

# ABCs of Being Smart...

## O Is for Opportunities

By Dr. Joanne Foster



Children's learning opportunities can be ordinary or outstanding. Here's an overview of my own opinions for optimizing them, in no particular order.

- **Online venues**—increasingly, technology informs what people do and what they know, and there are countless apps, links, tools, and portals for extended learning.
- **Obvious**—as tech-boundaries continue to expand so, too, does the need to oversee how children utilize the outlets and options.
- **Old-fashioned**—listening, chatting, reading together, playing games—these aren't new-fangled ideas—they're old-fashioned, tried-and-true, important ways to foster children's development.
- **Originality**—encourage creativity. Outrageous, obscure, odd or off-beat ideas can often be springboards for exciting new endeavors.
- **Ology**—astrology, biology, zoology. From A to Z, there are many "ologies" (or forms of knowledge) that might capture children's interest. Encourage their pursuit and help them find resources, programs, activities, and mentors.
- **Open-mindedness**—give children a heads-up: Learning opportunities can occur at any time, in any place, real or virtual, often or occasionally.
- **Organization**—lots of options, even the most captivating ones, can be overwhelming for kids if they're not organized. Help them become adept at managing their time, materials, and techno-activity.
- **Opposition**—healthy opposition is good for appreciating other people's perspectives. Teach kids the benefits of controversy, debate, and deliberation, all of which will enhance their thinking and learning.
- **Overabundance**—too much of anything is generally not good. Kids sometimes need assistance recognizing this so that opportune times remain opportune and not onerous.
- **Observation**—keep your eyes open to ensure that children are feel-



# Open-mindedness

ing comfortable with their schooling, extra-curricular, and other experiences. Ensure challenges are suitable (not too easy and not too hard).

- **Objectives**—help kids set reasonable goals—ones they can orchestrate, and that are attainable.
- **Offerings**—aside from conventional school curriculum, think about community centers, extracurricular programs, mentorship possibilities, and specialty focus courses (for example, in the arts,

such as origami, opera, or oil painting).

- **Optimism**—a positive attitude can help make okay experiences even better. ♡

## Author's Note

**Joanne Foster, Ed.D.**, is co-author (with Dona Matthews) of the award-winning book *Being Smart About Gifted Education*, 2nd Ed. (2009, Great Potential Press), and *Beyond Intelligence* (in press, Anansi). As a parent, teacher, consultant, researcher, and education specialist, Dr. Foster has more

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