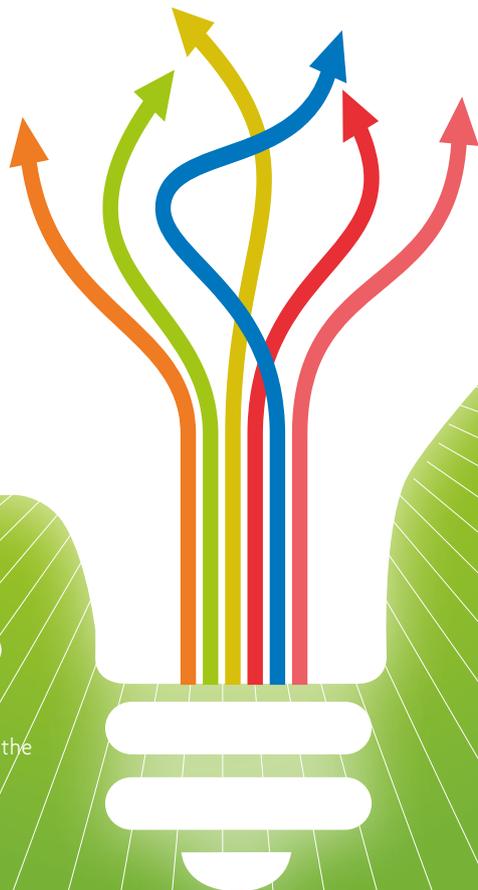




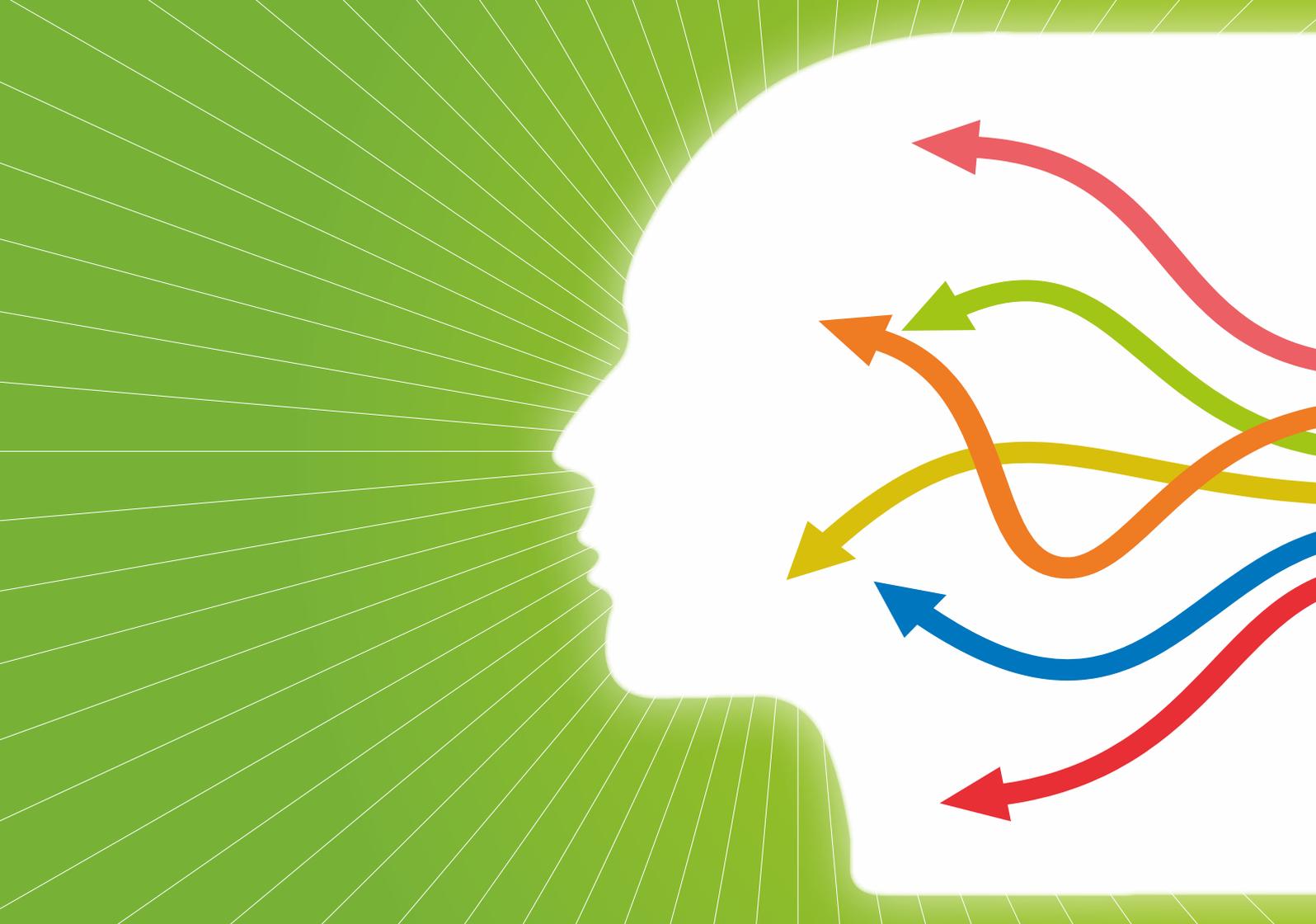
香港資優教育學院
The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education



A Guide to Nurturing Gifted Children

What is Giftedness?

This booklet provides information on giftedness and suggestions on the strategies to develop the strengths of gifted children



What is giftedness?

There is no single definition that can precisely describe giftedness. In the past, it was generally defined to describe those who demonstrated high intellectual ability. Here in Hong Kong, the Education Bureau employs a broad definition of giftedness according to the Education Commission Report No. 4 (1990). Children who demonstrate exceptional achievement or potential in one or more of the following areas or domains are considered as gifted.



the level of measured intelligence;



specific academic aptitude in a subject area;



creative thinking - high ability to invent and elaborate novel ideas precisely;



remarkable talent in visual and performing arts such as painting, drama, dance, music, etc;



leadership among peers - high ability to motivate others to achieve common goals;



psychomotor ability - outstanding performance or ingenuity in athletics, mechanical skills or sensorimotor coordination.

Some gifted children may have one or multiple gifts, and may not excel in all areas.

This booklet introduces each of these six domains in brief, illustrates the characteristics and provides suggestions on how parents of such children might nurture and communicate with their children. The last section provides useful websites that parents may refer to for more information and resources on gifted education.



The Level of Measured Intelligence

This level of intellectual ability is most likely to express itself in terms of precocity, reasoning and ability to comprehend or manipulate abstract concepts. Do your children learn fast and with ease? Are your children good at thinking logically, and making clear connections? Are your children inquisitive, asking penetrative questions that even adults struggle with? If so, it is possible that your children are gifted in this aspect or dimension. Below are some of the traits that are likely to characterise gifted children, although some of these may not begin to appear until a later age.

Children who are gifted with high level of intellectual ability



- ▶ learn more rapidly than their peers and may have high achievement in most, but not necessarily all subject areas
- ▶ have a wide range of interests
- ▶ have intellectual passion
 - are inquisitive and curious
 - are likely to ask a lot of questions, especially the 'why' questions
 - can be passionately interested in learning about something
- ▶ have an awareness and understanding of their own thought processes – metacognition
- ▶ use extensive vocabulary
- ▶ are good at drawing inferences
- ▶ enjoy problem solving and hypothesising
- ▶ are capable of handling complex and abstract materials
- ▶ are creative in new ideas, seeing associations and pursuing innovations

Tips for Parents

A never-ending stream of questions may be exhausting to parents, but a lack of encouragement and nurture may lead to an individual's gifted abilities not being stretched

You may

- ▶ guide children to raise questions at the right time and right place, instead of discouraging them from asking questions
- ▶ provide or point them to resources, such as the internet or library, where they can obtain information to satisfy their curiosity

Specific Academic Aptitude in a Subject Area

Giftedness in a particular academic field shares many of the characteristics of high level of intellectual ability. Below are some characteristics in selected subject areas and suggestions of how you might help develop such aptitudes further.

Children who demonstrate giftedness in mathematics are likely to

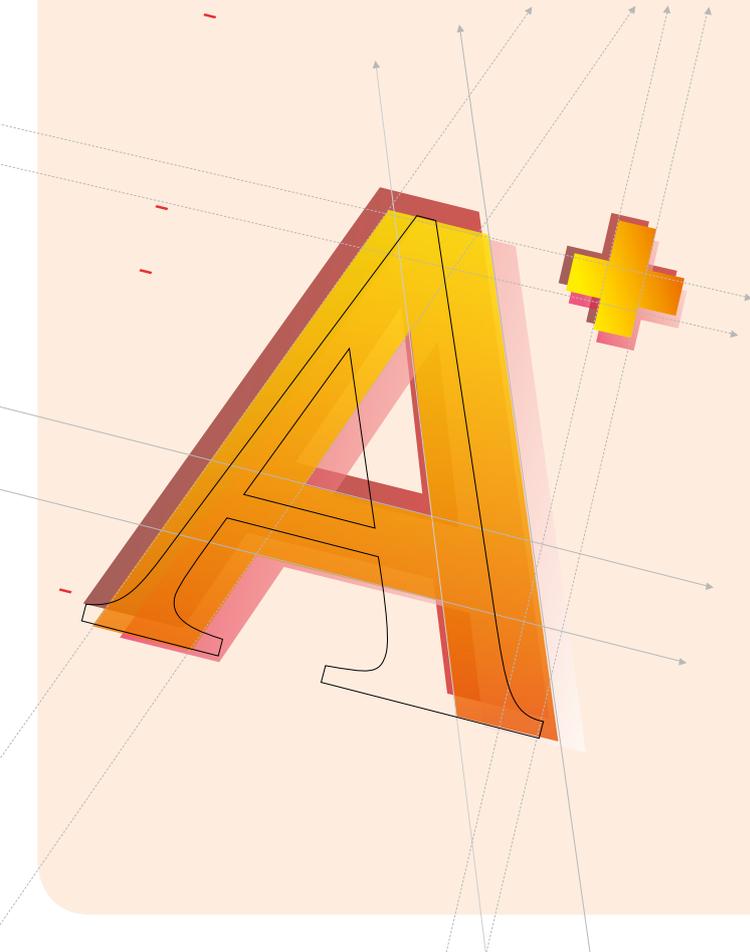
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- ▶ be interested in problem solving in mathematics and working with appropriately challenging problems
- ▶ be interested in mathematics related games, such as geometry or puzzles
- ▶ enjoy logic problems that require deductive thinking skills

Tips for Parents

Encourage your children to

- ▶ get into the creative process in mathematics including problem finding and problem solving
- ▶ develop spatial skills and concepts through geometry, measurement and estimation
- ▶ read books about famous mathematicians
- ▶ try solving some situational problems in daily life by using mathematical applications
- ▶ participate in mathematics related challenges such as mathematics games and puzzles



Children who demonstrate giftedness in language are likely to



- ▶ articulate confidently
- ▶ use complex sentence structures
- ▶ use language creatively
- ▶ be interested in the cultural elements of the language

Tips for Parents

Encourage your children to

| | |
|--------------|--|
| READ | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ choose the types of books based on their interests▶ read books of different genres such as fiction, non-fiction, biography, poetry, etc.▶ join the activities held by the libraries▶ learn more about particular authors and make comparison |
| WRITE | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ keep a journal for 'word of the day' or 'word of the week'▶ develop word bank of antonyms, synonyms or near synonyms▶ write reflections of a piece of music, a picture or a poem▶ write a comic book and think of a title for it▶ learn to keep a diary and journal or submit written work for publication |
| SPEAK | <ul style="list-style-type: none">▶ read their written work out loud to you and/or other family members and friends▶ learn storytelling, debate or oral presentation skills▶ join role-playing or drama club▶ learn foreign languages |

Children who demonstrate giftedness in Science are likely to

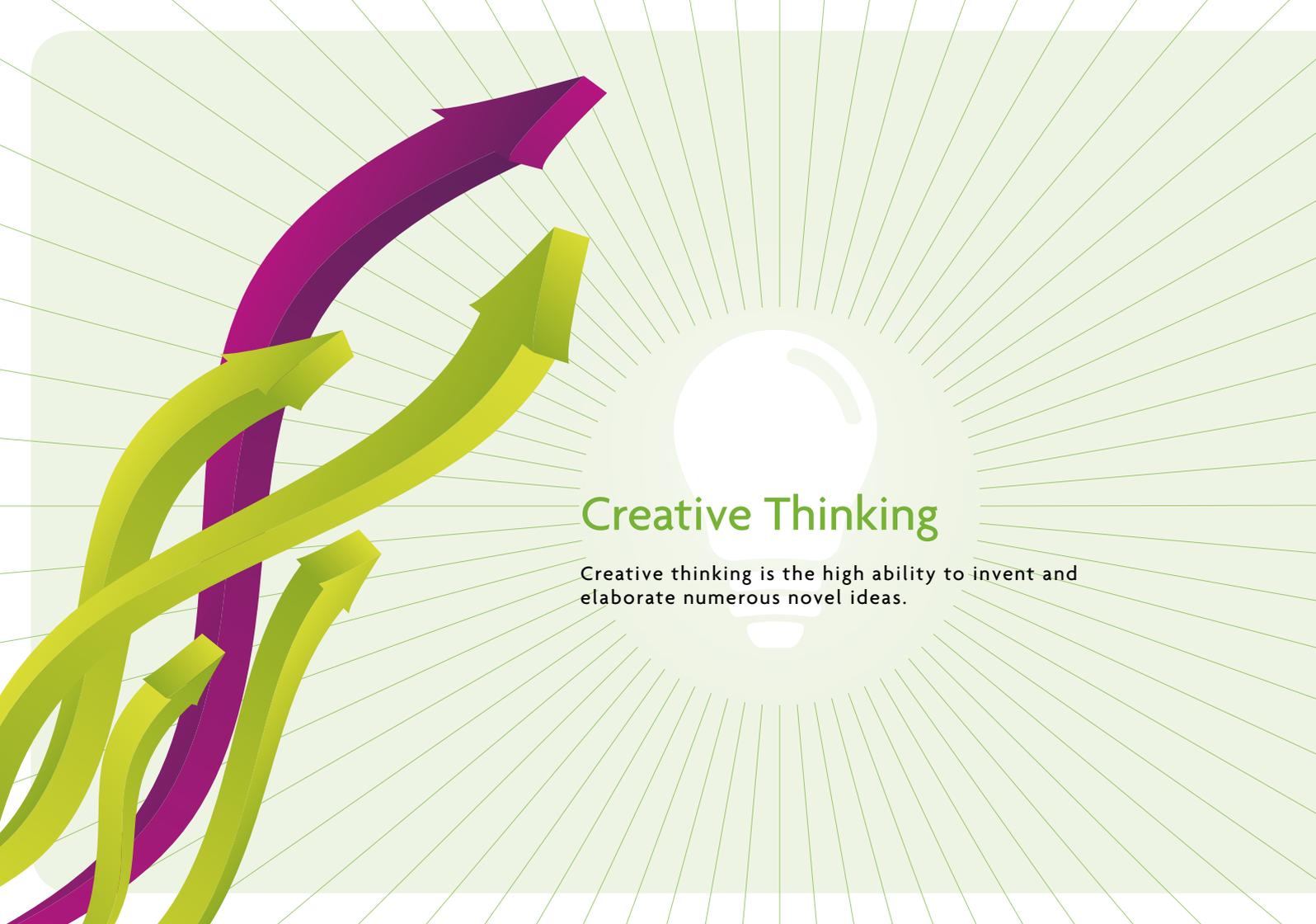


- ▶ ask 'how' and 'why' about things and phenomena around them
- ▶ be able to analyse and reason well
- ▶ be able to handle abstract concepts
- ▶ enjoy challenging problems and have creative and investigative ideas

Tips for Parents

You may

- ▶ take them to museums of science and natural history
- ▶ provide reading materials which contain a good balance of texts and activities, such as books containing simple experiments
- ▶ help them develop a scientific hobby like shell collecting, astronomy or electronics
- ▶ take them outdoors to places such as beaches, nature reserves, country parks, etc.
- ▶ encourage them to participate in activities, web courses or workshops held by Space Museum or Science Museum.
- ▶ encourage them to make observations, ask questions, collect information and draw inferences
- ▶ discuss controversial science issues such as cloning, environmental protection, etc.

The background features a light green gradient with a sunburst pattern of thin green lines radiating from a central white lightbulb icon. On the left side, there are several thick, 3D-style arrows in shades of purple and yellow-green, curving upwards and to the right. The text is positioned to the right of the arrows and below the lightbulb icon.

Creative Thinking

Creative thinking is the high ability to invent and elaborate numerous novel ideas.

Characteristics of creative children



- ▶ being open to experiences
- ▶ having a vivid imagination
- ▶ feeling bored with memorisation and recitation
- ▶ thinking independently and/or flexibly
- ▶ being confident in presenting and elaborating original ideas
- ▶ having a preference for complexity and open-endedness
- ▶ tolerating ambiguity, uncertainty and disorder
- ▶ taking risks willingly

Don't be a killer of creativity!



- ▶ Don't insist on a definite answer!
- ▶ Don't confine their thinking to "a right way of doing things!"
- ▶ Don't laugh at their imaginative thinking

Encouraging Creativity

Sometimes, out of curiosity, your children may do things that might frustrate or anger you. Try to explain to your children why you are upset, and if your explanations are clear and reasonable, you should be able to persuade them out of repeating the mistakes. Do not let your children associate curiosity with disapproval.

Tips for Parents

You may

- ▶ allow them to think at their own pace
- ▶ appreciate creative expressions of ideas
- ▶ encourage problem-solving and exploration
- ▶ provide opportunities for new experience to stimulate their creativity
- ▶ choose toys such as puzzles, bricks, clay which encourage thinking or creativity
- ▶ arrange space to show their products at home



Remarkable Talent in Visual and Performing Arts

Children who are gifted in the visual and performing arts will usually develop a particular interest in and passion for activities such as painting, drama, dance, music, etc. A good way of discovering any nascent interest might be to take children to a painting exhibition, to see drama or musical performance, or instrument performance. Allow children to choose for themselves after they have learnt a little about the available options. Children gifted in this field are often fiercely passionate, and may become frustrated if they feel that the project they are involved with is not being treated with sufficient earnestness. Therefore, it is important to look for a group or instructor whose approach and style are compatible with them, so as not to extinguish the drive they may have.

Gifted characteristics of visual and performing arts

General

- ▶ showing passion
- ▶ willing to improve artistic skills
- ▶ engrossed in artistic projects
- ▶ striving for perfection in their artistic works
- ▶ disliking repetition

Tips for Parents

- ▶ encourage originality and incorporation of ideas into products
- ▶ introduce various artistic forms, such as drawing, dance, drama, etc
- ▶ provide “collage” experience across art, music, and literature, such as musical, script writing
- ▶ consider providing an artist mentor
- ▶ provide unstructured activities with free choice over the medium of expression
- ▶ introduce biographies of creative people

Visual Art



- ▶ sensitive to colours
- ▶ visually imaginative
- ▶ observant of their environment
- ▶ thoughtfully organising different elements in the art work

Tips for Parents

- ▶ incorporate different elements into artwork
- ▶ prepare artwork portfolio
- ▶ provide art appreciation opportunities

Music



- ▶ identify loudness and softness, and different kinds of sounds (instruments)
- ▶ Sensitive to keys and change of tempo
- ▶ remembering melodies and can produce them accurately

Tips for Parents

- ▶ introduce various musical forms
- ▶ take them to concert, musical performance
- ▶ encourage them to create their own music
- ▶ allow them to choose to learn an instrument after they have learnt a little about the available options
- ▶ encourage them to create simple musical instruments with reused materials

Drama / Dance



- ▶ moving with ease to rhythm and melodies
- ▶ using gestures and facial expressions to show feelings
- ▶ a nonverbal communicator
- ▶ a mood sensor

Tips for Parents

- ▶ encourage them to try out for school plays and performances for shows that are being produced outside of school
- ▶ encourage them to write their own scripts to perform at home
- ▶ role-play with your children
- ▶ allow the children to create new endings for stories
- ▶ provide opportunities to learn different types of dance
- ▶ provide space for dance and movement at home





Leadership Among Peers

Some children have well developed social /emotional abilities and this can be manifested in their being able to relate well to others, to convince, persuade and lead others to achieve common goals.

Children who have leadership giftedness are likely to



- ▶ have strong organisational powers
- ▶ listen to the others empathetically
- ▶ be people-oriented and have the ability to motivate others
- ▶ have the ability to solve problems tactfully
- ▶ be emotionally stable
- ▶ be willingly to take risks
- ▶ easily adapt to new situations
- ▶ be able to see problems from different perspectives

Tips for Parents

Encourage your children to:

- ▶ take part in planning family activities such as organising a birthday party, a barbecue, a picnic, etc., and give guidance and advice if necessary
- ▶ share experience or evaluate the activities
- ▶ discuss and debate current events and other topics to foster independent thinking
- ▶ join organising committees of school clubs or other community groups
- ▶ take part in community service
- ▶ read selected biographies and autobiographies about high achievers
- ▶ learn how to encourage others and solve conflicts
- ▶ learn how to take another's perspectives and use empathy

You should

- ▶ support your children so that they can cope with the inevitable frustrations and challenges in working with others to accomplish a goal
- ▶ provide decision-making opportunities and evaluate the decisions your children made



A preference for physical play

Psychomotor Ability

Children with psychomotor abilities can be as successful as any other forms of gifted children under suitable nurturing skills and support. Psychomotor abilities include physical movement, coordination and mechanical skills but are often expressed in terms of sports and athletics.

Some common signs of psychomotor giftedness are:



Good balance



Good co-ordination



Adapt the movements to better suit the demand of the task at hand



Confidence and persistence in physical activities

A suitable body type is required for developing the talent in the psychomotor domain. However, parents may not be able to tell whether their children have the potential without the professional assessment by sports coaches or PE teachers. Parents should provide opportunities for their children to try different sports.

Tips for Parents

There are many ways to encourage your children to develop their physical abilities in sports such as football, gymnastics or dancing. How you can do this depends on the nature of the activities. Some general suggestions are as follows:

- ▶ encourage them to join sports clubs or teams
- ▶ if suitable, allow them to practice at home, or in an appropriate facility nearby
- ▶ allow them to watch professionals perform in competitions or on videos, such as dance performance, football match, athletics or gymnastics

There are plenty of extracurricular opportunities in Hong Kong. Children's interest is an important factor affecting their willingness to participate in an activity but parents should not let them give up halfway. All children can benefit from the virtues of patience, industry, and commitment to learning and practice.



Common Questions on Gifted Characteristics

If gifted children are not properly nurtured, will their talent or abilities gradually vanish?

Cognitive development is a dynamic process – a result of interaction between the natural gift and experience. In other words, a lack of encouragement and opportunities for gifted children could lead to underdevelopment of gifted abilities or underachievement.

Do gifted children excel in all areas?

Not necessarily. Some gifted children possess general intellectual abilities while many others have subject-specific strengths. Some even are *twice exceptional*, the coexistence of giftedness and other learning disabilities.

Is providing additional support to gifted children unfair to the others?

There is an important distinction between equity and equality of opportunity. All children deserve the chance to reach their full potential. Gifted children, in comparison with those in normal classes, need to work at a faster pace with more challenging materials in order to meet their learning needs.

Do gifted children fit better in international schools?

Not necessarily. Whether gifted children can fit in the school depends on various factors such as whether their learning and affective needs can be catered for. The running mode of the schools is less important. Therefore, when choosing a school for the gifted children, parents should not simply 'follow the crowd'. Instead, they should learn what suits their child best.

Is an IQ test essential in determining giftedness? Which assessment is recommended?

The Hong Kong-normed WISC IV (for children from 6 to 16 years old) is the instrument commonly used to compare children's abilities. However we would not recommend children to be assessed just for giftedness since an IQ test might not provide comprehensive information to identify non-tested strengths of the children such as their creativity, leadership ability, etc. You are advised to read up or attend seminars on understanding giftedness and how to nurture gifted children, so that you could provide good support to your children at home.

What to Learn More?

The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education

<http://hkage.org.hk/en/>

Gifted Education Section, Education Bureau, HKSAR

http://www.edb.gov.hk/cd/ge_e/

Hong Kong Association for Parents of Gifted Children

<http://www.gifted.org.hk/>

EDB Web-based Learning Courses, HK

http://www.hkedcity.net/article/project/webcourses_gifted/eng/EDB_Learning_main.phtml

Programme for Gifted and Talented, the Chinese University of Hong Kong

<http://www.fed.cuhk.edu.hk/pgt/>

Education Development Program, the Hong Kong University of Science and Technology

http://www.edp.ust.hk/index_e.html

Center for Child Development, Hong Kong Baptist University

<http://www.hkbu.edu.hk/~ccd/index.htm>

Neag Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development, University of Connecticut, US

<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/nrcgt/resource.html#parent>

Education Program for Gifted Youth (EPGY), Stanford University, US

<http://epgy.stanford.edu/courses/index.html>

Center for Talent Development, Northwestern University, US

<http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/gll/courses/enrichment/courses/>

Center for Talented Youth, John Hopkins University, US

<http://www.jhu.edu/~gifted/>

IXL Math, US

<http://www.ixl.com/math/>

Natural Math Website

<http://www.naturalmath.com/>

NASA Website, US

<http://www.nasa.gov/>



Call our Education Advisor at

3698 3947



Free Consultation Service

If you want to know more on giftedness;
If you have queries on parenting your gifted child;
If you have any questions in catering for your child's specific learning needs.

Book: A Guide to Nurturing Gifted Children — What is Giftedness?

Author: The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education

Editorial: Dr Stephen Tommis, Chng Poh-teen, Angel Wan, Jessie Chow, Samson Chan, Nelson Lai, Chan Mo-yam

Interpreter: Solomon Hui

Publishing: The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education

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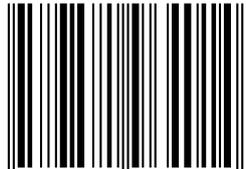
The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education

Kowloon Tong Education Services Centre East Block
19 Suffolk Road, Kowloon Tong

Website: www.hkage.org.hk

Tel: (852) 3698 4103 **Fax:** (852) 3586 3445 **E-mail:** academy@hkage.org.hk

ISBN 978-988-19640-1-4



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