

Resource Packet for Parents and Educators of Gifted Students

It is our choices that show that we truly are, far more than our abilities

- J.K. Rowling

Rationale for the Packet

The catch phrase, "It takes a village...", when it comes to raising children is very true. As parents and teachers, we are often times fulfilling the roles of educator, mentor, cheerleader, disciplinarian, playmate, friend, and many more. With these roles comes the realization that all of us are created differently and have been given different God given talents and abilities. Included in those abilities are those that have been characterized as gifted and talented. The "gifted" label is sometimes misunderstood and misused. Just like all people are different in our personalities and characteristics, gifted individuals are the same way, no two people are alike. These individuals may have gifted characteristics related to their cognitive, creative, academic, or leadership part of their lives. In regards to cognitive ability, they may be rapid learners, have superior language or analytical ability, great self awareness, or elevated levels of comprehension. Creatively speaking, they could be talented musicians, artists, dancers, or any other myriad of creative ability. Academically your child may be a straight "A" student or could even be an underachiever where the ability is there but the effort is not. In regards to their leadership, these students could be those that rise to the occasion time and time again or the child who shies away from the limelight. Navigating and nurturing the gifted individual can be quite the challenging task at times.

This book of resources has been designed to give you tools and helps to make the navigation a bit smoother.

Three National/State Organizations descriptions and websites

National Association for Gifted Children- NAGC: www.nagc.org: “An estimated 3,000,000 gifted children sit in U.S. classrooms today.” That being said, NAGC is “supporting the needs of high potential learners.” They offer help to educators, parents, administrators through membership, online resources, seminars, as well as keeping us up to date on ways to advocate for gifted students as well as the legislation that is in place.

Tennessee Association for the Gifted-TAG: www.tag-tenn.org : TAG is a state affiliate of NAGC and offers local information about gifted as well as workshops, seminars, articles, for educators, students, and parents.

Supporting Emotional Need of the Gifted: SENG- www.sengifted.org: “SENG’s mission is to empower families and communities to guide gifted and talented individuals to reach their goals: intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.” This website is full of programs, news, resources, books in print as well as opportunities for workshops and seminars.

The following sites are great places to research and begin to understand your child. They deal with a myriad of characteristics, research based strategies, and much more.

1. Gifted Child Today- Professional research journal that is available online: <http://gct.sagepub.com>
2. American MENSA: Parent/Teacher resources <http://www.us.mensa.org/learn/gifted-youth/parentteacher-resources/>
3. The Davidson Institute for Talent Development www.davidsoninstitute.org
4. Gifted-Children.com: Identification, Encouragement, and Development www.gifted-children.com
5. Intervention Central- Site full of academic and behavior modifications to aid you in helping your child become successful: www.interventioncentral.org
6. Child Development Institute: Resources for Parents of Gifted Children: http://childdevelopmentinfo.com/learning/gifted_children.shtml
7. Duke TIP- They are a leader in helping to not only identify gifted kids but also developing their talents: www.tip.duke.edu
8. Mississippi Association for Gifted Children: <http://magcweb.org>
9. University of Southern Mississippi’s Francis A. Karnes Center for Gifted Studies: <http://www.usm.edu/karnes-gifted>
10. Mississippi University for Women’s Center for Creative Learning Links for Parents: <http://web2.muw.edu/index.php/en/ccl-links.html>
11. The Rhode Island State Advisory Committee on Gifted and Talented Education: http://www.ri.net/gifted_talented/rhode.html
12. Prufrock Press- Publication company that specializes in resources for gifted education, advanced learning, twice-exceptional learners, and special needs students: http://www.prufrock.com/Assets/ClientPages/parenting_resources.aspx
13. Gifted Development Center- Embracing Giftedness- www.gifteddevelopment.com
14. Dr. Sylvia Rimm- expert in gifted studies- www.sylviarimm.com
15. Hoagies’ Gifted Education Page- This page covers all aspects of giftedness and is a great resource for further links on giftedness. <http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/>
16. The Center for Gifted- resources and useful links: <http://www.centerforgifted.org/resources.html>

17. Family Education: Various articles on the various issues that parents face with gifted students:
<http://school.familyeducation.com/gifted-education/parenting/34390.html>
18. Some Do's and Don'ts for Raising Gifted Kids:
http://www.educationoptions.com/resources/resources_raising_gifted_children.php
19. Blog for Moms of the highly gifted: <http://www.circleofmoms.com/moms-of-the-highly-gifted>
20. Underachieving Gifted students: A mother's perspective:
<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt/newsletter/spring98/sprng986.html>

The following websites give you the opportunity to help enrich your child at home. There are a number of suggestions for activities as well as a site to help you navigate what your gifted child is reading.

1. Help your gifted child reach his academic potential both at school and at home:
<http://www.scholastic.com/parents/resources/article/gifted-special-needs/your-gifted-child>
2. How do I nurture my gifted child? This article gives some general parameters as well as activities to do with your child: http://giftedkids.about.com/od/nurturinggiftsandtalents/p/how_to_nurture.htm
3. Highly Gifted Children at Home: http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/hg_at_home.htm
4. A Different Place- resources for children, parents, and teachers: <http://www.adifferentplace.org/index.html>
5. Activities for the Little Gifted Children: Ages Birth to Five. The Brain development is very crucial in a child's life and utilizing the critical time from birth to five is very important:
http://www.education.com/reference/article/Ref_Birth_Five/
6. The Literate Mother: A great resource for helping you help your gifted child to pick out age appropriate as well as content appropriate reading material: <http://www.theliteratemother.org/>

Games for Kids to play at home- independently or with family

7. Online Games for Gifted Children-Gifted Learners: <http://www.gameyum.com/other-education-games/70813-online-games-for-gifted-children/>
8. Mensa for Kids: Mensa is the oldest high IQ society in the world. This website has games and activities galore for kids- www.mensaforkids.org
9. Top Games for Gifted Children- Ten board games sure to challenge your gifted child. Great Family Night Opportunity http://giftedkids.about.com/od/booksandtoys/tp/top_ten_games.htm
10. Games for Gifted Children- these three games are somewhat out of the ordinary but are guaranteed to be a lot fun for the both of you and they are learning in the process... SHH!
http://mathandreadinghelp.org/games_for_gifted_children.html

These websites are opportunities for enrichment summer camps as well as activities geared specifically for the summer when the final school bell has rung and you are still trying to keep your child engaged and learning.

11. MUS Summer Programs for boys- <http://www.musowls.org/netcommunity/page.aspx?pid=696>
12. St. George's Summer Enrichment Program Guide: <http://www.sgis.org/page.cfm?p=16>
13. ID Tech Camps: <http://www.internaldrive.com/locations/tn-summer-camps-tennessee-computer-camps/vanderbilt-university-nashville-area/>
14. Top 5 Summer Activities for Gifted Children:
http://giftedkids.about.com/od/nurturinggiftsandtalents/tp/summer_fun.htm
15. New Day Children's Theatre offers great summer drama camps for those who are creatively inclined:
<http://www.newdaytheatre.org/summerworkshops.cfm>
16. Fun Summer Activities for Gifted Children- a few activities geared toward the older gifted children:
<http://suite101.com/article/fun-summer-activities-for-gifted-children-a253913>

Frequently Asked Questions about Gifted Students

1. What is the definition of gifted?

"Gifted individuals are those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude or competence in one or more domains." (NAGC) Early theorists defined giftedness as the intersection of high levels of above average ability, creativity, and task commitment. The State of Tennessee defines giftedness in intellectual as well as creative characteristics. There are a number of common as well as negative characteristics that may be present in a gifted child. In regards to cognitive ability, they may be rapid learners, have superior language or analytical ability, great self awareness, or elevated levels of comprehension. Creatively speaking, they could be talented musicians, artists, dancers, or any other myriad of creative ability. Academically your child may be a straight "A" student or could even be an underachiever where the ability is there but the effort is not. In regards to their leadership, these students could be those that rise to the occasion time and time again or the child who shies away from the limelight.

2. What do I do if my child is not performing in class as well as they could?

This is termed as underachievement. The disease of underachievement among gifted students is rampant. However, it is something that often times will go unnoticed. This could be due to the fact that the child has not been identified. Granted all of you here have identified children. But this can still rear its head in the classroom. It is possible that an underachieving child will slack off in responsibilities in the classroom and you mask it as laziness but this is not always the case. The child could be doing this because the standards that you have set for them are so high that they can't be reached or the opposite is the case and the standards are so low that they can easily reach them. Another question to ask is "is my child being challenged and motivated at school?" If you don't feel that this is the case, then it is time to step up to the plate and advocate for them. A last possible reason for underachievement is that the child is trying to stay under the gifted label in the classroom for fear of being rejected or cast out socially. All of these are very important things to watch for if you notice your child performing under their level of ability.

3. One of my kids is gifted and one isn't. Now what?

Remember that all children are different and have different abilities and talents. Each child has a set of traits that are unique to them. Make sure and capitalize on that uniqueness. It is important to stress to both of your children that they are unique and that has nothing to do with their IQ. If the gifted child is getting extra projects and things in school then take the other child and have them doing special things too. Make sure to treat them equally and give them the same amount of attention so that the gifted child doesn't down play their behavior to match with the other child.

4. What kinds of activities are best for my child at home?

This truly depends on your child. It is important to give them exposure to a variety of things. In choosing activities for your child to become involved in, it is important to allow them to have some choice but at the same time pushing their parameters of comfort. When deciding what activities are appropriate for your child, choose ones that are not only enjoyable for them but also a bit of a challenge. If they feel at home on the stage but yet are quiet in social settings, then putting them in a drama summer camp to promote social skills may be the answer. During the summer months, it is important to keep them engaged in reading and other activities that are both stimulating and challenging for them.

5. How do I nurture good problem solving skills at home?

As parents, you are the role model that they see every day. It is up to you to help to facilitate critical thinking skills at home. One way is to ask questions that can't be answered with a single correct answer. For example, if you could develop a new board game based off of an existing one, what would you create? Another way of teaching these skills is to engage them in conversations about issues that are intriguing to them. It is by talking with them and listening to their observations of the world around us that we find if their sense is skewed or if we need to intervene and direct. Lastly, include them in your thinking about the budget for the grocery bill. Or maybe you are trying to figure out the most economical way for the family to travel this summer for vacation. It is through these ways of modeling that they learn.

6. How many activities should I get my child involved in?

The answer to this really depends on the child. However, it is imperative that the child understand that you support them in their endeavors. It is important to expose your child to a variety of things because it is through exposure that one develops interest. However, it would be easy to think that because my child is gifted they need to be challenged academically all the time. This is not the case. According to a 1993 study of 200 teens that teachers had identified as gifted, there is a lot of focus on family dynamics. The families would cultivate close relationships, spent time in recreational pursuits, nurtured bonds with their children but encouraged individual paths. They were responsive to needs yet had them develop their own needs. Parents modeled good work ethic and expected productive use of free time. Down time is spent in hobbies, study, and practice or related to their interest. "No teenager will develop talent unless he or she enjoys working in the talent area." As a result, the students were able to devote more time to the talent and begin setting goals that turned into long term goal setting for higher achievements within their talents. Bottom line: create a culture that nurtures those things that the child is interested in. If they are creatively inclined and get their stress relief from being on a stage, provide the resources and opportunity to do that.