

students feel comfortable and confident in expressing and dealing with their personal and academic goals and concerns?

- f What specific steps do you take to insure that learning is exciting and original rather than boring and repetitious?
- f How do you ensure that students are challenged to work towards their full potential ("at the edge of their ability") rather than permitting them to drift along comfortably ("on cruise control")?
- f In what ways do faculty members inspire students to ask probing questions, examine many viewpoints, and use criteria to make and justify decisions?
- f How does the school program help students to learn social or interpersonal skills without sacrificing their individuality?
- f Have you asked me about my child, and discussed the insights I have about his or her interests, activities, experiences, relationships, and feelings about school, and in areas outside the school day?

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GUIDING PRINCIPLES FOR ADVOCATES

The needs of a child who is gifted and talented stems from his or her strengths rather than deficiencies. Consequently, the child doesn't look "needy." However, those who really know the child recognize the need to speak out in order to create for him or her more appropriate educational opportunities. Selected questions from this brochure can be used to help start the discussion. The advocate should be further guided by the following principals.

EFFECTIVE advocates are well informed. Become informed about the nature and needs of gifted children. Know the regulations for gifted and talented education. Read books and articles on gifted issues. Attend workshops, conferences and discussion groups on gifted issues. Know your child's strengths and needs.

A CLEAR MESSAGE is essential to effective advocacy. What you say must be carefully considered before voicing your message. Talk about the child's need to make continuous progress. Keep it positive and objective!

ADVOCACY is built on relationships. Don't wait until there is a problem to start building relationships with decision-makers. Polish your human relationships skills and build relationships before you need them. Who makes the decision will effect what you are advocacy for.

NUMBERS make a difference in advocacy. Look for other parents and groups of parents who have similar problems. Join KAGE!

For information about gifted education in Kentucky contact the Kentucky Association for Gifted Education (KAGE)
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WHAT ARE YOU DOING TO FIND AND DEVELOP MY CHILD'S TALENTS?

Tough questions that are more important than, "Is my child in the gifted program?"



**A NON-PROFIT
VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATION**

KAGE

**AFFILIATE OF THE
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR
GIFTED CHILDREN**

“WHAT ARE YOU
DOING TO FIND AND
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20 tough questions that are
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We are delighted when the proper school officials notify us that our child or student has been identified as gifted or is showing great potential. Often that notification validates what we had been thinking, but perhaps never said out loud. Most of the time, we have been well aware of the child’s eagerness to learn. Learning about the world seemed to happen so quickly and easily for the child. Myriads of questions have bombarded us since the child learned to talk or entered our classrooms. A mature sense of humor or sensitivity to happenings in the world may have been other clues. Now that the identification has been made, what comes next? If you are a parent, a conference with the child’s teacher and other school personnel is certainly necessary. If you are an educator, a serious look at how you and the district will nurture and develop the child’s potential is in order. Parents and educators can use the following questions to guide thinking about how best to provide continuous progress for a child with great potential.

- í How does my child learn best? How does your school program take into account students’ personal characteristics and learning styles?
- í In what academic content area(s) or extra-curricular area(s) does my child display strengths, talents, or special interests?
- í What provisions does your school make for them to be recognized, valued, and developed?
- í What provisions do you make to insure that students receive instruction that is well-suited to their real instructional needs?
- í What specific provisions are made for students to learn at their own rate or pace, rather than being limited to a rigidly-prescribed, “lockstep” curriculum?
- í What resources and materials are available to expose students to the newest ideas and developments in many fields, and to in-depth pursuit of their areas of special interest?
- í How do you provide students with access to and experiences with other students and adults who share their strengths, talents, and interests?
- í How do you use community resources and mentors to extend students’ learning in areas of special talents and interests?
- í How do you help students to become aware of their own best talents and interests and to appreciate those of others as well?

- í How do you help students to consider future career possibilities and to cope with rapid changes in our world?
- í What provisions are made for advanced content or courses for students whose achievements warrant them?
- í How are the students’ needs determined and reviewed?
- í What enrichment opportunities are offered that are not merely “busywork” or “more of the same” assignments?
- í How do teachers provide opportunities for students to learn and apply critical and creative thinking, problem solving, decision making, and teamwork skills? How are these skills taught and used in classes and throughout the curriculum?
- í What other activities or programs are offered that focus on these skills? (Future Problem Solving Program? OM? Invention Conventions? Others...?)
- í How do you help students learn to plan and investigate everyday (or real-world) problems and to plan and conduct research rather than relying on contrived, textbook exercises?
- í How do you help students create and share the products or results of their projects and investigations?
- í What provisions do you make, or what support do you offer, to create opportunities for students to explore a variety of motivating and challenging topics outside the regular curriculum?
- í How do you help students learn to set goals, plan projects, locate and use resources, create products, and evaluate their work?
- í What provisions do you make to help