suggestions you're about to read are about revealing the very best that's already inside our children versus stuffing them with facts that are: 1) easily forgotten, 2) can be looked up easily, negating the need for it, and 3)

often done at the expense of learning to DO, learning to BE, and learning to LEARN on their own.

At Acton Imagine, our philosophy is for the children to be able to learn on their own. We want them to know HOW TO LEARN, and to develop a lifelong passion for it that doesn't end when they walk across a stage. As a result, we don't lecture to them for seven+ hours a day, forcing them to memorize facts for regurgitation on tests to prove mastery.

We instead GUIDE them to ask better questions and to find their own answers. It's the difference between handing them a fish (*here, learn these facts we tell you to memorize*), and teaching them to fish (*what's important that I know, how do I best learn this?*).

Here are some of the many differences between the status quo and what we do at our school. For more, go to our website at ActonImagine.org.

Traditional Standard Schools Versus ACTON IMAGINE ACADEMY

1. Traditional Schools: seek to standardize behavior and thought.

Acton Imagine: **Seeks to create free-thinking, interdependence according to each Imagineer's unique genius.**

2. Traditional Schools: Based on a factory model where one-size-fits-all, bells dictate behavior, and obedience is emphasized.

Acton Imagine: **Learner-driven, where everything is designed to help the children find their unique calling so that they can change the world.**

3. Traditional Schools: Children are stuck at desks for 7+ hours a day for the passive learning of facts to regurgitate on tests.

Acton Imagine: **Children are free to move, collaborate, indulge their curiosity and creativity, and interact with what they are learning.**

4. Traditional Schools: The teacher is the sole authority and decides what is right and wrong for each child.

Acton Imagine: **Our young people learn to solve their own problems and learn to govern themselves.**

5. Traditional Schools: a 120+-year-old system designed by a government bureaucracy deciding what our children learn and when.

Acton Imagine: **School is a Hero's Journey with fellow travelers, Guides, adventure, and challenges worthy of each individual learner.**

6. Traditional Schools: Every child is forced to move at the speed of the class, regardless of whether they've already learned the subject matter or failed to master the principles.

Acton Imagine: **Each child moves as fast as they'd like and has the time to master each principle before moving on to the next challenge.**

8. Traditional Schools: Crowd control tactics are used as there is usually one teacher and many students.

Acton Imagine: **Young people govern themselves with agreed-upon contracts for behavior, effort, and excellence.**

9. Traditional Schools: Often arbitrary grades and tests on facts are used to measure success.

Acton Imagine: **Young people learn grit and persistence through effort and show mastery through hard-won badges and learning exhibitions.**

10. Traditional Schools: Little time or thought is given for character, kindness, or gratitude.

Acton Imagine: **Kindness, gratitude, character, and service to others are baked into the DNA of everything that we do.**

We hope you give us a look and a test drive and see if we can be a fit together, but I've made this list to help you no matter where your child goes to school. I sincerely mean it when I say I wish you and them the very best, regardless of whether or not we at Imagine are a part of your own Hero's Journey.

Visit www.ActonImagine.org for a lot more information, and call me (Chip) at (254) 535-3227 with your questions.

Thank you!

Now on to the report and an even better experience of education for your child.

10+ Ways to Turbocharge Your Child's Education.

1. Take the time to *actively ask* what your child is learning,

We get it, it's sometimes a tough thing to do at the end of a day. We're tired, our child is often tired...yet a little bonding at the end of their school day is something that can truly work to "save," the progress from the day--just like a computer game where we save our progress.

It's well known that spaced repetition of learning things helps each of us to actually remember what we're learning. It's also quite powerful to have them teach you what they've been taught. It's said we learn the most when we teach, and famed physicist Richard Feynman said, *"The ultimate test of your knowledge is your capacity to convey it to another."*

Have your child show you what they've learned. Have them explain it. Pull out some paper and have them write it out or diagram it.

They'll learn more from this than they could ever learn by simply hearing the lesson, or even by doing assigned problems from it. Debate it. Ask them the "why" behind what they learn. You can give them the tools to do this, too. Show them where they can find the lessons on their own, and to help show you what they're doing.

The other benefit is that YOU as a parent are deeply involved. You know what they're doing rather than abdicating what they're learning to the state. You'll have a chance to correct something that may not be quite right, and it will also give you a prime chance to bond with your child--and we call know, that's magic that can never be replaced.

2. Get your child onto a sports team.

This one may sound like a cliché, but that's because it's so very valuable. Hopefully, you've been part of a team and already know this. The learning of real-world effort, of striving, of coming up short, and getting up again and again.

It can show the payoff of hard work. It can be an example that shows them that the time they spend on improving their skills is worthwhile. It can show the link between effort and payoff. It's invaluable in that the child can often fail and this can teach so much.

It's also about focus. It's about concentrating on the moment. It gives your child a chance to bond with others, and to build camaraderie with friends. The harder the experience, the more they will connect.

I don't think that the sport is as important as the experience of doing it. Some examples could be:

Football, Soccer, Basketball, Swimming, Cross-Country Running, Wrestling (I'm partial to this one, as it was my sport), Baseball/Softball, Biking, Karate, Gymnastics, Cheer, Volleyball, and competitive Dance.

The sport also can instill a lifelong connection with the physical in the world. It can help them get into and stay in shape. It can also give them lifelong respect for being strong, lean, and fit.

To get started in this for your child, just look up children's sports in (your town) online, and get the contact information for them. You can also ask the families of your child's friends what sports they do, so they can start the sport with some much-needed allies.

3.D.E.A.R. Drop everything and read!

This is a staple of what we do at Acton Imagine. It's a time we stop everything during the day and just allow the children to read what they

want to read. This is so important! They will often have to read what others say they must read, instead of something about their own interests. We believe that this is the key to cultivating the child's lifelong love of reading and learning.

When they get to read what they want to read, whether that's comics, or books about sports heroes, Harry Potter, or the like--they will read much, much more. Textbooks don't count unless they're thrilled about that. Get them whatever they want--either buy it or get it for free through the school or a library. Have several ready to go.

I'm sure that you understand the many benefits of reading, but here are a few:

It stimulates the mind. It makes us think. It reduces stress and allows an escape. It helps develop creativity to imagine the world where their heroes are living. It helps us learn all about other worlds. It expands vocabulary. It can help to improve memory as they read more and more. It can help us in critical thinking by seeing how characters in the book think. It can help deductive reasoning when they read mysteries or solve problems. It will help our children write much better and concentrate better. Have you ever been lost in a good book for hours at a time? It's a welcome vacation from the incessant screens of their generation. It entertains, and it's a time of much-needed relaxation for them where their imagination is stimulated rather than the sights and sounds of videos.

Ask your child what they would want to read if they could read anything, and help them make that happen.

4. Have your child take classes outside of school in one or more of their interests.

By this one, I'm talking dance classes, music classes, art, acting, martial arts, mechanics, chess, cotillion, or pretty much anything--and here is the key--*that they are interested in doing.*

The idea is that they are able to follow a passion, and truly “geek out” and explore something that they love. You will want them to be so interested in this that they want to spend their *own* time learning on it, pursuing it, wanting to get better, and actually seeking ways to improve on their own.

The benefits of this are pretty obvious, but it is a chance for them to explore the edges of what they know. It's a chance for them to be proactive. It's a chance for them to get different instruction outside of a normal “teacher to classroom” setting, and to see different ways of learning. They can explore other ways to take in information, and when they strike off on their own to learn the skills they crave, they're *learning to learn* at that point.

At Acton Imagine, we love the children learning on their own, without a teacher telling them what to do and think. They're metaphorically learning to fish versus being given a fish. *That makes all of the difference.* At that point, they're not depending on a teacher to be in charge of their learning, but they're taking control of it themselves. This leads to so much more self agency. It leads to them putting in self-directed effort, and for them to see which ways they learn the best.

They also get to pick up a skill that they enjoy. One of my friends became a grandmaster at chess, and that allowed him to travel, to compete in tournaments, and even helped secure his first job at HBO when he was able to beat the head of the company at chess!

Your child will get a taste of the thrill of learning. They get to know that putting in the effort leads directly to their skills getting better. They will also learn the enjoyment of following their passions and doing what they love. ***This should be one of the biggest goals of education--for the child to love learning and to be able to do it on their own.***

5. Have your child “shadow” and/or “apprentice” with someone in a career they think they’ll enjoy.

This is so important! First of all, think of how we as a society usually go about deciding what kind of job we will work in when we, “grow up.” We often decide on a career based on what we think it will be like. Either we go to college, take classes in that field and eventually graduate to find a job in the market. Or, we can go into a field immediately after high school. Usually, because we like the idea of that profession.

But here’s the thing, and I’m sure you as an adult know this: being inside of a profession is often very different from the outside perception of that profession. Being a doctor, working their schedule, seeing what they see on a daily basis is much, much different than how it appears on Grey’s Anatomy, for instance. We will usually end up doing many different things than what we think we will be doing.

Yet, many times our children and young adults will end up in a career not having a real idea of how that career is as a lifestyle.

My oldest daughter Mandy wanted very badly to be a veterinarian. She had it planned out in her head at age 12 that she would go to Texas A&M (the country’s best vet school) and would spend her life working with the dogs and cats that she loved. Luckily, I asked our veterinarian if Mandy could, “shadow” her for a while and help her around her office. The veterinarian agreed, and I dropped off my sweet, idealistic daughter at 8:30 am in the morning at the office and left her there until 5 pm that day as a trial run of, “being a veterinarian.”

When I picked her up late that afternoon, she got in the car and immediately said, “Dad, I don’t want to be a vet.” Wow. Okay. So what happened? She explained her day to me, including cleaning cages, helping

feed the animals, and helping the doctor prepare for surgery. She also got to be nearby when a dog had to be put down. She realized that she wouldn't actually get to play much, if at all, with the animals, and also that her heart would be broken over and over like it was that day. She knew then that this wasn't the career for her.

I'm so glad that this happened before her applying to a vet school! It could have been after taking her undergrad courses to prepare for it, spending six years in school, and literally hundreds of thousands of dollars before she learned that lesson. What a valuable day that was!

Yet doing something like this isn't the norm. Our middle and high schools seldom have actual opportunities like this. Imagine Acton graduates will have had a minimum of eight opportunities for apprenticeships like this, but that is very rare. It's up to you as a parent to set this up, and to get your child to shadow someone in a profession they think they'll like.

So--have that talk with your child. See what it is that they're interested in, and see if it's possible to facilitate that. If they're young, you can help them make that happen. As they get older, let them plan the approach and have them actually reach out to shadow or work with a business or organization. This will develop their sales skills, their thinking in how it should be done, and they will succeed or fail and learn on their own merit. "Getting the job," is a skill that our Imagineers will have honed during their time with us, but just won't happen with nearly all children unless you help set them on this path.

6. Have your child get a job--a real one!

Just like they'll do when they get to shadow someone in a profession, have your child actually get a job. Have them apply and earn money for their efforts.

This can even be in conjunction with the last idea of shadowing. Have your child narrow down areas or places that they'd like to work, shadow

someone in the profession, see what they like--and then ask to work at that place.

I'm sure you know, but doing this will teach a child so much more about life, about work, about earning, and making their own way than most schools will ever teach them. They'll learn hard work. They'll learn delayed gratification. They'll learn to work with customers and deal with the 'not-so-pleasant' ones that are a big part of life. They'll see how their time converts to a paycheck, and possibly decide that there is a better way to do this, and earn more.

This is a reality check for many children, and the sooner that they start to learn these types of things, the better. If they are very young, they may need to get a job in the family business, or get paid as a contractor to do certain things. As they get older, they can research positions, decide what type of environment they want to be in, and apply on their own. At Imagine Academy, we will show our Learners world class examples of how something has been done, give them some guidelines they might want to use, and then have them do this on their own.

They learn all kinds of things, and this will also help put their upcoming college (if that is part of their Hero's Journey) years to practical usage. It's a chance to actually engage in life rather than just preparing for it in the artificial school environment. They can learn from their bosses, from their customers, from the situations they find themselves in, and get a taste of 'the real world,' before they're pushed into it after they finish high school or college.

Our daughter Mandy did this, as well. Part of her homeschooling was to work at least 20 hours a week while she was going to school. She decided on becoming a barista with Starbucks, and it turned out to be one of the best learning experiences she could have. She still talks about those days fondly, and she developed so much grit and perseverance through it. I recommend this for every child and family.

7. Have your child start a business!

Just like getting a job, this one will truly test your child. They can start a business as simple as a lemonade stand, babysitting service, or lawn mowing company. We will want something for them that has some costs and overhead. We'd like for them to learn to 'hustle' and market to get customers. They'll need to show that they are the best ones for the money to secure jobs from those customers.

This may be the most self-development they will ever do other than possibly raising a family well. They'll get to experience a different path in life. The difference between profits and wages is best learned early in life when there's not a family that needs to be supported as we learn how to conduct business and make a living wage through the alchemy of our own ideas, sweat, and tears. One of the biggest parts of this is that they will get to learn the quite significant difference between gross revenue and net profit. They'll get hands-on experience at creating their own way in life, and may actually stun you with how naturally they take to this before getting that entrepreneurial experience beaten out of them by the rigidity of traditional schools.

One of the things that Acton Academies do is to host a children's business fair each year. It brings together many children in order to create a product of service that they need to design, create, and refine. Then they promote the fair on their own and get as many people as possible to it so that they can hawk their wares to them in order to make a sale, and generate profit. They actually get to keep their profit once they pay off their creditors (often Mom and Dad)! It's a wonderful experience, and it's open to every child in the area of the Acton school. We will have ours, too--keep an eye on our site at ActonImagine.org to see when we host our fair. Your child is invited whether or not they attend our school! We'll be giving ideas and guiding the children on the many things they'll need to think through when creating their business. Who knows? They may start their own empire!

8. Have your children engage in “Daddy/Mommy Projects.”

This is a list of projects or ideas that you as a parent set up for your child. These are skills that you would want them to know, and ideas for them to pursue in that regard.

I first did this while homeschooling my daughters. I wanted them to learn the parts of life that school seldom taught. I wanted them to have many choices for these projects, and to pick some that they thought would be exciting and fun. Some of the ideas included getting a book published on Amazon, creating a YouTube video and getting 1,000 or more views, producing their own podcast, and developing their own keynote graduation speech after seeing examples of the worlds’ best do so.

[Here is the link for my original “Daddy Project” List.](#)

You can choose from these, make your own, or better yet, have your child choose--or you can make your own based on their interests...or you can have them pitch you several ideas and you both decide on what would be best for their own Hero’s Journey.

This shows all kinds of creativity. It allows working on the skills that you and your child think are most important. It also allows the child (and you) to really sink their teeth into something that they think will be worthwhile and fun. Getting their involvement in what they choose can increase “buy-in,” and allow them to see how it can help their lives. As mentioned in some of the ideas above, they will be able to pursue a passion that they have. It can open many doors creatively and serve to break them out of the standard, “go to school, get good grades, get a safe and secure job for 40 years,” etc., too.

Most importantly, this increases a child’s own agency. They will see that they have the power to create. They will see that they can do something on

their own in the world and become truly great at it. They can build themselves into doing something excellent. They will also have the chance to fail, but at least fail while daring greatly while doing this.

9. Have your child engage in reflection, journaling, and gratitude.

John Maxwell, the famed leadership teacher and author says that reflection is when the learning is actually done. It's doing the thing, and then thinking about that thing. Reflecting on how you did, what went right, what went wrong, and the actual lessons of what it was that was done.

As important as this would seem, we don't do a whole lot of it in our society. It's been estimated that less than 5% of adults have a journaling or reflection practice. I imagine it may be less than even that, as it's very easy to say that we have a practice, and substantially more difficult to actually create and maintain one.

So, have your child start a reflection and journaling practice. Get them in the habit of writing about their days, what they did and how they think about what they did. They can write about their wins and their lessons on what they may need to do better the next time.

The power in this is that a child (or anyone!) will learn so much more about themselves than they ever would in the absence of this practice. Journaling and reflection like this allow us to have almost a third-person, objective conversation with ourselves. It allows us to think about our own thinking. It is the surest and quickest path to developing ourselves and improving on what we do every day.

Some ideas for this can include the "morning pages," practice, where your child writes on their own about anything that they'd like for a few pages of a journal. It's been said that this is like a "toothbrush" for the brain. They can also write out their goals, and what they want in life. From something this

week to great big, hairy audacious goals that can and will change the world when they develop into the person that can accomplish them. They can write out their life plans. They can work on ideas. They can also work on their own gratitude!

Something that I really strongly believe is that gratitude and appreciation for one's life make literally everything better. It changes the lens through which we see life for the better. It allows us to see all that is good and right with the world, and to take note of that, rather than seeing what's wrong and feeling like a victim. A simple practice you can have them start is to write out 3-5 things that they are grateful for each day, either to begin or end the day. This has been shown to dramatically improve the way that we think and the quality of life for each of us. It's also a very powerful habit to begin as a young person.

The last idea for this here (there are many, many more ideas) is to have your child create a daily IDEA LIST. This is a thought exercise to develop their imagination, resourcefulness, and creativity. Working on this will help with what famed educator Sir Ken Robinson called, "divergent thinking." It's the ability to think differently than the masses of people who still think very much 'inside the box.' This is a chance to work on and strengthen their thinking skills as a muscle. It's just like they would with their physical body in the gym. They work on ideas and become an idea machine that will never be at a loss for what to do next.

This idea comes from an eccentric New York multimillionaire friend of mine named James Altucher. To do an IDEA LIST, come up with a particular subject like, "Books I Can Write to Change the World," "Different Careers I Would Love to Try During My Lifetime," or, "Ways I Can Show My Parents That I Love Them." Then, come up with at least 10 ideas for that subject.

The first few ideas may be easy, but you and they will find that it may get progressively harder to come up with great, good, or even bad ideas as your creativity and imagination is tapped! That's great! What that means is that

you're working your idea muscles. Each one becomes a hard "rep," just like at the gym. The goal on this, according to James is to make your mind sweat! They will get a workout each and every time, and just like we get stronger physically when we work out--their imagination and creativity will get stronger until they become IDEA MACHINES. When that happens, they'll be able to think their way out of most any situation and become world-class thinkers and problem-solvers!

This is something we emphasize heavily at Acton Imagine. We want our Imagineers to be thinkers. We want them to be resourceful, creative, and able to engage in high-level thought. You can get it on your own when you practice this with your own child, too. Please give it a try, and you'll be amazed at how quickly they sharpen their minds.

10. Praise the EFFORT, not the brilliance!

This idea comes from a book called, "The Growth Mindset," by psychologist Carol Dweck. The idea is that when you praise the effort and the work for what a child does, you're teaching them that they can improve through their own work and effort.

If one is brilliant and the tasks come easily, there is little if any growth. In fact, it's just the opposite as it makes it all too easy to coast by without doing anything to improve. Praising only their intelligence also sets them up for quite a fall when they inevitably come up against something that they can't do or do well. This is almost everything that they begin, as skill comes with deliberate practice and effort.

When we praise that effort and practice and show them how far they've come through their hard work--then they make the connection between their striving and the improvement. It encourages them to work harder. It shows that it's completely fine to be bad at something, as long as we don't stay there. In short, it encourages the growth mindset in our child instead of a "fixed," mindset.

It's so easy to tell our children that they're so smart, yet that might actually be doing them more harm than good! That's the opposite of what we want. If we tell them that they're smart, it's reinforcing that they can do this naturally versus working on the thing in an intentional manner. The idea is to praise what we'd like to see more of in their life. They can't really provide more innate intelligence, but they absolutely can put in more effort and intention into the things that they're doing.

Here are a few things that someone with a *fixed mindset* believes:

- Intelligence and talent are fixed.
- Failure is bad, so don't attempt new things.
- Talent is innate, so the effort is not necessary.
- Setbacks are failures and it's okay to quit.
- Other people who are good at something are a threat.
- Any bad feedback is a personal attack, and constructive criticism is to be ignored.

In contrast, a *growth mindset* believes:

- Intelligence and talent are developed over time with effort.
- It's good to embrace challenges and the possibility of failure.
- Effort and practice are necessary to master a skill.
- Setbacks are temporary and a great chance to learn.
- Other people who are good at something are an inspiration and a challenge to get better themselves.
- Bad feedback is a chance to grow, and constructive criticism is applied to get better.

People with a growth mindset have a much better outlook on life. They are happier, they are better adjusted and suffer less anxiety. They are more likely to attempt great things in life, and less likely to quit when the going gets tough (which we all know it will).

To encourage this kind of mindset, praise the hard work. Show them how far they've come through their deliberate effort. Show examples of people who have overcome great odds and who persevered to win in life. Get them out of their comfort zone and have them do things they aren't immediately talented in so they can fail, get up, do it again and again, and improve.

At Acton Imagine, failure is a huge part of what we do. If our children aren't failing, they're not attempting something grand enough. We believe that this failure is the very best teacher for life. When they learn that they can and will bounce back from setbacks to try and try again, and to eventually succeed--they will have figured out a very big part of a successful life.

You can do this, too. Start by praising the effort and not the brilliance.

11. Have THEM do it!

This is such a big deal, and honestly I've had my issues with this as a parent of a child with special needs. I've come around to a much better way of thinking, and I'm certain that this is a better way to help produce humans of unusual character and kindness.

Stop doing so much for your child. Instead have them do it. You can show them how to do something, and give them some best practices perhaps--but get out of their way as soon as possible and allow them to succeed and fail on their own.

When I started to do this with my son (who has Down Syndrome), I was shocked at how much he could do on his own. I am humbled and ashamed that I didn't do a lot of this sooner for him. It's not kindness and caring for my child when I don't allow them to do things on their own.

He now gets his own drinks. He can prepare something of his own to eat. He is left to entertain himself much more often rather than the crutch of a glowing screen. And he is amazing at learning and figuring things out for himself.

I challenge you to do that for your child, too.

Have them fix their own meal. If they take lunch to their school, make it a part of their duties to prepare it themselves. If they refuse to do it, let them go a day or two without lunch! That takes some guts from us, but think about what we are teaching them, and the character they are forging for themselves when a lesson like that is learned!

I am absolutely certain that your child will astound you when given the chance. They are capable of so much more than we as adults give them credit for being able to do. They are amazing, learning, growing, and adapting organisms who only get better and more resourceful when tested.

A great way to do this is to prepare your own IDEA LIST of things that your child can start to do on their own. Let them know what you're doing if you like. Ask them what they'd like to start doing, and turn that over to them immediately. We don't do any favors for them when we coddle them. We are actually hurting their ability to fend for themselves. So, create that list and have them do the things on it! Be prepared for failure, and celebrate their effort when they get it right.

Come on, you can do this (and so can they)!

There you have it! 10+ Ways to Turbocharge Your Child's education.

I hope this was good for you. It was a lot to take in, so something I'd really recommend doing is to pick one to three of these to start implementing in your lives right away.

When those become a good part of your lives, then revisit this (maybe even

set a calendar appointment to come back to this, as we all let really good ideas get lost in the shuffle of life). You can then add more to the mix and truly help your child to get the absolute most they can from their education.

Thank you for your time, and being the person who requests (and actually reads) this information. You're amazing, and it's an honor to speak with you.

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Chip Franks

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Chip is a husband and father first and then an entrepreneur and author. He has started and run several successful companies to include both real estate sales and property management businesses with dozens on his team to account for many thousands of home sales and several hundred homes managed at any given time.

Chip is a graduate of Texas A&M University. He is the published author of "Life Lessons from Dad: 101 Ways to Get More From Life (From Someone Who Loves You)", the host of The ChipChat Podcast, a consultant who has worked with Amazon, and a speaker who has shared the same stage at events with luminaries like Tony Robbins, Peter Diamandis, and

Lewis Howes. He has also taught courses on Journaling, Gratitude, and Joy to thousands of adults around the world.

Chip started Imagine Academy after a deep discussion with billionaire and friend Naveen Jain about how traditional education is failing our children and the need for innovation in our schools.

Visit Imagine Academy online at
www.ActonImagine.org
And Call Chip Franks at (254) 535-3227