

Preparing to Approach the School

Getting what is
best for the child
and keeping the
teachers on
side.....



Identification

You know your child – they grew up with
you

Gather together information about what your
child can do – samples of drawing or writing,
anecdotes, the sort of things they are
reading or doing

Parent nomination forms or checklists

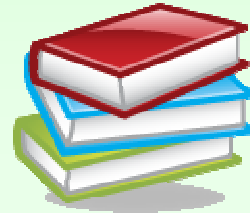
Know your child's strengths and relative
weaknesses

**Identification doesn't end when they start
school....**

Become Informed

Read widely

Read up on specific issues including
social and emotional issues and
acceleration



What to take

Examples of the things your child has
done

Records – developmental milestones

Psych report and other data

Your list of priorities

Psych report

Much more than just a score

Subtests will give you info about learning preferences, relative strengths

The score should be considered a minimum.

Things that can depress the score include anxiety, illness, undiagnosed issues including vision issues

How likely is the school to understand what it says?

How can you make best use of it?

What should I ask for?

What is important to you and your family?

Educational requests - social peers, intellectual challenge

Social and intellectual needs cant be separated

Establish your priorities
Reforming Gifted Education

Working out what they can do – off level tests may be needed

What if they aren't showing their ability in school?

Meeting with the school

The first meeting is often the most
important

ALWAYS make an appointment

Try to establish who else will be at the
meeting (so you know what to expect)

If possible, take someone else with you
to the meeting

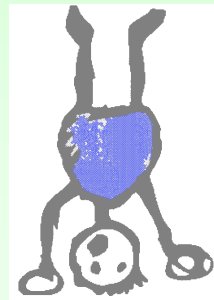
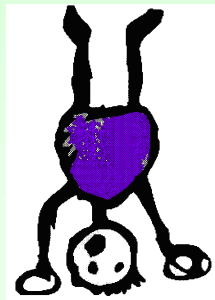
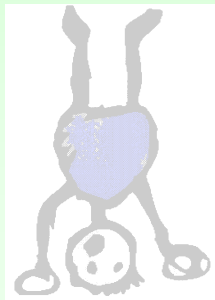
Be clear about what you want to
discuss, but be flexible

Some things to remember.....

- It is rare for teachers to have training in gifted issues
- They have their own perspective on your child (the one they see at school may be different to the one you see at home)
- They will have the child's best interests at heart even if their view doesn't match yours

Collaboration

Each person brings a different piece of
the puzzle.

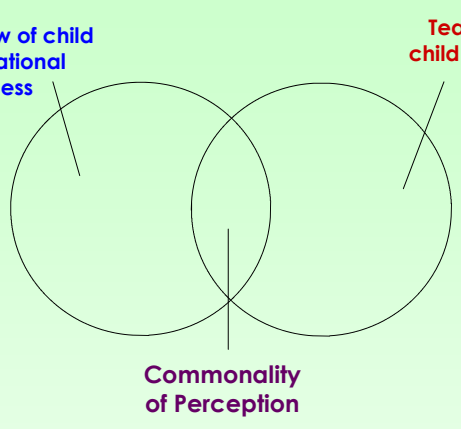


Why problems may arise.....

Parent view of child &
educational process

Teacher view of child
& educational process

Parent and teacher each have a different view of
the child. Each may view the other as antagonistic,
and believe that his/her own views are correct.
Predictably, conflict over which view is correct may
result.



Parent view of child & educational process


Teacher view of child & educational process

Commonality of Perception


Parent and teacher relate as individuals working together. They share a healthy uniqueness of perceptions that can lead to mutually enriched and broadened perspectives on the child and the educational process.

When there's a problem in school by by Donald J. Treffinger and Marvin J. Fine 1979

A different child at home



Difficult behaviour at school – could be a call for help



Giftedness is never an excuse for bad behaviour.
BUT interpret with care!
Get the bigger picture.

Norm referencing

Occurs from a (mental) age of about 7 years.

Mildly gifted kids just before they are 6

Moderately gifted kids at about 5 ½

Highly gifted from about 5

Exceptionally gifted kids from about 4 ½

This helps explain how gifted children can be so hard to spot, even at a young age

Early Social Development

Early relationships are important for future development

Gifted children generally have better than average social skills

You cant learn social skills from people who don't have them....



Hints for Dealing with the School

Become known to the teacher/s in positive ways e.g. parent help (you can then watch your child in action)

When approaching teachers and schools always go with the attitude of "how can I help you?"

Discuss issues with the teacher where necessary – always make an appointment

Try to understand situations from the teacher's perspective

At the meeting

- Introduce yourself to anyone you are not familiar with
- Use a POSITIVE approach.
- Be well prepared. Take anything with you that you may need to refer to.
- Be persuasive
- Take notes about what is discussed
- Recap at the end of the meeting
- Set a date for a follow up meeting (if appropriate)

After the Meeting

Write a letter summarising what you understand was discussed or decided at the meeting. Post or email it to the school and ask that they respond if their view differs.

Keep a record of when you met and what was discussed, plus a copy of any correspondence



Send a Thank you note following a meeting with teachers the next day. Even if the meeting didn't go well, thank them for their time.

Be sincere.

It is really important to keep the lines of communication open and the relationship positive.

Tips for advocates.....

Be well informed

Share what you know

Be patient

Join with others

Become familiar with policy where
possible

Take a step back, analyse problems
rather than jumping in

Individual Education Plans

An IEP can be used for any student who requires a modified or significantly different program from his/her peers. It can be in one area or across many.

It is a 'living document' – it records what has been tried, is added to so it shows interventions over time, is handed on from class to class.

The 4 M's for IEP's

It must be

- **M**easurable
- **M**anageable
- **M**onitored
- must **M**odify

Measurable

Review progress and measure successes
Identify areas to still be developed

Manageable

Will the modifications take place in class or in a
withdrawal setting
Make sure modifications are timetabled for these
students

Monitored

by whom? Classroom teacher or co-ordinator?
How often? End of term? End of unit of work?
How will you feedback to parents?

Modifications

Identify a priority goal and from that specific strategies
should address strengths and weaknesses

Working Together

There is no 'I' in
team.....

Parents and teachers
or carers working in
partnership will
greatly enhance
the experience for
the children



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