

Parent's Page

Parenting gifted children is one of life's greatest challenges. Fortunately, these children are not randomly distributed. They are usually given to parents who have the internal resources (if not the external resources) to deal with them. The first lesson to be learned is that you're as smart as they are, so don't be intimidated by finding out your child is gifted. Our research at the Gifted Child Development Center indicates that parents are usually within 10 IQ points of their children. We also have found that siblings are usually within 10 IQ points of each other, so don't worry about how your gifted child will affect the lives of your "non gifted" children. The chances are, if one of your children is identified as gifted, all of your children are gifted. Knowing this will help the family dynamics enormously (although it does little for your pocketbook). It deters your second child and your gifted daughter from hiding their abilities for the rest of their lives. It's harder to say, "I can't..." when you know that your parents know that you can.

Gifted children are expensive and time consuming. They usually need less sleep than you do, ask more questions than you can answer, want 100 percent of your attention 24 hours a day, have obsessive hobbies, are not stimulated by school curriculum, react intensively to everything, endlessly long for a best friend who understands them completely, hold perfectionist standards for themselves and you, want to know the meaning of life when other children only want to know how to tie their shoes, and keep their bedrooms in a condition you can never show company. If you have three or more of them and there's only one or two of you, you're outnumbered. In order to be a perfect parent, you need unlimited funds, unlimited patience, an encyclopedic mind, and someone to sleep for you.

But don't despair. Gifted children grow up even better with imperfect parents than with perfect ones. Eminent adults rarely come from peaceful homes where all their needs are met; they came from families that exploded and made up often; that shared their interests; that stimulated their thinking; that recognized and encouraged their abilities; that loved them a whole lot; and that had faith in them. If you find yourself exhausted, remember that some day your daughter the doctor or your son the artist will have you to thank. No matter what schools you put them in, it is their home life that determines what they do with their lives. Trust your intuitive judgment about their needs; no one knows them better than you do. Gifted children really enrich your family life. They have a great sense of humor and their development is so remarkable that they're exciting to watch grow. They grow up fast, so enjoy their childhood while you can.

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<http://www.gifteddevelopment.net/xcart/product.php?productid=16267&cat=260&page=1>