

What Parents Can Do

- **Love, laugh, learn, and listen.** Encourage the support of extended family and friends. Raising and nurturing a gifted child can be exciting, yet daunting and challenging!
- **Learn to be positive.** Giftedness can be an exciting challenge or a chore, depending on how you see a child's characteristics. For example, persistence and stubbornness are the same trait.
- **Understand the way that your child's giftedness affects his or her needs: intellectual, social, emotional, and physical.** For example, ideas forged by eight-year-old minds may be difficult to produce with five-year-old hands.
- **Read aloud to your child.** It is important that parents read to their gifted child often, even if the child is already capable of reading.
- **Help your child discover personal interests.** Stimulation and support of interests are vital to the development of talents. Parents should expose their children to their own interests and encourage each child to learn about a wide variety of subjects, such as art, nature, music, and sports, in addition to traditional academic subjects.
- **Speak and listen to your child with consideration and respect.** From the time he or she can talk, a gifted child is constantly asking questions and will often challenge authority. "Do it because I said so" often doesn't work well. Generally, a gifted child will cooperate more with parents who take the time to explain requests.
- **Teach your child how to find information and resources in a variety of ways.** Gifted children need to know, to learn, to solve, and to ponder. There will be times when your child's expertise on a topic will be greater than yours, and you will not be able to provide answers or solutions. Prepare them for the future!
- **Become involved in a local, state, or regional parent group, or join an e-mail listserv.** Parents of gifted children need opportunities to share, and many of them are great teachers!
- **Be a knowledgeable advocate.** The brighter the child, the greater his or her emotional complexity and potential vulnerability. Approach schools in a positive, cooperative manner.
- **Be a vocal advocate!** Federal, state and local government agencies need to hear your voice... OFTEN... about the need for continued support for and expansion of gifted education opportunities in our schools.
- **The key to raising gifted children is to respect their uniqueness, their opinions and ideas, and their dreams.** It can be painful for parents when their children feel out of sync with others, but it is unwise to put too much emphasis on the importance of fitting in. Children get enough of that message in the outside world. At home they need acceptance and appreciation for being themselves.

Adapted from S. Berger's *Keys to Raising a Gifted Child*. Learning Network, <http://familyeducation.com>