

Review by Dr. Gloria Cohen, New Jersey Association for Gifted Children Trustee

Being Smart about Gifted Children is designed for parents and educators. The authors describe ways to develop children's natural abilities and present practical strategies to help parents and educators identify and nurture the abilities of children with high abilities.

Readers may learn more about, and, hopefully, better understand, many of the complexities of gifted development to enable them to make informed decisions with and for the children and adolescents in their lives. Although the book is designed primarily for parents and teachers, it will certainly be of interest to other professionals including teacher educators, school counselors, psychologists, administrators and policy makers. It is full of valuable information for those who seek to better understand gifted children, educational programs for gifted children, and testing.

Matthews and Foster introduce the "mystery" and "mastery" models of gifted education for our consideration and challenge several commonly held assumptions about identification. The unique characteristics of the gifted and the fact that such children are "not a homogeneous population" are emphasized. The authors suggest that giftedness is a highly diverse phenomenon that is not easily measured or recognized.

They offer alternative approaches to gifted programming, ideas about teacher development strategies, and advice about advocacy. The authors focus on evidence-based understandings of high level development and challenge much of the conventional thinking about gifted education. They have included only those policies and practices which are "solidly grounded theoretically and/or empirically", a sorely needed approach in education. *Being Smart about Gifted Children* is a welcome combination of current research and readable format.

Areas addressed in the book are creativity and giftedness, testing, identification, labeling issues, classroom adaptations, program options, motivation, emotional, social and behavioral concerns, young gifted children, adolescence, counseling, parent strategies, sibling relationships, gifted adolescents, advocacy, helping school meet children's needs, gifted education trends and teacher development, (Dynamic Scaffolding Model). Their consulting model of dynamic scaffolding is an exciting approach to staff development.

Test interpretation, assessments for young children, and information

on psycho-educational assessment reports are provided very thoroughly in the appendix. The authors give us a comprehensive discussion of testing, assessment and identification which is thought provoking

They don't give easy formulas or recipes but provide, excellently, through evidence and experience, practical strategies for working with our gifted children. Their chapter "Adaptations: The Gifted Learner in the Regular Classroom" is a gem replete with resources, ideas, realistic strategies, action research vignettes from educators, children, and parents. Website resources are strategically embedded in every chapter as points are made so the reader doesn't have to search for them.

The authors offer many ideas for motivating high ability learners which are directed at teachers but can be adapted for use at home by parents. Wonderful quotes may be found at the beginning of each chapter and throughout the book from experts in education, philosophers, parents, teachers, administrators and kids. In addition, there are many real voices of children and adults in the vignettes included in every chapter.

Here is a book that truly extends the 3 R's. It is rich, real, readable, respectful, researched, refreshing - an excellent resource - a valuable reference. It is written with professional honesty and respect for children, their parents and educators. You would be smart to get this book and use it. It would be a great gift to give yourself but an even greater gift for your children. Full of valuable information for those who want to understand gifted learners, *Being Smart about Gifted Children* is designed as a guidebook. You couldn't wish for a better route.

Dr. Matthews holds degrees in Counseling and Psychology and Special Education (Gifted) from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. Currently she is Director of the Hunter College Center for Gifted Studies and Associate Professor of Special Education, City University of New York.

Dr. Foster holds degrees in Special Education and Human Development from the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto. Currently she teaches Educational Psychology as well as Gifted Studies at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education of the University of Toronto, and is the Gifted Education Consultant for a large school board in Toronto. Both have teaching and consulting

experience, were coordinators of programs for gifted children, and have written and spoken extensively throughout Canada and the U.S.

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