

How Optimal Match Invites the Involvement of Parents in Meeting the Needs of Gifted Learners

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Optimal Match

Discover your child's learning needs, and offer a flexible range of options that match their abilities and interests

Benefits:

1. Inclusive across all forms of diversity—race, age, ability level, gender, socio-economic status, geography
2. Strength-based
3. Applies to every kind of learning situation—homeschooling, public schools, charter schools, independent schools, online
4. Fluid, flexible, and dynamic, changing over time as learning needs and interests change
5. Fosters creativity, inquiry, engagement, and resourcefulness in children, teachers, and parents
6. Invites parents to share information about their children's learning needs, support their endeavors, and establish a meaningful partnership with schools

Optimal Match Increases Children's Investment in Their Own Learning

1. When children's learning opportunities are aligned with their interests and abilities, they become invested in the learning process. Instead of being bored, frustrated, or detached (as too often happens when gifted learning needs aren't met), they become motivated and engaged at home and at school.
2. Finding an optimal match means students actively participate in co-creating suitable challenges, participating in the planning, fine-tuning, and follow-through. Learning options may include acceleration, guided independent study, problem-based learning, mentorships, leadership initiatives, flexible subject-specific grouping, enrichment, extra-curricular activities, community volunteering, and more. As kids take increased ownership for their learning, parents can support them in their development.
3. Optimal Match involves networking and collaboration. While this still requires teachers' and parents' efforts and support, it gets easier over time as the connections build.

To find out more about the Optimal Match approach and ways to meet children's gifted learning needs, read [***Being Smart about Gifted Learning: Empowering Parents and Kids Through Challenge and Change***](#) by Dona Matthews and Joanne Foster.

