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Editorial and Business Offices
1719 N St. N.W., Washington, D.C. 20036
202-785-2255; scinews@scisvc.org

Advertising Representative
Lewis Edge & Associates, Inc.
366 Wall St., Princeton, N.J. 08540, 609-683-7900

Subscription Department
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For new subscriptions only, call 1-800-247-2160.
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Cover: This novel pattern, made up of overlapping 10-sided tiles, may serve as a model of how atoms can sometimes arrange themselves into a complex quasicrystalline structure instead of into the regularly repeating units of an ordinary crystal. (Image: P.J. Steinhardt, University of Pennsylvania; photo composite: Mark Gilvey, Design Imaging)
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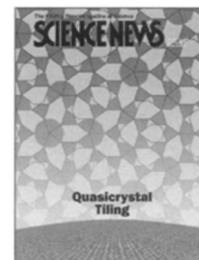
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Science Service, which publishes SCIENCE NEWS, is a nonprofit corporation founded in 1921 to increase the public understanding of science. Through its youth programs, it administers the International Science and Engineering Fair and the Science Talent Search for the Westinghouse science scholarships.

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Letters

Chatty parents, verbal skills, and IQ

The old debate on the relative influence of genes and environment on a child's IQ is not about to be solved by studies like the one described in "Talkative Parents Make Kids Smarter" (SN: 8/17/96, p. 100).

It may well be that more talkative parents carry—and pass on—genes that help their children score better on IQ tests. Verbal skills are known to be positively correlated with IQ scores, thus the talkative parents probably have higher IQs.

David Gurwitz
National Laboratory for the Genetics of
Israeli Populations
Sackler Faculty of Medicine
Tel Aviv University
Tel Aviv, Israel

Modest positive correlations between verbal skills and IQ indicate that the genetic influence on "intelligence" falls far short of hardwiring it into the brain from birth. In fact, IQ rises signif-

icantly in poor kids who attend intensive day care classes starting early in life (SN: 7/9/94, p. 25), a finding that is consistent with the talkative parents study. — B. Bower

Hart and Risley's research verifies the outstanding work of Glenn Doman and his colleagues at the Institute for Achievement of Human Potential, which began in about 1938 in Philadelphia. "Doman's gentle revolution" uses enriched input for all five senses, plus movement, to grow and synchronize competent brains, especially in "normal" kids zero to 5 years old. They extend their work to brain-damaged kids using intensive stimuli to promote growth around injuries and gain or regain function.

W. Boone Mora
Health Director
Northampton County Health Department
Jackson, N.C.

Bower attributes the following sentiment to me in ending his story with my observations about the importance of the research on

which he was reporting: "Although genes affect intellectual ability...."

I do not believe there is any evidence for a gene or any combinations of genes affecting intellectual ability. While no one denies that there may be biological influences on behavior, and a whole host of constitutional factors (genetic factors among them), it is, as I say in my paper, "... simplistic to claim the genes as the primary determinants of individual developmental outcome."

Frances Degen Horowitz
President
Graduate School and University Center
City University of New York
New York, N.Y.

Send communications to:
Editor, SCIENCE NEWS
1719 N Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20036
or: scinews@scisvc.org
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