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Nature vs nurture: why parents' genes determine who we become, not how they raise us, according to professor

Parents have little effect on their children's outcomes, beyond the blueprint that their genes provided, Professor Robert Plomin writes in a new book

Experiences matter – family, friends, school – but they do not change who we basically are, he says. Unsurprisingly, not everyone agrees

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Parents matter, says King's College London professor of behavioural genetics Robert Plomin in his recently published book, *Blueprint: How DNA Makes Us Who We Are*.

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But all that hard work, all those parenting manuals and all that money showered on children today do not count as much as parents would like to believe.

The most important thing parents give their children is their genes, says Plomin, pitching in on the old question of nature versus nurture.

During the past four decades scientists have researched “special” relatives such as twins and adoptees to test the effects of genes (nature) and the environment (nurture), Plomin writes. “This research has built a mountain of evidence showing that genetics contributes importantly to all psychological differences between us,” he says.



Identical Chinese twins. "We would essentially be the same person if we had been adopted at birth and raised in a different family," says Robert Plomin, King's College London professor of behavioural genetics. Photo: AFP

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