Gifted and high-ability learners need their passions ignited academically, socially, emotionally, culturally, and leisurely in order to thrive. This issue of Parenting for High Potential focuses on ways parents can help spark curiosity in their gifted children—at home and at school—in order to help them reach their potential.

Women’s activist and 19th century journalist Margaret Fuller once said, “A house is no home unless it contains food and fire for the mind as well as for the body.” In her article, Joan Franklin Smutny reminds parents that our homes can and should serve as the foundation for stoking the fires in our kids. With just a pinch of planning and dose of imagination, Joan’s rich recipe offers dozens of practical ways parents can ensure their homes and surrounding communities are a treasure trove of creativity and discovery for their children.

On the academic front, two articles focus on the ins and outs of acceleration as another way to fuel our gifted children’s needs. These articles offer parents a quick snapshot on the many types of acceleration, how to determine whether your child qualifies for acceleration, effective ways to work with your school or district, and new research on the effects of early college entrance on students.

While it would be impossible for each issue of PHP to cover every current challenge you face, my goal is to ensure there’s always a nugget of information you can use to help make your day a little brighter and your journey a little lighter. Keep in touch and let me know what that snippet might have been for you this time around.

Kathleen Nilles, Editor-in-Chief
Parenting for High Potential
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parents of gifted children play a powerful role in expanding their world and helping them discover what they love. When gifted children have impassioned, open-minded, and creative family members, they are free to discover what they love and who they are as people.

For gifted learners, curiosity, passion, and interest are absolute essentials. Gifted children have a questing spirit; they live for discovery. You may even notice that when children find interesting problems to think about, they look different. There is palpable excitement, eagerness, a burning need to know, and a lively curiosity you can see in their eyes.

Parents often ask: “What can I do that will make a difference?” I encourage parents to begin by looking at themselves and their homes as a rich resource for their gifted children.

You and Your Home
Adults often say their fondest childhood memories are those of when their parents swept them along in some new adventure or explored a new curiosity. Moments when they felt excited, awed, fascinated, and even humored by shared experiences vividly stand out. Experiences when they learned new skills and knowledge—or the value of patience, skill, and problem-solving—meant the most.

For some children, including English Language Learners (ELLs), home is a doorway back to a familiar world—adorned with spicy cooking smells, richly colored fabrics, wall hangings, and instruments from their native countries.
Everyday Problem-Solving at Home

Author and teacher Harry Roman points out that parents don’t have to create elaborate schemes for challenging their gifted children: “As parents, we must strive to involve our children in everyday things because not only will we teach them something useful and how to solve real problems...we will teach them how to be patient, caring, and memorable parents.”

Simple ways parents can challenge their high-ability children at home include:

• **Re-designing their room.** Have children participate in designing their rooms or other spaces where they work. They can create a 3D model of their room to develop their ideas, which integrates measurement, visual thinking, architecture, structural engineering, and estimation of costs.

• **Designing the backyard.** Children can measure areas of backyard space and divide it into areas according to activity (e.g., play, gardening, bird feeding, shed, and outdoor furniture). Create a plan and break it down into small steps.

• **Becoming chefs for a day or week.** Help children to plan a menu for a meal. They learn how to combine flavors, the fundamentals of food chemistry, and how to combine food ingredients. They can also create a restaurant-style menu by collecting samples and designing their own.

• **Exploring vacations.** Vacations offer endless opportunities for children to exercise their minds. Let them plan parts of the trip, research accommodations, calculate travel costs, and determine not-to-miss sites on the way. This teaches planning, how to break big goals down into smaller steps, and map reading (promotes visual thinking).

• **Saving energy.** Have children investigate ways to make the home more energy efficient, from blocking out air from drafty windows to installing energy efficient appliances to reducing the use of lights. They can explore solar applications for their home. Where might they work? What changes would have to be made to prepare for solar panels? Topics include engineering and conservation.

• **Reducing waste.** Hold a family meeting about reducing waste. Create an understanding of the problems of waste through investigations. What happens to the recycling materials in your town, city, or rural area? Where do materials go from there and how does the recycling process work? Plan visits to recycling centers. This can be an eye-opening experience as children begin to appreciate the scope of the problem. Explore methods of recycling and garbage disposal, and speculate about reducing waste in the future.
Some children love pouring through bird, plant, rock, insect, and butterfly books to figure out what they’ve seen outside. In one family, everyone adds to lists of species they’ve seen, draws them, and writes journal entries about their experiences. They have an extraordinarily rich record of their lives along coastlines, in mountainous regions, in the plains and along rivers—accompanied by sketches, photographs, maps, and poems.

Natural World
Families who enjoy the outdoors, for example, can make a regular practice of activities around bird and plant study. Ideas include:

- **Nature as your palette.** Take walks every day and gather bits of the natural world—acorns, sticks, and leaves. Mention the names of different trees, flowers, and birds. When returning home, your collections can become material for something you create—a painting (gluing what you’ve collected on to construction paper), a science display, or a sculpture.

- **Gardening and plant life.** Teach about the plants in your garden and offer each of your children a section to create their own gardens. Have them research types of plants most suitable for your climate and environment, discuss plants, look at garden magazines, create designs, and experiment. Visit botanical gardens, neighborhood nurseries, and ecology centers to learn about native grasses and what it takes to have native grasses on your land. Through this process, children learn about photosynthesis, the chemical components of different soils, and what different plant types need to thrive.

- **Volunteering.** Most children are born enthusiasts of animals and nature. By volunteering with their children—walking dogs, visiting a cat shelter, or removing invasive plants at a nature center—parents help them learn how to care for animals and plants. Children can also learn about the biology of different animals and the ecological system of local forests and water systems.

The Reading Life
Parents need to make literacy a part of their home. They can read everything in their environment with their children—be it retail circulars, the names of train stations, or traffic signs. Set aside times each week to read different kinds of texts—short stories, cartoons, poems, raps, and memoirs.

Most children have access to public libraries that provide books, magazines, DVDs, and Internet connections. At reading events, children become aware of reading as a social experience: something to be shared and even performed. They learn that words come alive on the page when they speak, interpret, and embody them. Having a close relationship with the local library is especially vital for gifted English Language Learners, whatever their proficiency level may be.

(Continues on p. 6)
TRAVEL: SUMMER TRIP TO ENGLAND
May 25 – June 3, 2015
Travel opportunities with The Center are for eighth grade and high school honors students as well as interested adults.

ADVANCED PLACEMENT SUMMER INSTITUTE
June 22–26, 2015
Summer institute for beginning and advanced AP teachers to prepare for teaching College Board Advanced Placement classes.

SCATS
Summer Camp for Academically Talented Middle School Students
June 7–19, 2015
A two-week residential/nonresidential camp for sixth through eighth graders.

VAMPY
Summer Program for Verbally and Mathematically Precocious Youth
June 21 – July 11, 2015
A three-week residential summer camp for seventh through tenth graders.
Consider these daily or weekly reading practices to further your child’s creative potential:

- **Storytelling.** Have children record family stories heard in either yours or a relative’s home. Have them write about events they remember. Activities may include: sketching and writing each part of the story; dramatizing the story; choosing a special word describing the person or story; writing the word (in both English and native tongue (ELL applicable); and creating a short poem.

- **Specialized professions.** Inspire children to learn words in specialized fields such as auto mechanics, ornithology and botany.

- **Collages.** Help children use collage as a medium for exploring language and meaning, especially by incorporating foreign and English text and images from different magazines. Both ELL and non-ELL children can select their country of origin, write words on the collage that express their personal feelings and thoughts about their home country, and write a letter to their country and the people they miss.

- **Journaling.** Get notebooks for children to use as private journals. At regular times each week, have them write or draw about things they saw, heard, and did. If they resist, help them find a more creative approach. Children can write upside down, or draw outside while sitting on a rock. They can draw on colored tissue paper. They can draw little creatures around the words they write. The journals are theirs alone.

**Music and Art**

According to writer, teacher, and publisher Maurice Fisher, “Gifted students must learn to squeeze as much music and art into their lives as possible to counter the many useless and insipid experiences they will encounter throughout life.”

For greater learning exposure, parents should take advantage of opportunities in their immediate community and nearby, such as:

- **Performing arts concerts.** A well-rounded exposure to the arts is highly important for gifted children as it develops their sensitivity and openness to their own and others’ cultures. Explore all types of music—classical, contemporary, jazz, blues, folk, roots, rock, and rap. Dance options include ballet, jazz, tap, modern,

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**Canadian inventor Eden Full** has a newspaper artist for a father who made her feel she could achieve anything if she put forth the effort. He opened her mind to many possibilities, at one point sharing pictures of people making robots and space shuttles. In 5th grade, she designed and built a solar car, that propelled itself on the sun’s energy, for a science project. By secondary school, Eden would sometimes become so involved in her experiments that she could not stop. “My parents would call in sick for me, so I could stay home from high school and work,” she said. “Teachers didn’t understand what I was doing.”

By 2010, she was bringing a prototype of her solar panel rotating system called the SunSaluter to Kenya and working with local villagers. With adjustments to its simple design, villagers can now charge their own batteries, use their own lanterns, and experience the benefits of a limitless energy source. Materials come from local, renewable resources that enable the people to assemble and maintain them without requiring outside technical expertise. Eden Full’s SunSaluter provides a vision for what future technologies might look like for the world.

and mime. Incorporate classical plays and operas, musicals, improvisation, and international perspectives into the mix. If money is tight, there are free and low-budget performances off the beaten path. Open air concerts in the warmer months are the norm in many areas.

- **Studios or after-school programs.** Studios and after-school workshops offer classes in the arts and other subjects. For ELLs, volunteers who speak their language (often parents) can assist the teacher or act as translators. For gifted children from other countries, an art studio or computer lab can be a quiet place where they can imagine and invent.

- **Art museums.** Most art museums have activity areas for children of all ages. Parents should prepare for the trip by exploring the options with their children first. If the trip involves specific exhibits, parents can help children learn about the artists and art movements in advance, including pointillism, surrealism, and abstract impressionism. At home after the trip, children can create their own art project in a particular style; compose a poem; or write about a figure in a painting.

- **Historical houses, sites, museums.** Whether near the home or on vacation, gifted children love anything that brings history alive for them. Again, preparation makes the experience more meaningful. Have children think of questions they can ask the guide. Plan follow-up activities, similar to those mentioned above.

- **Community centers.** Community centers provide a variety of offerings. If children are already skilled in a particular area, parents might negotiate with the teacher to see if they can try a higher level. Parents can participate by volunteering or by sharing resources and materials.

**Protecting from the Pressure to Conform**

As parents, we have the important job of helping our children navigate the world and learn how to integrate into society. At the same time, children depend on us to defend what is unique and special about them.

Most importantly, a nurturing home and family allows the individuality of gifted children to emerge naturally. By

Seventeen-year-old Malala Yousafzai of Pakistan, the youngest Nobel Prize Winner, suffered at the hands of Taliban gunmen on her way to school in 2012. Fortunately, Malala’s voice was not silenced despite significant injury. Malala has continued to advocate for the education of girls, giving a speech at the United Nations in June 2013. As she pointed out, knowledge is a power far greater than a gun. Malala did not achieve this on her own. She has always credited her father as the source of her inspiration, strength, and courage. Ziauddin, her father, a poet and education activist himself, has always stood proudly by her side.

“I never tried to clip the wings of my daughter who was meant to fly high in the sky,” her father says.


(Continues on back cover)


**Avenues of Acceleration**

**Is Acceleration Right for Your Child?**

**Advocating for Grade-Based Acceleration**

By Keri M. Guilbault, Ed.D.

It’s been a decade since the release of *A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America’s Brightest Students*, a landmark report on the status of acceleration in the United States and the disparities between research and educational beliefs and practices. While school administrators and educational policymakers may be better informed of the decades of research on acceleration, parents may still find themselves at a loss for how to begin the process for their own child. As your child’s advocate, you can work effectively with your school system to secure an appropriate academic placement that matches your child’s ability level, interests, and readiness to learn.

*A Nation Deceived* outlines 18 different forms of academic acceleration, including subject-based acceleration options and grade-based acceleration strategies that shorten the number of years a child spends in the K-12 school system.1 Parents often struggle with the decision to accelerate their child and may worry about social and emotional issues, although research indicates positive effects on the social and emotional adjustment of carefully selected accelerants.2 Once you’ve read the research on acceleration, considered the pros and cons, determined that your child may be a candidate for acceleration, discussed acceleration with your child, and are ready to approach the school, the following steps can help ensure careful consideration and successful adjustment.

**Know Your District Policies**

Some states and local school districts have formal acceleration policies. These may include guidelines for early entrance to kindergarten or 1st grade, earning high school or college credit for courses taken at an earlier age, and subject acceleration or grade skipping. Become well-informed of any written policies before you approach the school. You can locate your state policies at the Davidson Institute website (http://www.davidsongifted.org/db/StatePolicy.aspx) or by contacting your state gifted association.

(Continues on p. 10)
Potential explores two perspectives related to acceleration—one for elementary students and one for adolescents. Is acceleration right for your child? It’s not a decision to be taken lightly, but hopefully these articles provide food for thought and insights as you navigate the process.

For Adolescents

Early College Entrance: How Will My Child Do?

By Rachel U. Chung, M.Ed. and Nancy B. Hertzog, Ph.D.

Your precocious adolescent devours books, solves tricky math problems for fun, and easily makes friends with older classmates due to maturity that makes her “wise beyond her years.” She is in the most accelerated classes of her school and yet is still not adequately challenged. At 16, she tells you that she wants to go to college. What should you do? There’s no need to panic: Although unconventional, early college entrance is one possible option for self-motivated, high-achieving students.

Early College Entrance

Early college entrance is a form of acceleration, or the process of advancing students in academic programs faster than their same-aged peers. Many early entrants have demonstrated academic ability to achieve at high levels but they exhibit tremendous variety in their age, specific abilities, social and emotional maturity, family support, and personality traits. There is no “one size fits all” program for them.

Today there are a variety of options for acceleration depending on each student’s unique needs. Students may opt to take university courses while in high school, choose dual enrollment, or skip or drop out of high school entirely and enter college as fully matriculated freshmen, as in the case of the University of Washington’s early entrance programs.

The Robinson Center for Young Scholars at the University of Washington

The University of Washington (UW) Robinson Center for Young Scholars has two early college entrance programs for highly capable adolescents: the Early Entrance Program (EEP), created in 1977, and the UW Academy for Young Scholars, created in 2001.

EEP is a two-step program that admits a small cohort of students after 7th or 8th grade into the Transition School (TS), an intensive college preparatory program that condens-
Know the Research
When requesting that your child be considered as a candidate for grade-based acceleration, you may meet some resistance from teachers or school administrators. One of the main concerns and reasons often provided for not accelerating a gifted student includes the belief that it may cause social or emotional harm. As your child’s advocate, you can help to dispel this myth by sharing some of the research on this topic:

- There is no evidence that acceleration has a negative effect on a student’s social-emotional development.
- Gifted children tend to be socially and emotionally more mature than their age-mates.
- For bright students, acceleration has long-term beneficial effects, both academically and socially.
- Acceleration can provide access to classmates whose interests and stages of friendship are more closely in sync with your child.
- Doing nothing is not the same as doing no harm.

Follow the Chain of Command
Once you’ve done your research and are ready to approach the school, it’s important to remember that typical protocol is to request a meeting with your child’s classroom teacher first. Be specific, but polite in your request. Explain that you are interested in matching your child’s grade placement with his or her ability so that he or she will have an equal opportunity for academic and personal growth. (Be careful not to use the “b” word: bored!)

The classroom teacher will have recent academic achievement data that can provide evidence of ability that is above grade level. Your child’s teacher may even be able to address some acceleration and enrichment needs in the regular classroom first with collaboration and support from your school’s gifted education specialist. If this is not sufficient, then the gifted education specialist (or counselor if there is no gifted education specialist) can assist with administering any additional assessments that may be required to screen your child for acceleration.

If there is resistance at this stage, be polite but persistent and request a meeting with the appropriate school administrator (usually the Assistant Principal or Principal). Be sure to gather a portfolio of evidence to bring to your meeting, including independent work samples, achievement test scores, and any outside testing, such as individual IQ testing or above-level testing from participation in talent search programs. School officials will want to know that your child is working at least two years above grade level so that once accelerated, he or she will remain at the top of the class. Multiple pieces of evidence documenting above-grade level ability across content areas can help support your request.

School officials will want to know that your child is working at least two years above grade level so that once accelerated, he or she will remain at the top of the class.
Develop a Plan

If your school or district does not have formal acceleration policies or procedures, you might suggest that they use an evaluation tool, such as the *Iowa Acceleration Scales (3rd edition)*. This research-based tool is designed to help schools make an objective decision looking at the whole child. Information will be collected regarding your child’s current academic achievement, ability, motivation, as well as social factors, such as maturity and peer and teacher relationships.5

The following are some suggestions for creating your child’s acceleration plan:

- Request a copy of any meeting notes, including the Summary and Planning Sheet of the *Iowa Acceleration Scales (IAS)* for your records.
- Request that a follow up conference take place 30 days after the initial acceleration to review and discuss your child’s academic and social-emotional adjustment with all of the teachers involved.

Is Grade Acceleration the Best Option?

There are at least 18 different types of acceleration. Parents and educators may find that while one type is a good match for their child, another is not. For example, students who skip grades need emotional maturity as well as academic ability in order to be successful. With single-subject acceleration, however, the more important criterion is academic ability, and social-emotional maturity is less of a concern.1

Grade acceleration is only one form of acceleration. This type of acceleration shortens the amount of time a student spends in the school system and may be a good option for highly gifted students who are both socially mature and who are exceptionally advanced in several subject areas compared to same age peers. Other types of acceleration include:2

- Early admission to kindergarten or 1st grade
- Continuous progress
- Self-paced instruction
- Subject-matter or partial acceleration
- Combined classes
- Curriculum compacting
- Telescoping curriculum
- Mentoring
- Extracurricular programs

The *Iowa Acceleration Scales (3rd ed.)* is a tool that helps school teams make the best recommendation based on multiple criteria, taking the “whole child” into consideration. School teams using the IAS will review the candidate’s academic and social development, support from family and school personnel, and physical development. While full grade acceleration may be the best option for some gifted children, for other gifted learners subject acceleration or another intervention may be a better fit.

For more information, see the Q&A page of the Institute for Research and Policy on Acceleration (IRPA) website: [http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/Resources/QA/](http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/Resources/QA/)

Endnotes


Step-By-Step

• Include a plan to identify and address any potential academic gaps prior to the transition.
• Be aware that there will be a temporary period of adjustment. Give your child time.
• Ask that the receiving teacher locate a peer to help with your child’s transition to the new class, especially if acceleration takes place after the school year has begun and friendships have formed.
• Ask that your child’s acceleration plan include counseling or study skills support from the counselor or gifted education specialist during the transition if needed.
• If you don’t agree with the school committee’s decision, ask about the appeals process. If one does not exist, you can typically continue up the chain of command to an Assistant Superintendent, director, or supervisor at the school district office.

Acceleration is one of the most effective and research-based interventions for gifted learners. Acceleration can be an inexpensive and cost-effective way for schools to meet the academic and affective needs of highly able learners who learn at a faster rate.

As a parent of a highly-abled child, your voice is important when it comes to actively advocating for an appropriate educational placement. Don’t hesitate to ask questions and speak up for your child’s needs.

Resources

Websites
- Institute for Research and Policy on Acceleration
  http://www.accelerationinstitute.org
- Davidson Institute for Talent Development State Policy Map
  http://www.davidsongifted.org/db/StatePolicy.aspx

Books

Author’s Note
Keri M. Guilbault, Ed.D. is the parent of a profoundly gifted learner, an Assistant Professor and Program Coordinator of the graduate program in Gifted and Talented Education at Notre Dame of Maryland University, and current parent representative on the NAGC Board of Directors. She is also past president of the Maryland Coalition for Gifted and Talented Education, and the former national Gifted Youth Program Coordinator of American Mensa.

Endnotes
4 Colangelo, et al., 2004.
6 Colangelo, et al., 2004.
Dynamic Pathways for Gifted Learners

Center for Talent Development
Northwestern University

Programs Currently Enrolling:

Gifted LearningLinks: Online courses allow access to advanced subject matter, individualized pace and one-on-one engagement with instructors.

Summer Program: Rigorous, academic adventures that allow gifted students to delve into a subject of intrigue, build upon their strengths and connect with peers.

Civic Education Project: Pathway to leadership and civic engagement combining service-learning with academic study and reflection.

EXPLORE ALL OUR PROGRAMS ONLINE:
ctd.northwestern.edu
847/491-3782
Some time ago, I invited PHP readers to think about their own versions of the “ABCs of Being Smart.” Judie Becker sent me a scintillating submission that I’m super-satisfied to showcase. I’ve structured her superb suggestions with subheadings so each section speaks to a specific set of strategies.

Support Self-Confidence and Skill-Building
- **Soothe**—Calm the spirit while educating the mind so both work in harmony.
- **Separate**—The giftedness from the child. Even though he may master a subject like an adult, he’s still a child.
- **Sensitivity**—Practice it 24/7, especially when dealing with the social-emotional side of being gifted. Sometimes it’s a struggle, particularly during times of transition, or when a child has difficulty trying to fit in.
- **Space**—Make sure your child has plenty of downtime, including opportunities to relax and daydream.
- **Safe**—Assure your child that whatever he thinks, it’s safe to express himself with you.
- **Stretch**—Encourage your child to expand her comfort zone and to try something she’s never done before, whether she thinks she’ll be good at it or not.
- **Spotlight**—Many strengths and successes lie outside the academic realm, in activities like volunteering or singing in the choir. Encourage your child to become involved, and to share these times with friends.
- **Surround**—Encourage your child to play and connect with a wide circle of children, not just his academic peers.
- **Signals**—Watch for signs that your child is ready for something more challenging.

Support Schooling
- **Share**—With other parents what does and does not work as you move through the gifted education maze.
- **Strengthen**—The bonds between home and school so your child knows that all the adults in her life are working together in her best interest.
- **Search**—Keep looking for the right kinds of interventions to keep your child motivated to learn, such as acceleration, differentiation, ability grouping, curriculum compacting, among others.
- **Synthesize**—Sometimes homework seems fractured. Try weaving the thematic threads together to help your child see the big picture.
- **Spearhead**—If your school district has a parent support group for gifted education, join it. If not, organize one. There’s power in numbers.
- **Simplify**—You can’t change the entire system in a single semester or school year. Prioritize. Decide what’s really important, and work on that first.
- **School**—Make the world your child’s classroom, whether it’s the grocery or the hardware store. There’s an old saying, “A child educated only in school is an uneducated child.”
- **Skill**—What special skill can you offer at your child’s school? Perhaps you could start a student newspaper or an art club.
- **Study**—Be prepared with facts, figures, and a possible plan of action before complaining that your child’s needs are not being met.
- **Sensible**—No one likes a ranting, raging, red-in-the-face parent, so be sensible in your dealings with teachers and administrators.
- **Sounding Board**—Be willing to listen to the parents of other or younger gifted learners who may seek your ear, advice, and recommendations.
Support Success!

• **Savor**—Enjoy the uniqueness of your child’s giftedness, whatever challenges it presents.
• **Stimulate**—Most machines wear out from rust, not over-use. And so, too, does the brain!
• **Sideline**—Put aside wanting to live through your child’s accomplishments. Make sure whatever you’re pushing for is what’s in his best interest, not your ego’s.
• **Show up**—Even if you don’t understand robots or you hate chess. Be there for your child when she wants your input, needs your support, or exhibits her special talent.
• **Sureness**—Don’t be so sure that you know what’s best in every situation. Open your mind and your heart to new ideas from various sources.
• **Speak up**—When you have an opinion, concern, or good idea, let others know. Don’t assume that they can read your mind.
• **Sojourn**—The journey of helping your child reach his potential is a very long road. Appreciate the scenery when you reach a pleasant spot along the way.
• **Smile**—Your child’s future is vitally important to you, but lighten up. You can accomplish a lot more with a smile than with a furrowed brow.
• **Salute**—You deserve one for advocating strongly and appropriately for your gifted child.

Joanne Foster’s article “R We There Yet?” was first published in Parenting for High Potential in 2006, which became the springboard for the “ABCs of Being Smart” series of columns. Back then, Judie Becker, an insightful and enterprising parent from Leawood, KS, responded to the invitation for PHP readers to choose a letter and write a guest column. Judie selected the letter “S.” Her submission was subsequently published in PHP in 2007. The content is as originally written, although Dr. Joanne Foster added subheadings and reorganized the many points accordingly.

**Author’s Notes**

Joanne Foster, Ed.D., is co-author (with Dona Matthews) of Beyond Intelligence: Secrets for Raising Happily Productive Kids (2014, Anansi) and the award-winning Being Smart about Gifted Education (2009, Great Potential Press). As a parent, teacher, consultant, researcher, and education specialist, Dr. Foster has more than 30 years of experience working in the field of gifted education. She teaches at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, and writes and presents extensively on a wide range of topics at conferences and learning venues across North America. Her book Not Now Maybe Later: Helping Children Overcome Procrastination (Great Potential Press) will be released in early 2015. Visit her website at www.beyondintelligence.net or contact her at joanne.foster@utoronto.ca.
es most of high school into three academic quarters. After successfully graduating from TS, students officially enter the EEP program and are considered freshmen at the University of Washington.

The UW Academy program admits up to 35 students who drop out of high school after 10th grade and enroll into the university as college freshmen.

To ease their transition into college, the academy provides programming that includes cohort building activities, academic advising, and classes to introduce them to university writing, as well as to the wide variety of university majors, clubs, and resources.

Social, emotional and academic support, along with parent involvement, are important aspects of both programs. Parents participate in orientations, scheduled “check-ins,” and parent conferences. Discussion groups offer parents ways to support their early entrants through college and adolescence.

Parents most often want to know the long-term outcomes of students who graduated from early entrance programs. The Robinson Center has a long history of scholarly inquiry and a comprehensive summary of previous research. In addition, in 2013, the Robinson Center research team embarked on an alumni follow-up study spanning 35 years of the early entrance programs that explored how participation in the Robinson Center Early Entrance Program or the UW Academy impacted alumni’s personal, academic, and professional lives. The full results of that study are described in “Outcomes for Students on a Fast Track for College,” with a brief summary below.

**35-Year Alumni Study**

In 2013, nearly 200 alumni (119 EEP and 73 Academy students) participated in an electronic survey about participant characteristics, program impact, academic and career outcomes, and interpersonal relationships. Of these alumni, 41 were interviewed in-depth by phone or internet video.

Overall, the findings were very positive for academic and career outcomes, and mostly positive for social relationships—although there was some variance in the area of romantic relationships. A majority of alumni reported that they were generally happy and that the program had positively impacted their happiness. Nearly 90% of alumni said they would make the same choices if they had to do it all over again.

**Academic and Career Outcomes**

Graduates of the early entrance programs have remained academically successful. As college students, they majored in a wide variety of fields from the natural sciences to the social sciences, business, humanities, and the arts. As a group, they had an average GPA of 3.7, which is considerably higher than the GPA average of all undergraduates at the University of Washington. More than half attained graduate or professional level degrees, with more than 20% in progress toward attaining graduate or professional degrees. Alumni were also the recipients of prestigious scholarships, fellowships, and awards, including Rhodes and Fulbright scholarships.

According to the study, the top three most important things the alumni looked for in a job were high levels of intellectual challenge, passion for the field, and meaningfulness (in that order). Earning a high salary was not in their top priority list; however, for those employed, 31.1% indicated earning $100,000 or more.

**Need for Challenge**

Students came to the early entrance programs to find challenge, even though the
majority of them had participated in gifted programs. One student commented, “It was a relief to finally find an academically challenging environment that fostered an excitement for learning rather than pouring cold water on it. Having teachers who were dedicated to, and excited about, seeing each student challenged was fantastic.”

**Interpersonal Outcomes**
In the area of social relationships, the results were more varied. The alumni spoke of numerous social and academic benefits of having a like-minded peer group. One student said, “Academically, what was most beneficial was being in the presence of so many people pursuing diverse interests in novel and unique ways.” However,

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### Early Entrance Programs

Following are a list of early entrance programs compiled by Alexander Pagnani in his just-released book, *Early Entrance to College as an Option for Highly Gifted Adolescents*. This NAGC Select is available now in both print and Kindle formats at www.amazon.com.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Name</th>
<th>Host University</th>
<th>Typical Student Age Ranges</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Commuter Programs</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>The Early Entrance Program</td>
<td>University of Washington</td>
<td>12-15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UW Academy for Young Scholars</td>
<td>University of Washington</td>
<td>16-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Entrance Program</td>
<td>California State University of Los Angeles</td>
<td>11-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston University Academy</td>
<td>Boston University</td>
<td>13-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early College at Guilford</td>
<td>Guilford College</td>
<td>14-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bard High School Early College</td>
<td>Bard College</td>
<td>14-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early Honors Program</td>
<td>Alaska Pacific University</td>
<td>17-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Residential Programs</strong></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advanced Academy of Georgia</td>
<td>University of West Georgia</td>
<td>16-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Georgia Academy of Math, Engineering, and Science</td>
<td>Middle Georgia College</td>
<td>16-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Academy of Math and Science</td>
<td>University of North Texas</td>
<td>16-18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Texas Academy of Leadership in the Humanities</td>
<td>Lamar University</td>
<td>16-18</td>
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<td>Missouri Academy of Science, Math, and Computing</td>
<td>Northwest Missouri State University</td>
<td>16-18</td>
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<td>Clarkson School Bridging Year Program</td>
<td>Clarkson University</td>
<td>17-18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Program for the Exceptionally Gifted</td>
<td>Mary Baldwin College</td>
<td>14-17 (females only)</td>
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<td>Simon’s Rock College</td>
<td>Bard College</td>
<td>16-20</td>
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<td>Resident Honors Program</td>
<td>University of Southern California</td>
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<td>The Gatton Academy of Mathematics and Science</td>
<td>Western Kentucky University</td>
<td>16-18</td>
</tr>
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<td>National Academy of Arts, Sciences, and Engineering</td>
<td>The University of Iowa</td>
<td>17-18</td>
</tr>
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<td>Kansas Academy of Math and Science</td>
<td>Fort Hayes State University</td>
<td>16-18</td>
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there were some unexpected drawbacks of having such an insular peer group—such as difficulty integrating into the broader university community and limitations with dating.

**Implications for Parents**
Long-term outcomes indicate that early entrance program graduates perform well academically, find satisfying careers, and appear socially and emotionally well-adjusted. If your child is interested in this option, it’s important to remain open-minded. Children who take initiative, desire greater challenge, and show exceptional academic potential, may thrive in an early college entrance program.

One area that parents should consider is that early entrance graduates often experience different perspectives in developing friendships and romantic relationships. Some students may not integrate fully into the college lifestyle and may need support in developing relationships beyond their peer cohorts. However, the positives seem to outweigh the negatives for many adolescents, and knowing the complexities of these issues will help you and your child make the most appropriate decision.

**Resources**

**Websites**

**Institute for Research and Policy on Acceleration**
Policy guidelines, acceleration stories, and various resources
http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/

**Johns Hopkins CTY**
List of various early college entrance programs with related links
http://cty.jhu.edu/imagine/resources/college_entrance.html

**Robinson Center for Young Scholars**
Early Entrance Program (EEP) and UW Academy for Young Scholars (ACAD)
Details on early entrance programs at the Robinson Center for Young Scholars, University of Washington
https://robinsoncenter.uw.edu/

**Book**

**Authors’ Note**
Rachel U. Chung, M.Ed., is a prospective doctoral candidate in Educational Psychology at the University of Washington and a Pre-doctoral Research Associate at the Robinson Center for Young Scholars. She received her B.A. in Psychology from the University of Texas at Austin, and her M.Ed. in Counseling Psychology from Washington State University. She is certified in the State of Washington as a school counselor and has more than 10 years’ of combined experience teaching and advising K–12 students. Her research interests are best described as an intersection between gifted education, mental health, and immigrant issues.

Nancy B. Hertzog is a Professor of Educational Psychology and the Director of the Robinson Center for Young Scholars at the University of Washington. In addition to studying the outcomes of Robinson Center alumni, her research focuses on teaching strategies designed to differentiate instruction and challenge children with diverse abilities. Specifically, she has studied teachers’ implementation of the Project Approach in classrooms with both high-achieving and low-achieving children. She has published two books on early childhood education and numerous articles in the *Journal of Curriculum Studies, Gifted Child Quarterly, Journal for the Education of the Gifted, Journal of Advanced Academics, Roeper Review, Teaching Exceptional Children, Early Childhood Research and Practice, Journal of Research in Childhood Education, Young Exceptional Children, and Parenting for High Potential.*

**Endnotes**


A nonprofit at one of the nation’s premier universities, we’re dedicated to identifying and developing the world’s brightest K-12 learners through research, advocacy, and counseling, as well as our signature summer, online, and family programs.

cty.jhu.edu/nagc
Our role is to help them face whatever saboteurs stand in their way and to encourage the emergence of their unique self—their inner greatness as the people they are.

(Continued from p. 7)

supporting the creative needs and interests of the family, the home becomes a more vibrant place and everyone feels it. Regardless of their experiences at school, gifted children need a treasured place where they feel safe and can thrive as living, breathing learners.

No message could be more important than conveying to your child that it’s normal and right to pursue what they love. No message better safeguards the dreams and aspirations of impressionable children from the conforming forces of society.

Author’s Note
Joan Franklin Smutny is founder and director of The Center for Gifted and welcomes thousands of gifted children to year-round programs. She teaches creative writing to young students, as well as gifted education courses to graduate students at the university level. Joan has authored, co-authored, and edited many articles and books on gifted education for teachers and parents, and is editor of the Illinois Association for Gifted Children Journal, contributing editor of Understanding our Gifted, and a regular contributor to Gifted Education Communicator, Parenting for High Potential, and Gifted Education Press Quarterly. Joan received the NAGC Distinguished Service Award for her outstanding contribution to the field of gifted education, and the E. Paul Torrance Award in Creativity, also presented by NAGC.

Resources

Endnotes