



The most valuable lesson that parents can teach gifted children is that they have value and worth apart from how well they perform.

My Child's Gifted... Now What? Making Sense of Your Gifted Child




MYTHS and **TRUTHS** about **Gifted Students**



Myth:

Gifted students
don't need help;
they'll do fine on
their own.

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Truth: Would you send a star athlete to train for the Olympics without a coach? Gifted students need guidance from well trained, challenging teachers to help develop their talents.



Myth:

Teachers challenge all the students, so gifted kids will be fine in the regular classroom

Truth: Although teachers try to challenge all students they are frequently unfamiliar with the needs of gifted children and do not know how to best serve them in the classroom. The National Research Center on Gifted and Talented (NRC/GT) found that 61% of classroom teachers had no training in teaching highly able students, limiting the challenging educational opportunities offered to advanced learners.[1] A more recent national study conducted by the Fordham Institute found that 58% of teachers have received no professional development focused on teaching academically advanced students in the past few years. Taken together, these reports confirm what many families have known: not all teachers are able to recognize and support gifted learners.




MYTH: Our district has a gifted and talented program; we have AP courses

TRUTH: While AP classes offer rigorous, advanced coursework, they are not a gifted education program. The AP program is designed as college-level classes taught by high school teachers for students willing to work hard. The program is limited in its service to gifted and talented students in two major areas: First AP is limited by the subjects offered, which in most districts is only a small handful. Second it is limited in that, typically, it is offered only in high school and is generally available only for 11th and 12th grade students. Coupled with the one-size-fits all approach of textbooks and extensive reading lists, the limitations of AP coursework mean that districts must offer additional curriculum options to be considered as having gifted and talented services.



Myth: Gifted education requires
an abundance of resources

Truth: Offering gifted education services does not need to break the bank. A fully developed gifted education program can look overwhelming in its scope and complexity. However, beginning a program requires little more than an acknowledgement by district and community personnel that gifted students need something different, a commitment to provide appropriate curriculum and instruction, and teacher training in identification and gifted education strategies.

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Myth: Gifted students make everyone else in the class smarter by providing a role model or a challenge.

Truth: Actually, average or below-average students do not look to the gifted students in the class as role models. They are more likely to model their behavior on those who have similar capabilities and are coping well in school. Seeing a student at a similar performance level succeed motivates students because it adds to their own sense of ability; watching or relying on someone who is expected to succeed does little to increase a struggling student's sense of self-confidence. Similarly, gifted students benefit from interactions with peers at similar performance levels.




Myth: All children are gifted.

Truth: While all children are special and deserving, not all children have exceptional academic gifts that require additional support in school. Interestingly, most people readily accept that there are children in performing arts or athletics whose talents are so far above those of others their age that they require additional or different training or coaching. It is important to understand that these same characteristics apply to academically gifted students who need support and guidance to reach their full potential.



Myth: Gifted education programs
are elitist.

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Truth: Gifted education is not about status, it is about meeting student needs. Advanced learners are found in all cultures, ethnic backgrounds, and socioeconomic groups. However, not every school district offers services for gifted students, even though there are gifted students in every district.

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Myth: That student can't be gifted;
he's receiving poor grades.

Truth: Underachievement describes a discrepancy between a student's performance and his actual ability. The roots of this problem differ, based on each child's experiences. Gifted students may become bored or frustrated in an unchallenging situation, causing them to lose interest, learn bad study habits, or distrust the school environment. Other students may mask their abilities to try to fit in socially with their same-age peers. No matter the cause, it is imperative that a caring and perceptive adult help gifted learners break the cycle of underachievement in order for them to achieve their full potential.



Myth: Gifted students are happy,
popular, and well adjusted in school.

Truth: Many gifted students flourish in their community and school environment. However, some gifted children differ in terms of their emotional and moral intensity, sensitivity to expectations and feelings, perfectionism, and deep concerns about societal problems. Others do not share interests with their classmates, resulting in isolation or being labeled unfavorably as a “nerd.” Because of these difficulties, the school experience is one to be endured rather than celebrated. It is estimated that 20 to 25% of gifted children have social and emotional difficulties, about twice as many as in the general population of students.




Myth: This child can't be gifted, he is in special education.

Truth: Some gifted students also have learning or other disabilities. These “twice-exceptional” students often go undetected in regular classrooms because their disability and gifts mask each other, making them appear “average.” Other twice- exceptional students are identified as having a learning disability and as a result, are not considered for gifted services. In both cases, it is important to focus on the students’ abilities and allow them to have challenging curricula in addition to receiving help for their learning disability.

Quotes from Gifted Students

"Gifted people have the ability to creatively find ways of making their lives not only manageable but wonderful. I think we should learn not just how to survive, but also how to make the most of who we are--celebrating giftedness, being autonomous, and keeping our options open."

Paulita, 18



"Gifted kids tend to hide their intelligence, as well as their talents, for a very simple reason: Conformity." Claudia, 16

"Homework is supposed to be practice to master a skill. If you've already mastered a skill, why practice it?" Eric, 14


"You need to remember, we learn fast, even if we don't pass a pre-test with zero wrong, we still can learn the material quickly and don't need to sit through the whole unit." Lake Mills Freshman, 14

"Sometimes I feel like I just don't fit in."
Joshua, 12

"Why aren't gifted kids as popular as the other kids?" Allison, 12

"I made most of my friends in the advanced classes at school. Their goals and interests were compatible with mine, and that's what made me feel so comfortable around them." Boy, 16

"People my age just don't understand me, and they tease me a lot. I wish they would accept me for who I am."
Alice, 15



"I have a lot of trouble relating to kids my age. It's as though we are on a totally different wave length. I prefer adult company over kid company because I can contribute to their conversations without being thought of as strange for knowing what is going on."

Billy, 14

8 Gripes of Gifted Kids

1. *No one explains what being gifted is all about – it's kept a big secret.*
2. *School is too easy and too boring.*
3. *Parents, teachers and/or friends expect us to be perfect all the time.*
4. *Friends who really understand us are few and far between.*
5. *Kids often tease us about being smart.*
6. *We feel overwhelmed by the number of things we can do in life.*
7. *We feel different and alienated.*
8. *We worry about world problems and feel helpless to do anything about them.*

COMMON TRAITS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

- Asynchrony
- Intuition
- Uncommon Personality Traits
- Over-Excitability



OVER EXCITABLE

Intellectual

Imagination

Emotional Sensitivity

Sensory

Psychomotor

Intellectual Over -Excitability



Loves nothing
more than to
think, solve
problems, and
ask questions?

Over-Excitable Imagination

Creates such a rich fantasy life that it is difficult for him or her to distinguish reality from fantasy?



Emotional Over- Excitability



Intense
emotional
reactions, such
that it seems like
he or she is
"overreacting"?

Sensory Over-Excitability

Has strong, unusual reactions to sounds or smells?

Has strong reactions to the way things feel (tags, buttons, paper-towels, etc.)



Psychomotor Over- Excitability



Fidgets a lot, or
seems to have
more energy than
other children his
or her age?

Excessive talking

Helping your child cope with over-excitability

- ♦ Allow time for your child to express his or her over-excitability in a safe environment. For example, make time for physical activity or daydreaming.
- ♦ Teach your child skills to manage his or her over-excitabilities effectively. For example, teach your child emotion regulation techniques (e.g., deep breathing exercises for dealing with stress or anger) or how to effectively cope with offensive stimuli (e.g., politely declining a certain food or avoiding certain smells).

- ◆ Encourage your child to focus on his or her strengths and to use his or her over-excitabilities to an advantage.
- ◆ Educate your child and others involved in your child's life on over-excitabilities.
- ◆ Emphasize your child's differences as a positive and not a negative. Help your child to understand that being different is okay. We are all unique beings and should be celebrated as such.



75% of Gifted Kids are Intuitive Thinkers

- Struggle to explain themselves and their thought processes
- Make connections that others miss



PROBLEMS INTUITIVE THINKERS FACE

- 85-90% of CCRS is Left Brain/Analytical Thinkers
- Teachers tend to prefer logical, systematic explanations



What Can You Do To Help Your Intuitive Thinker?

- Give Time to Explore
- Let Them Go Faster
- Encourage Their Connections
- Demand Explanations

Fostering Habits of Success: On the Journey of Life, Remember to PACK FIRST

- Persisting
- Applying Knowledge
- Caring
- Knowing Self
- Failing Gracefully
- Inquiring
- Responding
- Structuring Time
- Thinking Flexibly

Persistence

Persistence “Most of the important things in the world have been accomplished by people who have kept trying when there seemed no hope at all” Dale Carnegie

- Remind children of previous successful strategies.
- Provide choices of both required and optional activities
- Avoid too early rescue, let the learner struggle. Provide support and encouragement, “I know you can figure it out”. Call attention to those who have persisted.
- It is more helpful to learn three ways to solve one problem, than one way to solve three problems.

APPLYING KNOWLEDGE

The ultimate purpose of learning is to profit from one's experience. Successfully intelligent people translate thought into action.

- Children's activities should offer opportunities for relevant applications
- Avoid describing exactly how a task should be accomplished
- Ask, "Where have we previously encountered something like this?"
- When task is completed ask for application to the future, "Where else could you use this?"

Applying Knowledge: Real World Connection

- Connect effort with results. Build commitment through seeing the results of one's efforts having an impact on his/her own life or the lives of others
- Reward action, overlook mistakes. Ask, "If you had this to do over again, how might you change it?"

Caring

Our differences define us but our common humanity can redeem us.

- Children need to be taught to care, to understand that not everyone shares the same ideas and perceptions.
- Model being open-minded, avoiding immediate judgments.
- Attempt to “preview” consequences of actions before they are begun.
- Foster sharing of talents and strengths.

Knowing Self

“The sign of intelligent people is their ability to govern emotion by the application of reason” --Robert Sternberg

What do I have going for myself?

interests
strengths/talents
weaknesses

What
motivates me?
How can I
make the most
of my abilities?

What do I
value? How do
I demonstrate
what I believe
in?

What stresses
me? How do I
overcome
obstacles?

Failing Gracefully

“Losing can be positive and ennobling if it compels us to examine why we lost. After all, it is the way we learn and the way we live.” William Eckenbarger, Pulitzer-prize winner

- Offer choices, even to a toddler. A resilient person needs to have confidence in his/her decision-making ability.
- Foster “islands of competence”—the ability to offer a positive outcome. Friends are important.
- Encourage risk-taking and accept mistakes. Model positive acceptance of failure.
- Set clear criteria for success. Assist the child in identifying “What went wrong?”

Inquiring: Questioning/Posing Problems

“You can tell whether a man is clever by his answers.
You can tell whether a man is wise by his questions.”

Naguib Mahfouz “

- Teach children how to question and how to collect, display, analyze and interpret data.
- Ask children to imagine questions, rather than identify answers, “If this artifact could talk, what three questions would you ask of it?”
- Provide the “scaffolding” necessary for independent exploration.
- Spotlight discrepancies and phenomena in their environment and inquire into their causes.
- Ask, “What do you know, what do you want or need to know?”

Responding

“True eloquence consists of saying all that should be said, and that only.” Francois de La Rochefoucauld

- Practice paraphrasing another's ideas.
- Identify emotional states of characters or people
in images using body language clues.
- Collect words which accurately describe feelings
- Role play appropriate responses to specific social situations.
- Teach the skills of brainstorming and consensus building
- Model responding with wonderment and awe

Structuring Time

“It is our choices about how to allocate our time, that ultimately define who we are and what we accomplish.” Sidney Moon

- Use graphic organizers with young children to convey ways that time and activities can be scheduled. Teach planning
- Gradually move toward multi-day projects and long term assignments.
- Encourage a balance between academics, passions and family responsibilities


Thinking Flexibly

“All human beings have the capacity to generate novel, original, clever or ingenious products, solutions or techniques—if that capacity is developed.” Art Costa

- Emphasize the importance of using critical and creative thinking in tandem.
- Always seek more than one way of obtaining the correct answer or end result.
- Teach CPS, FPS.
- Utilize SCAMPER strategies (substitute, combine, adapt, minify, magnify, put to other use, eliminate and reverse) in daily life.
- Focus upon the “big ideas”.

“Don’t worry that children never listen to you, worry that they are always watching.” Robert Fulghum

- Let children see you enjoying your work, your decisions, your play and your plans.
- Make your feelings and actions transparent. Show children how a complex task can be chunked into doable parts. Express disappointment and model making a detour.
- Guide, discuss, model, create the environment, question, listen and clarify.



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