

Nurturing Your Gifted Child at Home

Gifted students need opportunities in each academic area to practice higher-level thinking skills (analysis, synthesis, evaluation), develop creativity, and enhance their problem-solving skills. But their need for this challenge doesn't stop at the end of the school day. These skills can be encouraged significantly at home. Best of all, you can do it simply and informally, without your child even realizing what is happening!

Here are some ideas you might try:

- Ask him/her to compare or contrast the characters in a movie or Tv show that you have watched together.
- Choose a common household object-perhaps a flyswatter- and ask: 'How do you think this could be improved?' or "What else could this be used for?"
- Encourage some creative brainstorming while riding in the car by asking your child to name as many things he/she can think of that: _____. You fill in the blank! Be creative with your request and encourage your child to think beyond the obvious. For example, name: Things that run and what makes them run (gas makes a car run, a cold makes your nose run, the dream of a gold medal makes an Olympic athlete run...)
- Ask your child for his/her thoughts on a current issue while watching a news program or looking at news outlets online. "Do you think the judge made a fair ruling in that case?", "Why or why not?", "How do you predict that this will affect future cases?", "How could this event could have turned out differently?", "What if this event happened 100 years ago?" Be sure to listen to your child's opinion and encourage them to provide evidence their thought process.
- As your child is reading or you are reading with your child, stop before the end. Ask him/her to create an original ending or to predict what may happen.
- Ask your child to explain a preference that he or she has. For example, "Why do you like soccer better than baseball?"
- Don't discourage questions! Your gifted child probably hits you with innumerable amounts of questions daily. Try to answer as many as you can together by using the resources that you have on hand. Show enthusiasm for the questions and for finding the answers. Make it an adventure!
- Involve your child in as many hands-on activities as possible. If his or her science class is studying osmosis, do an at-home experiment. Even better, let him or her brainstorm how this concept could be illustrated visually with common household items.
- Play games with your child. Chess, Checkers, Pictionary, Scattergories, 20 questions or any other games that involve strategic thinking and creativity.
- Ask your child the following questions about a novel he or she is reading:
 - What challenges does the main character face? How does this compare with your challenges?
 - How does the main character change in the novel? What is significant about this change?
 - Why did the author write the novel? For what audience did the author write the novel?
 - What impact does the author intend that the book have on the reader?
 - Why did the author set the novel in _____?
- Plan with your child- involve him or her in planning for the weekly family calendar, family trip or summer camps in which they may be interested.