

# Educational choices for gifted children and families

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# Roadmap

- \* Identify needs
  - \* of children
  - \* of parents
  - \* of family
- \* Discuss balance
  - \* Compromise
  - \* Collaboration
  - \* Imperfection
- \* Educational options



# What gifted kids need

- \* Stability
- \* Intellectual stimulation
- \* Emotionally safe environments
- \* Challenging & stimulating environments – emotionally, intellectually, physically
- \* Teachers/mentors/adults who share their interests
- \* Teachers/mentors/adults who can introduce them to new ideas
- \* Just enough “good” stress



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# What gifted kids need



## Stability

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- \* Knowing that choices aren't made at random
- \* A sense of where they are going in their education
- \* Community through school or other educational choices

## Stimulation

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- \* Understanding that life is full of choices and change
- \* A sense of education as adventure and seeking
- \* A continual search for new community, a "tribe," like-minded friends

# What gifted kids need

## Safe environments

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- \* Understanding of giftedness – both educationally and socially
- \* Emotional safety
- \* Freedom to be accepted for oneself



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## Challenging environments

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- \* Challenge to define oneself in the world
- \* Emotional growth
- \* Freedom to continue to invent oneself, especially during teen years

# What gifted kids need

## Shared ideas

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- \* Importance of finding one's "tribe"
- \* Teachers who share interests
- \* Teachers who are trained enough in areas of passion that they can still be mentors
- \* Peers



## New ideas

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- \* Teachers/mentors who can introduce new ideas
- \* Teachers/mentors who have different areas of passion
- \* People who disagree
- \* Friends/peers who have different interests

# What gifted kids need: Good stress

- \* Research shows that some stress is good stress:
  - \* Excitement and nerves before a test
  - \* Challenging environments that force personal growth
  - \* “Hitting the wall” and learning to push further
- \* Keeping children from good stress results in helicopter parenting (as opposed to attentive parenting)
- \* Helicopter parenting results in young adults who are afraid of challenge
- \* In Carol Dweck’s terms: Good stress leads to a “growth mindset”



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# What does *your* child need?

- \* Stability vs. intellectual stimulation
- \* Safe environments vs. challenging & stimulating environments
- \* Teachers/mentors/adults who share their interests vs. who can introduce them to new ideas
- \* What is “good” stress for your child?





# What parents need

- \* Stability
- \* Emotionally safe environments
- \* Community with shared interests
- \* Stimulation
- \* Stimulating environments
- \* Community with new ideas



# What parents need

- \* Not too much stress!
- \* But...
  - \* Stress in family life is unavoidable
  - \* Learning to cope with stress is important
  - \* Modeling coping with stress helps your children



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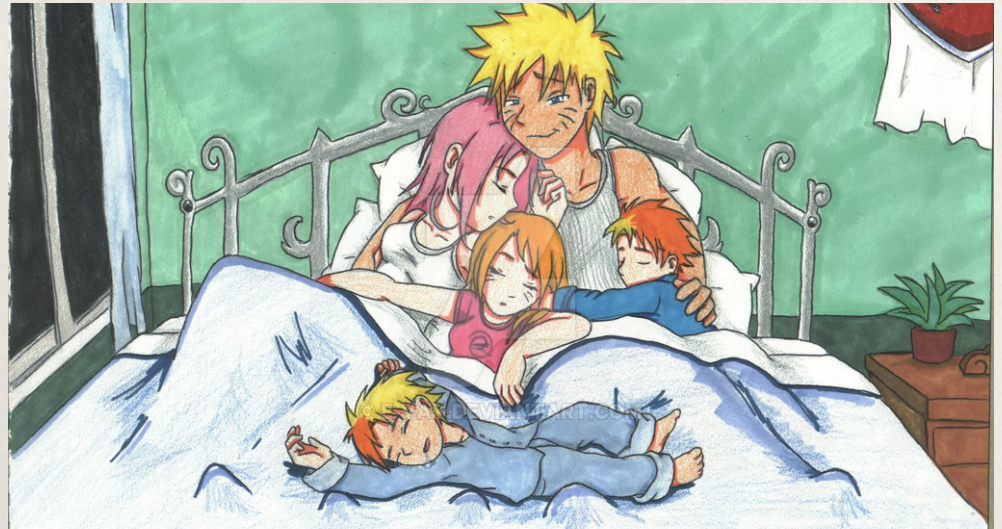
# What do *you* need?

- \* Stability vs. stimulation
- \* Safe environments vs. challenging & stimulating environments
- \* Teachers/mentors/adults who share your interests vs. who can introduce you to new ideas
- \* What is “good” stress for you?



# What families need

- \* Stability
- \* Enough challenge to keep things fresh
- \* Money (how much?)
- \* Emotional safety
- \* Shared interests
- \* Not too much stress



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# Balance



# Balance

- \* Kids compromise
- \* Parents compromise
- \* Build a support system
- \* Create partnerships with educators/mentors
- \* Acceptance of imperfect solutions
- \* Flexibility to move on
- \* Build a collaborative family relationship (Dr. Ross Greene, [livesinthebalance.org](http://livesinthebalance.org))



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# Educational choice

- \* Mainstream public
- \* Charter and alternative public
- \* Private
- \* At-home distance learning
- \* Traditional and cooperative homeschooling
- \* Community college for teens



# What are *your* choices?



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# Kids need, parents need, families need...

- \* to know that all educational decisions are imperfect & impermanent
- \* to focus on flexibility, adaptability, and collaboration



*"Kids do well if they can"*

- Dr. Ross Greene

# Workshops for Adults



- \* Homeschool Start-Up:  
4-week online seminar for potential and new homeschoolers
- \* Gifted Parenting Support Group:  
monthly online support group for parents

[www.AthenasAcademy.com](http://www.AthenasAcademy.com)

[www.sukiwessling.com/present](http://www.sukiwessling.com/present)