



# Leaving the GATE Open Over Summer Recess: What Teachers What You to Know and More!

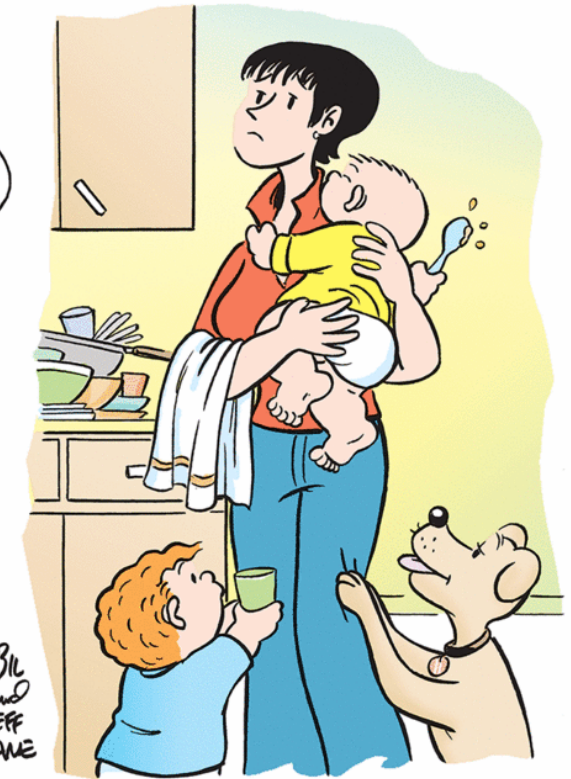
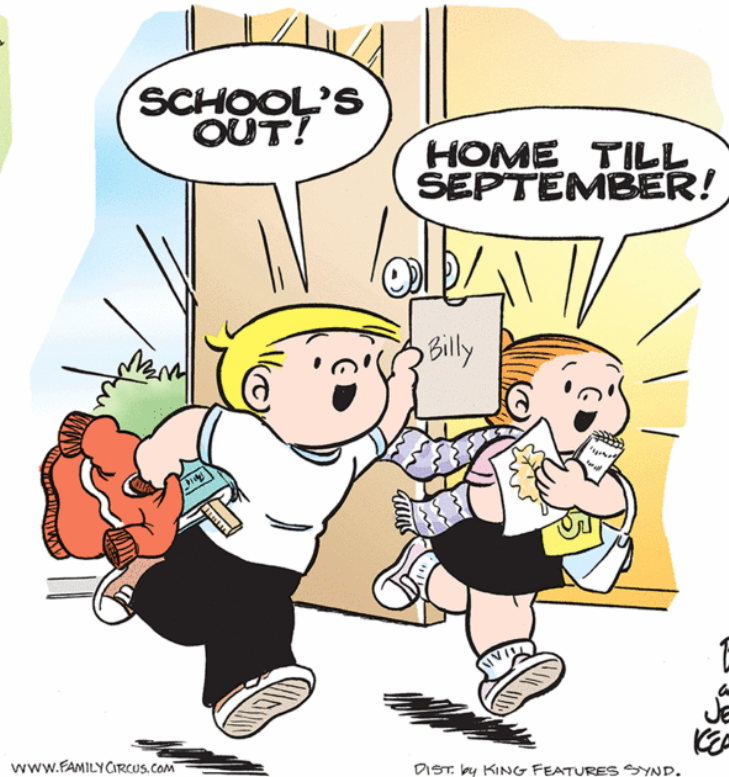
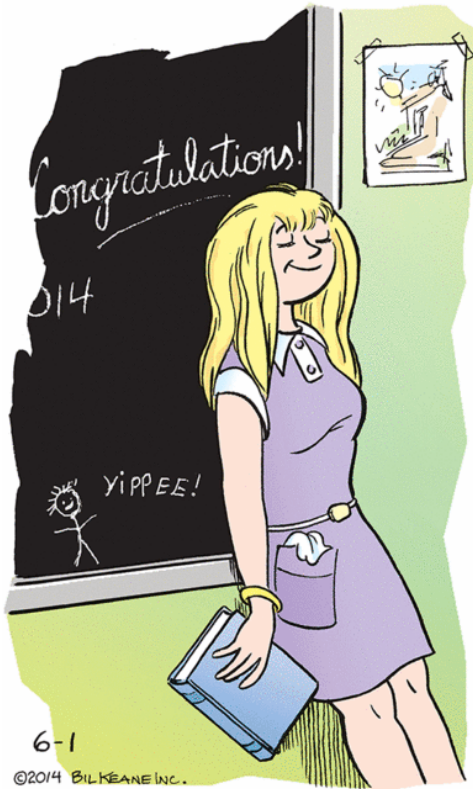
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# School is Out for Summer...



# Context: Revisiting a Starting Point

- **Being gifted is a gift**—unless you are the one experiencing it first hand (both blessing and burden)
- Gifted have a tendency to look **outwardly for approval and inwardly for blame**
- May experience unique pressures to 'perform' as if the **spotlight is always on—even when alone**
- The gifted individual employs a somewhat bifurcated approach to life (**rational and emotional**)
- Solutions must be **epiphany based** to mitigate perceived threat against the social personality and related pushback
- The greatest risk is the social risk, and the **greatest challenges for educators and parents alike are socioemotional**
- **Gifted tend to be great starters**, but at times lack discipline for follow through (beginnings are always fun!)
- It becomes **magnified** through the lifespan and pronounced during adolescence
- Things come **naturally—without having to work hard.**

# A Simple Question

- **Over 60 teachers** working toward certification in Gifted and Talented Education at CVESD were asked one very pointed question:

*What are the most important things that you would like parents to know about their gifted children?*

- Responses were organized thematically.

# What Teachers Want You to Know

- First and foremost: **Gifted children are still children.** They tend to have a lot of *expertise* but limited *experience*.

*They look to you to help them shape their interpretations and how to process them emotionally .*



# A Teacher Suggests...

*“Provide an organized personal space at home. Give them a place to put things in their physical space because their brain space may be chaotic.”*

# What Teachers Want You to Know

- **Struggle** is beneficial and part and parcel of lived experience for gifted and non-gifted alike. Push beyond comfort level.

*Help your gifted and talented children come to terms with imperfection. They need not be exceptional at everything, and should be encouraged to try things that are new and challenging.*



# What Teachers Want You to Know

- **Social skills are fundamental.** Facilitate engagement with others, even if it seems a bit uncomfortable at first. **But don't force it!**

*Your gifted child is unique and the gifted mind works differently. Don't compare your child to other children of the same age. Also, remember that the gifted can be long on need and short on patience with others.*

# What Teachers Want You to Know

- **Gifted children are hard on themselves.** In fact, under that emotional suit of armor, your gifted child is his/her own worst enemy.

*Beware of the explicit or subtle pressures you may exert on a day-to-day basis. It may exacerbate perfectionist tendencies. Help your child understand strengths and limitations.*

# What Teachers Want You to Know

- Teachers appreciate the way your child **thinks outside traditional parameters** and a **his/her sense of humor**. They see the giftedness blossom everyday and in every way.

*Remember that attending to the needs of the gifted is a community effort, and that you and the teacher are partners in this effort. The more you both know, the better!*

# A Teacher Suggests...

*“Encourage the inquisitive side of your child. When your child finishes their class assignment, find a different way to challenge them. It doesn’t mean they need to complete more of the same thing. Your child is unique and wonderful in their own way.”*

# What Teachers Want You to Know

- Teachers understand **perfectionism**.

*Teachers rely on you quite heavily to reinforce the idea that mistakes are not equivalent to failure, and that getting something wrong is a wonderful part of learning. Learn to celebrate failure and embrace learning experiences.*

# What Teachers Want You to Know

- Keep them sharp over summer with challenge.

*Teachers suggest that when school is out, parents should offer a challenge-rich environment to keep the synapses snapping. This doesn't mean that everything is an academic exercise—but do keep the inquisitive spirit alive!*

# What Teachers Want You to Know

- Organization is great—but empower your child to **use his/her own process** to get to the destination.

*Gifted individuals pursue problem solving in unconventional ways. Even if it is not the way you'd approach it, that is okay. Empower them to use the keen cognitive skills they've developed over their lives.*



# What Teachers Want You to Know

- By the same token, **empowering cognitive skills is not a free for all.**

*Help your child work within boundaries and understand the importance of meeting deadlines. Clear expectations at home, coupled with breaking down larger projects into manageable chunks are valuable metacognitive skills that translate well into the school environment.*

# What Teachers Want You to Know

- Beware the **assumption of universal giftedness**, even at home.

*At home as in school, mastery of certain ideas comes naturally, others not so much. Understand that taking time to learn to do something not only presents struggle but an emotional conundrum. Guide them through the struggle.*

# What Teachers Want You to Know

- We need your help in **differentiating instruction** for your child.

*Doesn't mean you need a teaching license, but the more teachers understand about what makes your child 'tick' the better they can attend to their unique cognitive and affective needs. You know what works—so do share it! We also are eager to share what we do with you and what it looks and feels like throughout the day.*

# What Teachers Want You to Know

- We understand **intensity** and want to work with you to **lessen its negative impacts**.

*Emotional outbursts and overreaction may be par for the course with gifted and talented individuals. The more we can work together to help your child work with intensity and unpleasant emotions, the better it will be for your child academically and socially.*

# What Teachers Want You to Know

- It is hard to turn off what is always on.

*We understand that gifted and talented tend to feel heightened levels of anxiety. Unless the level of anxiety begins to interfere with the course of daily life, parents should not become overly concerned (as it tends to exacerbate the problem).*

# What Teachers Want You to Know

- For us, just like it is for you—it is all about balance.

*Our most significant collaborative work is to help your child find senses of balance, peace and well being. It is important that we work together to help inspire and create confidence and true happiness in academic and other pursuits.*

# A Teacher Suggests...

*“Your child is unique and s/he has an amazing potential to make an impact in this world. Your child is bright but may still struggle in school with organizational skills, relating to peers or with coping when they make mistakes—be patient with them. Help them to find and develop their passions while also supporting them in their struggles.”*



# Same Question to You

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*Given your experiences and what you have learned over the year, what are the most important things you would want your child's teacher to know?*

# Keeping the GATE Open

- Avoiding the '**summer slump**' is even more critical for gifted and talented students who become easily distracted or otherwise occupied
- Summers should not be a continuation of the school year, but offer a **different take on cognitive and affective engagement.**

# Sneak Peek into Next Year

*The 'sneak peek' is really a collaborative effort involving teachers and parents. The point is not to get an early start on the fall, but instead to preview what is to come—especially longer-term projects that may take planning and forethought.*

***Helps to lessen anxieties over summer and cultivate interest around topics for the next academic year.***

# Build a Stockpile of Creativity

*Follow the motto of the Boy Scouts: Be Prepared. Summer is a time for creativity sans scrutiny. Head over to a crafts store and stock up on the essentials—paint, clay, paper, glue, science kits.*

***Allows children to depart from their comfort zones in a safe and engaging environment and serves as an organic catalyst for flow.***

# Find a Mentor

*Beyond helping your child to learn more about a particular area of interest or passion, college-age or adult mentors can encourage the development of social skills; patience around ambiguity and imperfection; and process-related/metacognitive abilities.*

***Even better, well-mentored protégées can serve as effective mentors for others.***

# Gifted Summer Camp/ College Experience

*A wide variety of summer camps have been designed specifically for gifted and talented students—each offering a unique set of experiential learning opportunities (day camps, residentials and even online). A somewhat comprehensive listing of these camps is available at the National Association for Gifted Children at [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org).*

# Let Them Lead

*Summer presents a unique opportunity for the gifted and talented to delve more deeply into something that drives them. Rather than being split between a host of subjects, there is a bit of freedom to explore deeply. Ask them to assume a leadership role—activities, materials, camps, etc.*

***The experience is cognitively beneficial and empowering.***



# Day Tripping

*Summer can offer the occasion to brainstorm family activities that keep the synapses firing. San Diego is home to a noteworthy number of places to explore—including museums and natural attractions. Take them all in, and debrief at home—what did everyone take away from or experience on the journey?*

***This one has it all: cognitive and affective connections; engagement; empowerment; and metacognitive skills building.***

# Allow for Free Time

*Although it is important to avoid the summer slump, be careful of overscheduling. Experts recommend that one of the most valuable experiences for a gifted and talented child is the opportunity to be a child—goofy, playful and relatively free of concern. Just have a bit of fun.*

***This type of free time represents an important 'brain break' and offers the opportunity to socialize and 'get the giftedness off one's chest'. Mitigates perfectionist tendencies and builds emotional intelligence. Allows children to 'turn off' for a period of time—and refresh.***

# The Right Direction

- California Association for the Gifted  
(<http://www.cagifted.org/>)
- Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted  
(<http://sengifted.org/>)
- National Association for Gifted Children  
(<https://www.nagc.org/>)
- Hoagie's Gifted Page  
(<http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/>)

# Enjoy the Summer!



*But if you need anything over the break, please always feel free to reach out to me at the university.*

# Comments and Questions

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# Contact Information

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