

The Arts

Exposure to the arts provides meaningful avenues for critical and creative thinking and expression.

From an early age, gifted children often demonstrate thinking that is abstract, complex, insightful, and logical. Artistic projects and endeavors—like creative writing, dance, music, theatre, and the visual arts—can provide a framework that permits the gifted child to express ideas and impressions in ways that might be otherwise difficult to demonstrate. Furthermore, a gifted child's vivid imagination and ability to make unlikely connections often makes his drawings, paintings, compositions, interpretations, performances, and writings unique.

WAYS TO PROMOTE YOUR CHILD'S ARTISTIC DEVELOPMENT

At home. Create opportunities for your child to explore his interests be it through listening to music, producing art, or engaging in dance or theatre for his own amusement or that of others. Let your child explore your music collection, paint family portraits, or stage a play in your living room.

At school. If your child is artistically advanced, consider placing her in a specialized arts school and explore whether arts integration programs are available in your district. You may also want to ask your child's teacher how the arts curriculum is differentiated for the gifted child.

In your community. Take your child to musical and dance performances, art galleries, and theatrical productions. Be respectful of age limits placed on attendance by the sponsoring group, but also be on the lookout for all-ages events even the youngest gifted child may enjoy. Also seek out workshops, classes, and other opportunities, often found at public libraries, local museums, community theatres, and universities.

QUESTIONS PARENTS OFTEN ASK

How can I tell if my child is gifted in the arts?

Children who demonstrate precocity in the arts often show fluency of imagination or expression, passion and intensity for their discipline, and an ability to manipulate the art form in deeper ways. For instance, a young child who is both able to replicate rhythmic patterns and create new patterns is demonstrating an ability to play with sounds that may indicate he is musically gifted.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

- » Don't worry about labels for your child; instead, focus on the services available for his benefit.
- » Before (or instead of) praising your child's work, ask her to explain it to you. Why she made certain choices is often more important than the finished product.
- » Support your child's passions and provide him opportunities to explore and acquire new ones.
- » Mentor your child's talent by finding books, biographies, films, and other resources in her area of interest.
- » It's important to choose the right instructor, preferably one experienced in nurturing artistically gifted and talented children.

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How can I tell if my child is gifted in the arts? (continued)

Other indicators of an artistically minded child include the ability to:

- Replicate a melody, via voice or instrument
- Recreate a painting or sculpture
- Compare theme and composition across works of art
- Demonstrate fluency of imagination, expression, or physical movement
- Show sensibilities for design, color, rhythmic patterns, and aesthetics

Can I support my child in the arts if I am not an expert in them myself?

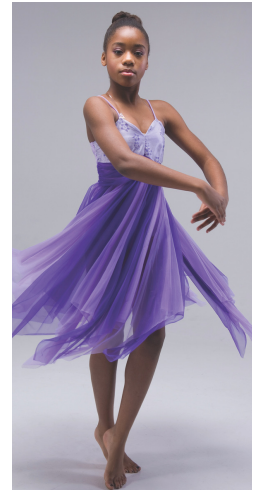
In some ways, supporting a child who is gifted in the arts is similar to what parents do for the athletically gifted child. You may not directly teach your child how to throw a curve ball or play a sonata, but you will spend time investigating potential opportunities, transporting your child to practice and competitions, and engaging in advocacy for the organization.

Talk with fine arts teachers at your local schools, seek out private instructors and resources, and look to local art museums, opera companies, orchestras, and dance and theatre companies for opportunities.

What can I do to nurture the strengths and skills of my child?

Let your child explore through movement, color, shape, and sound. Immerse your child in the art form by participating in classes and community groups. Additionally, if possible, expose your child to the highest form of his artistic interests by taking him to see exhibits at your local art museum, listening to performances by a symphony orchestra, or attending a play.

Provide your child multiple entry points into an art form, so he is introduced to the technical skills, habits, and mind of an artist. Most importantly, introduce your child to a community filled with others who share his passion for the arts.



FOR MORE INFO

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