

An Early Childhood Assessment Tool to Identify Young Gifted Children rev 9/2019

Dr. Sally Beisser, Ph.D. sally.beisser@drake.edu Drake University 3206 University Ave. Des Moines, IA 50311 515-271-4850 (o)	Linda Moehring, M.A. M.S. linda.moehring@gmail.com Greater Lisbon Christian Academy Lisbon, Portugal Skype: lindamoehring	Kala Sullivan, M.S.E. kmbarre@iastate.edu Iowa State University Preschool Lab Ames, IA 515-294-0789 (o) 641-799-6659 (c)
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The following information is a research-based tool to identify young gifted children in 10 areas to assess preschool and Kindergarten students. These areas are not mutually exclusive; some information may overlap, and some students will fall into multiple categories. Students only need to have one descriptor, though, to be considered gifted. This tool is based on 10 Descriptors of high Potentiality. Activities and prompts for each descriptor are designed to support identification of students including diverse learners, ESL/ELL students, and children in poverty. See *Optimal use of the Early Identification Tool*, at the end of this document, for information regarding data collection suggestions.

10 Descriptors of High Potentiality in Young Children

1. **Asynchronous development and/or self-critical behaviors**
2. **Early use of advanced vocabulary, complexity, and humor**
3. **Early literacy skills; interest in symbols**
4. **Excellent memory; retention from varied sources**
5. **Keen observation; curiosity and inquisitiveness**
6. **Intense interests examining and building; concentration; perseverance; enjoys tinkering**
7. **Strong critical thinking skills; organizational skills**
8. **Creativity; imaginative capacity**
9. **Ability to understand complex concepts; thinks abstractly**
10. **Early demonstration of talents in music, art, athletics, or the performing arts**

(Betts & Neihart, 2010; Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977; Gadzikowski, 2013; Kingore, 2001; National Kindergarten Alliance, 2014; Rogers, 2002; Ruf, 2009; Sayler, 1992; Slocumb & Payne, 2000; Teaching Strategies Gold-Assessments, 2014).

	DESCRIPTORS	EXPLANATIONS and ACTIVITIES	OBSERVATION – ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES
#1	Asynchronous development and/or Self-critical behaviors	Description: Asynchrony means uneven development; being out-of-sync within oneself or age mates and the expectations of the classroom, having heightened emotions and awareness, known as “overexcitabilities”, and being vulnerable, due developmental and psychological differences from the norm. May exhibit skills or maturity usually associated with older children; is sensitive to others’ feelings and shows distress at other children’s or adult distress. Reads body language. High need for fairness. Perfectionistic, hard on themselves, easily frustrated and critical of self and others.	Asynchronous behaviors in all cultures exist. Some cultures may view “overexcitabilities” as being “naughty” especially in a collectivist culture (Cherry, 2014) where goals of the group exceed goals of the individual. Look for evidence of social emotional imbalance such as kids who clearly know behavioral expectations but struggle with self-discipline and self-regulatory management.

	Descriptor #3	<p>how many ways they can organize the Cheerios into patterns; ask students how many items are in the various patterns.</p> <p>Provide Tangrams: Ask kids to make a picture using tangram shapes and to tell about it.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for early readers to safely demonstrate their abilities: Teach children to use iPads with recording apps and encourage them to record themselves “reading” to themselves, a stuffed animal, or their imaginary friend.</p> <p>Provide opportunities for early readers to read at the level they read at home: It is not unusual for students to mask their abilities. Ask parents about books or abilities that children display at home. Celebrate with a “bring a book from home day” and ask students to read the book or part of a book to you or into a recorder of some type. (e.g., Peter with Box Car Children.) In math, provide opportunities for students to share their higher -level skills (e.g., Lincoln explaining square roots.)</p>	encourage communication regarding symbol meaning.
#4	Excellent memory; retention from varied sources Intentional Activities for Descriptor #4	<p>Description: Good short and long-term memory; quick to provide facts, details, or stories related to complex events; learns quickly and recalls accurately words to songs, poems, stories or conversations; points out connections between ideas and events. Problem solves, develops and/or describes own multistep directions</p> <p>Under-Resourced, Diverse Learners, ELL/ESL Students Might prefer to use dialect or first language and uses word or phrases that respective of home culture. Encourage story-telling, sharing aloud, tell directions or steps.</p> <p>Teacher or Parental Anecdotal Observations of prior experiences. Memory Prompt with kids: What is one of your earliest memories...from when you were really little? Can share it with friends, toys, act it out in a spontaneous playtime. Memory Game© with Kids: Play Memory© card game with kids. No more than two people. Follow game directions. There are various versions of this game. Verbal Alphabet Memory Game: Develop a funny story using alphabet order. See how many alphabet segments the child can remember. Make sure to keep this fun and spontaneous. Memory Prompt using retelling: Ask students to retell a segment of a story. If possible, use some of the same words the author used. ((e.g., Kira retelling story.)</p>	<p>Look for and/or develop opportunities where child can: Listen to and understands increasingly complex language Follows directions Remember and connect experiences and/or make connections Recognize and recall</p> <p>Encourage growth in this area: Provide opportunities for high level problem solving. Encourage development and/or description of own multistep directions.</p>

#5	<p>Keen observation; curiosity and inquisitiveness</p>	<p>Description: Asks questions incessantly especially once imagination has been aroused, pays close attention when learning, has enthusiastic need to know and explore, remembers things in great detail. Loves to collect things.</p> <p>Student is fascinated with a topic or activity. May refuse to transition to the next activity. Wants depth, time to explore, more information or resources. May need or demand teacher attention on a topic</p> <p>Under-Resourced, Diverse Learners, ELL/ESL Students Be aware that this behavior might not be considered appropriate in all cultures e.g.,</p> <p>Teacher or Parental Anecdotal Observations of prior experiences. Observation Prompt with kids: Who can tell me what you see on the playground? What are you watching (on the playground?) Listen to what they say. Does the child persist on an aspect of the playground, such as the bugs? Preoccupation with ants for example. Observation Prompt with kids: Ask kids to play school, scientist, or other with other children using any item that will fit their imaginative need (dolls or stuffed animals). Ask kids where they might want to go to “work” and encourage them to show you how to do said work. Provide opportunities for creative imagination.</p>	<p>Look for and/or develop opportunities where child can: Demonstrate positive approaches to learning Show curiosity and motivation Show flexibility and inventiveness in thinking</p> <p>Encourage growth in this area: Allow prolonged center/learning time to encourage in-depth study and exploration on topic of interest. Warn students of transition changes ahead of time (possibly using timers) and let child know that they will be able to return to this area/topic.</p>
#6	<p>Intense interests examining and building; concentration; perseverance; enjoys tinkering</p>	<p>Description: Spends long periods of time exploring and examining how objects work or building things; likes to tinker when building/working with structures. Perseveres with ideas, toys, manipulatives; might like to build new structures.</p> <p>Child is intensely interested in specific topics, especially in topics not included in the planned curriculum. May be fascinated by tools, machines, things that have working parts. Loves to tinker.</p> <p>Listens for long periods of time to stories and conversations; may sit patiently when reading or listening to books. Entertains self for long periods of time</p> <p>ELL/ESL Students May use their native language.</p> <p>Teacher or Parental Anecdotal Observations of prior experiences: For example, does the child show particular fascination with bugs or nature? iPad© Prompt with kids: Give kids an iPad© with various interactive apps. SEE list. Observe attention span, “moving” applications from one platform to another. Observe individuals or small groups sustain attention with various applications. (e.g. students who download their own videos or photos into a Blog or use creative apps). Tinkering Task with kids: Provide non-working hand appliances to examine, take apart and reassemble. See www.goldieblox.com and www.tinkertopia.com Building Prompts with kids: Provide many materials that can be used for building and observe perseverance and creativity with the items. (See ideas from GoldieBlox video.) Provide opportunities for children to revisit their interests inside or out. ((e.g., Jacob and his</p>	<p>Look for and/or develop opportunities where child can: Demonstrate positive approaches to learning Attend; Engage; Persist</p> <p>Encourage growth in this area: Find student’s area of interest or expertise (ask parents) and let them share with you individually. Possibly use photos, video, or record for translation purposes. Allow prolonged center/learning time to encourage in-depth study and exploration on topic of interest. Warn students of transition changes ahead of time (possibly using timers) and let child know that they will be able to return to this area/topic.</p> <p>iPad Apps suggestions from 5-year-old: Flow; Clifford; PBS Kids; Super WHY; Angry Birds; DoodleDandy; Cars Match; Toy Story; Thomas the Tank Engine; Planes; Bob the Builder; Heroes of the City; Build a Truck; ChatterPixKids.</p>

		<p>ant house.)</p> <p>Conversation Prompt with kids: Ask the child: “If you could do ANYTHING you wanted to do today, what would it be?”</p> <p>Animal Prompt with kids: Show book of animals. Flip through pages together. Listen to what they know about any of these animals. Ask “What would you want to know about any of these animals?”</p>	
#7	<p>Strong critical thinking skills; organizational skills</p> <p>Intentional Activities for Descriptor #7</p>	<p>Description: Thinks in a nonlinear, open-ended, complex way; provides multiple responses and perspectives, unspecified answers. Engages in independent inquiry. Naturally organizes own belongings. May organize by size, color, collection type or other. Can explain arrangement and why.</p> <p>Teacher or Parental Anecdotal Observations of prior experiences: For example, how they organize their room, their desk, toys, etc.</p> <p>Organization Prompt with Kids: Provide manipulatives such as Legos, blocks, marbles, assorted buttons, match box cars, etc. Watch how they categorize objects and ask child to explain their categorization.</p> <p>Design Prompt with Kids: Ask kids to design a new play area (or other idea). See how they arrange things differently and ask them why.</p> <p>Dimensional Block Puzzle with Kids: Using puzzle block with 16 pieces with 6 different pictures, allow child to work at putting the pieces together to make pictures.</p> <p>Deck of Cards Prompt with kids: Use a “kids” deck of cards. Give the deck to a small group of kids or an individual and ask them to make up “rules” for a new game, (as was seen with Henry making up a card game.)</p> <p>Set© Game Prompt with kids: Play Set© card game with 2-4 people. Follow game directions or make up your own directions or outcomes of the game. Variations include color, number, shading and shape. Observe. Ask students why the cards that they selected are a “set,” as was seen in the video with Evan.</p>	<p>Look for and/or develop opportunities where child can:</p> <p>Compare and contrast</p> <p>Organize in multiple ways or very specific about one way of organizing</p> <p>Think critically</p> <p>Encourage growth in this area: Allow time and attention for students to organize manipulatives. Seek items of familiarity from child’s home. Possibly use photos, video, or recordings for observation from home or school.</p>
#8	<p>Creativity; imaginative capacity</p> <p>Intentional Activities for Descriptor #8</p>	<p>Description: Makes ingenious or functional things from LEGO or other building toys; uses toys in unique or non-traditional ways; plays with or carries on conversations with imaginary friends; makes up believable endings to stories. May create, do, and/or talk about things in new or inventive ways in order to solve a problem or for pleasure.</p> <p>Parental Anecdotal Observations of prior experiences: For example, do they have imaginary friends? Also ask parents for personal anecdotes.</p> <p>Teacher Anecdotal Observations of child in play and creative experiences.</p> <p>Puppet Play prompt with kids: Have the child use toys such as stuffed animals, puppets (one in each hand) and make up a story. Could use finger puppets or draw faces on their fingers. Listen to personalization of behaviors and details.</p> <p>Prompt with “imaginary friends” with kids: Ask kids to tell you all about their “imaginary friends” as you saw with Gwen, or ask parents to share about friends at home.</p>	<p>Look for and/or develop opportunities where child can:</p> <p>Demonstrate positive approaches to learning</p> <p>Show <i>flexibility</i> and inventiveness in thinking. Research suggests <i>flexibility</i> is broader than social interactions.</p> <p>Encourage growth in this area: Probe for ways that the child can exhibit creativity: fluency, flexibility, elaboration, and originality in creative thinking capacity in language and play activities.</p> <p>Look for ways that thinking, creativity and imagination are beyond the norm of what is expected or typically observed in early childhood.</p>

		<p>Creativity Task with kids: What could you make out of supplies (e.g., milk cartons, rubber bands, plastic drinking straws, paper clips, scotch tape, toilet paper roll, etc.)</p> <p>Kids Invent Structures: with Magnatiles, Legos, GoldieBloxetc.</p> <p>Structured time possibilities for Creativity: Genius Hour</p>	
#9	<p>Ability to understand complex concepts; thinks abstractly</p> <p>Intentional Activities for Descriptor #9</p>	<p>Description: Exhibits play and/or organizational interests that resemble those of older children; likes to play board games designed for older children, more apt to be interested in cooperative play, complex play situations or sophisticated play activities. Makes connections, perceives relationships.</p> <p>ELL/ESL Students May use their native language. Ask the parents about games in their culture and in which way the child participates or interacts.</p> <p>Teacher or Parental Anecdotal Observations of prior experiences. Prompt with kids: Can you make up a game? (any kind of game) Time or relationship prompt with kids: Can they tell a story using “time” or “relationships?” e.g. yesterday, tomorrow, next week? Can they figure out relationships such as “who is your mother’s mother?” Very few children will respond with “grandma” Can they share comments on who is sitting next to whom at the dinner table. For example, daddy is ACROSS from me, Mommy is NEXT to me. Ask child to use the words today, tomorrow, and yesterday in a sentence.</p>	<p>Look for and/or develop opportunities where child can: Use symbols and images to represent something not present Think symbolically Show increasing ability to interpret and record ideas and thoughts and to solve problems without concrete points of reference. Mentally manipulate information and use logical arguments with increasing regularity; needs concrete points of reference for complex concepts and text; reflects on his or her work</p> <p>Encourage growth in this area: Engage in time and relationship conversations, or other topics of interest that are not concrete in nature.</p>

#10	<p>Early demonstration of talents in music, art, athletics, or the performing arts</p> <p>Description: Exhibits memory skills and keen awareness and appreciation of music, art, movement, dance, sports, or performing arts. Music: Demonstrates increasing competency of various components such as rhythm, phrasing, pitch (may have perfect pitch), memorizes musical lyrics and notes easily. Art: Moved by aesthetic qualities and experience with art elements. Loves to draw. Athletics/Dance: Early coordination and memory of movements, and eye-hand coordination. Body movement is natural. Expressive arts: Successfully assumes children’s roles in plays, musicals, drawn to dramatic opportunities. May enjoy performing or developing skills.</p> <p>Under-Resourced, Diverse Learners, ELL/ESL Students Be mindful that culturally respected music or expressive arts may be very specific to a child’s background. Ask parents about child’s talents in the areas of music, art, athletics/dance, or expressive arts.</p> <p>Intentional Activities for Descriptor #10</p> <p>Teacher or Parental Anecdotal Observations of prior experiences: Music based prompt with kids: Do you play an instrument? Give out a bucket of instruments (drum sticks, tambourine, marimbas, etc.). Piano keyboard? Show me ways you use these instruments. Can students match a pitch? Can students match a rhythm that you model? Can they do it back for you to replicate? Introduce students to music related play making musical tones by filling bottles or glasses with varying levels of water. Arts based prompts with kids: Provide a variety of mediums for students to immerse themselves in many forms of art. Ask “Show me a piece of your art work and tell me what you like about it. What are your favorite items to work with? Can you create something else you like?” Athletic/Dance: Ask students about their sports experiences. If you have the supplies, allow them to show you and /orexplain to you how to play. Possible questions, Show me a movement you make when you play your favorite sport. Show me how you can dance? Use different kinds of music. Or “Who are your favorite performers why do you like them so much?”</p>	<p>Look for and/or develop opportunities where child can: Explore Visual Arts Explore musical arts Explore dance and movement concepts Explore drama through actions and language</p> <p>Encourage growth in this area: Invite opportunities for children to investigate music, movement, voice, expression, or performance in various areas from dance to drama or use of instruments. Encourage and enjoy free choice not driven by sequenced lesson or planned activity. Have children develop own music using common household or school items.</p>
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Sample Observational Tool of Opportunities for Intentional Activities

Indicate which descriptors may fit each child.

Describe the intentional activity provided and the child's responses.

	Asynchronous development and/or Self-critical behaviors	Early use of advanced vocabulary, complexity, and humor	Early literacy skills; interest in symbols	Excellent memory; retention from varied sources	Keen observation; curiosity and inquisitiveness	Intense interests in specific topics; concentration perseverance; enjoys tinkering	Strong critical thinking skills; organizational skills	Creativity; imaginative capacity	Ability to understand complex concepts; thinks abstractly	Early demonstration of talents in music, art, athletics, or the performing arts
Gracie										
Sarah										
Simon										
Peter										
Lincoln										
Jacob										
Evan										
Henry										

Optimal use of the Early Childhood Identification Tool: Prompts must occur during frequent and multiple opportunities for exploration and observation. It is important to engage students in a safe interactive or play environments, not necessarily in an adult pleasing environment. The observer/teacher would ideally consult and collaborate with parents, extended family, and previous teachers or instructors for various observational data about the child. The 10 Descriptors are used to support the identification of the early childhood advanced learner. This is not a checklist, a ranking scale, or rating scale. Children do NOT need to exhibit all 10 behaviors. Any ONE of these may be an indication that the child needs a “qualitatively differentiated” classroom experience. The matrix above is a framework for data collection through anecdotal notes and observation of the student. The observer will take notes and fill in the cells with appropriate information and possible reference to pictures and video somewhat similar to Karen Rogers’ Data Collector. Date the boxes for reference. There are references to children’s names as featured in the powerpoint© shared by the presenters, but the tool can stand alone to help identify advanced early learners.

Revised Profiles of the Gifted & Talented

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Type	Feelings & Attitudes	Behaviors	Needs	Adult/Peer Perceptions	Identification	Home Support	School Support
The Successful	Complacent Dependent Good academic self--concept Fear of failure Extrinsic motivation Self--critical Works for the grade Unsure about the future Eager for approval Entity view of intelligence	Achieves Seeks teacher approval Avoids risks Doesn't go beyond the syllabus Accepts & conforms Chooses safe activities Gets good grades Becomes a consumer of knowledge	To be challenged To see deficiencies To take risks Assertiveness skills Creativity development Incremental view of intelligence Self knowledge Independent learning skills	Liked by teachers Admired by peers Generally liked & accepted by parents Overestimate their abilities Believe they will succeed on their own	Use many multiple criteria Grades Standardized test scores Individual IQ tests Teacher nominations Parent nominations Peer nominations	Parents need to let go Independence Freedom to make choices Risk--taking experiences Allow child to be distressed Affirm child's ability to cope with challenges	Subject & grade accelerati Needs more than AP, IB & Time for personal curricul Activities that push out of zone Development of independ learning skills In--Depth Studies Mentorships Cognitive Coaching Time with Intellectual Pee
The Creative	Highly creative Bored & frustrated Fluctuating self--esteem Impatient & defensive Heightened sensitivity Uncertain about social roles More psychologically vulnerable Strong motivation to follow inner convictions Wants to right wrongs High tolerance for ambiguity High Energy	Expresses impulses Challenges teacher Questions rules, policies Is honest and direct Emotionally labile May have poor self--control Creative expression Perseveres in areas of interest (passions) Stands up for convictions May be in conflict with peers	To be connected with others To learn tact, flexibility, self awareness and self control Support for creativity Contractual systems Less pressure to conform Interpersonal skills to affirm others Strategies to cope with potential psychological vulnerabilities	Not liked by teachers Viewed as rebellious Engaged in power struggle Creative Discipline problems Peers see them as entertaining Want to change them Don't view them as gifted Underestimate their success Want them to conform	Ask: In what ways is this child creative? Use domain specific, objective measures Focus on creative potential rather than achievement	Respect for their goals Tolerate higher levels of deviance Allow them to pursue interests (passions) Model appropriate behavior Family projects Communicate confidence in their abilities Affirm their strengths Recognize psychological vulnerability & intervene when necessary	Tolerance Reward new thinking Placement with appropri teachers Direct & clear communi Give permission for feeli Domain specific training Allow nonconformity Mentorships Direct instruction in interpersonal skills Coach for deliberate pract
The Underground	Desire to belong socially Feel Unsure & Pressured Conflicted, Guilty & Insecure Unsure of their right to their emotions Diminished sense of self Ambivalent about achievement Internalize & personalize societal ambiguities & conflicts View some achievement behaviors as betrayal of their social group	Devalue, discount or deny talent Drops out of GT & advanced classes Rejects challenges Moves from one peer group to the next Not connected to the teacher or the class Unsure of direction	Freedom to make choices Conflicts to be made explicit Learn to code switch Gifted peer group network Support for abilities Role models who cross cultures Self understanding & acceptance An audience to listen to what they have to say (to be heard)	Viewed as leaders or unrecognized Seen as average & successful Perceived to be compliant Seen as quiet/shy Seen as unwilling to risk Viewed as resistant	Interviews Parent nominations Teacher nominations Be cautious with peer nominations Demonstrated performance Measures of creative potential Nonverbal measures of intelligence	Cultural Brokering Normalize their dissonance College & career planning Provide gifted role models Model lifelong learning Give freedom to make choices Normalize the experience Don't compare with siblings Provide cultural brokering Build multicultural appreciation	Frame the concepts as soc phenomena Welcoming learning enviro Provide role models Help develop support grc Open discussions about c racism, sexism Cultural Brokering Direct instruction of social Teach the hidden curricular Provide college planning Discuss costs of success

Typ	Feelings & Attitudes	Behaviors	Needs	Adult/Peer Perceptions	Identification	Home Support	School Support
The At---Risk	Resentful & Angry Depressed Reckless & Manipulative Poor self---concept Defensive Unrealistic expectations Unaccepted Resistive to authority Not motivated for teacher driven rewards A subgroup is antisocial	Creates crises and causes disruptions Thrill seeking Will work for the relationship Intermittent attendance Pursues outside interests Low academic achievement May be self---isolating Often creative Criticizes self &	Safety and structure An “alternative” environment An Individualized program Confrontation and accountability Alternatives Professional Counseling Direction and short term goals	Adults may be angry with them Peers are judgmental Seen as troubled or irresponsible Seen as rebellious May be afraid of them May be afraid for them Adults feel powerless to help them	Individual IQ testing Achievement subtests Interviews Auditions Nonverbal measures of intelligence Parent nominations Teacher nominations	Seek counseling for family Avoid power struggles Involvement in extracurricular activities Assess for dangerous behavior Keep dialogue open Hold accountable Minimize punishments Communicate confidence in ability to overcome obstacles	Don't lower expectations Diagnostic testing Non---traditional study skill In---depth Studies & Mento G.E.D. Academic coaching Home visits Promote resilience
Twice/Multi Exceptional	Learned helplessness Intense frustration & anger Mood disorders Prone to discouragement Work to hang on Don't see themselves as successful Poor academic self concept Don't know where to belong	Makes connections easily Demonstrates inconsistent work Seems average or below More similar to younger students in some aspects of social/emotional functioning May be disruptive or off---task Are good problem solvers Behavior problems Thinks conceptually Enjoys novelty & complexity Is disorganized Slow in information processing May not be able to cope with	Emphasis on strengths Coping strategies Skill development Monitoring for additional disorders --- especially ADHD To learn to persevere Environment that develops strengths To Learn to self---advocate	Requires too many modifications because of accommodation Seen as “weird” Underestimated for their potential Viewed as helpless Seen as not belonging in GT Perceived as requiring a great deal of structure Seen only for disability	Measure of current classroom functioning Achievement test scores Curriculum based assessment Examine performance over time Look for pattern of declining performance paired with evidence of superior ability Do not rely on IQ scatter analysis or test discrepancy analysis	Focus on strengths while accomodating disability Develop will to succeed Recognize & affirm gifted abilities Challenge in strength areas Provide risk---taking opportunities Assume college is a possibility Advocate at school Family Involvement Nurture self---control Teach how to set & reach realistic goals	Challeng in area of strengt priority Acceleration in area of str Accommodations for disab Ask, "what will it take for to succeed here?" Direct instruction in self---re strategies Give time to be with GT p Teach self---advocacy Teach SMART goal setting
Autonomous Learner	Self---confident Self---accepting Hold incremental view of ability Optimistic Intrinsically motivated Ambitious & excited May not view academics as one o their highest priorities Willing to fail and learn from it Shows tolerance and respect for others	Appropriate social skills Works independently Set SMART goals Seek challenge Strongly self directed Follows strong areas of passion Good self---regulators Stands up for convictions Resilient A producer of knowledge Possesses understanding & acceptance of self	More support not less Advocacy for new directions & increasing independence Feedback about strengths & possibilities Facilitation of continuing growth Support for risk---taking On---going, facilitative relationships Become more adept at managing themselves A support team	Admired & Accepted Seen as capable & responsible by parents Positive influences Successful in diverse environments Psychologically healthy Positive peer relationships	Demonstrated performance Products Nominations Portfolios Interviews Standardized Test scores Awards	Advocate for child at school & in the community Provide opportunities related to passion areas Allow friends of all ages Remove time & space restrictions for learning Help them build a support team Include in parent's passions Include in family decision making Listen Stay out of their way	Allow development of lon integrated plan of study Remove time & space rest Develop multiple, related studies, including mentors Wide variety of accelerate Mentors & cultural broker Waive traditional school p regulations Stay out of their way

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