



The Essential Conversation

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Objectives

- To recognize the characteristics, demands and challenges of raising a gifted child
- To understand the expectations of parents and teachers for the gifted child
- To communicate effectively; to hold essential conversations between:
 - Parent and child
 - Parent and teacher
 - Parent-teacher-and child
- To learn “best practices” in advocating for a gifted child
- To learn how CAG can support this advocacy

Characteristics/Possible Problems

- Learn quickly and easily
- Exhibit verbal proficiency
- Have high energy level
- Exhibit heightened curiosity
- Is persistent
- Become bored and frustrated
- Dominate discussion; difficulty listening
- Frustrated with inactivity
- Take on too many activities
- Resist interruption or schedules

Characteristics/Possible Problems

- Exhibit unusual emotional depth and intensity
- Highly sensitive
- Concerned w/ adult/moral issues
- Aim at perfection
- Vulnerable; confused if thoughts and feelings not taken seriously
- Perceived as immature
- Attempt unrealistic reforms
- Set unrealistic high goals

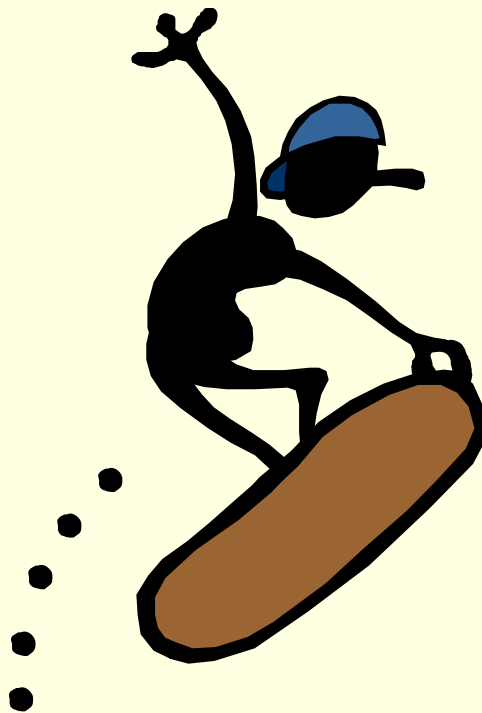
Characteristics/Possible Problems

- Feelings of being different
- Keen sense of humor
- Possess unusual imagination
- Respond and relate to older children and adults
- Regard difference as bad, worthless
- Confused when humor not understood
- Seen as weird
- Seen as show off, odd, critical

Demands of Giftedness

- To focus on or devour a subject
- To be creative or inventive
- To question generalizations and “authority”
- To concentrate, to be totally absorbed
- To resist routine drill
- To work alone
- To seek order, structure and consistency
- To have one’s intelligence responded to
- To seek out mental peers
- To have thinking time
- To be outstanding in some areas but average in others

Challenges of Parenting the Gifted Child



Expectations of Parents

Schools will...

- Identify my child's talents
- Play a significant role in developing that talent
- Be enthusiastic and eager to facilitate advanced achievement
- Create a school/classroom culture that supports intellectual excellence

Experiences of Parents

Programs that...

- Don't exist
- Don't last
- Don't have continuity
- Don't function
- Don't meet needs

Students are punished for giftedness.

Parents...

- Are discounted/not believed
- May have more knowledge of gifted education than teachers
- May have been given erroneous or damaging information
- Are promised services that are not delivered
- Are worn out, tired, frustrated by challenges of raising a gifted child
- Not perceived as a partner

Expectations of Teachers

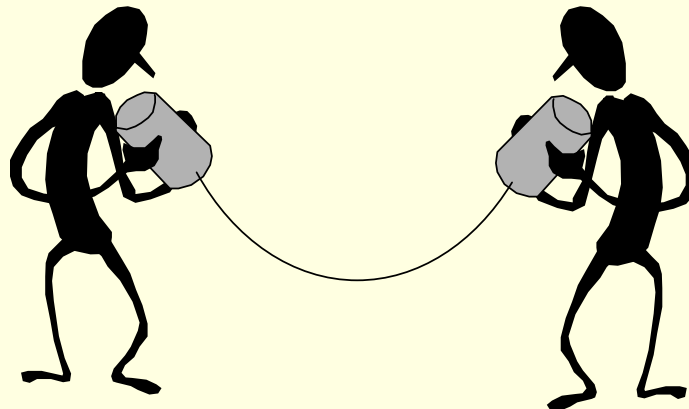
- Gifted children come to school organized and socialized.
- Parents are knowledgeable about giftedness.
- Parents understand their child's giftedness.

Experiences of Teachers

Some parents...

- Have preconceived ideas
- Are too involved and too demanding; they need to let go.
- Have their children engaged in too many activities---no down time
- Expect a separate program for their child
- Don't understand the social/emotional needs of their gifted child
- Don't understand the need for career goals

Communication



What Do Parents Want To Say To Teachers?

- Know and appreciate my child
- Be enthusiastic and passionate about your teaching
- Validate and support intellectual excellence
- Communicate with me
- Understand my child's giftedness
- Share your knowledge with me
- Show me how I can help my child

What Do Teachers Want To Say To Parents?

- Understand your child's giftedness
- Set realistic goals for your child and support achievement of those goals
- Teach social skills
- Find opportunities for your child to be with "like" peers
- Teach organizational skills
- Set realistic expectations
- Allow and encourage "down time"
- Promote self-reliance and responsibility
- Allow your child to struggle
- Communicate with me

What Do Gifted Children Want To Say To Parents and Teachers?

- Explain what our giftedness really means
- We want challenging, meaningful work
- Don't expect us to be perfect all the time
- Make it okay to make mistakes
- Friends who understand us are few and far between
- Kids often tease us about being smart
- We often feel overwhelmed by the number of things we can do in life
- Give us time to be with others like us
- Help us find our place in the world
- We worry about world problems and feel helpless to do anything about them
- Listen to us!
- Like us for who we are, not for what we can do.



The Conference:

Opportunity for Communication,
collaboration, and creating
community.

Parent Preparation

- Review your child's work
- Talk with your child
- List questions you want to ask
- Share insights about your child

Teacher Preparation

- Show student progress through student work
- Invite students to lead
- List ways parents can reinforce learning
- Listen!

Collaboration

- Develop an action plan for communication
- Remember you are on the same side of the table
- Find meaningful ways to work together
- Set goals together

Create a Community for Gifted Learners

- Discover passions
- Identify Resources
- Continue to learn about giftedness
- Model and Mentor
- Become an advocate for gifted education

---John Naisbitt

We stand at the dawn of a new era. We are in the midst of the most important decade in the history of civilization, a period of stunning, technological innovation, unprecedented, economic opportunities, and great cultural rebirth. The issue is how do we prepare our children for it?