

V is for Viewpoints

by Dr. Joanne Foster

Here are 15 VIPs—*Very Important Perspectives*—for parents to consider when supporting their child’s high-level development. The order makes sense to me personally, however I invite you to prioritize this list for yourself because then you’ll be thinking even more carefully about the points!

- **Values.** Integrity, honesty, respect, compassion...What’s on your list of virtues that children should learn and that can’t be compromised?
- **Verify.** Help children find the truth, relevance, and meaning in what they undertake. It will spark their interest and motivation.
- **Voice.** Kids have to be able to express their opinions, concerns, and ideas—and possibly even vent—and that means parents have to listen (preferably attentively) and respond.
- **Venture.** Explore, discover, play—these are all action verbs that pave the way for learning and personal growth from infancy right through adulthood.
- **Venue.** The dictionary defines venue as “a place of action,” and it might be a home, a school, a store, a park, a beach, a museum, a gallery, or anywhere children can acquire varied experience of the vast world around them. The more venues visited, the more vistas, and vantage points.
- **Vision.** Following that thought, the more kids see, the more they learn.
- **Volition.** The act of choosing whether to put forth effort, to be creative, to engage in activities, to collaborate with others—these are just some of the many choices that affect children’s well-being and achievement levels. Kids have to be

willing to try, and to learn from their mistakes.

- **Versatility.** Children may want to pursue a variety of whims and interests (and why not?) but they might need support switching from one area of focus to another, and they likely won’t be equally adept at everything they try. Be available to offer guidance and encouragement when kids’ inclinations veer.
- **Vicissitudes.** Life is full of ups and downs. Nothing is really certain, and goals can be hard won, so children have to learn about resilience and a growth mindset.¹
- **Vigor.** Children who demonstrate vitality, vivaciousness, and vehemence, including strengths of character and conviction, are forces to be reckoned with. (Very positive forces.)
- **Volunteerism.** It’s imperative that we show children how they can contribute to the community because we all belong to humankind. Continue to reinforce children’s commitment to the greater good.
- **Vanguard.** It means being at the forefront of a movement. Is your child a leader or a follower? Being on the frontline of anything takes courage and grit. (You might say valor.)
- **Victory!** Success comes in different guises, and there is no one measure of it. How do you gauge success? More importantly perhaps, how does your child? Maybe determining happy



productivity is one way.

- **Vulnerability.** Even the most capable children are capable of being upset, or hurt; they may also have difficulty academically or socially. Part of being a good parent is to give them the tools to stay safe and confident, and to overcome challenges.
- **Vigilance.** In the whole scheme of things, it’s smart for parents to be watchful and wise. But *wait—that’s the letter W.* Next time...

Author’s Note

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Endnotes

¹Matthews D. & Foster, J. (2013). *Mindsets and gifted education: Transformation in progress.* <http://community.mindsetworks.com/blog-page/home-blogs/entry/mindsets-and-gifted-education-transformation-in-progress>