

How Do I Work with My Child's School?

Winter Super Saturdays 2014 Parent Seminar

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BE INFORMED...

1. Know the facts

1. About your child
 - Strengths and weaknesses
 - Objective data: achievement test results, ability test results, etc.
 - Anecdotes and examples of work done at home or in extracurricular activities
2. About gifted children in general
 - Characteristics
 - Asynchronous development
 - Needs: social, emotional, and cognitive
3. About gifted education
 - Myths
 - Effective strategies
 - Reports
 - ^ *A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students*
 - ^ *Talent on the Sidelines: Excellence Gaps and America's Persistent Talent Underclass*
4. About gifted education in the district and the school
 - State law, regulations, and statutes
 - District policy
 - School policy
 - SBDM policies
 - Identification procedures
 - Services offered
5. About the terminology
 - *Nurturing Our Future* pamphlet
 - *Communicating Effectively with Your Gifted Child's School* article

2. Know your rights

1. *Gifted Children's Bill of Rights*
2. Gifted Regulation
 - Identification
 - Primary Talent Pool vs. Formal Identification
 - Gifted Student Service Plan
 - Services
3. Other regulations
 - Early Entrance to Kindergarten
 - Educational Enhancement

3. Know the protocol

1. Teacher
2. Gifted and Talented Teacher
3. Principal
4. Gifted Coordinator at Central Office
5. Superintendent

4. Know how to communicate effectively

1. The wish list
2. Understanding the educator
 - Lack of formal training
 - Differentiation for struggling learners
 - Belief in the myths
 - Emphasis on accountability and high-stakes testing
3. Formal versus informal
4. The conference
 - Suggestions for Effective Conferences (Whitney & Hirsch, 2011)
 - ^ Control your emotions.
 - ^ Thank one another for taking the time to meet.
 - ^ Listen first.
 - ^ Make eye contact.
 - ^ Wait before you respond.
 - ^ Paraphrase.
 - ^ Be courteous.
 - ^ Stress “we,” not “you.”
 - ^ Keep an open mind.
 - ^ Write a note of thanks to the teacher that summarizes the key points of your discussion and the decisions or agreements that were made.
 - ^ Understand that you will probably need more conferences.
 - Tips for Your Gifted Kids' Parent-Teacher Conferences (Berger, 2014)
 - ^ Plan ahead.
 - ^ Establish a feeling of teamwork.
 - ^ Listen carefully for positive and negative ways the teacher describes your child.
 - ^ Clarify expectations – yours and the teacher's.
 - ^ Don't assume that the teacher has a great deal of experience with educating gifted children.
 - Tips for Talking to Teachers (Walker, 2012)
 - ^ Make an appointment. Don't just drop in.
 - ^ Document what your child has done, said, or read.
 - ^ Plan what you're going to say.
 - ^ Choose your words carefully. Try to start with something positive.
 - ^ Build a partnership and negotiate solutions. Work as a team.
 - ^ Be diplomatic, tactful, and respectful.
 - ^ Focus on what your child needs.
 - ^ Listen.
 - ^ Bring along your sense of humor.
 - ^ Summarize what you have discussed and a time line. Plan a follow-up meeting.

5. Know the questions to ask

1. Questions Parents of Gifted Children Should Ask Schools (Gallagher, 1998)
 - What services are available for gifted students in this school and school system, and what are the goals of such services?
 - How much time each week will my child spend in the gifted education program or receive services?
 - Have the teachers in the gifted education program received specialized training?
 - Has my child received an assessment?
 - Are there specialized materials (e.g., software) used in the gifted education program or services?
 - How will the school know if the gifted education program or services are working?
 - How can I help the program?

2. Important Questions to Ask the Teacher (Berger, 2014)
 - What are your academic goals for the year?
 - What do you see as my child's strengths? Can you give me some examples?
 - What are some areas that my child needs to work on?
 - How would you evaluate my child's learning profile?
 - How can I help?

6. Know how to partner

1. Volunteer
2. Acknowledge varied perspectives
3. Listen
4. Share information and opportunities
5. KAGE <http://www.kagegifted.org/>
 - Be a member
 - Encourage teachers and school to be members
 - Give individual or institutional memberships

Resources

- Berger, S. (2014). Tips for your gifted kids' parent-teacher conferences. *familyeducation*. Retrieved from <http://school.familyeducation.com/gifted-education/parent-teacher-conferences/38665.html>
- Colangelo, N., Assouline, S. G., & Gross, M. U. M. (2004). *A nation deceived: How schools hold back America's brightest students* (Vol. 1). Iowa City: The University of Iowa, The Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development. Retrieved from http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/nation_deceived/
- Plucker, P., Hardesty, J., & Burroughs, N. (2014). *Talent on the sidelines: Excellence gaps and America's persistent talent underclass*. Storrs, CT: Center for education Policy Analysis. Retrieved from http://cepa.uconn.edu/uconncepa/assets/File/AG/excellence2013/Excellence%20Gap%2010%2018%2013_JP_LK.pdf
- Rimm, S. (1994). *Keys to parenting the gifted child*. New York, NY: Barron's Educational Services, Inc.
- Shoplik, A. (2009-10). *Tips for parents: Advocacy – working with your child's school*. Davidson Institute for Talent Development. Retrieved from http://www.davidsongifted.org/db/Articles_id_10558.aspx
- Walker, S. Y. (2002). *The survival guide for parents of gifted kids: How to understand, live with, and stick up for your gifted child*. Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.
- Whitney, C. S., & Hirsch, G. (2011). *Helping gifted children soar: A practical guide for parents and teachers* (2nd ed.) Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.