



Experts now say that listening to classical music affects baby's memory for mere minutes. But more and more studies suggest that learning to play an instrument or to sing has sizable long-term benefits for kids and teens.

Some of the evidence:

A study of 237 second graders by researchers at the University

of California, Irvine, found that those who got music instruction scored 27% higher on a fractions test than those who lacked instruction. In a recent analysis by the Texas Commission on Drug and Alcohol Abuse, band and orchestra members were less likely than other kids to smoke, drink alcohol, or experiment with drugs. And when the Princeton, NJ-based College Entrance Examination Board looked at the SAT scores of college-bound high school seniors, they discovered that musicians scored 57 points higher on the test's verbal section and 41 points higher in math. Think all this just shows that music makers are motivated types? Not so fast. Researchers found academic gains even in kids assigned to music lessons and groups.

SAT scores aside, the best reason to encourage your child to learn an instrument is because it's fun and rewarding, says Mark Churchill, dean of the

# From A-Sharp to A-Plus

Music lessons can boost your child's brainpower

BY SARÍ N. HARRAR

**R**emember "The Mozart Effect"? That was the nifty notion that parents could boost their baby's IQ just by playing a little "Nachtmusik." The claim sold millions of music CDs and led many hospitals (not to mention the state health departments in Georgia and Tennessee) to issue recordings to all new parents. Well, roll over, Mozart—and make way for the "Music Lesson Effect."

