

## How Optimal Match Encourages Children’s and Teens’ Engagement in Learning

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### **Optimal Match**

Optimal Match is about discovering a child’s or teenager’s learning needs, and then offering a flexible range of options that match the individual’s 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 a child’s learning needs and interests change
5. Fosters creativity, inquiry, engagement, and resourcefulness in children, teachers, and parents
6. Invites students to co-create their learning experiences by helping to plan and self-monitor their activities

### **Optimal Match Increases Kids’ Investment in Their Own Learning**

1. When children’s and teens’ 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. Students participate in co-creating their own Optimal Match by becoming actively involved in planning and fine-tuning their learning experiences. 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 ownership for their learning, they gain a deeper level of engagement, and a growing independence.
3. Optimal Match involves networking and collaboration. This has many benefits for students, expanding their world and providing exciting new learning opportunities and possibilities.

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.



