

MODERN RULES FOR PARENTING A GIFTED CHILD

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In years past, caring for a gifted child usually meant measuring them based on one IQ test and assigning them to a specific study program. Today, there's greater understanding that ***each child's potential grows over time based on their experiences and activities***, and flexibility allows parents and schools to adapt to their individual needs.

If you're the parent of a gifted child, it's important to develop a plan to manage the rewards and challenges ahead. Try these tips that have helped other families with similar situations.

Parenting Tips to Use at Home

- 1. Watch for clues.** *By spotting the early signs of advanced cognitive development, you can help your child benefit.* They may need to sleep less than other babies and reach milestones like counting and reading earlier. You may also notice their strong language skills and keen memory.
- 2. Seek support.** A gifted child can place heavier demands on your time and energy. Let older siblings and family friends pitch in.
- 3. Show empathy.** Your child's uniqueness can make them less popular if they have trouble communicating with their peers or sharing their interests. Your child may also struggle with uneven development like knowing ideas they can't put into words yet.
- 4. Develop coping strategies.** While you're validating their experiences, you can

also offer practical suggestions. Role play what to do if they're asked to share a toy with another child or feeling bored in class.

5. **Listen attentively. Reassure your child that it's okay to be different.** Be enthusiastic when they tell you about their latest projects and discoveries.
6. **Screen stuff out.** Gifted children tend to be sensitive and alert. You may need to protect them from disturbing stories on the evening news.
7. **Explain the rules.** You're likely to receive more cooperation if you explain the reasons for going to bed early and picking up your toys. Family meetings are an excellent forum for such discussions.
8. **Step back.** Offer your child opportunities to assume more responsibility and make their own choices as appropriate. *Ensure they're comfortable skipping a grade or going away to science camp.*
9. **Be patient.** Even if your child solves calculus problems faster than you, they're still a child. Expect tantrums and imaginary friends.

Parenting Tips to Use at School

1. **Talk with teachers.** Meet with your child's teachers as soon as possible so you can share your insights and pool your observations. *Coordinating your efforts maximizes your chances for success.*
2. **Connect with other parents.** Remember that there are many other families like yours. You can learn from their experiences and support each other. You can also be a more powerful advocate for your children when you unite your

efforts.

3. **Understand acceleration and enrichment.** Acceleration and enrichment are different educational approaches that work well together. Enrichment refers to making the curriculum more challenging, while acceleration means skipping a grade or otherwise moving faster through the educational system. Be open to trying both.

4. **Volunteer your services.** Many schools have limited resources. Show your appreciation by contributing your time or donating supplies. You'll be enhancing relationships that are important for your child's education.

5. **Promote friendships.** *While you're teaching your child to treat each individual with respect and kindness, it's also a good idea to introduce them to peers who they can identify with.* Be willing to drive across town each week if they want to join a chess club and hang out at a diner afterwards.

As a parent, you know your gifted child is a blessing who also requires a lot of work on your part. Plan ahead so you're prepared to give them the love, encouragement, and support they need to flourish.