

GATE New Parent Meeting

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It is not the answer that enlightens, but the question.

– Eugene Ionesco Decouvertes

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MADDENING MYTHS

There are many misconceptions about what it means to be gifted. Here are ten of the most common myths we've encountered over the years:

Myth #1: Gifted kids have it made and will succeed in life no matter what. They don't need any special help in school or anywhere else.

Fact: Everyone needs encouragement - and help - to make the most of their abilities and succeed in life.

Myth #2: Gifted kids should love school, get high grades, and greet each new school day with enthusiasm.

Fact: Most schools are geared for average learners, not gifted learners, which makes it hard for gifted students to get excited about going. Some of the most talented students in the United States actually choose to drop out of school altogether.

Myth #3: Gifted students come from white middle- and upper-class families.

Fact: They come from all cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.

Myth #4: Gifted kids are good at everything they do.

Fact: Some gifted students are good at many things; others are exceptionally able at only a few things. Some gifted students are also learning disabled,* which means that they might not be very good at schoolwork.

Myth #5: Teachers love to have gifted students in their classes.

Fact: Some do, some don't. Certain teachers feel uncomfortable with gifted students and get defensive when they suspect that their students know more than they do.

Myth #6: If gifted students are grouped together, they will become snobbish and elitist.

Fact: Some will, some won't. What's especially pernicious about this myth is that some adults use it to rationalize decisions about *not* allowing gifted students to work or study together or *not* providing them with opportunities that meet their learning needs.

Myth #7: All gifted kids have trouble adjusting to school and forming friendships.

Fact: Some do, some don't - just like other kids.

Myth #8: Gifted students don't know that they're "different" unless someone tells them.

Fact: Most gifted kids don't need to be identified or labeled before they know that they're not quite like their age peers.

Myth #9: Gifted students must constantly be challenged and kept busy or they'll get lazy.

Fact: They might get bored, but they won't necessarily get lazy.

Myth #10: Gifted kids are equally mature in all areas - academic, physical, social, and emotional.

Fact: That would be convenient, but it's not a reasonable expectation. On the other hand, it's not fair to assume that just because someone is advanced intellectually, he or she will lag behind in other developmental areas.

*We prefer the term "learning different" because we believe that it more accurately reflects individual characteristics.

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE GIFTED CHILD

GRASP AND RETAINS KNOWLEDGE

- responds quickly and accurately
- questions critically
- transfers learning to new situations

CONVEYS IDEAS EFFECTIVELY

- follows logical sequence/order
- has extensive vocabulary and uses it appropriately
- is selective, critical, and fluent

SHOWS SKILL IN ABSTRACT THINKING

- makes generalization
- recognizes relationships
- can understand and apply rules
- foresees new possibilities

USES WIDE VARIETY OF RESOURCES

- is versatile and self-reliant when meeting problems
- is ingenious in knowing when, where, and how to seek help

HAS CREATIVE AND INVENTIVE POWER

- shows curiosity and originality
- is alert to possibilities
- enjoys experimentation

EXHIBITS POWER TO PLAN INDEPENDENTLY

- shows ability to plan and organize
- shows ability to execute/evaluate

ASSUMES AND DISCHARGES RESPONSIBILITY

- shows perseverance
- shows will to succeed

HAS PHYSICAL COMPETENCE

- is alert, active, and energetic
- is generally healthy

APPRECIATES SOCIAL VALUES

- senses right and wrong
- respects the rights of others
- is willing to share
- is conscientious and truthful

ESTABLISHES FAVORABLE RELATIONSHIPS

- has sense of humor
- is friendly, helpful and cooperative

NEEDS OF THE GIFTED STUDENT

Gifted Kids Are Sensitive To Values

They believe in honor, truth, and time-honored values. They are extremely critical of adults who compromise their stand to “make peace” with the real world.

Gifted Kids Resist Routines

They resist drill in school and they resist the repetition of routine tasks at home.

Gifted Kids Need Time To Work Alone

There are lots of thoughts running around in their heads and they need time alone to sort them out and put them into categories. They don't always want to be on committees or to work in groups.

Gifted Kids Are Intolerant Of Stupidity

Particularly when it masquerades as authority.

Gifted Kids Seek Order, Structure, Consistency, And A Better Way Of Doing Things

They want to understand why things are the way they are and why people are the way they are. Their intelligence demands that they seek a better way; and as a consequence, they are very often critical of others and of themselves.

Gifted Kids Think Critically About Themselves And Their Behaviors

They are introspective and are continually assessing what is good and bad about themselves. They are impatient with disorganized thinking.

Gifted Kids Are Sensitive And Empathetic To People, Situations, And Circumstances

As a consequence, they are very responsive to underdog causes and in school often take political positions contrary to those of their parents.

Gifted Kids Need To Have Their Intelligence Responded To

Gifted children will seek out their mental peers, whether they be children or adults. They need to have many types of groups and not necessarily just the group you prefer. Treat the gifted youngster as an intelligent child.

Gifted Kids May Be Outstanding In Some Areas, But Average In Others

They have a learning pace of their own. They may grasp more complicated concepts than their peers and read materials written for a level well beyond their grade but do so in a painfully slow, meticulous fashion. We should be careful not to misinterpret this slow pace as being signs of laziness.

Gifted Kids May Be Expected To Know Things They Don't Know Because Of Their Extreme Verbal Facility

Gifted kids should not be viewed with awe just because they have been identified and labeled. They need to spend some time doing ordinary things so that they will not begin to see their giftedness as an entitlement to privilege or as an unbearable burden.

Gifted Kids Don't Need Enhancing Adults

Before Children were gifted, they were children. They are still children and need all of the things that all children need—attention and affection, discipline, an opportunity to make mistakes, and a mother and father who don't necessarily do everything for them, or try to make everything a little better than it really is.

10 Tips for Parents of Gifted Students

1. Support Your Child

Despite barriers of language, poverty, fear and distance, parents who consistently support their children and are proud of them are good resources for schools (Tomlinson, 1997). All children flourish in the care of supportive parents. Self-esteem and a sense of security are critical elements in the lives of children. Gifted students who struggle with school require the same kind of nurturing environment.

2. Identify Your Child's Interests

By virtue of their extraordinary potential, bright underachieving children require learning experiences based on their interests and sufficiently sophisticated to match their potential. For example, consider a child consumed by an interest in computers or insects; this child needs to be able to act on this intense interest and express his or her concerns about it. The child can do so by engaging in research using the same investigative methods professionals use in their work. Professionals usually like to share their findings with children and adults who are interested in the same topic. This is real world learning (Cooper, 1997).

3. Request An Appropriately Challenging Curriculum

One of our rights as parents is to collaborate with schools to design better programs for our children. Many times, we feel that if we share our ideas with our child's teacher, we will appear to be interfering in the teacher's business. Although teachers can get to know children well, nobody knows children better than their parents. Usually, teachers welcome information about their students in order to provide better instruction. Feel free to share information that may help your child's teacher design a better curriculum for your child. For example, if your child complains at home that school is "too boring", set an appointment with the teacher and ask for more challenging work for your child. You may want to suggest that your child will benefit from preparing a special assignment or project.

4. Help Your Child Set Goals

Discuss with your child some things he or she wants to achieve within a certain period of time. These goals can be related to grades or to extracurricular activities (sports, music, or art) as well as social goals. Goal setting contributes to developing a child's decision-making skills (Callaghan, 1997). For example, children may have an interest that they want to pursue in school, they may want to help the family in some way, or they may want to contribute in the community.

5. Emphasize Responsibility

Provide your children with opportunities to exercise responsible choices and allow them to experience the consequences of those choices. For example, completing homework has been used to practice certain skills beyond the classroom as well as to help students organize their time after school and learn to prioritize. A gifted child may see homework as futile since he or she usually does not feel the need for extra practice. However, parents need to guide their children to see the importance of fulfilling their responsibility. Parents can help gifted children understand that responsibility does not mean we have to like something in order to do it, such as doing household chores. It is also important for your child to reflect on the consequences of the choices he or she makes (Karnes, 1997).

6. Provide Opportunities

Sometimes there are many opportunities for our children that are available at little or no cost to parents, but they go unnoticed. One way of finding such opportunities is to ask the teacher or the school office. Today, many schools offer programs after school that may be excellent opportunities for gifted children to get involved in extracurricular activities. These activities may offer opportunities that sometimes are hard for us as parents to provide, such as fieldtrips, contests, research, and community projects.

7. Look For Resources

Many community resources are available to children. One of the most valuable resources at no cost to parents is the public library. There, gifted children have access to all kinds of information. Most public libraries have computers with internet access that can provide learning experiences in collecting information in different ways (Green, 1997).

8. Encourage Your Child

In addition to supporting your children, verbally express how you feel about them. It is important to encourage children to fulfill their interests and dreams. Encouragement provides children with the assurance that they are capable of carrying out a certain venture. For example, if your child wants to do something to help the community, as a parent, you can promote his or her idea with loving guidance.

9. Be An Advocate Of Your Child And Others

When children struggle in school, there is a tendency to blame the child or to blame the system. However, parents who know their child is gifted, but struggling in school, may sometimes feel ashamed and frustrated. Sharing your situation with other parents helps you to see you are not alone. Forming groups of parents who are willing to collaborate with the school can help children by demonstrating to them responsible leadership. It is important to let the school know about your values, goals, and heritage, and about how they may influence your child's attitude in school if these are not respected or valued.

10. Don't Give Up

Gifted and talented children need special attention. Finding ways to support your child in developing his or her talents may be difficult, but it is worthwhile. Although gifted children may sometimes appear "giftless", in order for them to believe in themselves, they need the perseverance of a caring family. Although they may face adversities in school, the support and encouragement of a loving family will eventually help them achieve success.

Ways to Nurture Your Gifted Children

1. Love and respect your child for who he or she is, not that they are gifted. Children aren't there to be shown off like a new car or home. They are children and children respond to love.
2. Listen to your child, respect his or her opinions and your child will learn to respect others and will be more willing to listen as well.
3. Our children are keen observers. They pick up on our values by watching us from the time of their birth. If parents value learning and set that example, it will be more likely that their children will value learning as well.
4. Talk with your child related to something that he or she can understand and may have experienced. Also, talk about topics in which adults are interested such as newspaper articles, (not just the funnies), current events, and news reports.
5. Children love it when we spend time with them; the memories and modeling that they receive is valuable to them now and in the future. Money and gifts can't replace that time.
6. Children love to create inventions, pictures, painting, crafts, etc. Providing them with basic materials rather than a structured project allows children to use their own creative ability.
7. Every day your child will do new and different things, regardless of their age. Watch for these, you may be in for some wonderful surprises.
8. Encourage their creative side, play, day dreaming and down time. Let them know that it is okay to use their imagination.
9. When your child does something right, let your child know. Hugs and honest words of praise are better than candy or treats to a child.
10. Limit television, video games, and computer games. Encourage your child to find other, more creative outlets more often. This will help your child to build relationships with others as well.

ARE YOU A GIFTED PARENT?

1. Do you answer your child's questions with patience and good humor?
2. Do you take advantage of his questions and expressions of interest to guide him into further teaming and explorations?
3. Do you help him develop physical and social skills as carefully as you encourage mental growth?
4. Do you help him learn how to get along with children of all levels of intelligence?
5. Do you avoid comparing him with his brothers and sisters or his companions?
6. Do you show him that he is loved for his own sake and not for his intellectual achievement?
7. Do you provide early opportunities for decision making by your child, with follow-up of learning to evaluate decisions after carrying out whatever action was taken?
8. Do you set reasonable standards of behavior for your child and then see that he meets them?
9. Do you try to find something specific to praise when he shows you his work? (A generalized compliment means little to gifted children.)
10. Do you help him find worthwhile and challenging reading materials and television programs?
11. Do you provide hobby materials and books?
12. Do you find places where he can study and work at his hobbies?
13. Do you provide a place to display his work?
14. Do you let him learn about and share in some of your hobbies and interests?
15. Do you take him on trips to points of interest?
16. Do you enable him to take advantage of lessons and activities offered by private groups or community organizations?
17. Do you teach him how to budget his time, organize his work, and improve his study habits?
18. Do you help him make his own plans and decisions?
19. Do you give him increasing independence as his ability to handle responsibility increases?
20. Do you give him household responsibilities and other tasks suitable to his age level?
21. Do you avoid overstressing intellectual achievements?
22. Do you avoid pushing him by not being unreasonably demanding about after-school lessons or activities?
23. Do you resist the impulse to show him off?
24. Do you resist any temptation to exploit him?
25. Do you teach him to use his gifts for the benefit of society as well as for himself?
26. Do you encourage him to set high educational and vocational goals?
27. Do you refrain from trying to pick his vocation for him, but instead try to help him learn about as many occupations as possible?
28. Do your expressions of attitude and your behavior set the example you want him to follow?
29. Do you speak as properly as you want him to speak?

GATE Differentiation

The Four Components of a GATE Program

Acceleration/Pacing - Moving students faster through the curriculum and not expecting them to do what they already know how to do.

Depth - Having students become true experts in a given area; giving them an opportunity to find out about certain subjects in great detail.

Complexity - Exploring the connections and relationships between things, comparing and contrasting.

Novelty - Allowing students to exhibit their creativity in the creation of original projects that challenge their thinking in new and unusual ways.

Differentiating the Curriculum

Differentiating the curriculum for children means providing each child a curriculum compatible with his or her stage of development, specific needs and interests, irrespective of what is considered a standard curriculum for the child's chronological age (Kames & Johnson, in press-b). Differentiating the curriculum does not mean teaching children what they already know, nor does it mean providing them with more of the same or merely increasing the pace of learning. Kames, Scwedel, and Williams (1983). GAG believes that curriculum should be differentiated for all students and that in all classrooms there should be multiple paths for success. The major purpose of GATE differentiating is to challenge the advanced learner.

Key Characteristics:

1. Offering not usually a part of the standard curriculum for young children.
2. Encouragement to pursue a chosen interest in depth.
3. Learning based on needs rather than on predetermined order or sequence on instruction.
4. Activities more complex and requiring more abstract and high-level thinking processes.
5. Greater flexibility in the use of material, time, and resources.
6. Higher expectations for independence and task persistence.
7. Provisions of more opportunities to acquire and demonstrate leadership abilities.
8. Greater encouragement of creative and productive thinking.
9. More emphasis on interpreting the behavior and feelings of self and others.
10. More opportunities to broaden the base of knowledge and enhance language abilities.

Common Misconceptions Concerning Differentiation

Kames (1988) described common misconceptions concerning what constitutes differentiation. A program for gifted students is **not**:

- **Giving gifted students more of the same**
For instance, if a gifted student is able to work math problems faster than an average child, it is not appropriate to give him/her ten extra problems of the same difficulty. This type of extra work feels like punishment for being gifted.
- **Teaching gifted students something they already know**
They are interested in new learning and applying what they know to new situations. They shouldn't have to study spelling words, do math problems they already know, or reread books they are already familiar with.
- **Assigning work that demands only lower level thinking skills**
Students can become resentful, withdrawn, refuse to turn in work, or invest little time or effort in their work.
- **Expecting gifted students to spend too much time helping less able children**
Some time spent this way may be beneficial to gifted children, but they need ample time to be challenged.
- **Giving gifted children work designed for older (average) children**
They have learning styles that differ from average children. Even though the level of the material may be more advanced, it may not be appropriate. Does it meet the four major elements for designing differentiated curriculum?

Goldilocks and the Three Bears

Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Objectives

1. **Knowledge** - Acquiring and recalling facts.

Example: "What are some of the things you remember about the story?"

2. **Comprehension** - This level adds understanding to recall.

Example: "Why did Goldilocks' parents give her that name?"

3. **Application** - Using what is understood in a real or simulated situation. Bridging the gap between school simulations and real-life issues.

Example: "What would have been a good name for Goldilocks if she had had brown hair?"

4. **Analysis** - Using data or gathering information to form a conclusion. Analysis forms the basis of research and scientific inquiry.

Example: "Why do you think Goldilocks was in the woods in the first place?"

5. **Synthesis** - Creating something new by using or recombining previously learned knowledge and experience in a different way.

Example: "Tell me a story about what might have happened had the bears not let Goldilocks out of the house."

or

"What if the bears had visited Goldilocks rather than the other way around?"

6. **Evaluation** - Judging one's own or other's behavior or products. Monitoring the process of creating until the final product has been completed, providing feedback.

Example: "Was Goldilocks a good girl or a naughty girl? Tell me a way in which she was good or naughty."

GATE Bibliography

Book Titles	Author
Different Minds: Gifted Children with AD/HD, Asperger Syndrome, and Other Learning Deficits	Lovecky
To Be Gifted and Learning Disabled: Strategies for Helping Students with LD, ADHD, and More	Baum, Owen
Learning Outside the Lines	Money and Cole
Overcoming Dyslexia	Shaywitz
The Myth of Laziness	Levine
Keeping A Head in School	Levine
In the Mind's Eye	West
Upside-Down Brilliance: The Visual-Spatial Learner	Silverman
Raising Topsy-Turvy Kids: Successfully Parenting Your Visual-Spatial Child	Golon
Unicorns Are Real: A Right-Brained Approach to Learning	Meister Vitale
Smart Kids with School Problems: Things to Know and Ways to Help	Vail
Crossover Children: Gifted Children with Learning Disabilities	Birley
Uniquely Gifted: Twice Exceptional Children	Kay
The Spatial Child	Dixon
Right-Brained Children in a Left-Brained World	Freedman and Parsons
The Out-of-Sync Child	Kranowitz
Guiding the Gifted Child	Webb, Meckstroth, Tolan
The Survival Guide for Kids with LD	Fisher and Cummings
What Once Was White	Abeel
The Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Children: What Do We Know?	NAGC
Some of My Best Friends are Books: Guiding Gifted Readers Preschool Through High School	Halsted
Smart Boys: Talent Manhood, & the Search for Meaning	Kerr & Cohn
Could Do Better: Why Children Underachieve and What to Do About It	Mandel, Marcus, Dean
Dreamers, Discoverers, & Dynamos: How to Help the Child Who is Bright, Bored, and Having Problems in School	Palladino
Empowering Gifted Minds: Educational Advocacy that Works	Gilman
The Introvert Advantage: How to Thrive in an Extrovert World	Laney
A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students	Templeton National Report on Acceleration
Magazine Titles	Publisher
Understanding our Gifted	Open Space Communications, Inc.
The Journal of Secondary Gifted Education	Prufrock Press
Creative Kids	Prufrock Press
Gifted Child of Today	Prufrock Press
Parenting for High Potential	National Association of the Gifted
Gifted Child Quarterly	National Association of the Gifted