

Your Child is Talented  
James I. Hymes, Jr.  
(paraphrased)

Every student has at least one unique strength or talent. Only a few stand head and shoulders above the rest in schoolwork. Academic brilliance is only one kind of talent. Some schools focus on it, but we mustn't let that blind us to students' many abilities. We must nurture every talent of every individual. Not to do so is sheer waste.

School grades are important, but they can trap us into thinking that they are a measure of all abilities. This simply is not so. Youngsters have many talents that aren't identified with school tests and that don't show up in grades. Let's look at Tom, a C student, whose grades say that he's only average. Yet Tom is talented for he has the ability of ambition. He sets his sights high. He uses every ounce of his power; nothing goes to waste. This means that all his life he'll do better than many who have more native intellect.

Peter Miller, 14, has the talent of curiosity. Most youngsters merely do their assignments that take routine learning for granted! Not Peter! He itches to know everything about everything. The whole world fascinates him. His schoolwork suffers sometimes, because he doesn't limit his curiosity to the assignment. His mind is always reaching; this is his special strength.

And there's Bill. He's not talented in the school's special sense; his grades are only a little above average. But Bill has another way of shining; he has a way with people. People like him. They like to talk to him. They like to work with him. They turn to him. He is easy going and interested in people. Talent with people is sorely needed in a world where skill in human relations lags far behind the "brilliant" skills of science and technology.

Probably no school ever called Elaine talented, but fortunately, her mother feels that she is. Elaine just passes her schoolwork. Sometimes she is a little above average, but she works hard.

Persistence is her rare and valuable ability. She will always be one who never gives up.

Joel's talent is organization; he's the one who engineers the group in the classroom. He is a top-notch administrator in the making.

I watched a sixteen-year old boy the other day. Quite accidentally, a teammate hit him with a baseball bat - a glancing blow, but it hurt. The hurt boy walked away, sat down awhile, and then walked again. His eyes were swimming, but never once did he cry although his face was distorted with pain. There, I believe, was the ability of courage. We need people who have courage, but we have no place on the report card to mark his quality with an A. It may go unobserved and undeveloped, and another ability is lost to the world.

Some children are talented in music, in art, in dramatics, but don't discount the child who isn't; he may have another talent just as important. Alex can lift more, push harder, and throw farther than all the other guys. His ability is physical strength. Never minimize this ability. There are talents of coordination, dexterity, fluency. Students possess talents of listening well, wit, perceptual awareness. Some students possess energy, while others have calmness.

To make a good world, we need the talents of each person. I know a man who has the talent of anger. Another has the talent of a sense of humor. Talented adults were once talented children - the lucky ones whose particular talents were directed and valued by parents and teachers. Look at what your son or daughter does. Look at all he does - with his mind, his body, his feelings. Be honest. Once you look at the whole of him; you'll see where he excels. Having discovered his strength, you are entitled to feel good about it. Don't hide your pride and contentment. They are necessary nourishment for your son or daughter to grow.