

Having a gifted child can be a life altering experience for the entire family. After all, profoundly and exceptionally gifted children will likely be smarter than Mom and Dad at a young age. These children function at a much older intellectual level, but they are still in a child's body which can be an adjustment for everyone in the family.

Myths About Gifted Children



You've Myths about giftedness permeate our culture. The prevalence of these myths can result in a variety of problems for you as the parent of a gifted child and for your child. Among the most common myths are the following;

1. "Every child is gifted"
2. "Gifted children are easy to raise"
3. "Gifted children are nerds and geeks"
4. "Gifted children are strangely manipulative and grow up to be white-collar criminals"
5. "Gifted children are so intensely emotional that they cannot exist in the real world. Often they commit suicide because they feel so tortured"

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Society flourishes and moves forward because of individuals who have a vision, genius, or talent that enhances or improves our understanding of ourselves and of the world. To create a context where this can happen, it is imperative that talent, creativity, and genius be discovered and nurtured in our children. Schooling and the understanding of child development are the keys to developing gifted potential.

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Identifying gifted children isn't just about high IQ scores. Parents and educators alike must also look at the student's classroom work, achievements and classroom observations with respect to other children that are his or her age.

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Unfortunately, gifted education is neglected. The development of gifted children puzzles and concerns parents, educators, psychologists, and other mental health professionals.

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General confusion about which children are really gifted stems from both the prevalent myths and the fact that there is no working definition of giftedness. Clearly, and unequivocally, giftedness is today misunderstood misused as a psychological educational construct by parents and educators.

A General Definition of Giftedness

Since psychology became recognized as a science in the 1850's, psychologists have tried to demonstrate the existence of giftedness as a psychological phenomenon. Researchers have used twin studies for more than 150 years to prove that giftedness not only exists, but that intellectual potential is genetically determined. Although there are flaws in this genetic research, there are nonetheless conclusive indications that intellectual potential has roots in the child's genetic endowment. Culture, environment, and parenting, contribute significantly to the giftedness laid down in the child's genetic makeup.

Just as researchers disagree about what makes a child gifted, so do parents and educators. When I talk to persuasive and positive parents, I can totally understand why some have difficulty getting a grip on what is distinctive about a gifted child.

Only the top 2 percent of children on the bell curve qualify as gifted, while only 1 in 100 is considered highly gifted. But another part of me, the "grandmom about town," knows that her words have a ring of truth if you hear them through the perspective of positive or naive parents.

Why do most parents want to believe their child or children are gifted? This leap of faith is natural, healthy, and well meaning. Parents should believe in their children. From a psychological perspective, our children represent our hopes and dreams.

By believing in your child, in essence, you believe in yourself and your capacity to create and nurture. Effective parents will at different times, see their son or daughter as talented, capable, brilliant, charming, and able to accomplish he or she wants to do.