



Choose a School for your Gifted Child

Quick Kit

Based on the book *Picky Parent Guide: Choose Your Child's School with Confidence (2004)* by Bryan C. Hassel, Ph.D. and Emily Ayscue Hassel





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- ☑ **Child – School Matcher** Quick Kit
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- ☑ **Planning Tools** for **After School** Quick Kit
- ☑ **Great School Quality Checklist**

... And The Complete Book

Picky Parent Guide: Choose Your Child's School with Confidence

List price: \$19.99 At PickyParent.com: \$13.57*

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We have made reasonable attempts to be accurate and helpful in this Quick Kit. We do not promise that following the advice contained here will result in improvements for individual children or families. By reading this Quick Kit, you accept this disclaimer.

* Discounted price on Amazon.com as of the creation of this Quick Kit.





Choose a School for Your Gifted Child Quick Kit

Introduction

This collection includes the steps, information and tools that parents of intellectually gifted children need to choose the right school for each child. Materials included here are collected and adapted from the book ***Picky Parent Guide: Choose Your Child's School with Confidence*** (Armchair Press, 2004), the PickyParent.com *Light'ning Letter* and the authors' work counseling parents. Parents will find this consolidated collection helpful for choosing schools, working with the schools their children attend, and choosing after-school activities.

More help on related topics is available in the complete book and other *Picky Parent Guide* Quick Kits listed in the front of this collection. Visit PickyParent.com for an updated list of Quick Kits.

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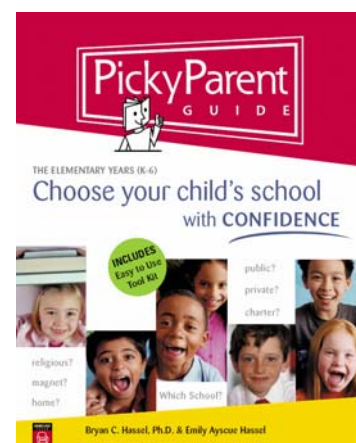
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Six Steps to a Successful School Choice

(2004-2005 edition)

adapted
from
the highly
acclaimed
book



Dear Parent,

Whether you are choosing a first school or considering a change, ***Picky Parent Guide: Choose Your Child's School with Confidence*** is the complete action manual and reference guide that helps you choose just the right school for your child and family. Based on the best available research, it provides easy-to-use **Confident Choice Tools** to make choosing and working with your child's school a snap. *Six Steps to a Successful School Choice* provides the most important ideas and steps, which the book or a parent counselor (available in some local areas) can help you complete. Register for our **FREE** e-newsletter at **PickyParent.com**, and we will walk you through the steps to choose a school and get the best results from the school you've chosen at just the right time each year. For now, **follow these Six Steps** to get started on the path to finding and working with a school where *your child* will be successful and happy:

1

Get Started Chapter 1

Most children spend over 16,000 hours of time in school from grades K–12. Research shows you can significantly improve your child's life and school performance by choosing and working with the right school, so you have plenty of reasons to give it your best effort. When you consider a school, you need to assess both its academic quality and how well it fits your own child and family. Just **think: "Great School, Great Fit!"** And like many of the families whose inspiring stories are told in *Picky Parent Guide*, you might be

surprised by the results! So, let's get started...

2

Solve the Great Fit Puzzle Chapters 2-9

The goal of this step is to help you ensure that the school you choose meets the particular needs of your own child and family. While every child and family need is potentially important, you must identify the few that are *most* important for your unique child and family. These needs are called "Must Haves," because you really must have those needs met at school. The complete *Picky Parent Guide* guides you through each possibility so you can determine your own Must Haves. Common child and family needs fall into four categories

called the **four Fit Factors**:

- #1: What Your Child Learns** – Needs in this category affect the *subjects and level of difficulty* a school should offer your child. These include your child's academic and mental readiness for learning, other important academic and non-academic capabilities, and strong interests. Family needs include your values about what a child should learn and your goals for your child.
- #2: How Your Child Learns** – Needs in this category affect *how a school should interact* with your child. These include a wide range of items, such as your child's learning styles, academic motivation, behavior, mental and physical health, and disabilities. Family needs include your values about behavior rules and teaching methods.
- #3: Social Issues** – These are your child & family needs and preferences for a social community where you and your child feel connected to other people, through friendships, school involvement and common values.

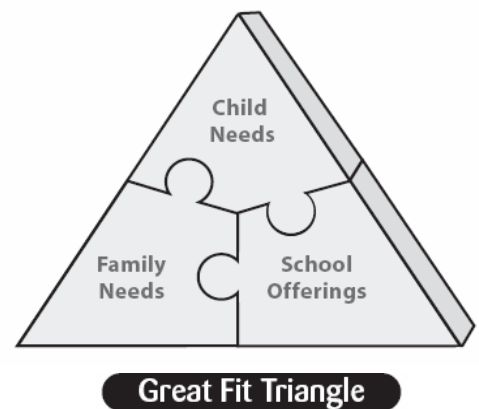
#4: Practical Matters – These are your child & family logistical needs and practical constraints, such as scheduling, child care, balancing your multiple children’s needs, and money.

Child “Quick Think”: *Your child* has a unique collection of capabilities, interests, and preferences. To get started, ask yourself what strengths, challenges and other characteristics really stand out about your child. Consider (a) what your child likes or is able to do well, (b) what your child does not like or has difficulty doing, and (c) how your child works and interacts best with adults and other children. While Must Have needs vary, all children need a school that will appropriately *challenge and nurture* them to succeed in core academic subjects. Use the Fit Factors above to help guide your thinking.

Family “Quick Think”: *Your family* has values, preferences and constraints you’ll want to take into account. To get started uncovering your family needs, consider (a) your preferences concerning what your child should learn and achieve at school, (b) your values about how children should behave and learn at school, (c) your preferences about how you and your child interact with the school community, socially and otherwise, and (d) your family’s practical constraints. Use the Fit Factors above to help guide your thinking.

Once you have identified your child’s and family’s most pressing school needs, it is time to determine what a **school** should offer to meet those needs. In general, you should expect a school to offer your child appropriate academic challenge, to build and take advantage of your child’s strengths, and to develop your child’s weaknesses without dwelling on them. The right school will optimize learning both in core academics and other subjects and areas you and your child value. For a Great Fit, you should expect a lot from a school when it comes to meeting your child and family Must Have needs, especially those that your family cannot address outside of school!

Picky Parent Guide provides a point-by-point discussion to help you pinpoint your top child and family needs, determine how they match up with what schools offer, and summarize your needs on a one page *Personalized Great Fit Checklist*.



**Learn about
Truly Great
Schools**
Chapters 11-14

3

After you have determined what a school should offer to meet your child and family needs, it’s time to learn about truly Great Schools. In Great Schools, *children of all types and abilities learn dramatically more and perform better in core academic subjects than similar students in other schools*. A Great School is more likely than others to meet both your child’s changing academic fit needs and the needs of your multiple children. Repeated, unbiased research over thirty years has shown that these schools adhere to seven principles called the **Great School Quality**

Factors. While all are important, **Great School Quality Factors #2 and #3 are the ones to seek above all others**.

#1: Clear Mission Guiding School Activities

#2: High Expectations for All Students means all students are expected & helped to meet high minimum goals; goals are raised for individual students as soon as they are ready to learn beyond grade level

#3: Monitoring Progress and Adjusting Teaching means the school assesses individual student progress often (weekly is ideal) and changes teaching approaches to ensure that every child locks onto learning

#4: Focus on Effective Learning Tasks

#5: Home-School Connection

#6: Safe and Orderly Environment

#7: Strong Instructional Leadership

The complete *Picky Parent Guide* walks you through the critical aspects of each Great School Quality Factor. You learn exactly what to ask, what to look for, and unique ways to determine each school’s quality strengths and weaknesses. You’ll also get a short Great School Quality Checklist to compare schools point-by-point.

**Get the Scoop
on Schools**
Chapter 15

4

Be sure you are considering all available, high-potential schools: look for articles in local newspapers and magazines, contact your local parent information resource center, and ask other parents and your preschool/daycare director. Focus on schools that appear to meet your Great School and Great Fit needs: see school websites, visit the schools, interview principals and teachers, and talk with parents of children with needs similar to your own child's. To get the best results when visiting schools, be firm to get

the information you need, be polite, listen well, and be genuine about yourself and your child. The complete *Picky Parent Guide* contains hidden sources of information about schools, provides interview worksheets customized to your needs, and shows you the correct ways to interpret what you learn about schools.

**Make Your
Choice, Make It
Happen**
Chapters 16-17

5

Compare your schools point-by-point on quality and fit. Which schools best meet the needs you really can't meet outside of school? Rank your school options and do all you can to secure a slot for your child. If your top-ranked school is your assigned public school, congratulations. If you are applying to a selective school, make sure that you clearly describe a) the school's quality strengths that you recognize and appreciate and b) why the school is the best fit for your child and family needs. No matter what kind of school you hope for your child to attend, make sure you follow all

of the application or registration steps precisely, meeting all deadlines. The complete *Picky Parent Guide* provides a convenient school-by-school comparison worksheet, an application organizer and dozens of helpful tips on getting in to your favorite schools.

**Make the
Most of It**
Chapter 18

6

No school is perfect. Even Great Schools must work constantly to improve. You may find that you have limited options in your area, your child does not get in to your favorite school, or your chosen school is not perfect in quality and fit. Then, knowing a school's strengths and weaknesses will help you work better with your child's teachers and find the right experiences for your child outside of school. You also can help improve your child's school in all the *right* ways once you know its quality and fit

strengths and weaknesses! *Picky Parent Guide* contains lots of practical ideas, specific to your needs, to help you focus your child's activities on what matters most, reducing activity overload for your child and family. The book also helps you prepare your child for a new school and resolve school conflicts immediately when they arise.

We wish you the very best of luck in your efforts to find the best educational environment for your child and one that fits your family's values, as well. We have a passion for your child's personal and academic potential. We are committed to providing expert advice based on the best available research and helping all parents make decisions based on their own children's needs and family values.

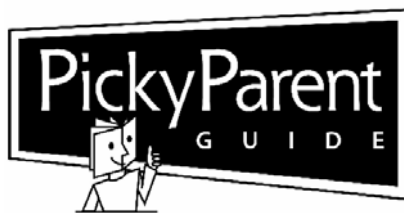
If you want further assistance in this process, we recommend that you purchase a copy of *Picky Parent Guide: Choose Your Child's School with Confidence, the Elementary Years (K-6)* from your favorite bookseller or from **PickyParent.com**, or ask for it at your local library. Don't go it alone – take us with you: we'll be right by your side during the process of choosing a school and making the most of the one you've chosen via our **FREE** e-news *Light'ning Letter* running from August through April each year (register at PickyParent.com). Your area also may have counselors who use the *Picky Parent Guide* materials and who can assist you with your educational decisions. Visit us at **PickyParent.com** to get additional tips, ask questions, learn more, download our *Group Action Guides*, and share your own stories and ideas.



Sincerely,

Bryan C. Hassel, Ph.D.

Emily Ayscue Hassel



Which School is the Right School? Five Questions Every Parent Should Ask

A CONFIDENT CHOICE Tool

Child and Family “Quick Think”*

Think for a few minutes about your child and family:

- ✓ **What strengths, challenges and other characteristics stand out about *your child*?**
 - ◆ Consider what your child likes or is able to do well, what your child doesn’t like or has difficulty doing, and how your child works and interacts best with adults and other children.
- ✓ **What values, needs, strengths and challenges stand out about *your family*?**
 - ◆ Consider your values about what your child learns and achieves through school, values about how children should behave and learn at school, how you and your child interact with the school community, socially and otherwise, and your family’s practical constraints (scheduling, finances, transportation, child care, multiple children’s schools).

*Condensed from pp. 37 and 109 of *Picky Parent Guide: Choose Your Child’s School with Confidence* (Armchair Press, 2004).

Five Questions *Every Parent Should Ask*

- ✓ To choose a **Great Fit** school, identify & match your child & family needs to schools. Find point-by-point help in *Picky Parent Guide* (PPG) Chapters 2-10.
- ✓ Learn more about **Great Schools** – where *all* children learn more academically. See PPG Ch. 11-14.
- ✓ Ask schools the Five Questions below: listen for just the right answers for *your* child and family!

Question 1: Do you expect *all* students to meet *tough* grade level standards?

Seek: Would grade level work at this school challenge your child? If not, see Question 2. If so, seek a school that relentlessly ensures every child masters core subjects. Can they tell you how? Don’t just take a school’s word for it: do a high percentage of kids like yours meet grade level? Scores for children similar to yours in previous performance, parent income, and race are better predictors of what your child will learn at a school than are overall school scores. If a school claims to have “higher standards,” compare your top schools in one or two grades and subjects. Seek short, written, step-by-step goals in each subject – these tell you that every teacher can use the goals. Among schools that have clear goals, compare: which school expects more?

Avoid: Schools making excuses for kids who are behind academically. If your child struggles, they may make excuses rather than help your child, too. Also avoid schools that pretend none of their students struggle. *All* schools have more than a few students who face learning challenges at some point. You need to know in advance how the school will respond.

Question 2: Do you raise goals for individual students *beyond* grade level?

Seek: All-you-can-eat learning, no limits for kids ready to learn more. Kids not just *allowed* to work ahead, but *expected* to work ahead when ready. Percent-at-grade-level scores don’t tell you much if your child could learn more: seek schools where top learners score very high and more than just “gifted” kids score above grade level. All children, including advanced students, should show large yearly “gains” or “growth.”

Avoid: Schools that say, “Our grade level work is tough enough for all students” and schools where everyone makes grade level, but few kids score far above grade level. Both academically gifted children and motivated “typical” kids miss out in schools focusing on grade level only.

Question 3: How do you *monitor* individual students' progress?

Seek: Weekly checking of your child's learning progress is ideal and not at all unrealistic in a school organized to ensure that every child learns. Monitoring progress every six weeks is the minimum needed to keep your child on track. School staff should be able to explain to you in plain language how this is done. Frequent quizzes, short papers, etc. are ways to check each child's progress, but these alone are not enough. They do not tell a teacher *how* your child learns best. Small group or one-on-one contact between students and the lead teacher is almost always necessary for a school to implement effective, frequent monitoring.

Avoid: Schools using end-of-grade tests only to "monitor." This information comes too late to ensure that your child learns each year. Also avoid schools that say, "We don't need to monitor *our* kids." Every school has students who need extra help or new approaches and others who are ready to move ahead faster. A school can't detect a child's changing learning needs if it does not monitor progress often.

Question 4: Do teachers *adapt* methods to ensure each child learns (and loves learning)?

Seek: Every teacher is trained and expected to reach every child by addressing individual kids' interests, strengths and weaknesses. Other staff ("resource teachers" and specialists) should play a clear, consistent role in monitoring and adapting to children's needs. The school should have materials on hand to meet the needs of different learners – not just worksheets and not just work at grade level only. Otherwise, the best teachers will burn out and leave, and more typical teachers will stick to a one-size-fits-all routine. Other parents should be able to tell you how teachers have adjusted instruction to meet their children's learning needs.

Avoid: Schools that say, "We know the one best way to teach all children." Research has repeatedly disproven this outdated notion. Also avoid schools that say it is up to each teacher to decide whether to adjust instruction. You can be sure that your child will experience an enormous teacher-by-teacher quality rollercoaster in a school like this. Choose a school that helps teachers be their best in understanding and meeting your child's needs.

Question 5: Does the school *fit* your other top child and family needs and values?

While the best research shows that every child benefits academically from a Great School (Questions 1 – 4 get you started), each child and family also has a unique set of "Must Have" fit needs and values. Use the Child and Family "Quick Thinks" above to get started. *Picky Parent Guide* Chapters 2 – 10 and *Picky Parent Guide* Quick Kits available on PickyParent.com provide more help. Seek the school that fits your child's top 1 – 3 learning needs to create the best chance that your child will be successful and happy in school.

www.PickyParent.com



Expert Advice, Your Values

Your Notes:



Top Ten Signs of a *Great* Fit Between Your Child and School

1. Your child is eager to go to school and energized and happy at the end of most school days
2. Your child regularly has to work hard to learn and perform in school work
3. Your child regularly experiences success learning and performing in school work
4. You see big progress in your child's overall development – academic, social, emotional and physical
5. Your child is learning and performing academically at the level of which you think (s)he is capable
6. Your child's teachers really understand and appreciate your child's strengths
7. Your child talks about school positively, using words like "fun," "interesting," or "cool"
8. You and your child feel positive about your child's health, behavior and personal well-being at school
9. Your child has friends and acquaintances who like, accept and treat your child kindly at school
10. School work and friends are important, but not all-consuming, parts of your child's life



Top Ten Signs of a *Bad Fit* Between Your Child and School

1. Your child is hesitant to go to school or worn down and unhappy at the end of most school days
2. Your child has made little progress in the past year — academically, socially, emotionally or physically
3. Your child is not performing as well academically as you reasonably think (s)he can
4. Your child says "school is boring" or expresses little interest in what (s)he's learning
5. Your child learns more in a core subject outside of school than in school
6. Your child's teachers do not seem to understand your child or appreciate your child's strengths
7. Your child doesn't seem to have any close friends or friendly acquaintances at school
8. Your child regularly makes poor choices at school, such as befriending bullies, choosing work of little interest, focusing on weaknesses rather than strengths — and school staff does nothing to intervene
9. You or your child are worried about your child's health, behavior or personal well-being at school
10. Your child shows symptoms of stress only when school's in session (e.g., sleeplessness, fatigue, excessive clinginess and whining, new nervous habits, regressing to younger behaviors)

The Basics on Basic Learning Capability: Is Your Child Gifted? Does It Matter?*

Basic Learning Capability

Lucy just began second grade. For two years, she has learned little in school. When she began kindergarten she was already reading at a second grade level and by the end of the year was reading at a fifth grade level, though the teachers focused on teaching letter sounds to the entire class for the year. Lucy's parents had engaged in repeated discussions with her teachers about how to challenge Lucy at school, to no avail. The teachers assured them that Lucy was "doing just fine" at school – making grade level and not misbehaving – and that the one-hour weekly pull-outs for gifted students would start later in second grade. Her parents started to feel embarrassed requesting special favors for their child. They began looking at other schools. They sought – and found – a school that monitored children's learning and adjusted the lessons upward every week for children who were ready. Lucy would be grouped with other children at her current learning level – from her own class or others – for at least half of each school day. All children at this school were organized into small learning groups with ever-changing membership, so she would not be labeled a "brain."



Sam, a personable and athletic first grader, was an "on target" student, his teacher said. Yet he was still struggling with reading, and his parents did not believe that this was very "on target" at all. His school had a large population of gifted students and also many who were challenged. His parents' dismay grew as they realized how little attention the kids in the middle, like their son, were getting. After no response despite several polite meetings with his teacher, his concerned parents hired a private tutor once each week (for Sam and a classmate to share). Sam's reading skills developed quickly. "Am I crazy, or is something wrong with this picture? What should I do next?" his mother asked in frustration. Assured that indeed there was something wrong, she and several other parents scheduled a meeting with the new principal. The principal, eager to improve results for all students, formed a committee to plan significant changes in the school's reading program. The resulting changes, including targeted strategies for readers at differing levels, raised reading scores for children across the board in only one year's time. Sam's parents were thrilled and stopped feeling guilty for being "pushy."



Approach this process with an open mind about your child. A Great Fit school will make the most of your child's strengths and develop his or her weaknesses.

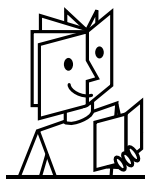
* Reprinted from Picky Parent Guide, p. 43-51

The Basics of Basic Learning Capability, *continued*

Basic Learning Capability: What It Is, Why It's Important

Basic Learning Capability (BLC) is a child's current readiness for learning in core academic subjects, before intervention by a school. It is one very important factor in determining what a child will be ready to learn at each age – and therefore *what* he should be taught.

Definition



Capability: A person's readiness for performance or accomplishment in a pursuit.

Basic Learning Capability: A child's readiness for learning in core academic subjects.

"Core" academic subjects: Subjects that all students must master in preparation for independent adult life and further education in our society, including at least reading, writing and math.

BLC includes traditional measures of "intelligence," which assess mental processing speed and agility in areas such as logical problem solving, comparing, and contrasting ("analytical" and "conceptual" thinking). But not that alone. An individual child may take a bump up or down in BLC based on previous *exposure to core academic material*. A "typical" child who has been offered a very rich and stimulating environment – at home or school – that encourages language and mathematical/logical development may be ready for more challenging school work in core subjects than a child who has not had much stimulation.

It is important to identify the state of readiness for academic work that your child brings to school, because you will want to *find a school that provides children like yours the twin joys of facing challenges and being successful in facing them*. Core academic work – reading, writing, math and the like – consumes much of school time and focus.

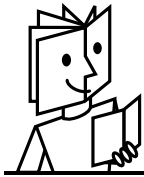
- ***If academic work is far too hard*** without the intensive support and unrelenting expectation for success that an academically *challenged* child needs, he will learn neither the ultimate joy of success nor how to overcome challenge (nor the basic knowledge he needs for adult life).
- ***If academic work is far too easy*** for an academically *gifted* child, he will not learn the tenacity to face and overcome challenge, since he will not encounter it until much later.

Both over-challenged, under-supported children and the never-challenged ones lose an opportunity to strengthen their intellectual gifts and reinforce good work habits.

* Reprinted from Picky Parent Guide, p. 43-51

The Basics of Basic Learning Capability, *continued*

Definition



Analytical thinking: Solving problems by breaking them down into logical, orderly steps. One of the two major capabilities assessed by traditional “I.Q.” tests.

Conceptual thinking: Making comparisons between things not obviously related, seeing similarities and large patterns in a collection of smaller events. The second major capability assessed by traditional “I.Q.” tests.

If your child is properly challenged at school, he can make enormous progress in classic “intelligence,” increasing his thinking abilities by leaps and bounds. A child’s I.Q. may increase by 20 points or more during childhood – a *huge* change – with proper stimulation and challenge. A child can progress from one BLC category to another entirely with combined, consistent high expectations, effective teaching approaches and commitment by the child to work hard. The discipline and confidence a child gains from such an experience can last a lifetime.

Indeed, a Great School that expects much of every child – no matter where each starts – can make all the difference. This is one reason why school *quality* hinges significantly on challenging individual students of all capabilities to make constant *progress*. But we’ll get to that big point later. Meanwhile, you need to know where your child is *now* to choose a school that will offer your child the opportunity to move forward.

Most schools are designed to target children in the middle. The impact on children of low BLC – who just don’t grasp the basic facts they need – can be devastating. Not only will they not learn what is expected, they may feel bad about it and show it with angry behavior, acting up or tuning out in class. And the very high BLC child – who grasps the basics immediately and is ready to move on – will suffer, as well. He will begin to “feel different” from his engaged peers, may demonstrate bored behavior like not paying attention and not sitting still, and will not learn the tenacity that comes with being challenged to learn something new and hard. A high-quality school will overcome these challenges, but you must make sure that a school is strong in the specific ways that will fit your child right now.

Do not worry that you are limiting or pressuring your child by “pegging” her early. Think of this as a starting point, neither a cap on your child’s academic potential nor a guarantee of performance in school. We all know that motivation and hard work accompany any long-term success, and your child can bring these to the table regardless of other capabilities.

* Reprinted from Picky Parent Guide, p. 43-51

The Basics of Basic Learning Capability, *continued*

All students can influence their own success by working hard and overcoming barriers. The right kind of challenge and support can teach your child to do just that.

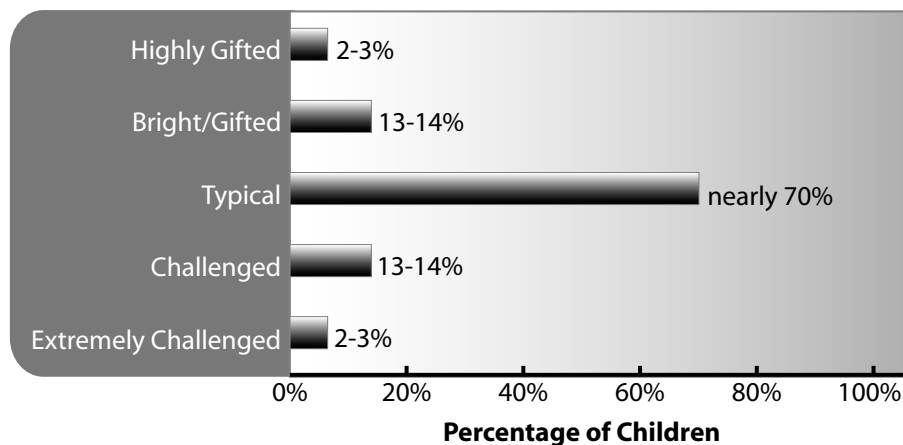
Some students just have a harder time initially learning new things, solving problems, seeing how ideas are similar and different and coming up with new ideas. Others seem to breathe in knowledge and solve problems before the rest of us even know there's problem at all. Most are somewhere in between. All students can influence their own success by learning to work hard and overcome barriers along the way. Indeed, the right kind of academic challenge and support in school can influence how well and how early children learn these lessons.

Categories

The five categories of Basic Learning Capability are these:

1. **Extremely Challenged:** very delayed math and language; difficulty relating as peer of Typical children; I.Q. below 70. About 2–3% of children fall here. These children are included under the umbrella term “special needs” because of their learning challenges.
2. **Challenged:** consistently somewhat delayed in math and language; I.Q. between 70 and 85. About 13–14% of children fall here.
3. **Typical:** close to expected in math and language, but may be somewhat behind or ahead in some areas; I.Q. between 85 and 120. Most children, nearly 7 out of 10, will fall here.
4. **Bright/Gifted:** advanced or learns quickly in math and language; or 90th–97th percentile on achievement tests; or I.Q. between 120 and 130. About 13–14% of children fall here.

Where Children Fall on the Range of Basic Learning Capability



* Reprinted from Picky Parent Guide, p. 43-51

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The Basics of Basic Learning Capability, *continued*

5. **Highly Gifted:** very advanced math and/or language; or 97th percentile and up on achievement tests; some may have difficulty relating as peer of Typical children; I.Q. over 130. About 2–3% of children fall here.

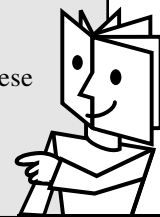
We'd like to have narrowed these to three big buckets – On Target, Below and Above. But parents, educators and researchers who know about Extremely Challenged and Highly Gifted children will tell you that these two groups tend to be much more different from their peers academically than children even a bit closer to the norm. Those mental differences often create social challenges, too, so it's especially important to get a handle on things if your child is near either extreme.

Viewpoint Multiple Intelligences

Howard Gardner, the highly regarded developmental psychologist who pioneered thinking about “multiple intelligences” in *Frames of Mind*, originally divided intelligence into seven categories. He sees the intelligences not as goals to be met, but as strengths to appreciate in their own right and to be drawn upon for teaching different children traditional academic subject matter (e.g., using music to teach math). His basic intelligences include these:

1. Linguistic – the ability to learn and use language (words), both spoken and written.
2. Logical-mathematical – the ability to analyze problems (i.e., to break problems down into parts and weigh the value of different parts), to do math, and to investigate “logically” (working through the different elements of problems in order).
3. Musical – the ability to appreciate, compose (write rhythm and pitch), and perform music.
4. Bodily-kinesthetic – the ability to use all or part of the body to create new things, accomplish goals and solve problems.
5. Spatial – the ability to understand and *use space and the objects in it* to create new ideas and solve problems.
6. Interpersonal – the ability to understand and act on the feelings, thoughts, abilities and motives of *others*.
7. Intrapersonal – the ability to understand and act on *one's own* feelings, thoughts, abilities and motives.

You might be wondering, “How does Basic Learning Capability compare to these seven?” BLC includes a combination of the first two of Gardner's intelligences: Linguistic and Logical-mathematical. Many of the other intelligences are part of child characteristics presented later in this chapter and the next.



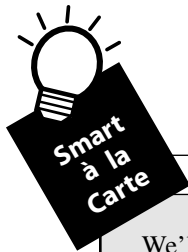
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The Basics of Basic Learning Capability, *continued*

When is This a Priority for Your School Hunt?

In most cases, we encourage you to discard any Fit Factor element that isn't a clear, top priority so you may focus on those that are. But Basic Learning Capability is the one exception. You – and all parents – will best be able to choose the right school if you know where your child's Basic Learning Capability falls.

You may be tempted not to bother if your child is right in the middle, particularly since so many schools are designed to fit children of "typical" academic capability. But too many right-in-the-middle children miss out because their schools either have set low learning standards or, having set challenging standards, fail to reinforce basic subjects adequately and interestingly. We have heard too many parents of these children lament in retrospect that schools did not ask enough of their children or failed to drive home the basic building blocks of knowledge in reading, writing and math. Consider finding a school that fits your child's BLC a Must Have even if your child is quite the norm.



Take Care When Having Your Child Tested

We'll say it here as you identify your child's needs, and we'll say it again later regarding testing for school admissions: take precious care of your child before and during testing times. All children are susceptible to stress from testing situations – the younger the more so. If you yourself are stressed about your child's testing, your child may absorb that stress and take it on as his or her own. Your child will not "over test," but she may "under test" if she's too preoccupied, tired, sick, hungry or otherwise "not herself" to show what she knows. So:

- Try a slightly earlier than usual bedtime for your child for at least a few days before tests.
- Pay special attention to your child's diet during the week prior – good nutrition, plenty of water, not too many sweets (the usual suspects).
- Make sure your child gets regular exercise.
- Schedule only one testing event in a week if possible, and never two days in a row (but it's fine to have multiple tests in one multi-hour session – discuss your child's stamina with the tester if you are concerned).
- Limit new and unusual activities to essentials in the days prior.
- On test day, ensure that your child has a healthy breakfast, plenty to drink, and healthy snacks to maintain energy.
- A hug goes much further than a lecture just prior to testing time.

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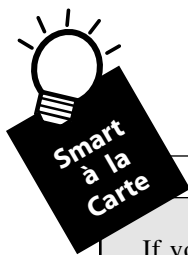
The Basics of Basic Learning Capability, *continued*

Identifying Your Child's Need

If you're not sure about your child, a simple I.Q. test is a good place to start. But if we'd meant I.Q. alone, we'd have said it. Your child's previous exposure to academic material matters, too. Your child may be ready for *more* challenging work more quickly than others in his I.Q. range if he's had a lot of academic exposure and challenge previously. Likewise, your child may need more catch-up than others in his I.Q. range if he hasn't had the same level of academic exposure and challenge.

If you'd prefer not to test – or at least not right away – you may be able to make an approximate guess of your child's BLC. Your best strategy is a process of elimination. Start with the most extreme categories and move to the center until you find one that seems best to describe your child. Children who are either Extremely Challenged or Highly Gifted will often show clear behaviors that are markedly different from others of similar age – Challenged and Bright children somewhat less so. Typical children are, well, typical in mental processing and have a better chance of just seeming to “fit in” academically and sometimes even socially.

Remember:
I.Q. is not set in stone. Your child can learn analytical and conceptual thinking skills and increase I.Q. by 20% or more during the elementary years.



When Your Child's I.Q. and Academic Skills Don't Match

If you believe, or a tester confirms, that there is a great difference between your child's I.Q. and academic know-how, you'll need to find a school prepared to nurture your child appropriately across the gap. Going for a high quality school, not just one that fits today, will be critical. If your child has had less academic exposure than most children with his mental processing capability (I.Q.), your child's school will need to guide your child *rapidly* up the ramp of academic basics rather than holding him back or skipping steps. If your child works in overdrive and seems to perform “beyond herself,” then the school will need to allow your child to continue challenging herself while watching for academic gaps and over-achiever stress.

If a very large gap shows between I.Q. and actual learning – either in an expert assessment or later school performance – you'll want to have your child checked for learning disabilities and disorders, too. This is especially true if you know that your child has had great exposure to academic learning materials and activities, either at home or in school or day care.

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The Basics of Basic Learning Capability, *continued*

To get a read on all of this, check out the Basic Learning Capability section of our *Know Your Child's Needs* table, which starts on page 368.

If you're not sure after thinking it through and you feel motivated to get testing, you're in luck. I.Q. tests and those of verbal and mathematical/ logical development are some of the most refined tests available. That said, know that children are susceptible to stress from the usual burdens of growing up and even the testing situation itself – the younger the more so. Your child probably will not “over test,” but she may “under test” if she's too preoccupied, tired, sick, hungry or otherwise “not herself” on the day of the test. If test results do not seem correct to you, consider a retest. But it will be easier on you and your child if you simply take special care of your child's health and well being before the first test so your child is relaxed, undistracted, and mentally alert. For more on this, see the box *Take Care When Having Your Child Tested* on page 48.



When Your Child's Reading, Writing, and Math Skills Don't Match

Your child may apply his or her Basic Learning Capability unevenly to academic subjects. The fact is that any specific academic work – reading, writing, math, or particular aspects of each – uses several parts of your child's brain. Your child may have particular strengths (what he *can* do) and preferences (what he *likes* to do) unrelated to the “thinking skills” assessed on an I.Q. test. Your child may apply thinking skills to any of the three core academic areas, and other pursuits, too – or not.

If your child has an exceptional *capability* in one core academic area, such as writing or math, treat your child as Highly Gifted in that subject. Seek in a school the individualized goal-setting and instruction *in that subject* that your child needs. Use the sections of the Child tables addressing Highly Gifted children to help with your hunt. Ideally, you'll find a school that challenges and nurtures the strength, while also meeting your child where he is in other academic areas. Similarly, treat a very strong *interest* in one academic area over the others as just that – a strong interest to be addressed through school or elsewhere (use the Interests section on page 55 to help).

That said, vast differences in skill and learning across core subjects may indicate a learning disability. For example, if your brilliant mathematician or chatty 7 year old child can't read, consider testing for dyslexia and other disabilities.

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The Basics of Basic Learning Capability, *continued*

Identification strategies include:

- Have a straightforward I.Q. test conducted by a professional tester. The tests will differ for young and older children, and the expected results vary by age, but a qualified tester will be able to explain the specifics to you.
- Have a developmental test of language and math conducted by a professional tester, which will capture not just I.Q. but previous exposure to academic material compared to children of similar age.
- Ask your child's school, preschool or day care teachers how your child compares to other children of same age whom they have observed.
- Observe and compare your child's language to similar age children – the clarity of speech, difficulty of words used, complexity of ideas expressed, and length of paragraphs.
- Watch for behavioral indicators, especially compared to other children. Use to identify or eliminate Highly Gifted and Extremely Challenged categories, and possibly to identify or eliminate Bright and Challenged:
 - ✓ **Extremely Challenged:** is very delayed developmentally overall. Clearly seems “slow” to master daily life challenges, not just academic ones. Does not connect as true peer of children who seem more typical.
 - ✓ **Challenged:** seems slow, is behind developmental lists you've seen. But is able to get along and learns in daily life and learns ideas and skills that are repeated often in your home, at school or in child care.
 - ✓ **Typical:** seems close to expected.
 - ✓ **Bright/Gifted:** seems quick in language and math, but not so different that social interactions with more typical children the same age are challenging.
 - ✓ **Highly Gifted:** seems very advanced or quick in math and/or language; very mentally energetic. Always “on” compared to other children, asking many questions, concocting many new ideas, endlessly pursuing current interests. May get bored easily in big group.
- See our Resources for Parents section starting on page 354 or visit *PickyParent.com* for more assessment resources.
- *If you get overwhelmed, aren't sure where your child falls and aren't able to get professional testing, do this:* focus on school quality, in particular Great School Quality Factors #2 and 3 detailed in Chapter 12, to help ensure that your child's needs are met.

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Know Your Child's Needs: Is Your Child Gifted?

How to Use This Table:

- Read the section below on Basic Learning Capability (BLC). Bright/Gifted and Highly Gifted children have high levels of BLC.
- On the following pages read the characteristics of "Bright/Gifted" and "Highly Gifted" children to determine where your child falls.

Basic Learning Capability

- Extremely Challenged
- Challenged
- Typical
- Bright/Gifted
- Highly Gifted

Your child's readiness for learning in core academic subjects. A Must Have for all children. All parents should determine the best-fit categories for their children. (When identification is not possible, seeking both Great School Quality Factors #2 and 3 in a school becomes essential.)

Basic Learning Capability is a combination of your child's mental processing capability and the knowledge and skills developed through prior academic exposure in the core academic subjects. Mental processing, for this purpose, includes analytical thinking (problem solving) and conceptual thinking (comparing, contrasting, seeing similarities and differences) in both language and math. Core academic subjects include at least reading, writing and math in the elementary years.

- Basic Learning Capability may be measured using traditional I.Q. (intelligence quotient) testing or, even better, a combination of this and assessments of demonstrated learning in language and math compared to same-age children.
- If your child's I.Q. and academic learning are different, use the higher of the two to choose a school.
- If your child tests differently in math and language, use the higher of the two to choose a school.
- If your child's academic learning is far below I.Q., consider further testing for specific disabilities, disorders, motivation challenges, need for additional academic exposure, or other barriers that may keep your child from absorbing or expressing knowledge.
- The categories below are guidelines. If your child falls near a border, you should read about the categories on both sides to determine which best fits your child currently.
- Opt for the higher category if uncertain, but read advice for both levels so that you will be prepared for academic and social challenges your child may face.
- I.Q. and language/math testing is quite accurate, but does not measure a child's creativity, motivation or other competencies needed to use intelligence in work and life.

Basic Learning Capability: Bright/Gifted

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- Tests between 120 and 130 on standard I.Q. test, and/or
- Is developmentally advanced, or learns more quickly than most peers, in most language and mathematical areas; or is advanced and learns quickly in at least one major area, and/or
- Scores between 90th and 97th percentile on language and/or math achievement tests.
- If child is already in school, may display one or more symptoms of inadequate academic challenge at school: May say schoolwork is easy. May say school is boring generally. May say basic subjects are boring (reading, math). May have trouble listening, paying attention or sitting still in whole-class learning activities in

<p>Basic Learning Capability: Bright/Gifted</p> <p><i>...continued</i></p>	<p>basic subjects, yet be very focused in small achievement-level groups, individual work, and subjects introducing new topics (breadth). May perform well in basic academic subjects without seeming to study very much. May learn new school material quickly once introduced.</p>
<p>Basic Learning Capability: Highly Gifted</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Tests above 130 on standard I.Q. test, and/or ➤ Is developmentally advanced in most language and mathematical areas or extremely advanced in at least one major area, and/or ➤ Scores at or above 97th percentile on language and/or math achievement tests, and/or ➤ Displays most behaviors below, when compared to children of same age: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very large vocabulary • Able to read early, often before elementary school • Longer attention span, persistence, intense concentration in areas of interest • Learns basic skills quickly, with less practice • Wide range of interests • High curiosity level; asks limitless questions • Likes to experiment, do things differently • Puts ideas or objects together in new, unusual, not obvious ways • Remembers a great deal of information • Unusual sense of humor • May express feeling of “being different” from other children in abstract ways (e.g., “other kids not interested in my ideas” or “I am different”) beginning at very early ages (3 – 4 years). • If child is already in school, also may display one or more symptoms of inadequate academic challenge at school: May say schoolwork is easy or boring. May say basic subjects are boring (reading, math). May have trouble listening, paying attention or sitting still in whole-class learning activities in basic subjects, yet be very focused in small achievement-level groups, individual work, and study of new topics. May perform well in academic subjects without seeming to study much. May seem to know new school material before it has been taught or learn immediately once taught. Because they tend to go unchallenged early in life and become accustomed to being “the best” always, may develop perfectionist tendencies when faced with challenges later (e.g., won't try new skills if aren't sure they'll be the best, won't finish projects unless they are certain they are “perfect,” avoid competition from equally gifted students). ➤ Future challenge: may have difficulty using intelligence in adult life unless learns to face challenges and develops strong social and emotional skills. <p style="text-align: right;"><small>*Adapted from <i>Guiding the Gifted Child</i> (Great Potential Press, 1994).</small></p>



Your Gifted Child: What to Look for In a School

How to Use This Table:

- Use the preceding Know Your Child's Needs table to determine whether your child is "Bright/Gifted" or "Highly Gifted."
- Read general information about Basic Learning Capability below.
- Then read specific information about your child's category (Bright/Gifted or Highly Gifted).
- **Bolded** questions and things to seek are the most important. Focusing on them will help you quickly target the best-fit schools and eliminate poor-fit schools.
- Note top things to seek and ask at schools on your Personalized Great Fit Checklist.

Basic Learning Capability

- Extremely Challenged
- Challenged
- Typical
- Bright/Gifted
- Highly Gifted

Using the information below for your child's specific BLC category, look for right combination of the following for your child's Basic Learning Capability:

- **Pace:** Your child is both challenged to learn new things and able to learn what is taught, particularly in basic subjects. Look for school either:
 - Focused primarily on children of your child's Basic Learning Capability, or
 - With frequent monitoring of individual children's progress and frequent changes in teaching approach and individual child's learning goals (may be done one-on-one with teacher or in very small groups of up to 4 children grouped by current level, maybe more if children are very similar), or
 - With significant time spent on supervised independent work in basic academic areas. Schools should not put children into one level of learning group for the entire year. Instead, students should be moved to different learning groups when monitoring shows they've made extra progress or are lagging behind.
- **Breadth:** Multiple topics and subjects are taught. Look for time spent on multiple subjects – e.g., science, foreign languages, geography, art, music. Breadth may be used to:
 - Reinforce basic areas: provide new, interesting contexts for learning reading, writing, math (topics should be connected to or "integrated" with math, reading and writing),
 - Motivate students: keep students interested in school with interesting topics, especially important when basic subjects are too easy or too hard, and/or
 - Broaden knowledge: taught for intrinsic value of the special subjects.
- **Critical thinking:** Children learn to use the basic knowledge they are acquiring to make judgments, solve problems, apply ideas across topics and subjects, and create new ideas:
 - Analytical Thinking: problem solving by breaking ideas and objects into orderly steps and parts
 - Conceptual Thinking: connecting existing ideas in new ways; comparing and sorting things or ideas for similarities and differences
 - Creativity: creating new ideas and objects. Look for the following common ways to teach critical thinking:
 - Supervised research by individual students or small groups;
 - Projects by individuals or small groups;
 - Writing: not just describing an object, book or event, but also evaluating, creating steps, comparing, connecting ideas, and creating new ideas;
 - Teaching method in which students must formulate own questions, think of

...continues

<p>Basic Learning Capability</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Extremely Challenged ➤ Challenged ➤ Typical ➤ Bright/Gifted ➤ Highly Gifted <p><i>...continued</i></p>	<p>possible answers, and evaluate own and others' ideas and work;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Academic exercises and materials specifically intended to develop thinking skills. <p>➤ Social Environment: Your child's successes and challenges in developing positive relationships with other children, both one-on-one and in groups. Look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social opportunity: time during school day when students may work or play in unstructured groups or pairs without adults setting rules (except safety, basic behavior rules) • A significant number of students of your child's Basic Learning Capability also attending same school (and at least two or three others in your child's classrooms), and if your child is different from norm of school . . . • Social tolerance for students of differing capabilities (children discouraged from teasing others who are more or less academically capable than norm of school) <p>➤ Test Score Indicators: Standard results of academic testing that allow you to compare across schools, overall for whole schools, for children in your family's economic and racial group, and for children with previous performance similar to your child's. Overall school scores may not be a good indicator unless schools you compare have similar student populations. Types of scores include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percent (%) of students at grade level, which tells you how many children have met at least grade level on tests. • Growth scores, which tell you how much progress each child has made on average. Should be at least one full year's worth on average, ideally more (since some students may be catching up and others can learn faster). Sometimes called "progress" scores. (Do not confuse this with "Adequate Yearly Progress" which is a technical term in federal legislation requiring schools to increase percent of students achieving grade level.)
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<i>If Your Child Is In This Category</i>	<i>... Then Look for This in a School</i>	<i>... And Ask These Questions</i>
<p>Basic Learning Capability: Bright/Gifted</p> <p><i>...continues</i></p>	<p>In general, look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ School sets higher, individualized learning goals for students ahead of grade level; if not, school's learning goals are set higher for all students ➤ School monitors students' individual learning frequently during year (at least every 6 weeks; weekly ideal) ➤ School adjusts teaching approach to ensure goals are met ➤ School offers individual or small group teaching according to students' current capability in basic subjects to ensure all students are challenged to next level ➤ School focuses on critical thinking skills, with significant time spent on research, writing, projects, and exercises specifically geared to teach thinking skills ➤ School offers advanced courses for students in higher elementary grades (at school or at other nearby schools) ➤ School places students with children in higher grades for advanced study (if very few other children in same 	<p>Principal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pace <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Are grade level expectations challenging? How can I tell? • Do you set higher goals for students who are ready to go beyond grade level? How and how often? • How do you monitor individual progress during the year? How often? • How are children grouped for learning in basics? Why? • Do you make any other changes for students who progress beyond grade level? ➤ Breadth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What subjects are taught? • How much time is spent on each subject weekly? • What is the purpose of each of these "special" classes? How is that purpose achieved? • How is each special subject taught? Separate class or

<i>If Your Child Is In This Category</i>	<i>... Then Look for This in a School</i>	<i>... And Ask These Questions</i>
<p>Basic Learning Capability: Bright/Gifted</p> <p><i>...continued</i></p>	<p>grade are equally advanced in a subject)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ School's extracurricular activities include academic ones, such as Odyssey of the Mind, Chess club ➤ Social Needs: school has some other children who are gifted; typical school population is usually adequate ➤ Test scores: Top 10% of students have very high scores; large % students score in top category; high average scores (not a good indicator if school also has many challenged students); high growth scores by top scoring students. <p>Pace, Breadth, Critical Thinking, Social and Testing Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pace: Must Have. Your child needs a school that does not let bright students coast along at grade level when they are capable of more. Look for school that monitors student progress frequently in reading, math and writing, and groups children by current achievement; or by other methods school individualizes most class work and homework at each student's current level of capability. Alternately, look for schools that set learning goals higher than other schools for all students; this is an inferior approach for students in this BLC category, so if you consider such a school, ensure that goals are actually higher in basic subjects than other schools (often they are not, despite school claims). ➤ Breadth: Nice to Have. More important when pacing in basic subjects is inadequate to keep child challenged. Breadth may keep bright child motivated when not challenged in basics. ➤ Critical Thinking: Must Have. Many of these students will need advanced critical thinking in their future school and work. Extremely important if pace in basic subjects is inadequate to keep child challenged. ➤ Social Needs: Nice to Have. Typical school population. Some other bright students in your child's classroom. ➤ Test Score Indicators: see above. 	<p>woven into basic subjects? Do teachers of special subjects coordinate with teachers of basic subjects each week?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Critical Thinking Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your school teach critical thinking skills? • How are these skills taught? • How much time is spent each week on this? • If answers do not include these items, ask: Do your students do independent projects, research or writing? Can you give me a few examples of what they do? ➤ Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many children in each classroom do you think will be at a learning level similar to my child's? ➤ Test Scores <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask about this if you have not been able to get information elsewhere • Ask about any problems you see with test score results – does the principal have a plan for addressing problems? <p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Same as principal. Look for answers consistent with principal's and consistent across teachers within each grade level. <p>Parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Same as principal. Look for answers consistent with principal's and teachers'. ➤ Speak with parents of academically bright/gifted children. Ask if their children's academic and social needs have been met. <p>Written Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Look for information consistent with what you have heard from principal, teachers, and parents. <p>Observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Are the learning activities described to you by principal, teachers and parents taking place? ➤ Are teachers taking advantage of small group or one-on-one work to engage every child; are teachers trying different approaches with

<i>If Your Child Is In This Category</i>	<i>... Then Look for This in a School</i>	<i>... And Ask These Questions</i>
		<p>different children?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Do teachers deal with children like yours effectively?
<p>Basic Learning Capability: Highly Gifted</p> <p>...continues</p>	<p>In general, look for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ School sets higher, individualized learning goals for students ahead of grade level ➤ School monitors students' individual learning frequently during year (at least every 6 weeks; weekly ideal) ➤ School adjusts teaching approach to ensure goals are met ➤ School offers individual or small group teaching according to students' current capability in basic subjects to ensure all students are challenged to next level ➤ School focuses on critical thinking skills, with significant time spent on research, writing, projects, and exercises specifically geared to teach thinking skills. ➤ School offers advanced courses (at school or at other nearby schools) ➤ School places students with children in higher grades for advanced study (if very few other children in same grade are equally advanced in a subject) ➤ School's extracurricular activities include academic ones, such as Odyssey of the Mind, Chess club ➤ Social Needs: school has a substantial percentage of children who are gifted or highly gifted ➤ Test scores: Top 3 – 5% of students have very high scores; large % students score in top category; high average scores (not a good indicator if school also has many challenged students); high growth scores by top scoring students <p>Pace, Breadth, Critical Thinking, Social and Testing Indicators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pace: Must Have. Unless a child has a disability or similar barrier, students in this group will rapidly learn and exceed grade level in any school not focused on the highly gifted. Few if any schools can make one set of learning goals appropriate for children in this group, as their needs are very diverse. Look for a school admitting only children in this ability range; and/or a school that monitors student progress frequently in reading, math and writing, and groups children by current 	<p>Principal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pace <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do you set higher goals for students who are ready to go beyond grade level? How and how often? • How do you monitor individual progress during the year? How often? • How are children grouped for learning in basics? Why? • Do you make any other changes for students who progress beyond grade level? ➤ Breadth <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What subjects are taught? • How much time is spent on each subject weekly? • What is the purpose of each of these "special" classes? How is that purpose achieved? • How is each special subject taught? Separate class or woven into basic subjects? Do teachers of special subjects coordinate with teachers of basic subjects each week? ➤ Critical Thinking Skills <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does your school teach critical thinking skills? • How are these skills taught? • How much time is spent each week on this? • If answers do not include these items, ask: Do your students do independent projects, research or writing? Can you give me a few examples of what they do? ➤ Social <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How many children in each classroom do you think will be at a learning level similar to my child's? ➤ Test Scores <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask about this if you have not been able to get information elsewhere • Ask about any problems you see with test score results – does the principal have a plan for addressing problems?

<i>If Your Child Is In This Category</i>	<i>... Then Look for This in a School</i>	<i>... And Ask These Questions</i>
<p>Basic Learning Capability: Highly Gifted</p> <p><i>...continued</i></p>	<p>achievement; or that individualizes most class work and homework at each student's current level of capability by other methods.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Breadth: Nice to Have. More important when pacing in basic subjects and teaching of critical thinking are inadequate to keep child challenged. Breadth unlikely to keep highly gifted child satisfied and motivated when not challenged in basics. ➤ Critical Thinking: Must Have. Essential component to both challenge and satisfy these children. Critical thinking will be essential for future school and work at this level of capability. ➤ Social Needs: Must Have. School must have some similar-capability peers in your child's class to prevent isolation. ➤ Test Score Indicators: See previous 	<p>Teachers:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Same as principal. Look for answers consistent with principal's and consistent across teachers within each grade level. <p>Parents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Same as principal. Look for answers consistent with principal's and teachers'. ➤ Speak with parents of academically highly gifted children. Ask if their children's academic and social needs have been met. <p>Written Materials:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Look for information consistent with what you have heard from principal, teachers, and parents. <p>Observations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Are the learning activities described to you by principal, teachers and parents taking place? ➤ Are teachers taking advantage of small group or one-on-one work to engage every child; are teachers trying different approaches with different children? ➤ Do teachers deal with children like yours effectively? ➤ Isolation: no child should be doing work all by him or herself all day. Even if a student is very far ahead academically, some of day should be spent with other children and some working with an adult.

Child Needs Summary

How to Use This Summary:

- Use this checklist to help identify your child's most important characteristics for choosing a school. If needed, you'll find more help identifying your child's needs in *Picky Parent Guide*.
- Write an "M" in the square box beside needs that are Must Haves: truly essential for your child's school to address. Most children will have a small number of Must Haves.
- Write an "N" in the square box beside needs that are Nice to Haves: not essential, but helpful for school to address.
- Leave empty boxes beside items not important for choosing a school for your child, because either (1) an item is not important for your child or (2) you do not need school to address an item.
- Record Must Haves and top Nice to Haves on your *Personalized Great Fit Checklist*.

WHAT YOUR CHILD LEARNS

☐ **BASIC LEARNING CAPABILITY:** A child's readiness for learning in core academic subjects. A Must Have for all. Check highest category that fits.

- ☐ **Extremely Challenged:** very delayed math, language; or I.Q. below 70; social difficulty as peer of Typical children
- ☐ **Challenged:** consistently delayed in math and language; or I.Q. between 70 and 85
- ☐ **Typical:** close to expected math, language, but may be somewhat behind or ahead; or I.Q. between 85 and 120
- ☐ **Bright/Gifted:** advanced or learns quickly; 90th-97th percentile on achievement tests; or I.Q. between 120 and 130
- ☐ **Highly Gifted:** very advanced math and/or language; 97th percentile and up on achievement tests; or I.Q. over 130; may have social difficulty as peer of Typical children

OTHER CAPABILITIES: look for strengths (early or very strong capabilities) and weaknesses (late or very weak capabilities) compared to other children of same age. A Must Have only for extreme strengths and weaknesses. Mark Must Haves ("M") and Nice to Haves ("N"), if needed.

- ☐ **Musical:** senses, appreciates, composes, and/or performs music, including rhythm, pitch, and tone
- ☐ **Artistic:** understands and appreciates others' art; creates original works of art pleasing or interesting to others
- ☐ **Physical & Hands-on:** displays strength, agility, speed, balance and/or flexibility; or uses all or part of the body to create ideas or objects and to solve problems
- ☐ **Social & Leadership:** understands & interacts well with many kinds of people; or organizes/ leads other children
- ☐ **Creativity:** thinks of new ideas and ways to do things, rather than imitating others; may apply to varying activities
- ☐ **English as Second Language:** understands, speaks, reads, and writes English at age-appropriate level

☐ **INTERESTS:** something your child loves to do or think about often, regardless of skill; interest must be long-held and something your child wants to continue pursuing frequently at school to make it a Must Have. Write interest here, if any: _____

Continues...

Child Needs Summary

...continued

HOW YOUR CHILD LEARNS

- ☐ **LEARNING STYLES:** a Must Have if child is very strong or weak in a style. Check extreme strengths or weaknesses below.
- ☐ **Visual:** learns best seeing things written or in pictures; stimulated by how things look; bothered by disorder, clutter. Strength or weakness?: _____
 - ☐ **Auditory:** learns best listening, talking, discussing; stimulated by sounds; bothered by loud, disorganized noises. Strength or weakness?: _____
 - ☐ **Kinesthetic:** learns best moving body; and/or using hands ("tactile"); stimulated by activity; bothered sitting still. Strength or weakness?: _____

- ☐ **MOTIVATION:** how self-motivated is child to achieve academically? A Must Have if this is a strength or weakness. May be a Must Have if child is Typical and parent cannot provide general supervision of child's work and progress. Check category that best fits.
- ☐ **Strength:** child sets challenging goals for self, tries hard things on own, works to overcome barriers and problems
 - ☐ **Typical:** child works to meet goals set by teachers, parents; or sets achievable goals for self; stops if problems arise
 - ☐ **Weakness:** child not bothered when does not perform well; or is bothered but takes no action

- ☐ **PHYSICAL OR MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES:** any physical restrictions or handicaps; ongoing illnesses requiring daily treatment or special facilities; or ongoing or recurring emotional upset (severe depression, anxiety, other mental health challenges). Write here, if any: _____

- ☐ **BEHAVIOR CHALLENGES:** significant, unresolved behavior or discipline problems in group settings that prevent your own child or others in class from effectively learning.

- ☐ **LEARNING DISORDERS AND DISABILITIES:** a Must Have for any recognized learning disability; or learning disorder severe enough to require special services at school to meet academic, social, emotional or physical needs. Write disability here, if any: _____

- ☐ **SELF-UNDERSTANDING:** child's demonstrated ability to understand self, including own strengths, weaknesses and interests and to use that understanding to make decisions. A Must Have only if child is very weak in this area.

SOCIAL ISSUES

- ☐ **FRIENDS:** a Must Have if your child has well-established friendships with children attending a certain school, and your child does not have social skills to make new friends, and you are unable to help your child continue current friendships outside of school or establish new friendships. List specific friends here, if any: _____

PRACTICAL MATTERS

- ☐ **ESSENTIAL ACTIVITIES:** Must Have if child has non-school activities that must continue and can't be done at school. Write activity here, if any: _____

Family Needs Summary

How to Use This Summary:

- Use this checklist to help identify your family's most important characteristics for choosing a school. If needed, you'll find more help identifying your family's needs in *Picky Parent Guide*.
- Write an "M" in the square box beside needs that are Must Haves: truly essential for your child's school to address. Most families will have a small number of Must Haves.
- Write an "N" in the square box beside other needs that are Nice to Haves: not essential, but helpful for school to address.
- Leave empty boxes beside items not important for choosing a school for your child, because either (1) an item is not important for your family or (2) you do not need *school* to address an item.
- Record Must Haves and top Nice to Haves on your *Personalized Great Fit Checklist*.

WHAT YOUR CHILD LEARNS

VALUES ABOUT WHAT CONTENT IS IMPORTANT: a Must Have if you strongly value a subject and need for school to cover it. Mark Must Haves ("M") and Nice to Haves ("N") below:

- ☐ Core academic subjects (reading, writing, math)
- ☐ Other academic subjects (foreign language, etc. – make your own list of subjects you value)
- ☐ Morals, ethics, character, religion
- ☐ Other non-academic: social, emotional and physical development
- ☐ Other topics important to you

GOALS FOR YOUR CHILD: a Must Have if one of these is your goal for your child, and your child is at risk of not meeting the goal (if goal is learning a particular subject, use *Values about content* above). Mark Must Haves ("M") and Nice to Haves ("N") below:

- ☐ Grade progression: child at risk of failing required subject or not meeting standard for grade progression
- ☐ Academic performance: child is capable of performing above grade level but at risk of not achieving potential
- ☐ College opportunity: you want child to attend college and child is capable, but child at risk of not achieving goal

HOW YOUR CHILD LEARNS

☐ **VALUES ABOUT SCHOOL-WIDE EXPECTATIONS AND RULES ON STUDENT CONDUCT:** a Must Have if you have strong opinions about school rules on children's social behavior, especially if

1. your time with your child is very limited or
2. you have difficulty teaching the religious, moral or ethical lessons you want your child to learn or
3. child is very susceptible to peer influence or
4. you are very concerned about values and behaviors your child is adopting at current school

Check expectations and rules important to you below:

- ☐ Manners with other children and adults
- ☐ Honor code
- ☐ Dress
- ☐ Discipline
- ☐ Other behaviors _____

Continues...



Family Needs Summary

...continued

HOW YOUR CHILD LEARNS...continued

VALUES ABOUT HOW CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN: a Must Have if you have a strong opinion about how children should be taught and behavior managed in school

☐ **Teaching method** (check preferred method below)

- ☐ Teacher directed: teachers transmit their knowledge directly to students and guide student activities in detail
- ☐ Student discovery: teachers help students figure out new knowledge for themselves and choose own activities
- ☐ Mixed approach: some of both teacher directed and student discovery learning

☐ **Classroom behavior management** (check preferred method below)

- ☐ Controlling/Strict: teachers maintain order through clear rules, rewards and consequences
- ☐ Developmental: maintain order by coaching and developing students' self-control; use peer and parental pressure
- ☐ Mixed approach: some of both controlling/strict and developmental approaches

☐ **YOUR ROLE AS ADVOCATE FOR YOUR CHILD:** a Must Have if you have difficulty understanding and communicating your child's needs to teachers and principal (because of time constraints, lack of confidence, language barriers, cultural differences, or other reasons)

SOCIAL ISSUES

☐ **PARENT COMMUNITY:** a Must Have if you want your child's school to have parents with particular characteristics (make a list and check preferred items below)

- ☐ Friends: Parents you already know?
- ☐ Neighbors: Neighborhood parents?
- ☐ Location: Parents from a particular neighborhood other than your own?
- ☐ Values: Same values as you? Which values?
- ☐ Social behavior and manners: Ways you want, or don't want, other parents to act?
- ☐ Social and economic status: Do you have preferences about the diversity or makeup of the parent community?
- ☐ Race and ethnicity: Do you have preferences about the diversity or makeup of the parent community?

☐ **PARENT INVOLVEMENT:** a Must Have if you have a strong preference about the level and type of parent involvement in your child's school, including (check preferences, if any)

- ☐ Helping: helping with school's daily life (e.g., volunteering for classroom activities, media center, field trips)
- ☐ Decision making (e.g., volunteering as member of school advisory or governing board)
- ☐ Fundraising activities (see last item below, Money, about your own donation dollar amounts)

Continues...



Family Needs Summary

...continued

SOCIAL ISSUES...continued

- ☐ **STUDENT COMMUNITY:** a Must Have if you want your child's school to have students with particular characteristics (make a list and check preferred items below)
- ☐ Friends: Want to keep your child with current friends? Seeking new friends for your child?
 - ☐ Neighbors: Your child's neighbors?
 - ☐ Location: Students from a particular neighborhood other than your own?
 - ☐ Values: Same values as you? Which values?
 - ☐ Social behavior and manners: Ways you want, or don't want, other students to act?
 - ☐ Student achievement: Higher, lower or same-performing students compared to your child?
 - ☐ Social and economic status: Preferences about the diversity or makeup of the student body?
 - ☐ Race and ethnicity: Preferences about the diversity or makeup of the student body?
 - ☐ Gender diversity: Do you want an all-boys or all-girls program for your child?
 - ☐ Other student characteristics you do or do not want?

- ☐ **I WANT MY CHILD TO ATTEND A CERTAIN SCHOOL, SCHOOL TYPE, OR SCHOOL DESIGN:** a Must Have only if you would choose a certain school type (e.g., public, private, religious) or design over a different school of better quality and fit

PRACTICAL MATTERS

- ☐ **CHILD CARE:** a Must Have if you do not have other affordable child care options for hours needed
- ☐ Before and after school
 - ☐ Holidays and Summer

- ☐ **SCHEDULE:** a Must Have if you have unchangeable commitments (e.g., work, other children's schedules) and can not use transportation or child care to accommodate a different schedule
- ☐ Daily hours
 - ☐ Yearly (start/finish and holidays)

- ☐ **TRANSPORTATION:** a Must Have if you have unchangeable commitments preventing you from providing transportation and you cannot use non-school transport (e.g., carpool, city bus)
- ☐ To school and home from school
 - ☐ After school activities

- ☐ **LOCATION:** a Must Have if you need to have your child's school near work or home (e.g., you have time or transportation constraints, or you plan to visit your child's school very frequently)

- ☐ **YOUR OTHER CHILDREN:** a Must Have if you definitely do or do not want child to go to same school as siblings. Same or different schools? _____

- ☐ **MONEY AVAILABLE TO PAY FOR SCHOOL:** a Must Have if money available to pay, including possible scholarships or vouchers, is less than most expensive school option

Current \$:¹_____ Target \$:²_____ Maximum \$:³_____

1 Current: Amount you actually spend on education now (tuition, fees, child care, supplies, gifts, donations)

2 Target: Amount you could spend without major changes in work, lifestyle or debt (may be same as Curr. or Max.)

3 Maximum: Most you are willing to spend, with acceptable changes in work, lifestyle and debt.

Personalized Great Fit Checklist

School Name: _____

- In the first blank column, list in pencil the precise names of your top child & family needs based on your *Child and Family Needs Summaries*. For example, write: "Basic Learning Capability, Typical."
- Check whether each of your needs is a Must Have or Nice to Have.
- In next big column, make note of the characteristics a school must have to meet your need. *Picky Parent Guide* pages 380–408 give you specific ideas, if needed.
- Include specific questions to ask school principal, teachers, parents, and others. *Picky Parent Guide* pages 380–408 provide questions, if needed.
- Make an extra copy and fill in notes for each school you consider.
- After you gather the information you need, grade each school on how well it fits each Must Have and Nice to Have item:
A perfect fit **C** halfway fit **D** poor fit **F** very poor or no fit
B very good fit

FIT FACTOR	CHILD & FAMILY NEEDS: Must Haves & top Nice to Haves	MUST HAVE	NICE TO HAVE	WHAT TO LOOK FOR <i>and</i> QUESTIONS TO ASK	NOTES ABOUT THIS SCHOOL	GRADE
What Your Child Learns						
How Your Child Learns						
Social Issues						
Practical Matters						

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Great School Quality Checklist PAGE 1

School Name: _____

- Complete a separate *Great School Quality Checklist* for each school you consider.
- In Notes column, make notes about each school. Which factor elements are strengths? Weaknesses?
- After gathering available information, grade each school on each overall Great School Quality Factor:
 - ✓ **A** school has all of the elements
 - ✓ **B** school has most of the elements
 - ✓ **C** school has about half of the elements
 - ✓ **D** most of the elements are missing
 - ✓ **F** school has none or almost none of the elements

GREAT SCHOOL QUALITY FACTORS		NOTES ABOUT THIS SCHOOL	GRADE
1. Clear Mission Guiding School Activities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Written mission communicating focus and priorities ● Staff, parents & written materials state same mission ● School-wide goals support mission ● Student goals, curriculum & teaching support mission 			
2. High Expectations for All Students: <i>High Minimum Expectations for All</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Challenging but achievable student learning goals (standards) for each grade level ● School-wide plan and actions ensure that all students achieve at least grade level in basics, no excuses ● All or near all children achieve grade level ● Progress scores high for all, including lowest scorers <i>Higher Expectations for Students Who are Ready</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Learning goals raised for ready students ● Clear, written progression of goals beyond grade level ● Plan and actions ensure students meet higher goals ● At least gifted students achieve very high test scores ● Progress scores are high for top students 			

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Great School Quality Checklist PAGE 2

School Name: _____

3. Monitoring of Progress and Adjusting Teaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School assesses individual student progress (weekly is ideal) ● Teachers change teaching approach to ensure that every child achieves his or her learning goals 		
4. Focus on Effective Learning Tasks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Instruction approach proven to work ● Class time allocated according to subjects' importance ● Materials & facilities allocated in line with importance ● Principal and teachers limit class interruptions 		
5. Home-School Connection <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● School tells parents what children will be learning ● School tells parents how to help own children learn ● School updates parents on own child performance ● School works with parents to resolve problems 		
6. Safe and Orderly Environment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Students know how they are expected to behave ● Students focus on work in the classroom ● Consequences for behavior are clear and consistent ● School keeps students safe from harm 		
7. Strong Instructional Leadership <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Clear performance expectations for teachers ● Principal recruits, keeps great teachers ● Teachers work together within & across grades ● Principal monitors individual teacher performance ● Staff regularly identifies problems, improves school ● Professional development focused on school goals ● Principal acts on high and low teacher performance 		

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School List Tool

Date: _____

- Make your "gut" list of schools you'd like to consider
- Find out what other schools are available to your child in your community
- Add a school to your list if you think it may fit at least one of these categories:
 1. Fits your child's and family's Must Haves, or
 2. Provides better quality than other schools available to your child
- Consider different types of schools (public, private, religious, home)
- Include schools using designs likely to fit your child or family well
- Add each school's essential contact information (name, telephone number, website) for quick reference
- Eliminate schools as needed, based on quality or fit

SCHOOL TYPES	SCHOOLS WE MAY CONSIDER
<i>Public:</i> <i>Assigned</i>	
<i>Magnets</i>	
<i>Charters</i>	
<i>Other</i>	
<i>Private Schools</i>	
<i>Religious Schools</i>	
<i>Home School</i>	

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School Comparison Worksheet PAGE 1

- Use the information you have gathered about schools to do a side-by-side comparison of both fit and quality. If you are comparing more than five schools, you will need to use two of these worksheets.
- List school names at the top of the school columns to right (use school initials or abbreviations to fit).
- Page 1: Transfer information to the first three blank columns from your *Personalized Great Fit Checklist*. Place your grades for each school on each Fit Factor below school name. Compare how well schools fit your child and family needs.

FIT FACTOR	CHILD & FAMILY NEEDS: Must Haves & top Nice to Haves	MUST HAVE	NICE TO HAVE	SCHOOL #1	SCHOOL #2	SCHOOL #3	SCHOOL #4	SCHOOL #5
<i>What</i> Your Child Learns								
<i>How</i> Your Child Learns								
Social Issues								
Practical Matters								

Continues...

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School Comparison Worksheet **PAGE 2**

- Page 2: Grade the quality of your school options. Use school information available on GreatSchools.net and clarifying questions found in *Picky Parent Guide* to help.
- Review pages 1 and 2 and compare the schools. Highlight particular strengths and weaknesses of each school. Remember, not all items listed here are equal in importance for you and your child.
- ✓ Must Haves and quality should weigh more heavily in your decision than Nice to Haves.
- ✓ *Picky Parent Guide* provides *Child, Family and Quality: Ways to Get What You Don't Get at School* tables to help you decide which Must Haves and quality weaknesses you can best accommodate outside of school, if needed.

GREAT SCHOOL QUALITY FACTORS	SCHOOL #1	SCHOOL #2	SCHOOL #3	SCHOOL #4	SCHOOL #5
1. Clear Mission Guiding School Activities: Everyone knows and uses the school's goals.					
2. High Expectations for All Students: Kids like mine make grade level and all teachers raise goals for kids who are ahead.					
3. Monitoring of Progress and Adjusting Teaching: Teachers check to see what kids have learned often (weekly ideal) and change how they teach to meet individual kids' needs.					
4. Focus on Effective Learning Tasks: Teachers spend a lot of time on activities <i>proven</i> to work with kids at the school.					
5. Home-School Connection: Parents know what children are learning and how to help at home.					
6. Safe and Orderly Environment: Children are safe and focused on learning at school.					
7. Strong Instructional Leadership: The leader makes sure that great teachers stay, low-performing teachers go, and all do their best work on #1-6.					

Getting In Is More Than Spin!

A When-It's-Time-to-Get-Practical Checklist

- Note the names of schools you are considering in top row.
- Check off each step as you complete it for each school. Some items will not apply to all schools; for example, several items apply only to selective schools.
- Items #16 – 19 are intentionally blank. Add other steps for individual schools you consider.

GETTING IN STEPS	SCHOOL #1	SCHOOL #2	SCHOOL #3	SCHOOL #4	SCHOOL #5
1. Get application or registration materials, brochures, other materials					
2. Sign up for open house and tour					
3. Get school's previous test scores					
4. Schedule phone or live interview with principal (best after tour or open house)					
5. Schedule classroom observations (ideally with chance to ask teachers questions – or do this at open houses)					
6. Interview parents with similar family needs and children like yours					
7. Gather child's documents (birth certificate, social security number)					
8. Teacher recommendation packages delivered to recommenders					
9. Check with recommenders to ensure letters & forms complete, delivered					
10. Application/registration complete, delivered (make sure school receives)					
11. Schedule interviews and observations (where they interview you and child)					
12. Schedule child testing at schools (or private testing if allowed)					
13. Plan "spin" to get child in (friends, etc.)					
14. All Great School quality information gathered					
15. All Great Fit information gathered					
16.					
17.					
18.					
19.					

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Your Gifted Child: Ways to Get What You Don't Get at School

How to Use This Table:

- Read the general section on Basic Learning Capability and then the one on your child's category (Bright/Gifted or Highly Gifted).
- Once you have chosen a school, use to help plan non-school experiences for your child.
- Some of the suggested actions, such as hiring a tutor, seeing a counselor, and enrolling your child in activities, can be expensive. Local community organizations, public libraries, and other agencies, however, may offer some of these services and activities free or at reduced prices.
- Add your own ideas! (And, if you like, share them with other parents at PickyParent.com)

Basic Learning Capability

Your child's readiness for learning in core academic subjects

If school is not a good fit for your child's Basic Learning Capability, keep track of the following items, especially ones that are Must Haves for your child (see BLC categories below)

- **Pace:** What your child knows and can do, particularly in reading, math and writing. Look at your child's work after it is completed and graded. Ideally, compare your child's current level of mastery to the school's standards for current and surrounding grades (or state or national standards).
- **Breadth:** Topics covered, and not covered, in your child's curriculum. Assess how the non-basic subjects covered reinforce basic subjects, motivate and interest your child, and cover broadening topics that you value.
- **Critical Thinking:** How much your child's program includes analytical problem solving (non-fiction writing, projects, research, other chances to figure out problems and organize steps to reach a goal), conceptual thinking (projects, research, all writing except purely descriptive) and creative thinking (creative writing of stories, poetry, drama; creative art; thinking of own topics or research questions for study; other chances to think of new ideas)
- **Social Needs:** Keep track of your child's successes and challenges in developing positive relationships with other children, both one-on-one and in groups. In general, consider the following non-school sources for educational and developmental assistance with your child:
 - Extracurricular activities with other children in groups outside of school
 - Individual private lessons or tutoring
 - Individual counseling with a psychologist or other trained counselor
 - Set aside work time, and help your child pursue activities independently (e.g., provide needed transportation, materials, equipment and space for work at home)
 - Take your child to public facilities, such as museums and libraries, that have information and exhibits
 - Help your child find biographies of people who have traits in common with your child
 - Help your child find websites to educate and develop
 - Purchase computer software to develop your child's skill and knowledge
 - Form an out-of-school club with similar children
 - Help your child find friends with similar characteristics
 - Seek out community organizations that support children and families like yours

<p>Basic Learning Capability: Bright/Gifted</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pace: Must Have. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach your child to face new mental challenges in core academic areas (reading, math, writing) by introducing more advanced skills and concepts than school offers • Do "school at home" in non-school hours, either yourself or by hiring a tutor in core areas (math, reading, writing). Use school's own standards for current and higher grades to determine next challenging steps, if possible ➤ Breadth: Nice to Have. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help your child choose a limited number of extracurricular activities to pursue (in groups, with private tutors, etc.) • Ensure that, over time, your child is exposed to mix of physical, creative, analytical, artistic, language and mathematical/scientific topics and sensory experiences. Nonschool activities are more likely to broaden knowledge than to motivate or reinforce school academic learning, since activities will not be coordinated with current school work ➤ Critical Thinking: Must Have. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage creativity and problem solving in your child's home life. Get child's input into creative activities (e.g., decorating, landscaping). Allow or pay child to take on multi-step home projects; help child plan work steps before doing the work, and encourage self-critiquing of own work at end • Provide materials at home that encourage creativity (art, music, story tapes, fiction books) and problem solving (crosswords, puzzles, models, brain teasers, nonfiction books) • Help your child find extracurricular activities of interest that develop creative and conceptual thinking (e.g., art, drama, science) and problem solving (e.g., chess club, science club) ➤ Social Needs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage child to develop friendships with many types of children from many sources (school, neighborhood, religious organizations, extracurriculars) • If child attends school with few bright/gifted children, then play match-maker to help your child meet and develop relationships with similar capability peers
<p>Basic Learning Capability: Highly Gifted</p> <p style="text-align: right;">...continues</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Pace: Must Have. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach your child to face new mental challenges in core academic areas (reading, math, writing) by introducing more advanced skills and concepts than school offers • Do "school at home" in non-school hours, either yourself or by hiring a tutor in core areas (math, reading, writing). Use school's own standards for higher grades to determine next challenging steps, if possible ➤ Breadth: Nice to Have. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help your child choose a limited number of extracurricular activities to pursue (in groups, with private tutors, etc.) • Ensure that, over time, your child is exposed to mix of physical, creative, analytical, artistic, language and mathematical/scientific topics and sensory experiences. Nonschool activities are more likely to broaden knowledge than to motivate or reinforce school academic learning, since activities will not be coordinated with current school work • Consider choosing activities likely to draw other highly gifted children for combined breadth and social development (discuss with program directors, if possible) ➤ Critical Thinking: Must Have. Critical component to challenge and satisfy these children. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encourage creativity and problem solving in your child's home life. Get child's input into creative activities (e.g., decorating, landscaping). Allow or pay child to take on multi-step home projects; help child plan work steps before doing the work, and encourage self-critiquing of own work at end • Provide materials at home that encourage creativity (art, music, story tapes, fiction books) and problem solving (crosswords, puzzles, models, brain teasers, nonfiction books) • Help your child find extracurricular activities of interest that use creative and conceptual thinking (e.g., art, drama, science) and problem solving (e.g., chess club, science club)

<p>Basic Learning Capability: Highly Gifted</p> <p><i>...continued</i></p>	<p>➤ Social Needs: Must Have.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play match-maker to help your child meet and develop relationships with similar capability peers • Coach (or hire psychologist skilled in this area to coach) child in social skills needed to develop friendships with others, even when child "feels different" • Seek "matches" from many sources (school, neighborhood, religious organizations, extracurriculars)
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Does My Child Need Formal Assessment?

Is *formal* assessment of your child's abilities and learning characteristics, in writing or given orally, ever necessary? Well, yes. In some cases, an informal understanding of a child's work mastery is not enough. Two problems can arise. First, an academically gifted child who also has a mild learning disability, behavioral challenge or mental illness may be up to grade level, but actually capable of much more. This child will raise no red flags unless his academic work slips or his behavior becomes unmanageable in the classroom. For example, a very bright child with mild ADHD (attention deficit hyperactivity disorder), depression or dyslexia may perform "just fine" in the classroom but fall far short of his academic capability. Once the disability or impairment is addressed, his academic performance can rise to the full level of his capability.

Second, children who are typical in academic capability but who have mild learning disabilities, behavioral impairments or mental illness may be misdiagnosed as academically challenged. "Why isn't John paying attention? Because the material is over his head, so let's get him more repetition." Not the right solution for the depressed or clinically hyperactive child! If a child has certain disabilities or other challenges, even a star teacher working with a small group may not be able to diagnose the *cause* of the problem. And clearly, a child of any academic capability who has a severe learning disability or other impairment (physical or mental) may require formal assessment and significant treatment to learn as well as he is able.

What kind of formal testing might a school do? For starters, a formal test of each child's I.Q. (or similar) compared to performance will help identify that a gap exists between how we'd expect the child to perform academically and reality. Children whose performance lags need further assessment to pinpoint the exact problem – physical, mental or behavioral. In addition, brief formal tests of learning styles, interests and motivation are not essential but can help teachers anticipate individual students' needs.

As long as some children have learning disabilities and physical, mental and behavioral challenges, formal assessment at the beginning of each school year – or at times when academic performance changes suddenly – makes sense. This is a role that the Great School assumes but does not confuse with the three F's: frequent, focused and forward-looking monitoring of student progress (see page 217). If your school does not provide such formal testing, you may find it helpful to have your child tested by an education counselor or psychologist outside of school, to help with either your school choice or your communication with your child's teachers.

* Reprinted from *Picky Parent Guide*, p. 215



Higher Standards or Individualized Pacing: What Do Gifted Children Need?*

Q: We are choosing a kindergarten for our now 4-year-old son to attend next year. His pre-school teachers say he is very bright and that we should find a school that will challenge him. They recommended a popular private school. In our tour, the admissions counselor told us our son would be challenged, since their standards are set above other local schools. A friend has been trying to convince me to look at another school where the kids work in small groups and independently, mostly at their current levels of advancement. Now we are really confused. What works best: one higher standard or having my child advance at his own pace?

A: While you might be feeling confused now, we say, “lucky you.” You have stumbled over a key decision point earlier than many parents of academically gifted children. Fortunately for you, good research-based answers await. Here’s the scoop:

In the past, many schools tried to meet the needs of academically gifted learners simply by upping learning goals six months to a year along the typical development curve. Others tried to meet children’s needs merely by covering a wide range of topics and subjects. Today, we know better.

Both past and current research studies show two things conclusively that every parent of a gifted child should know:

First, academically gifted learners have a very wide range of capabilities. Children scoring roughly in the top 15% on logical and conceptual thinking skills are far more diverse in their mental processing capabilities than the 70% of children in the middle. Similarly, the top 2.5% are twice as diverse in their thinking capabilities as the next 13.5% of kids. In addition, gifted children who choose to focus their mental skills on a particular subject or activity of interest can shoot the moon, outstripping their mental peers significantly in the chosen area. **There simply is no one-size-fits-all set of learning goals that will fit all bright and gifted children. That includes your child.**

Second, no matter how researchers slice it, **a significant majority of gifted children fare better when they face continuous challenges in core subjects.** This concept – that facing challenge and experiencing success are both critical learning experiences – is easy for most people to accept with typical learners, but much harder to accept with gifted (and severely challenged or disabled) learners. The goal-setting skills, tenacity and can-do attitude that come with regularly facing and conquering challenge helps gifted learners put their thinking skills to use as students and as adults. “Challenge” includes not just learning more about more topics and subjects (“breadth”),

but also learning more difficult thinking skills associated with advanced math, literature studies and writing. (For more about thinking skills, see *Picky Parent Guide* pages 45 and 213.) Gifted learners crave this challenge, but many begin to avoid it if they become accustomed to mastering all tasks easily. This “perfectionism” is a familiar ghost that haunts many gifted learners as adults.

In short, if you must choose between two schools, one that sets its one-size-fits-all learning standards somewhat higher than other available schools and one that offers all-you-can-eat learning so your child may keep moving forward when ready, choose all-you-can-eat. But don't just take a school's word for it. Ask probing questions about how the school organizes students' work time. *Picky Parent Guide* Chapter 3 and accompanying tables give you specific questions that will allow you to distinguish among schools. In few schools will all work be precisely at your child's level of readiness; look for the *majority* of time in core subjects (at least) at your child's level, not just one or two hours per week. Also keep in mind that the social community may be a factor if your child is extremely gifted; these children often have a harder time connecting with typical children and fare better emotionally when they experience meaningful friendships with mental peers early. In recent years, we've seen more schools trying to pull together the whole package – academic and social – for gifted learners, so keep your expectations high.

If your options all pale against the ideal, try to make up for it outside of school. Hiring a tutor and enrolling your child in activities that attract other gifted learners are just a couple of examples. Moving your child up one or more grades is an option growing in favor among researchers who study gifted students. (See more in *Ways to Get What You Don't Get at School* in *Picky Parent Guide*.)

Finally, remember that your child may have other characteristics important for choosing the right school. Motivation, learning disabilities, social skills, and behavioral challenges are four issues that hold some gifted learners back. See Chapter 4 of *Picky Parent Guide* for more about those factors.

Picky Parent Guide pages 46-47 and 368-69 provide more help identifying your child's level of academic giftedness. For more books and useful websites, check out Tips: Resources and Links on PickyParent.com.

**Reprinted from PickyParent.com Light'ning Letter, October 2004.*



Gifted and Not Motivated: Why It Matters*

Low in motivation, academically gifted. A child with this mix is probably the most at risk for underperforming compared to her potential (even more so for the highly gifted child). This child may meet even high academic standards without actually learning new material. She will not complain or demand more challenging work as will her more motivated academic peers. This child will need the school to set more challenging goals for her – and help her learn to face challenges and overcome barriers – if she is to reach the level of learning of which she is capable. If the school does not play this role, it falls to the parent. What an uncomfortable dynamic it is for a parent to push her child who is already making A's and B's to “do better”! Yet the ability to face and master challenging work is one best learned young. If your child has this twin combination of academic gifts and low motivation, you may want to make finding a school that will *challenge* your child with individual learning goals and nurture her with individual attention a very top-priority Must Have.

As with many fit items, Great *quality* Schools will meet the needs of children with all motivation levels. In general, highly motivated students need to be allowed to set their own goals beyond other students and have their work *formally* recognized (through an activity log, work portfolio or other record-keeping, and possibly in report cards). A child with little motivation needs clear, challenging expectations imposed by others and regular monitoring of progress. A Great School will set high minimum standards for all (higher still for advanced students), assess students' “starting points” at the year's beginning, track individual progress and push and prod students to meet goals. But given that most schools have quality strengths and weaknesses, you'll want to ensure that your child's school has the right strengths for your own child if motivation is a Must Have need.

* Reprinted from *Picky Parent Guide*, p. 71



Gifted and Not Motivated: What to Tell Your Child's Teachers*

Q: My second grade son is gifted (we had him tested). We switched schools due to a move last year. The work he is getting this year is easier than he had last year. Last year he also had more “thinking skill” work, like challenging math word problems. My son says that the work is really easy and then laughs about it. I know he was really happy when the work was more challenging, but he is not *unhappy* now. He adores his teacher and would never say anything to her about this. I even think he would be worried about me saying something to her since it might hurt her feelings. I am very worried about what this means and am wondering what I *should* say to the teacher. I am even wondering if we should switch schools. Meanwhile, I would like to salvage the rest of this year. I have two younger children and so do not have much time after school to help.

A: Your son appears to have a classic profile: gifted but not equally motivated. He's already learned that taking what you get is easier on relationships than asking for more! The teacher may be able to make changes. But if the principal is not asking teachers to do this uniformly and providing training and materials to help, it is unlikely that you can count on teachers in this school to meet your child's needs consistently. Your instincts are good; follow through and consider a switch if things do not turn around promptly.

First, make an appointment to talk with the teacher (without your child). You should say something like this: "My son adores you -- you have really bonded with him. The thing about him is this: he is very bright, but he is not very motivated. The more you ask of him, the more he learns. But he would never hurt his relationship with you by asking you for harder work. Instead he tells *me* that the work is a lot easier than what he was doing last year. He says that the work is too easy, but he also adores you. I am not concerned about him doing calculus, but I am concerned that he will not be ready to face challenging work when he is older if he never has it in the elementary years. For example, last year in addition to math facts, he had word problems that focused on thinking skills. I have a baby and I wish I could do more for him at home -- and I will. But because he adores you so much, it would be a lot better coming from you, even if he does the work at home. Do you have any ideas about what we should do?"

Many parents do not want to spend a great deal of time after school on academic learning when their young children have been at school most of the day. Ideally, your son would find his challenge at school, where he is most likely to learn the skills and habits to face and conquer challenges. Those are lessons that even the brightest kids find hard to learn if they do not face challenging work until the teen years. Many gifted children do not develop the tenacity to stick with something hard. And is it any wonder if they've learned that sitting back and taking easy work without complaint makes their teachers happy? The research in this area is very consistent: bright children who are asked to advance their learning early fare better in work and emotionally.

** Adapted from PickyParent.com Talk response, January 2005.*



Holding Back and Grading Up: Should You?*

At some point, many parents consider holding a child back for a year or moving a child up a grade. How can you make this sometimes wrenching decision with confidence?

In truth, there is no simple answer. Many child development experts believe the normal variation in mental, social and emotional maturity to be very wide up until age 8 or 9. It is reasonable for you as a parent to expect a school to accept these normal variations in the early elementary years. Great Schools do. But you may have less than Great available, or your child may be an extreme case. If your child's birthday is within roughly two months of a school's birthday cutoff, the issue is less problematic – do what seems best for social and academic fit. But even then, know that there are always tradeoffs. Consider the implications not just for this year and next, but for puberty and teenage years. (e.g., How might maturing physically and getting a driver's license well before or after peers affect your child?)

Holding Back: Perhaps you're concerned about your child's academic or social readiness for school. Or perhaps you are not concerned at all, but your child's school is. Here's the score: research shows no long-term *academic* achievement benefit to delaying the start of kindergarten or holding children back a grade. This isn't surprising given the strong evidence that the more a school expects of a child, the more that child learns. Far too many complacent, one-size-fits-all schools claim to have higher grade level standards, but adopt an early birthday cutoff for entry into a grade and a frequent practice of holding children back. These schools may claim that holding back is evidence of their high standards, but in fact the opposite is true. The social costs and benefits of holding a child back are less clear. You will need to weigh the potential social benefit of your child's additional physical and social maturity compared to classmates – now through high school – against the likely long-term academic cost.

Moving Up: Research makes one point very clear – gifted children are better off academically, emotionally, socially and in life-long work performance if their learning is accelerated, even when this requires not learning with age peers. If moving a child up one or more grades is the only means available to accomplish acceleration, then in most cases this is preferable to keeping a child in a grade determined by age. See <http://nationdeceived.org/> for more.

Sure, it's ideal for a child to spend a large part of the day with several children close in age. While very bright children often seem to skip academic steps, they rarely skip social and emotional ones. Getting along with same-age peers will be an invaluable life-long skill quite difficult to develop at older ages. A Great School will not need to move a child up a grade for academic challenge except in the most extreme circumstances. Instead, children across the grade who have similar current academic capabilities will be taught together. But if your best school option doesn't do this well, or if your child is extraordinarily advanced, moving up is the best move. Even then, attending academic sessions with older children but staying with same-age peers the rest of the day will enhance your child's social development for the long run. And you'll need to take extra care to help your child form and nurture friendships with same age children outside of school. (For more help with your highly gifted child, see "More Resources About Gifted Children" at the end of this Quick Kit and visit **PickyParent.com**.)

* Adapted from *Picky Parent Guide*, p. 287



Kindergarten: Should I Hold Back My Small, Young but Gifted Child?*

Q: I am a parent of a five year old boy who turned five at the END of August. Although he was eligible to start kindergarten this year (by only a few days) my husband and I decided to keep him back a year. He is small for his age and at times can be immature. He is in a pre-k program 5 days a week, but his classmates are mostly younger – children who have just turned 4. The problem now is that he is bored. I now realize that he is advanced mentally. I would love to put him into a 2 or 3 day program to limit the boredom, but due to his age his school wants him to be in the five-day program. Should I keep him at home, put him in a program that's fewer days or stick with what we've got?

A: Kudos to you for trying to do the right thing for your child. It is hard, isn't it, to know what's best for one so young? Below are some facts and guidance that we hope will help.

First of all, a general note: expressing the feeling of “boredom” at school at this young age is a strong indicator that your child is gifted intellectually. Many gifted children do not like pre-school when it is not mentally challenging enough. A less capable child simply would not notice and would be happy to “just play” in preschool. “Boredom” would not enter the picture until later. Of course, we have not assessed your child. But we will answer the rest of the question assuming that your child is gifted to some degree.

Holding back a grade: repeated research shows either no academic benefit or a small disadvantage to children held back a grade, even those who would have been very young kindergarteners. That research does not tell us why. But research about “Great Schools,” where all children learn more, tells us that the harder the material, the more children learn. So it makes sense that a young child taught more will learn more, and a child held back a grade will learn less – unless he is lucky enough to be in a school that expects ready children to tackle more challenging material. This may sound silly when discussing a barely-five-year-old child. But in fact, many young children crave mental challenge (and success) and are quite a bit more capable of and interested in learning than many of us once thought!

There are other factors to consider, of course – social, emotional and physical. The latest research shows that gifted children fare better in all areas when they are allowed to accelerate learning to match their capabilities.

Maturity: Your barely five year old seems less mature than older children because he is! He's in the process of learning about his feelings in different situations and how to control what he says and does to match each situation. Stick your head into any kindergarten class and you will see that he is not alone. Children are all over the map in their social capabilities, group behavior, and self-control at these young ages. A good school will have a plan – and good teachers who know how to use it – for helping young children learn to understand their emotions and behavior and make smart choices about their behavior at school. This is part and parcel of a solid kindergarten program – teaching these skills, not expecting them from the start.

Here are potential solutions to your challenge of having a young, small, gifted child:

- 1) Consider switching him to a half-day kindergarten (or even a regular day one that has a good rest time) five days per week. Look for a school where the principal and teachers are willing to work with you to coach and develop your child's social and behavioral maturity. If you do this, make time to invite a few children from his new class over to play so he will quickly feel at home socially.
- 2) Find a better-fit pre-K program. Look for one with older children and/or a more academic focus. In some neighborhoods where many children attend traditional private elementary schools (which often hold many children back – a practice debunked by research but still commonly followed), pre-K programs are filled with held-back children. One of these preschools may be a good fit. Look for one that has an academic focus; if your child is bored, he is ready for it. Even an “academic” school will spend most of the day using hands-on learning activities, not worksheet-and-desk ones (though some of this is good for learning to write letters, numbers, etc.).
- 3) Taking a bored child out of school is not a terrible solution if you are prepared to offer him mental challenge and social experiences. Many urban and suburban areas have school supply stores used by home-schooling parents. These offer a variety of both hands-on and “letter and number book” materials. Look at pre-K, kindergarten and first grade materials in different subject and topic areas. Choose items for visual, listening and hands-on learning – the more areas of the brain you “light up,” the more well-rounded your child's learning will become. Set up a neat station at home where he can choose and work with materials. In addition to reading to your child, you will find that even a half hour of focused time each day spent on learning letter sounds, math or science (and so forth) will be welcome if you use age-appropriate materials and help your child learn in small steps. As for social development, commit to having another child over for play at least once each week. Consider enrolling him in a weekly “after school” activity of interest where he is part of a group – this will help him learn group behavior skills. All of this takes time and leg-work; only you can decide if it is a better solution than trying to find a more challenging school setting for him.

Whatever you do, either this year or next year, seek a school where children are grouped by current learning level and where groups change during the year when children are ready to make a leap. If you continue to hold him back, he will be bored in a school that

teaches the same thing to all kids. If you switch him to kindergarten, he will need the flexibility to move up as his maturity catches up with his cognitive abilities. If you continue to hold him back a grade now, you may be able to shift him up a grade later when his physical maturity has caught up with the rest of him, as long as he has had the chance to make academic progress equal to the higher grade. School policies vary on this – just ask.

** Adapted from PickyParent.com Talk response, January 2005.*



Gifted + Learning Disability: How To Choose a School That Meets Both Needs*

Q: We have a child who is gifted intellectually and who has a learning disability. There seem to be schools and resources for LD children and the same for Gifted and Talented, but not for both. He has a strong passion to learn. How should we choose a school?

A: You are correct. It is hard enough to find schools that fully meet the needs of gifted children or that meet the needs of children with some learning disabilities. It's even rarer still to find one that meets the needs of gifted learners who also have learning disabilities! Many schools will "hold back" a gifted learner because of a disability that does not affect thinking, but affects execution (e.g., writing or speaking) or attention.

Your son's ideal school would have:

- 1) a well-developed specialty helping children with your son's particular disability, and
- 2) a strong program for gifted learners, either through honors classes or through "differentiation" in the regular classrooms (different work for children at differing levels of advancement), and
- 3) a staff person who will coordinate the scheduling of services and academics for your son and keep track of his overall development.

The challenge of course is finding all three in one place. In general, you are as likely (or unlikely) to find these three things in a public school as a private school. Public school districts are required to try to meet the needs of children with disabilities that affect learning; they are not *required* to meet the needs of gifted learners, but some do. Likewise, some private schools specialize in meeting the needs of children with disabilities or in meeting the needs of gifted learners; we rarely stumble across one that attempts both, even though a number of children have this need.

You are more likely to find #1 and 2 than #3 in a school. In any case, you most likely will need to play the role of Dot Connector in Chief, informing the principal and teachers of your child's strengths, challenges and needs *each year*. If you are assertive, capable of working cooperatively with others and you have the time, you the parent can play the role

of #3 quite well. You may be able to hire a weekly tutor to review his progress and play the coordination role.

You do not say what the disability is nor where you live, but we assume that you are limited to the schools available to you in your current locale. What we suggest is this:

- a) Determine the extent to which you can find and afford private services to address your child's disability outside of school.
- b) Decide the extent to which you could offer your child tutoring and academic enrichment outside of school.
- c) Use the book *Picky Parent Guide* to determine how well the schools available to your son would meet his needs as a gifted learner and as a child with a learning disability. Make sure to ask each school whether they have a staff person who would play the coordination role of #3 above.

Then, choose the school offering the best services in the area that you would find most difficult to make up for outside of school. In general, he is more likely to enjoy a school where he can spend a lot of time using his strengths rather than dwelling on his weaknesses. Nonetheless you must address the disability somehow. For example, if his disability is one that can be well-addressed with weekly counseling/tutoring and you can find (and afford) this service outside of school, go for the school that offers the best gifted program. Tell the principal and teachers about your son's disability and the services he is receiving outside of school. Watch for challenges he faces and work with teachers to help him learn and show what he knows despite the disability.

**Adapted from PickyParent.com Talk response, January 2005.*



Behavior Problem or Just Gifted: How To Tell the Difference*

The challenge for parents is to distinguish those times when poor behavior is a result of other easily changeable circumstances from those times when the child has a “behavior problem” resulting from underdeveloped social and emotional skills or a behavioral disability. Mild to moderate behavioral problems can result from a school (or preschool) that is a very poor fit in critical ways. For instance, shoehorning your child into a school with the wrong academic pace or teaching method can lead to mild behavior problems for all but the child with terrific self-control. A bright child who is bored or a struggling student who is lost often will wiggle excessively and fail to pay attention to school work. A strong learning style misfit between school and child also may lead to an excessively wiggly or upset child: a strong kinesthetic learner (who needs to move and touch) in a “look and listen” school may wiggle endlessly, and a strong visual or auditory learner in a too-chaotic school may be easily upset by the noise and disorder.

In the case of the school misfit, you will notice that your child behaves very well when she is in environments where she feels both engaged and successful. For these children, the burden should be on the school and teacher, not the child, to address the problem, or on you to seek a better-fit school. These behavioral problems should disappear with a better school fit or changes in how your child’s teacher interacts with the child. If your child is very extreme in some way – very gifted or very challenged academically or very lopsided in learning styles, for example – then she will *need to learn better self-control than most other children*, because she may often find herself a “misfit.” You’ll give your child a great gift if you recognize the ways in which she is very different from peers and help her learn to recognize her feelings and manage her behavior when she feels out of place.

But these behavioral “problems” – though grave to parents when dealing with them – will pale in comparison to those of the child who is repeatedly violent towards teachers or peers or who consumes excessive teacher time by frequently violating basic behavior rules. The child who needs help with *behavior* specifically will have significant or repeated disciplinary problems *in most group settings*.

The earlier parents and school jointly intervene to provide a stable, clear set of behavior expectations and consistent, appropriate rewards and consequences for actual behavior, the sooner the child will develop self-understanding and self-control in group settings. You are doing your child a disservice when you ignore or defend true behavior problems. Instead, it is a great gift to a child to learn these behaviors as soon as possible, since continued problems will prevent him from realizing his potential in other areas and enjoying life (not to mention driving teachers and parents batty).

* Reprinted from *Picky Parent Guide*, p.77



More Resources About Gifted Children

Picky Parent Guide contains a wealth of information on identifying giftedness, knowing what to look for in a school for your gifted child, and getting what you don't get in school. Start with Chapter 3 and go from there to the more detailed tables at the back of the book. For more help, see the resources below:

Websites

Hoagie's Gifted Education Page collects numerous gifted resources in one place.

<http://www.hoagiesgifted.org>

The Association for the Gifted was organized to help professionals and parents support gifted children.

<http://www.cectag.org>

Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) has information on a wide variety of topics related to gifted education.

<http://ericec.org/gifted/gt-menu.html>

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) is an organization of parents, educators, and other professionals interested in gifted issues.

<http://www.nagc.org>

Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG) provides information on identification and effective ways to live and work with the gifted.

<http://www.SENGifted.org>

The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented provides links to gifted associations in each state.

<http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/stategt.html>

Genius Denied is a website companion to the book listed below.

<http://www.geniusdenied.com>

A Nation Deceived highlights a major national research study on “acceleration.”

www.nationdeceived.org

Books

Guiding the Gifted Child: A Practical Resource for Parents and Teachers by James T. Webb, Elizabeth A. Meckstrom, and Stephanie S. Tolan (Great Potential Press, 1989), Paperback, 216 pages. [ISBN: 0910707006]

Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom: Strategies and Techniques Every Teacher Can Use to Meet the Academic Needs of the Gifted and Talented by Susan Winebrenner (Free Spirit Publishing, 2000), Paperback, 184 pages. [ISBN: 1575420899]

Helping Gifted Children Soar: A Practical Guide for Parents and Teachers by Carol Ann Strip with Gretchen Hirsch (Great Potential Press, 2000), Paperback, 270 pages. [ISBN: 0910707413]

Gifted Children: Myths and Realities by Ellen Winner (Basic Books, 1997), Paperback, 464 pages. [ISBN: 0465017592]

Genius Denied: How to Stop Wasting Our Brightest Young Minds by Jan Davidson, et al (Simon and Schuster, 2004), Hardcover, 256 pages. [ISBN: 0743254600]