



How to Advocate for Your Child's Talent Development

Ten Do's and Don'ts for Parents and Families



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Is My Child Gifted?

At *Educating Innovators*, we believe that each child has unique **talent aptitudes** that can be developed. The **Talent-Targeted Teaching and Learning** approach motivates and engages learners to discover and develop their potential to become “tomorrow’s innovators.”

The term “**gifted and talented**” is used to indicate a very advanced developmental level which requires **different educational options**.

Use these checklists to look for **clusters of traits** that may indicate a child’s advanced talent aptitudes which need to be developed.

Characteristics of Advanced Intellectual Capacity (Intellectually Gifted)

This child consistently when compared to age-level peers:

- ___ 1. Has an extensive and detailed memory, particularly in an area of interest.
- ___ 2. Has vocabulary advanced for age—precocious language.
- ___ 3. Asks thoughtful questions.
- ___ 4. Learns information quickly.
- ___ 5. Uses logic in arriving at common sense answers.
- ___ 6. Understands abstract ideas and complex concepts.
- ___ 7. Observes relationships and sees connections.
- ___ 8. Finds and solves difficult and unusual problems.
- ___ 9. Exhibits a high degree of concentration in areas of interest.
- ___ 10. Is reflective about learning.

Characteristics of Advanced Creative Capacity (Creatively Gifted)

This child consistently when compared to age-level peers:

- ___ 1. Prefers complexity and open-endedness.
- ___ 2. Has extreme fluency of thoughts and a large number of ideas.
- ___ 3. Is observant and pays attention to detail.
- ___ 4. Proposes unique solutions to problems; improvises.
- ___ 5. Challenges existing ideas and products.
- ___ 6. Makes unusual connections; intuitive
- ___ 7. Is attracted to the novel, complex, and mysterious.
- ___ 8. Is a nonconformist, uninhibited, adventurous, able to resist group pressure.
- ___ 9. Accepts disorder, tolerates ambiguity; delays closure.
- ___ 10. Is emotionally sensitive; sensitive to beauty.

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*Ten **Do's** and **Don'ts** for Working with Schools*

1. **DO** approach your child's teacher and school with the attitude that you believe they want the best for your child, and they *are* trying.

Don't assume that your child's teacher has had specialized training in gifted and talented education. Many schools do not require it.

2. **DO** attend all regular parent conferences, and schedule conferences even if your child's grades are good.

Don't buy into the myth that conferences are for students who aren't being successful or that your child is "too old" for parent conferences.

3. **DO** share at parent conferences the positive aspects of the school program that currently engage and challenge your child. (Find something!)

Don't frame the issue as "My child is bored," even if you think that is the case. This puts the educator on the defensive (*Your class is boring*).

4. **DO** share with your child's teacher the types of learning activities your child enjoys doing outside of school (often teachers don't know this).

Don't assume that the teacher has been prepared to differentiate for a child's interests or learning style. You might hear, "Well, all students here have to take the same test, so..."

5. **DO** make suggestions about extracurricular activities that motivate, engage and challenge your child. Ask if any of these are part of the regular curriculum, or could be.

Don't assume that the teacher has control over the classroom curriculum or assessments. Curriculum modification is often a school issue that needs to be addressed at the leadership level.

6. **DO** get involved in the PTA and other school system committees or councils. Advocating for *all* children along with your own child is a win-win.

Don't negate the "power of one" or a few voices. Be at the table when major educational decisions are made – they usually affect gifted education programs. See if there is a GT Advocacy group in your area.

7. **DO** be willing to work with the school on low-cost, easy to implement options that might meet your child's academic needs (acceleration is one).

Don't be deterred by statements such as, "We don't do that here" or "It's not our policy." Often there is no written policy, but only custom. Ask to see a copy of a written policy.

8. **DO** educate yourself about talent development, creativity, and motivation. Read, attend workshops and conferences. Find out what really matters in parenting children for 21st century careers.

Don't buy-in to the education consumer mindset that you must "keep up with the Joneses" and get your child in "the best" school or college in order to ensure future success. Intrinsic motivation matters more.

9. **DO** observe your child's learning style and heed it. Don't expect your child's preferences to be identical to yours or to a sibling's.

Don't overlook the power of well-chosen summer academic programs where your child can be with peers who share the same interests.

10. **DO** believe in the resiliency of your child! Allow your child to take risks, and teach your child to learn from failure.

Don't hover, make excuses for your child, or overprotect. Trust yourself and your child to overcome and benefit from difficulties.

Questions? Contact me:
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