

Basic Facts About The Gifted and Academically Talented



Why is the moon a different shape than it was on Tuesday?" "Why don't frogs have fur?" "If I rode on a beam of sunlight, what would the world look like?"

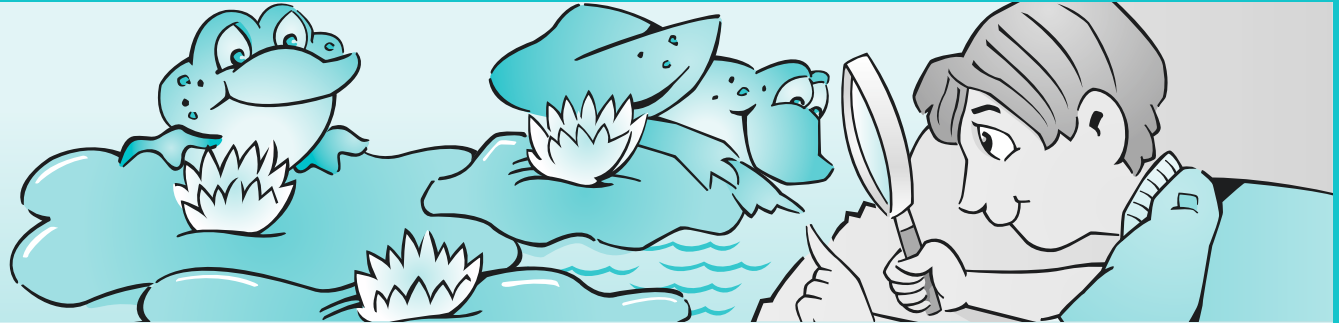
Gifted and academically talented children might seem to be every parent's dream. But they present real challenges. They are often as misunderstood as children with learning problems.

Here are some common myths—and the facts—about gifted children. You'll also find tips on how you can nurture your gifted child.

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MYTHS & FACTS ABOUT GIFTED CHILDREN



Here are some common myths—and the actual facts—about gifted children.

MYTH #1

Gifted children are always good students.

FACT: Some are. But some may also earn low grades. Gifted children need to learn the importance of hard work and effort. *Having* ability is not the same as *using* it.

MYTH #2

Gifted children may have strong academic skills, but they don't get along well with other children.

FACT: Not true. Most gifted students are also skilled socially. Gifted children do, however, enjoy spending time with other academically able students, in class or outside of it.



MYTH #3

Gifted children should be straight-A students.

FACT: False. There are many ways to be gifted. A child talented in math, for example, may not be equally talented in reading. Parents and schools should not set overly high expectations. Gifted and talented children, like all children, want to please. They, too, become discouraged and feel like failures if they cannot live up to expectations.

MYTH #4

Gifted children will do fine without any special attention.

FACT: Wrong. Gifted children *do* need special attention. They are demanding at home and at school. Their interests can be intense. They ask many questions. They can be impatient. They can be quick to question authority. They are often messy. It's important to know how to deal with these problems. All children deserve appropriate help to make the most of their talents.

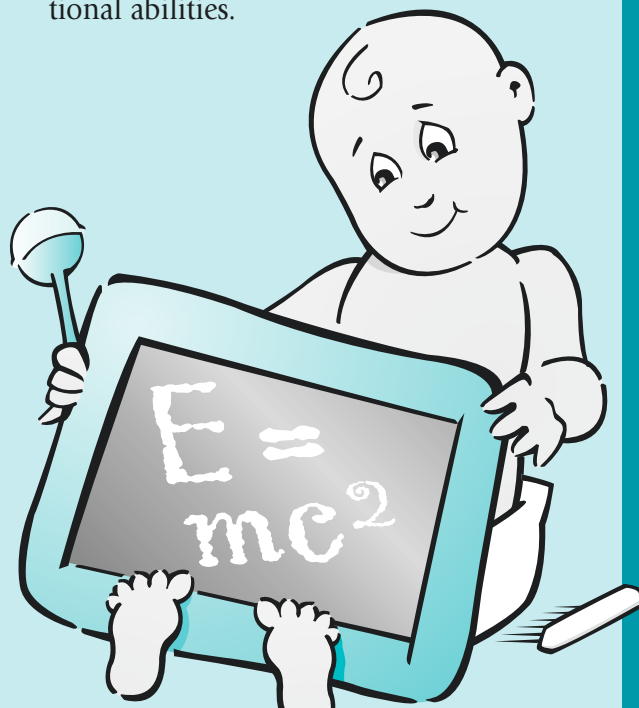
Is Your Child Gifted?

Every child has different strengths and abilities. Today some experts believe that *every* child is gifted. They say every child has unique strengths.

But children who are considered academically gifted and talented are those children whose exceptional talents and abilities set them well apart from others their age.

Parents usually first notice special abilities at home. The child learns to talk or read very early. Or write. Or calculate. Or all those things. Gifted children are very curious. They demand a lot of attention.

Schools use tests to identify the gifted and talented. They have trained specialists evaluate children. Using set standards, schools can identify children with exceptional abilities.



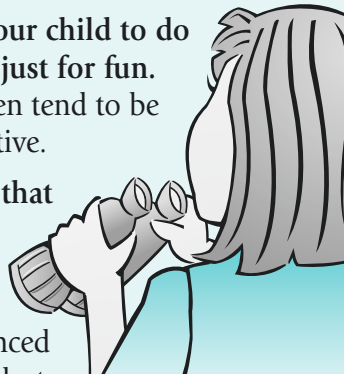
Coping With a Gifted Child

- **Give your child every chance to nurture her gifts.** The school will do what it can. But your child will also need stimulating activities outside of school. These are not always expensive. They will require some of your time. Your child's teacher may be able to suggest good activities.



- **Encourage your child to do some things just for fun.** Gifted children tend to be very competitive.

- **Don't forget that your gifted child is still a child.** She may be advanced academically but has normal emotional growth. Don't expect adult judgment or maturity just because your child has some adult abilities.



- **Don't let your gifted child consume most of the family's time and attention.** Other children need attention, too. You also need to take care of your own emotional needs.
- **Accept that your child may not develop her talents the same way you might.** Set reasonable expectations. Provide support. Don't insist that she study or practice your way. That's a struggle you're almost certain to lose.

Should a Gifted Child Be Moved Ahead?

Should a gifted child be advanced in school? It depends upon the student. Many who are moved ahead in school do not suffer academically. In fact, they may be more interested and enthusiastic about school.

But acceleration is usually not good for students who are physically or emotionally immature. The child should be willing. He should not be pushed into the process by adults. Teachers and administrators should approve. Fellow students should be tolerant and friendly.

It is often better to advance students in one or two subjects. But be sure advancement is also an option in the future. Otherwise, a student could end up repeating material in a later year.

Parents and Schools Face The Challenge Together

Parents and schools are both responsible for educating children. Neither can do the job alone. The best thing you can do is to stay in touch with your school. You know your child better than your school ever can. You know his interests, hopes, fears and dreams. Your school knows how your child is doing in class. You need to *combine* your knowledge and develop plans jointly. Working together with your school, you can help your child get the best education available to use his special talents to the fullest.

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