

Myths and Truths About Gifted Kids...



Being gifted isn't always a bowl of cherries. Gifted kids are often misunderstood by their teachers, classmates and even their parents! To help you better understand your child's talents, the Council for Exceptional Children has identified a few of the most common myths and surprising truths about giftedness.

Myths:

- ◆ Gifted kids can accomplish anything they put their minds to, they just have to apply themselves.
- ◆ Gifted kids have fewer problems than others; they do not need or deserve extra time and attention.
- ◆ Gifted kids are self-directed, they know where they are heading.
- ◆ Gifted underachievers just need to try harder and get organized.
- ◆ The primary value of the gifted child is in his or her brainpower.
- ◆ A gifted child's family always prizes his or her abilities.
- ◆ Gifted kids need to serve as examples to others and they should always assume extra responsibility.
- ◆ All gifted kids are high achievers; they don't have to work for grades.
- ◆ Gifted kids don't need help with study skills, they can manage on their own.

Truths:

- ◆ Gifted kids are often perfectionists and idealistic and may equate achievement and grades with self-esteem and self-worth. This can lead to fear of failure and can interfere with their achievement in and out of school.
- ◆ The social and emotional development of a gifted child may not be at the same level as their intellectual development.
- ◆ Gifted kids may experience heightened sensitivity to their own expectations and those of others, producing constant guilt over achievements or grades perceived to be low.
- ◆ Some gifted kids are "mappers" (sequential learners) while others are "leapers" (spatial learners). Leapers often can't say how they got a "right answer." Mappers may get lost in the steps leading to the right answer.
- ◆ Gifted kids may be so far ahead of their chronological age mates that they know more than half the curriculum before the school year begins!
- ◆ Their boredom can result in low achievement and grades.
- ◆ In school, gifted kids may need real problems to work on in order to achieve at high levels.
- ◆ Gifted students often refuse to work for grades alone.
- ◆ Gifted kids often think abstractly and with such complexity that they may need help with study and test-taking skills. They can justify all the answers in a multiple-choice question, or skip reading test instructions because they are impatient.
- ◆ Gifted kids who do well in school may define success as getting an "A" and failure as any grade less than an "A." By early adolescence they may be unwilling to try anything where they are not certain of guaranteed success.

