

**#511 08/10/09 Help your gifted child broaden his interests**

Parenting a gifted child is hard work. Not only must a parent encourage her child in his area of giftedness, but she must support his development in others areas so that he becomes a well-rounded adult. Some highly intelligent people are successful in their careers while also enjoying a sport or an artistic interest.

Every child should be given opportunities to develop skills in a sport or athletic endeavor as well as some genre of the arts. It is possible that a gifted child will say he is not interested in sports and the arts. Most highly intelligent children are accustomed to being successful because they make the top grades and have the correct answers to the teachers' questions. For this reason, it seems safer to stick with intellectual activities rather than risk being less than the top dog in a sport or some artistic venture.

If your child seems to be focused only on intellectual activities, you will need to talk to him about expanding his horizons. You might say something like, "I know you enjoy all the things that involve reading, writing, math and computers. But, it'd be a really good idea to find something you like that is physical as well as something in music or art.

"You've already said that you don't want to play on a school sports team. However, it's really all about being physical. Why don't we explore some different things that you might enjoy such as tennis, running, swimming or biking? If you find one you like, you can actually compete against yourself rather than be on a team. Are there some of those you might like to do as a family?

"After thinking that through, we can also look at some options that are musical or artistic. What do you think about learning to play a keyboard? If you enjoy that, who knows, you might get a praise band started at church."

Remind him that he does not have to be as good at those activities as he is at school stuff. Perhaps that will take off some of the pressure so that he can just have fun.