



Gifted/Talented Programs Parent Newsletter

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LAUSD CORE BELIEFS: 1. Start with students, 2. Families are our partners, 3. Success in the classroom, 4. Diversity is our strength, 5. Effective teaching, leadership, and accountability are the

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How Parents Can Support Gifted Children

Linda Kreger Silverman

The following helpful hints for supporting your gifted child are excerpted from an article in the August 2012 newsletter from the California Association for the Gifted (CAG).

Responsive Parenting

Children learn first from their parents. Parents who spend time with their gifted child are more able to tune in to their child's interests and respond by offering appropriate educational enrichment opportunities. It is important that parents read to their children frequently, even when the children are capable of reading to themselves. In the early years, parents can help their children discover their personal interests, expose their children to their own interests, and encourage their children to learn about a wide variety of subjects such as art, nature, music, museums, and sports. Children who are attracted to a particular area need opportunities to explore that field in depth. Home stimulation and support of interests is vital to the development of talents. Following the lead of the child will help the child flourish.

Family Relationships

Gifted children often can exhaust and overwhelm a new mother and father. Gifted infants often sleep less than other babies and require extra stimulation when they are awake. It is helpful to have extended family in the home, grandparents who live nearby, a close community of friends or relatives, or a teenager in the neighborhood who can spend some time with the child so that the primary caretakers can get some rest to do other things. For single parents, such support is particularly important. From the time they can talk, gifted children are constantly asking questions and often challenge authority. "Do it because I said so" doesn't work with these children. Generally, parents who take the time to explain requests get more cooperation than do more authoritarian parents. If these children are spoken to and listened to with consideration and respect, they tend to respond respectfully. As children get older, a family meeting can be a good way of sharing responsibility and learning negotiation skills.

Family meetings can provide a forum where children have a voice as a family member, and provide avenues for avoiding power struggles that otherwise can occur. It is important for gifted children to feel emotionally supported by the family—even when there are disagreements.

Parent Advocacy

Gifted children need strong, responsible advocates, and parent groups can make a difference. It takes persistence of large groups of parents to assure that provisions for gifted children are kept firmly in place. Parents of children who are gifted need opportunities to share parenting experiences with each other, and parent groups can provide a place where that can happen. It is important for parents of any children with special needs to meet with the teachers early in the school year. When parents and teachers work together, appropriate programs can be developed and problems can be caught early. It is helpful for parents to offer to assist their child's teacher by making or locating supplemental materials, helping in the classroom or library, offering expertise to small groups of students, or finding others who can provide other enrichment experiences. Effective parents stay involved in their children's education and informed about gifted education in general. When a teacher makes a special effort to understand or assist a gifted child, a note to the teacher or to the principal is generally appreciated.

Conclusion

The key to raising gifted children is respect: respect for their uniqueness, respect for their opinions and ideas, respect for their dreams. Gifted children need parents who are responsive and flexible, who will go to bat for them when they are too young to do so for themselves. It is painful for parents to watch their children feeling out of sync with others, but it is unwise to emphasize too greatly the importance of fitting in. Children get enough of that message in the outside world. At home, children need to know that their uniqueness is cherished and that they are appreciated as persons just for being themselves.

Join CAG's mailing list (www.cagified.org) to receive information and updates related to GATE.



Why Gifted Programs?

The District's instructional programs for gifted and talented students are based on the principles that all students are to receive an education

appropriate to their individual capabilities, interests, and needs, and that students have learning opportunities that help develop their abilities to the highest level. Because gifted and talented students generally demonstrate high performance beyond age/grade expectations, they are atypical learners who require specialized learning experiences beyond the regular classroom.

Why are gifted and talented programs important?

• Research shows that gifted education strategies (i.e. clustering, acceleration, curriculum compacting, etc.) result in higher achievement for gifted learners; these strategies benefit gifted students longitudinally (i.e. students are "college prepared and career ready"). Additionally, strategies such as flexible grouping and curricular enrichment have a "spillover" effect to other students in the classroom.

• Gifted education programs and strategies are effective at serving gifted and high-ability students in a variety of educational settings and from diverse ethnic and socioeconomic populations; Gifted education pedagogy can also reverse able underachievement for these students.

• Teachers and administrators need specialized professional development in meeting the academic and social-emotional needs of gifted students. A strong GATE program ensures that teachers and administrators of the gifted are appropriately trained to identify the characteristics of gifted learners (including those from underrepresented populations) and to differentiate instruction and assessment to meet their needs.

Adapted from www.lausd.net/gate and www.nagc.org.

For more information, read *Research That Supports the Need for and Benefits of Gifted Education* from the National Association for Gifted Children (Reis, 2008).

2012 OLSAT Results

1,272 second grade students were identified as gifted in the High Achievement category (350 more than the year before)!



GATE Program Options

Programs are offered to students who require an environment which encourages extremely high levels of abstract thinking, motivation, interest, achievement, peer interaction, and a radically accelerated pace of learning. Acceptance is based on eligibility criteria, availability of space, and any specific conditions unique to the school. The following lists the program opportunities in LAUSD for GATE students:

*Regular community schools include a cluster program for gifted students

*Schools for Advanced Studies (SAS)

*Magnets for gifted and highly gifted students

*Saturday Conservatory of Fine Arts

*Honors and Advanced Placement classes (middle and senior high schools)

Check with your local school about GATE program offered.

Mark Your Calendars!



- **September 7:** Application deadline for new and returning students for the Saturday Conservatory of Fine Arts
- **October 6:** Registration for returning students for Saturday Conservatory of Fine Arts, Cal State LA
- **October 8:** Applications will be available for Magnet, PWT and NCLB-PSC Programs for the 2013-2014 school year. Apply online at echoices.lausd.net. Applications will also be available at school sites and at public libraries
- **October 13:** Registration for new students accepted into the Saturday Conservatory of Fine Arts, Cal State LA.
- **November 16:** Application deadline for Magnet, PWT and NCLB-PSC Programs for the 2013-2014 school year
- **December 15:** City/County GATE Conference at the Pasadena Convention Center—"Differentiation in the 21st Century: Shift Happens." Registration will be available soon at www.centralcities.org (fee required)

GATE/SAS Parent Workshops
5:30 pm-7:30 pm

- **January 28:** Grant HS (ESC North)
- **February 4:** Westchester HS (ESC West)
- **February 11:** Lincoln HS (ESC East)
- **February 21:** Banning HS (ESC South)

Spring GATE/SAS Parent Conference
(date and location TBD)

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