

Advocacy Guidance

In our work with the gifted since 1979, it has been clear that gifted students fare better in schools when their parents (and teachers) are strong, knowledgeable advocates for gifted children. Yet, advocacy for giftedness can feel uncomfortable and many parents admit they don't know what to ask FOR. Associate Director, Bobbie Gilman offers consultations on advocacy to prepare you for this important role. Her recent *Gifted Minds Empowered: Advocacy to Develop Gifted Children's Strengths (2019)* was written to serve as a reference for the many questions parents ask us—and is the textbook for our parent advocacy class at GDC. It addresses advocacy issues that arise K-12, for all levels of giftedness and the twice-exceptional. For example, it is not enough to just identify a child for the gifted program. The gifted child, like all students, has the right to gain real benefit from school. Every child should learn new material every day that requires them to work hard, learn strategies for solving difficult problems, and develop study and organizational skills. Over time, they should develop their strengths and confidence! Sadly, many gifted children do not reap these benefits, and their motivation to learn can be undermined. For the gifted child with co-existing disabilities (2e), it is critical that the strengths be emphasized, while gently accommodating the weaknesses. Consultation with Bobbie can further explore your child's specific needs and answer your questions on issues such as the following:

- My child has been identified for the gifted program, but very little is being done.
- My child was turned down for the gifted program, based on the school's gifted screening tests, but fits most of your Characteristics of Giftedness list.
- We don't call attention to our child's giftedness. Why should we have our child tested?
- What is the best type of school for a gifted child (neighborhood, gifted, charter, magnet, private schools)? How do I choose a school?
- What options in typical schools are effective for gifted children?
- Could my child be twice-exceptional (2e)—gifted with one or more areas of disability (e.g., a learning disability, ADHD, or autism spectrum disorder)?
- My child is struggling, but the teachers don't see it. Do schools provide identification and services for 2e students?
- How can I clarify my child's strengths and weaknesses?
- Is homeschooling an option? How do I choose a curriculum?
- How do I plan for a highly, exceptionally or profoundly gifted child? How do I share my child's needs with teachers? (Bobbie's *Challenging Highly Gifted Learners* can help.)
- How do I successfully work with educators on my child's behalf?
- What do I need to know to prepare for a meeting with the school?!

For more information, contact GDC and ask for a consultation with Bobbie Gilman.