BE INFORMED...

1. **Know the facts**
   1. **About your child**
      - Strengths and weaknesses
      - Objective data: achievement test results, ability test results, etc.
      - Anecdotes and examples of work done at home or in extracurricular activities
   2. **About gifted children in general**
      - Characteristics
      - Asynchronous development
      - Needs: social, emotional, and cognitive
   3. **About gifted education**
      - Myths
      - Effective strategies
      - Reports
        ^ *A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America’s Brightest Students*
        ^ *Talent on the Sidelines: Excellence Gaps and America’s Persistent Talent Underclass*
   4. **About gifted education in the district and the school**
      - State law, regulations, and statutes
      - District policy
      - School policy
      - SBDM policies
      - Identification procedures
      - Services offered
   5. **About the terminology**
      - *Nurturing Our Future* pamphlet
      - *Communicating Effectively with Your Gifted Child’s School* article

2. **Know your rights**
   1. *Gifted Children’s Bill of Rights*
   2. **Gifted Regulation**
      - Identification
      - Primary Talent Pool vs. Formal Identification
      - Gifted Student Service Plan
      - Services
   3. **Other regulations**
      - Early Entrance to Kindergarten
      - Educational Enhancement

3. **Know the protocol**
   1. Teacher
   2. Gifted and Talented Teacher
   3. Principal
   4. Gifted Coordinator at Central Office
   5. Superintendent
4. Know how to communicate effectively
   
1. The wish list
   
2. Understanding the educator
   - Lack of formal training
   - Differentiation for struggling learners
   - Belief in the myths
   - Emphasis on accountability and high-stakes testing

3. Formal versus informal

4. The conference
   - Suggestions for Effective Conferences (Whitney & Hirsch, 2011)
     - Control your emotions.
     - Thank one another for taking the time to meet.
     - Listen first.
     - Make eye contact.
     - Wait before you respond.
     - Paraphrase.
     - Be courteous.
     - Stress “we,” not “you.”
     - Keep an open mind.
     - Write a note of thanks to the teacher that summarizes the key points of your discussion and the decisions or agreements that were made.
     - Understand that you will probably need more conferences.

   - Tips for Your Gifted Kids’ Parent-Teacher Conferences (Berger, 2014)
     - Plan ahead.
     - Establish a feeling of teamwork.
     - Listen carefully for positive and negative ways the teacher describes your child.
     - Clarify expectations – yours and the teacher’s.
     - Don’t assume that the teacher has a great deal of experience with educating gifted children.

   - Tips for Talking to Teachers (Walker, 2012)
     - Make an appointment. Don’t just drop in.
     - Document what your child has done, said, or read.
     - Plan what you’re going to say.
     - Choose your words carefully. Try to start with something positive.
     - Build a partnership and negotiate solutions. Work as a team.
     - Be diplomatic, tactful, and respectful.
     - Focus on what your child needs.
     - Listen.
     - Bring along your sense of humor.
     - Summarize what you have discussed and a time line. Plan a follow-up meeting.

5. Know the questions to ask
   
1. Questions Parents of Gifted Children Should Ask Schools (Gallagher, 1998)
   - What services are available for gifted students in this school and school system, and what are the goals of such services?
   - How much time each week will my child spend in the gifted education program or receive services?
   - Have the teachers in the gifted education program received specialized training?
   - Has my child received an assessment?
   - Are there specialized materials (e.g., software) used in the gifted education program or services?
   - How will the school know if the gifted education program or services are working?
   - How can I help the program?
2. Important Questions to Ask the Teacher (Berger, 2014)
   • What are your academic goals for the year?
   • What do you see as my child’s strengths? Can you give me some examples?
   • What are some areas that my child needs to work on?
   • How would you evaluate my child’s learning profile?
   • How can I help?

6. Know how to partner
   1. Volunteer
   2. Acknowledge varied perspectives
   3. Listen
   4. Share information and opportunities
   5. KAGE http://www.kagegifted.org/
      • Be a member
      • Encourage teachers and school to be members
      • Give individual or institutional memberships

Resources


