

Tips for Parenting the Gifted Child

- General Tips -

General Thoughts

A gifted child is a *child*, first.

Gifted children need opportunities to interact with other gifted children.

Gifted children need opportunities to interact with the mainstream.

“Smart” is not a single construct.

Asynchronous development is a way of life.

Give your child...

An understanding of the relationship between social/emotional needs and academic needs.

Social skills to use in interactions with their peers.

An understanding of his/her nature and how to react to events and circumstances in his/her life.

Coping skills and effective ways to manage stress.

Appreciation of non-academic activities and hobbies, as well as down-time and relaxation.

Give yourself...

Appropriate coping behaviors, to better model for your child.

A knowledge of your child’s personality and his/her social goals.

The habit of communicating with teachers and school staff to better develop goals for the child.

Empathy for the social expectations of the school/classroom through the eyes of your child.

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- Age-Specific Tips -

Elementary Age Children

- Remain, and help others to remain, cognizant of your child's chronological age.
- Find opportunities to relate to other gifted children.
- Pay attention to how you praise your children:
 - Praise should address specific behaviors/accomplishments.
 - "You did very well on this spelling test."
 - "You really seem to be understanding this new math!"
 - General and/or global praise may have a paradoxical effect.
 - "You're so smart!"
- Encourage an *incremental* definition of "gifted."
- Allow children to fail:
 - Experiencing failure is a part of life.
 - Failures present growth/learning opportunities.
- Be open about your own challenges:
 - Model for your children how to appropriately handle frustration and failure.
- Be supportive of your child's *personal* weaknesses.
- Encourage and support involvement in special interests.

Middle/High School Age Children

- Find and encourage opportunities to relate to the mainstream.
- Allow teens age-appropriate expressions of independence.
- Assign children age-appropriate responsibilities.
- Openly use technological safeguards and monitoring.
- Talk with your child about drugs/alcohol and sex.
- Get to know child's peer group and, if possible, their parents.
- Remain cognizant and supportive of physiological and emotional changes.
- Allow teens age-appropriate expressions of independence.
- Encourage extra-curricular activities and, if possible, part-time employment. Be mindful, however, that your teen doesn't over-extend his or herself.
- Help your child to explore post-secondary goals and career options.