



# *We Asked, They Answered!*

**“What do you want your parents to know and understand about you?”**

**Libby Family Night  
Parent Program  
May 1, 2013**

# Survey of Libby Center's Tessera & Odyssey Students

- Teachers asked students in 3rd thru 8th grade to respond anonymously to the question "What do you want your parents to know and understand about you?" Hundreds of student responses were sorted and presented to parents.
  - We found common themes of students struggling with perfectionism, pressure and a desire to be understood. We also found that the survey responses aligned closely with work Judy Galbraith has done in her research with gifted children. We used her "*top ten things gifted students wish their parents would do (or not do)*" to categorize the quotes taken from the surveys.
  - We found this to be valuable information that supports the diverse and individual needs of gifted students. We hope to continue to share this information with parents and staff alike and find ways to continue to address our students' needs for support as we do our important work as educators at Libby Center.
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- Angela Hartsfield, Odyssey School Counselor
  - Glenda Kohls, Tessera Teacher, SENG Facilitator

# Written by a Grade 3 Student

"Being "gifted" really does have its ups and downs. You get treated differently. I know I personally have a different relationship with teachers than other kids. But it's also great to be able to see things differently from classmates. You kind of set this goal for yourself to get everything perfect and win every award. I, just the other day (and it has happened before) didn't get an award and went home and cried because I thought I wasn't good enough for, dare I say, "average" school. It is incredibly stressful and frustrating. Another thing that happens is someone will say for example "Ask \_\_\_\_\_. They're really smart." And you don't know the answer. It's hard to make friends because they don't understand how you think. Things at "regular school" are too easy and make it hard to focus. We find things pointless because they're too easy. It is difficult to be a "gifted" kid. You feel if you ask for help, your "gifted" label will drop."

# What Gifted Students Want (and Need) from Their Parents

According to the survey conducted for *"The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide: A Teen Handbook"*, the top ten things gifted students wish their parents would do (or not do) are:

1. Be supportive and encouraging; be there for us; be on our side.
2. Don't expect too much of us; don't expect perfection.
3. Don't pressure us, be too demanding, or push too hard.
4. Help us with our schoolwork/homework.
5. Help us develop our talents.
6. Be understanding.
7. Don't expect straight A's.
8. Allow us some independence; give us space; trust us, because chances are we know what we're doing.
9. Talk to us; listen to us.
10. Let us try alternative education/special programs.

# What Gifted Students Want (and Need) from Their Parents

- Why can't GT kids just tell parents what they want? Although they can often talk a **blue streak** about virtually any subject, it can be difficult for gifted kids to speak frankly about what they need from their parents with their parents.

# Be supportive & encouraging; be there for us; be on our side.

- Gifted kids can be hard on ourselves. If we always turn in assignments on time, it's okay to once in a while forget it and turn it in late the next day. Please don't wig out.
- There's a lot of emotional stress involved with being gifted. It's harder than it seems.
- Sometimes I even get mad at myself because if it gets hard I might give up "because I should know this."
- Stuff takes time and I need patience to do my job for homework.

# Be supportive & encouraging; be there for us; be on our side.

- I would like my parents to know that it is a lot harder to be “gifted” than they probably think it is ‘cause you have to put up with bullies, being excluded, people being sarcastically “nice” to you, and a lot of other things.
- Gifted children are sensitive; we need to have support.
- “Praise your child for good grades and work. Although this praise doesn’t seem like much, it means the world to me.”
- “I like my parents support when I don’t meet expectations.”
- “Pressure isn’t what helps, it’s encouragement.

# Don't expect too much of us; don't expect perfection.

- I strive for excellence and feel like if I am not grade A in everything you will be disappointed in me. I am worried that being perfect is the minimum expectation for me, and that I am not perfect all the time. I want to please you and hope what I do is perfect enough for you.
- "Please realize we won't always be the best at everything."
- I want to tell my parents that just because I am so-called "gifted" doesn't mean I am going to get everything right every time....They always push me and push me more and more as to work like an adult. But in reality I'm a 10 year old kid?!?

# Don't expect too much of us; don't expect perfection.

- As a kid, it's always been hard to keep up with my parents' expectations. It's like they've got my life on a list: what schools, what job, the kind of person I should marry, extracurricular, the list goes on and on. And then they have a list of things I should decide on while still young: what subjects should I take in college?? Do I want to get married?
- "My parents don't understand me because they expect me to be over the top in math. Although I am a perfectionist, it is always hard to impress my parents, even though by other people's standards I am doing perfectly well."
- "Getting something wrong can be awful!"

# Don't pressure us, be too demanding, or push too hard.

- Please let me have a little time to be gifted. Just not every minute of every day. Please don't take this personally. I know you only want what is best for me. You just be you and I'll just be me.
- Sometimes I feel like my parents push me too hard. They think I'm not doing my best when I really am.
- You expect me to be good at everything. I only have a few more years in my childhood and, please, I would like them to be free.
- Pressure to be perfect – ALWAYS – and to get into a good (Ivy League) college.

# Don't pressure us, be too demanding, or push too hard.

- When we meet standard we're disappointing; exceeding standard is always expected.
- I'm only 9 and there's only so much I can handle. Stop pushing me like I'm an adult when I'm not. I'm just a kid.
- "Being labeled gifted puts a lot of pressure on me"
- "I feel compelled and pressured to do things well and I worry if I don't. I have a lot of self-doubt about my abilities."

# Help us with our schoolwork/homework.

- I would like adults to know that I am fast/quick to learn things. I tend to be a perfectionist. So when I get something wrong I would like encouragement and help.
- "We may need help even though we aren't asking"
- "I would like my parents to be involved in my studies and to push me to do better in school."
- "Sometimes I need help unlike at my old school. The homework here is meant for me and that means it's more challenging and creative."

# Help us develop our talents.

- Everything is going great but I want to be pushed harder. I'm getting better at everything and I want it done faster. Please push me harder.
- My life is the best life I could ever ask for except I am bored at school and I am not being pushed at all in my learning. Could you help me with that?
- "Academics isn't my whole world. Sports, music and hobbies are a really big part of my life."
- "Sometimes we want to learn other things than math, social studies and science."
- "I hope to have a career in music."

# Be understanding.

- I've tried to tell you how I feel but you can't seem to understand. I feel like I'm alone, but it's stupid to think that because I know I'm not the only kid who feels like that. At night I can't fall asleep because I'm stressing over sports, school, friends, homework, my personality and Tessera.
- I'm very lonely. It's hard to find a person to play with. I need some help!
- I wish you knew that sometimes I feel over pressured and way over scheduled. Plus I feel scared that I'll be rejected or avoided.

# Be understanding.

- I don't like being bored. Can we do something about that?
- I wish you knew the me inside.
- "Sometimes we don't know how to deal with things that's why we are in our rooms reading or on the computer, we find comfort in these things, that is all."
- There's a lot of emotional stress being gifted. It's harder than it seems.
- I am me, not my brother or my sister, me.

# Be understanding.

- I'm sensitive: emotionally and physically.
- Sometimes I feel like nobody understands me and how I feel and at Tessera, people do. One of the bad things about being "gifted" is people think because I'm "gifted" I do things quicker. I can talk about stuff at Tessera and people "get me".
- Being gifted makes it harder to make friends because you have much different feelings and interests. Gifted children often have many more life challenges than average kids.
- We are higher maintenance than others"

# Don't expect straight A's.

- "I am expected to get straight A's. That is what I expect of myself too, but it is OK to get a bad(ish) grade once in a while. I want my parents to know that I have already beaten myself up about the grade and I will try really hard to improve it."
- "Parents are saying "you'll get an A+ for sure!" and that's nice, but what happens when you don't get the perfect score? You feel guilty, like you're a failure to them."

Allow us some independence; give us space; trust us, because chances are we know what we're doing.

- "I feel my parents should trust me more and trust me with more important stuff."
- "I often wish that my parents would understand that just because I don't do everything exactly when they say doesn't mean I'm never going to do it! I do have priorities and I do motivate myself."
- "Let us figure it out."

# Talk to us; listen to us.

- "Talking is a favorite pastime and I have to try very hard not to talk in class."
- "We think a lot more than you could imagine, even if we don't say."
- "I feel like my parents should ask more adult or more mature questions, so they understand how gifted I am."
- "I feel as if I'm trapped in a 12 year old's world and not able to break out. Psychologically I feel I'm maturer than some might think. I know about the world's happenings, politics and "adult problems"."

# Let us try alternative education/special programs.

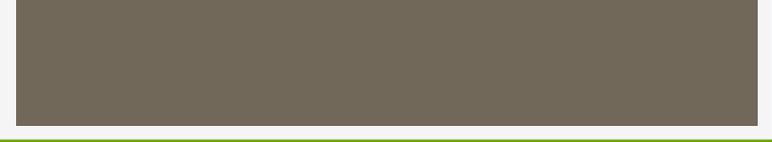
- Thank you for letting me be in Tessera.
- Tessera is the only place where people take me for who I am. I am grateful for the Tessera Program.
- In Odyssey, there are lots of kids like me so I don't get picked on. I feel I'm in a safer/more friendly environment.
- At Odyssey, it's not unusual to be different.
- Being a gifted student at Libby makes us feel proud & special.

# Let us try alternative education/special programs.

- When I was in Tessera at my old school I felt the most different and I love the feeling of others by me. I feel better with students like me.
- Odyssey is very exciting at all times.
- I like coming to Tessera. I don't like when other kids want to know what I do at Tessera because I know they'll just say "awww...no fair!" I don't like when I come back to my home school and don't know what's going on, what we're doing and stuff.
- I love Tessera because I get to be with people that think the same as me!

# Let us try alternative education/special programs.

- The advantages of Tessera are getting better grades and getting to meet other students from different schools. I got one of my best friends at Tessera.... Sometimes I wonder if people still like me at my home school.
- To me Odyssey is like a second home. It's a great place to be and there are many people who also think like I do.
- Odyssey is hard, but it has been one of the greatest blessings of my life. For once, I am getting my fill of learning.
- At Odyssey....the teachers treat you more like adults and there is almost no bullying.



Dear Mom and Dad,

Thank you for the gift of life. I have a great life and thank you for all you do.

I feel perfectly happy with my life and I feel I'm blessed to have all of these privileges.



“Most importantly, no matter how it may seem, we still LOVE YOU.”

# SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION TOPICS

- Thoughts about the label “gifted”
- Social concerns, friends
- Transitioning from homeschool to Tesseract and back
- “Normal” vs. “Different”
- Resources I’ve found helpful

**“It’s not always easy being gifted.”**

**It’s not easy parenting a gifted child.**

# RESOURCES

- Odyssey PTG [www.odysseyptg.org](http://www.odysseyptg.org)
- Prodigy Northwest  
<http://www.prodigynw.org/>
- See Handout for lots more... 😊