

"Intelligence does not equal effortlessness."

Tips from **"Teaching Gifted Kids in the Regular Classroom"** by Susan Winebrenner

As I train teachers to provide more challenging learning experiences for gifted kids, I hear them worry aloud that parents will react negatively if their children start getting lower grades. The teacher knows that many parents share the misperception that high grades mean all is well in school and anything less means that something is amiss. I like to suggest that teachers tell parents (and students), "Intelligence does not equal effortlessness." Putting these words on banners and hanging them in the classroom (and wherever the child does homework) would help us all remember what the true goals of learning should be.

You want your child's teacher to provide a challenging environment and expectations. You want your child to learn not to fear hard work. To my knowledge, there is no college application that asks for transcripts from elementary or middle schools. Therefore, grades K-8 are the best, safest times for students to learn to welcome hard work rather than avoid it.

You certainly don't want your child to glide through grades K-12, get high grades with little or no effort, then go off to a highly competitive college with no clue how to study or work hard to learn. This is a recipe for disaster. Everyone in the freshman class came from the top 5 percent of their high school graduating class. Most are accustomed to getting all A's in school. Unfortunately, the college doesn't work that way. Many students will get low grades for the first time in their lives. When that happens, they can become seriously discouraged or even depressed.

It's much better if your child understands that real learning means forward progress from wherever one enters the learning curve of a particular subject. Straight A's mean that your child knows the material. They don't necessarily mean that your child is learning. Maybe he knew it six months ago or a year ago. So instead of marching into school at the first sign of a lower grade, toting all of your child's previously glorious report cards and asking the teacher how she can be the one to ruin your child's perfect record, send flowers and/or candy and count your blessings.