Developing Your Child’s Talent

After observing parents of gifted children, researchers came up with the following insights on how to effectively develop your child’s giftedness:

**Be involved in developing your child’s giftedness.**
Monitor your child’s exercise and practice, or if your child is gifted in academics, check his or her homework. Share with them in a loving way your unique experience and knowledge in the area where they are gifted. You can also be involved in their practice. Sit down beside them at the piano while they are practicing, give praise or gently correct them or give them advice if necessary. Serve as motivation and encouragement for your gifted child’s efforts.

**Stress the importance of hard work and doing one’s best.**
Even the best talent can only blossom with hard work. Tell your child that there is work or practice to be done before they go out and play. In making your child spend time in practicing their talent, appeal to their love for the field and remind them of the rewards for being the best they can be. Challenge your child at the optimal level, but don’t put too much pressure, especially if your expectation from them is unrealistic.

**Ensure that your child makes productive use of their time.**

**Provide your child with an enriched environment.**
This includes finding a good teacher to develop your child’s talent, and making sure that the teacher is doing a good job. Put them in the best school you can afford or find a school where you can get free or low-cost tuition. Take the family to watch competitions or attend concerts so your child will learn more about their field and observe the performance of more advanced people in the field.

**Expose your child to resources that make them stay interested and motivated in their field.**
Subscribe to magazines; buy them books, videos, or software that is related to their field.

**Give them space where they can practice.**
Convert an area of the house, like a basement or an attic where your child can have space and privacy to work.

**Learn to judge your child’s progress and assess their strengths and weaknesses.**
Attend all of their meets, tournaments or recitals so you can gauge their developments.

**Give rewards and praise for a job well done.**
Decorate your family room with ribbons and trophies that your child has won or fill the scrapbook with newspaper clippings about their achievements. Stress the joys and pride in winning, as well as the satisfaction of doing one’s best.

**Teach them the values of setting goals and doing one’s best to attain them, and establish priorities.**
Tell them that they can only be good at one thing at a time. Defining a task and sticking to it is the way to excel.

http://raisesmartkid.com/all-ages/1-articles/6-raising-a-gifted-child
# PARENT RESOURCES FOR GIFTED CHILDREN

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Website</th>
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<tr>
<td>NAGC National Association For Gifted Children</td>
<td><a href="http://www.nagc.org">www.nagc.org</a></td>
<td>NAGC’s website has a parent resource directory that provides information and valuable resources on a variety of topics. Each listing includes a description of the organization, what it offers, and contact information.</td>
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<tr>
<td>OAGC Ohio Association For Gifted Children</td>
<td><a href="http://www.oagc.com">www.oagc.com</a></td>
<td>OAGC has resources and information specific to Ohio and links to the Ohio Department of Education documents related to gifted identification and services.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sylvia Rimm</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sylviarimm.com">www.sylviarimm.com</a></td>
<td>Sylvia Rimm is a nationally recognized expert in gifted children, specializing in social and emotional development. Her website includes numerous articles covering a variety of topics specific to parenting gifted children.</td>
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<tr>
<td>SENG Supporting the Emotional Needs of Gifted</td>
<td><a href="http://www.sengifted.org">www.sengifted.org</a></td>
<td>This organization is devoted to the unique social and emotional needs of gifted children and their families.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duke University</td>
<td><a href="http://www.tip.duke.edu">www.tip.duke.edu</a></td>
<td>This website provides resources to help nurture the development of bright youngsters. From the home page, click on Research &amp; Resources and then go to Parent and Student.</td>
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# BOOKS OF INTEREST

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<tr>
<th>Mindset</th>
<th>Why Bright Kids Get Poor Grades</th>
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<tr>
<td>by Carol S. Dweck, Ph.D.</td>
<td>by Dr. Sylvia Rimm</td>
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<th>Parenting Gifted Kids</th>
<th>How To Parent So Children Learn</th>
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<td>by Jim Delisle, Ph.D.</td>
<td>by Dr. Sylvia Rimm</td>
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# Characteristics Of The Gifted Child

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<tr>
<th>Characteristics</th>
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| Grasps and retains knowledge | • Comprehends meanings  
                                 • Responds quickly & accurately  
                                 • Questions critically  
                                 • Transfers learning to new situations |
| Conveys ideas effectively | • Follows logical sequence and order  
                               • Has extensive vocabulary and uses it appropriately  
                               • Is selective  
                               • Is critical  
                               • Is fluent |
| Shows skill in abstract thinking | • Makes generalizations  
                                  • Senses cause and effect  
                                  • Recognizes relationships  
                                  • Can understand and apply rules  
                                  • Foresees new possibilities |
| Uses wide variety of resources | • Is versatile  
                                  • Is 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  
                                   • Uses trial and error method  
                                   • Finds ways to extend his ideas |
| Exhibits power to work independently | • Shows ability to plan  
                                      • Shows ability to organize  
                                      • Shows ability to execute  
                                      • Shows ability to judge |
| Assumes and discharges responsibility | • Shows perseverance  
                                         • Shows desire to forge ahead  
                                         • Shows will to succeed |
| Adjusts easily to new situations | • Understands and accepts reasons for change  
                                     • Anticipates outcomes  
                                     • Maintains optimistic attitude toward new adventures  
                                     • Is challenged by new ideas |
| Has physical competence | • Is alert  
                           • Is active  
                           • Is energetic  
                           • Is free of nervous tensions  
                           • Is generally healthy |
| Appreciates social values |  |
| Establishes favorable relationships |  |
Recognize and respect the relationship between social and emotional needs and academic needs.

One affects the other. For example, whether a gifted student is challenged or able to work at a pace that is stimulating can affect his or her emotional well-being. Our school psychology clinic in Teachers College at Ball State University has documented that the most common reason gifted students are referred for psychological assessments is rooted in their becoming a behavior problem in school after having previously been a strong student. The root of the behavioral change is the manifest frustration with not being challenged in school. For many students, this connection goes unnoticed until it is far too late to help them.

Be cautious about forcing your desires on students based on your perception of their strength areas.

Talent manifests over time and with opportunity. Determining for a child what his or her “gift” or “talent” is without allowing for flexibility or encouraging additional self-exploration may cause a number of problems from adolescence on. A positive outcome of nurturing a talent is the development of a lifelong a vocational interest or hobby.

Teach pro-social skill development.

Teaching gifted students a handful of social skills can reduce the number of negative experiences they may encounter while in school. The phrasing of questions and comments and the ability to take another person’s perspective are skills that are helpful in teaching gifted students to navigate the difficult social waters in schools.

Teach them to enjoy nonacademic activities.

As appropriate, try to teach gifted students to recognize that nonacademic pursuits are also important in one’s life. They become stress relievers and additional areas where gifted students can grow. Modeling works well in teaching this lesson.

Teach gifted students ways to manage stress.

As they move through the grades, many will experience growing amounts of stress. Ironically, much of this will be self-imposed or a consequence of only their gift being recognized by those around them without concern for their needs as individuals. Because many gifted students develop coping strategies, educating them about how to effectively manage stress may prove relatively easy.

To accomplish many of the suggestions previously noted, adults should model the behavior they wish gifted students to exhibit.

Like all children, gifted students learn from the behavior of adults. Whether it is effective coping strategies, nonthreatening communication techniques, or how to relax, teachers, counselors, and parents often become the models that children follow. If you want your messages to be influential, let the students see you behaving accordingly.
Understand that much of how gifted students appear and behave is biologically affected.

Do not try to change the basic nature of the student. Shyness, for example, like some physical characteristics, has roots in biology. Like the relationship between body type and weight, shyness and a student’s willingness and ability to actively participate in class are related. Respect the nature of the individual gifted child.

Embrace diversity, do not merely tolerate it.

To tolerate suggests a position of authority or position of judgment that allows someone to decide what human differences are meaningful and, therefore, acceptable and what differences are intolerable. This special privileged position tends to disadvantage gifted students because giftedness rarely makes people's lists of meaningful differences. As a teacher, parent, or counselor, you are in a position to have a significant impact on the minds of gifted children. If a school truly embraces diversity, then gifted students will be accepted. In many schools, giftedness is still experienced as being aberrant. In a study a few years ago, I found that gifted students are just as prone to believe stereotypical ideas about other gifted students as the general population. This phenomenon can be explained by the fact that gifted students cannot escape their environment.

Expose gifted students to knowledgeable counseling-avoid professionals who are not knowledgeable about gifted students.

A proactive counseling program can be invaluable to gifted students. Learning about oneself and how to effectively relate to others in school can positively affect the psychological development of gifted students. Conversely, messages learned from untrained counselors and psychologists who rely on intuition when providing services can actually exacerbate problems in the social and emotional realm.

Know that many gifted students will have created coping strategies while in the earliest grades in school.

I have found that, by first grade, some gifted children have begun to engage in behavior patterns that reveal their discomfort with the gifted student label. Some of these strategies reflect their tacit knowledge about the social milieu of their classroom. Knowing that these patterns exist can enable teachers, counselors, and parents to understand the worries and behaviors surrounding gifted students' school experience.

Provide opportunities for down time.

All children need time to relax away from school concerns. Arranging down time for some students will come easy, but for others it will be quite difficult. Providing gifted student's opportunities to explore or read for pleasure can reduce stress and may have the positive effect of increasing vocational pursuits when they get older.

Tracy L. Cross, Ph.D.  http://www.prufrock.com/client/client_pages/guiding_gifted.cfm