

**Article #1 – We Know Our Child’s IQ: Now What Should We Do?**

*Although there are many helpful books, articles, and specialists out there to help parents, sometimes what you really need is a "to-do" list. One of the leading stated concerns parents voice on gifted forums is, "We got our child assessed but we still don't know what to do." So, here are some answers for you. Enjoy!*

- ◆ **Young children can be evaluated for intellectual functioning (IQ) either through the school or privately arranged assessment (testing).** Either way, you get a score or a set of scores. Both are important for deciding what your child needs in school. Please see the short article, <http://www.talentigniter.com/ruf-estimates> to help you understand a bit more about what the scores you have mean. (Note: If your child scored over 150, he or she was probably tested on a test that is on a different scale than most current tests in use).

**What are the next steps?**

- ◆ **Do your research on the possible schools your child could attend.**
  - State Departments of Education post NCLB School Report Card Results each year. Find out how the students at each potential school are doing. Teachers must spend more time and attention on students who aren't showing adequate progress, so the more of those students are in a school, the less attention your advanced learner will receive.
  - The wider the ability and achievement spread in any school, the slower the overall instructional pace will likely be and the fewer true peers your advanced learner will have. Schools rarely ability group or track since the early 1970's, and the average IQ difference between people who are likely to become very good friends, marry each other, or get each other's jokes is 12 points or less. Too wide a range in your child's school will leave him or her waiting for others to learn and possibly very lonely, too.
- ◆ **Visit any potential schools or your child's current school.** Although talking to adults—teachers and administrators—is something you have to do, visit several classrooms at the same grade or age level of your child.
  - **If you are looking for a school, ask for permission to visit several classrooms, if possible, on a regular, normal school day.** Fifteen minutes per room is sufficient for any one day. Tell the school that you want to come in for about 45 to 60 minutes one day in the

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morning and see several classrooms during your visit. You plan only to observe, maybe walk around a little to see what the students are working on, but explain that you are not there to be impressed with anything in particular; you want to get a sense of the school and how they go about doing things so that you can determine if this is a good fit for your child.

- Does the teacher teach to the whole class or does she differentiate and expect different output and assignments according to the different students’ readiness to learn?
- Do the students have opportunities to move around, talk to each other, ask questions or is everyone expected to sit quietly in their seats for long periods of time?
- Does the instruction being presented sound interesting and challenging—something that would stimulate and challenge your child—or is your own child well beyond what is being taught in this class?
- **After your school visits (at least two different times to give it a real chance), if you are still considering the school, arrange to meet with the administrator to ask a few questions.**
  - What is the school’s policy for meeting the needs of advanced learners?
  - Do they do any ability grouping or acceleration, how often, and what is the process?
  - Do they allow any subject acceleration for student’s whose ability profiles show they have a particular strength area, for example, as in math or reading?
  - Don’t accept any nebulous statements such as these:
    - ◆ We have lots of bright students in our school and they’re all challenged and doing very well with our approach.
    - ◆ We’ll be able to meet your child’s needs.
  - Bottom line: If you aren’t seeing an instructional level that is clearly at the level of your own child in a classroom filled with lots of children as advanced as your child, it’s probably the wrong school for your family. The easiest, simplest, best way to meet the needs of your advanced learner is to have him or her attend a school where the other students are very close to the same ability level. Hoping to work things out if what your child needs is too different than what most of the children need is a constant uphill battle and struggle. The worst aspect of this situation is that your

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child won’t have true peers and will not be as socially accepted or happy as in a school with more true peers.

- **If your child is already in a school but you wonder if it is the best one for your family, go through the same steps as above first. If you suspect the school fit is less than ideal, these are your next steps:**

- Talk to the teacher about the possibility of either grouping or accelerating your child for the subjects where he’s an advanced learner (you know it or test results show it). If the answer is no, you’ve got a problem. If the answer is yes, ask the teacher when this can begin. Often the school will tell you that they need to discuss it, but it really isn’t any big deal to make such arrangements so this is generally a stalling tactic.

Give them 2 weeks. Here are some of your options at this point:

- ◆ Follow the steps above for finding a different school that already does what your child needs.
- ◆ Check with your state’s gifted association to find out what your rights are (relevant only in public schools because private schools are totally different). All states allow home schooling, and some allow partial home schooling where you can use the school for parts of the day and guide the remainder of your child’s education yourself. Some states make you choose one or the other; no partial home schooling.
- ◆ You do not need to actually home school your child if you don’t want to or don’t have the time or skills. There are lots of options where you are the facilitator of your child’s education. It takes a little work up front and a little money, but your state’s gifted association and numerous national sites and resources will guide you if no viable school options are available for your particular child.

**We Know Our Child’s IQ: What Should We Not Do?**

- ◆ You should not go into the school and demand anything. Schools have absolutely no legal obligation to meet the learning needs of advanced learners.

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- ◆ You should not go into the school waving the test results around and expect the school to believe they mean anything all that significant. Most educators do not believe IQs really mean much. They will likely point out that your child doesn’t do his work perfectly, that they have plenty of kids like yours, and that just because a child has a high IQ doesn’t mean she really understands all the material at higher levels.
- ◆ You should expect to hear about how there isn’t any money for gifted learners even though what they need generally doesn’t actually cost any more money. Most schools generally already have everything a gifted young learner needs but they won’t allow the learner to go where what they are ready to learn is already being taught.
- ◆ Don’t tell them your child is bored and needs more challenge. It’s simply offensive and counter-productive.
- ◆ Don’t assume or expect that the educators at your child’s school have any specific training in the identification, instruction, or needs of gifted learners, what IQs are or what they mean. It is not part of the curriculum in schools of education.

Every family has its own particular set of circumstances and issues. Different states, different cities, different districts present a whole array of singular considerations. *The Ruf Estimates™ of Levels of Gifted Online Assessment* (<http://www.talentigniter.com/ruf-estimates-gifted-assessment>) tackles many of these and is specific to your child’s ability profile. If you’ve reached an impasse—or simply are ready for more individualized guidance—you will find many answers and resources there.