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Celebrate

Your Child's Special Abilities, Interests, and Talents



Celebrate Your Child's Special Abilities, Interests, and Talents

School districts have many programs designed to help children reach their full potential. The ability to match students with programs that meet their needs, however, requires information that might not necessarily be captured by tests and schoolwork, especially in the early grades.

Parents have a unique perspective outside of the classroom that can help teachers and administrators discover a child's strengths and unique learning needs. This set of materials has been designed to initiate a dialogue between parents and teachers. As a parent, you can identify key behaviors in your child and share this information with the school to ensure your child receives appropriate services.

These cards provide examples of certain characteristics that have been identified as important to a child's school performance. Many of these traits can be related to one another. Further, these characteristics are only some of the behaviors that the school will want to know about. Talk with your child's teachers concerning other behaviors you observe that you feel might indicate special abilities, interests, and/or talents.

The best way to keep track of your child's behavior is with a written record that you can share with teachers. It is not important to write down full sentences or ideas, just enough to recall later during your conversation. A printed form has been provided for your notes.

Teachers want to meet your child's needs. Working with them and making sure they have the information they need will improve the chances that your child has a happy and successful school experience. Celebrate the unique qualities you discover in your child! Share what you learn with your child's teachers!

Equity in Gifted / Talented Education



Texas Education Agency

For more information, contact the Texas Education Agency,
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Curiosity

Most children are curious about their environments, but some are more so than others. Some behavioral characteristics of a highly curious child include the following:

- **Asking questions constantly about anything and everything**
- **Possessing a good deal of intellectual playfulness, making up imaginary playmates or colorful stories**
- **Starting questions with, “I wonder what would happen if . . .”**
- **Manipulating, changing, and elaborating on ideas**
- **Concerning herself with adapting, improving, and modifying her environment and objects that surround her**

This type of curiosity can sometimes get the child into trouble, like when he gets into Dad’s tool box or takes apart a household object “just to see how it works.” A curious child’s constant questions can also become frustrating for adults, but this behavior is worth noting.

ENERGY



Does your child have above-average physical and mental stamina and/or appear to be tireless?

Energy

Having a child who never seems to sit still may be frustrating at times, but his energy may indicate special learning needs and abilities. For instance, some parents may find that their child does not need much encouragement to accomplish things or complete projects that tap into the child's passion. He might be characterized by the following descriptions:

- Risk-taker
- Adventurous
- Popular with peers
- Leader of many social activities

A high-energy child may seem to possess more mental and physical stamina than his peers. The same child may (or may not) also be well-coordinated and enjoy all sorts of games and sports.

CURIOSITY



Does your child ask many unexpected questions, utilize a variety of resources, and/or take more intellectual risks than his peers?

Persistence

Some children have difficulty moving on from specific problems, tasks, or topics until they feel satisfied they have solved the puzzle or found an answer. A persistent child tends to display the following characteristics:

- Easily bored with routine jobs
- Drawn to complex and complicated tasks of his own choosing that often appear to be “over his head”
- Responsible (he can be counted on to do what he’s promised and usually do it well)
- Focused on perfectionism
- Self-critical and not easily satisfied with his own speed or accomplishments
- Tenacious, continuing with tasks when others have quit
- Ambitious with a “can-do” attitude

Your child may keep collections, draw pictures with many careful details, or have a long-term interest in a particular topic or task.

ENTHUSIASM



Does your child demonstrate a high degree of interest and excitement in work and play?

Enthusiasm

A child's enthusiasm can manifest in many ways. An enthusiastic child often displays some or all of the following:

- **A keen sense of humor and the ability to see humor in situations where others may not**
- **Assertiveness (sometimes even aggressiveness) about her beliefs**
- **The capacity to generate many ideas**
- **Questioning right and wrong or worries about social issues**
- **An eagerness to participate in some activities that peers do not like (i.e. chess, conversations with adults)**
- **Taking on the role of the "cheerleader"; encouraging others to join in activities**

Your child may show pronounced enthusiasm and display that enthusiasm in various ways. An awareness of this characteristic can help teachers tap into the interests and passions that move your child to succeed in the classroom and in life.

PERSISTENCE



Does your child rarely get discouraged, stick to tasks for long periods of time, and/or show strong determination when challenged?

Interest in Adult Issues

A child may possess a storehouse of information about topics that go beyond the usual interests of other children her age. This child might do the following:

- Display interest in adult problems such as the environment, politics, religion, or ethnic issues
- Have older friends
- Spend time listening to adults talking
- Show interest in current events

Your child's teachers will want to know if your child asks questions that show an interest in news events or adult issues. This information can help a teacher connect the lesson to your child's passions.

Stock Market

Business & Economy

Problem-Solving and Reasoning Ability



Does your child find unique ways to solve everyday problems, think things through carefully and thoroughly, or use more logical, rational thought processes than his peers?

Problem-Solving and Reasoning Ability

A child may possess the ability to solve problems easily. Here are some examples of characteristics a problem-solver might have:

- Identifying the reasons something happened
- Demonstrating a natural curiosity to find out the “how” and “why” of things
- Seeing the “big picture” easily
- Noticing how things are alike or different
- Coming up with a large number of ideas as possible solutions
- Trying to understand complicated material by separating it into parts
- Possessing the ability to develop logical and common sense answers

A child with good problem-solving and reasoning abilities will sometimes tackle questions or problems that seem complicated or beyond his age-level. For example, he may figure out how to fix broken toys or find ways to keep his younger siblings occupied for long periods. Many times, parents are surprised by the kinds of problems their child is capable of solving.

Interest in Adult Issues



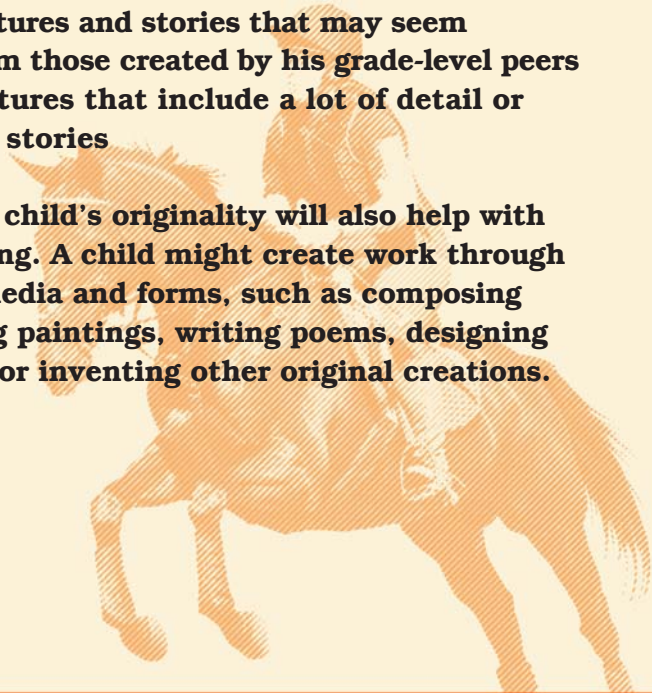
Does your child hold a mature perspective in conversation and raise provocative questions about current events or historical episodes?

Originality

A child may express ideas in a variety of unique and unusual ways including the following:

- **Playing with words and making up riddles**
- **Using ordinary terms in unusual ways**
- **Creating pictures and stories that may seem different from those created by his grade-level peers**
- **Drawing pictures that include a lot of detail or tell unusual stories**

Many times a child's originality will also help with problem-solving. A child might create work through a variety of media and forms, such as composing songs, making paintings, writing poems, designing experiments, or inventing other original creations.



Sensitivity



Does your child demonstrate a deep understanding and compassion for others?

Sensitivity

A child's sensitivity may be demonstrated through the following:

- An unusual degree of self-awareness
- A greater awareness of her own and other people's feelings
- A non-conforming persona (having no fear of being different)
- Being judgmental of other people, places, and things

She may also display a keen sense of economic, religious, racial, or gender-related barriers.

A sensitive child may stick up for another child who is being picked on by the group or may seem overly sensitive to criticism that a parent or a playmate might make.

Sometimes others may mistake this sensitivity for immaturity or weakness.

ORIGINALITY



Does your child use uncommon combinations of materials to produce products and/or process ideas in unique ways?