

### For more information:

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### Author Note

NAGC thanks Maureen Neihart, Psy.D., for developing this FAQ brochure. She is a clinical child psychologist who has written extensively about social and emotional development of gifted children.

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## About NAGC

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) is a nonprofit organization of parents, teachers, educators and community leaders who work to expand support for high-ability learners across the United States. NAGC also provides "just-in-time" information for parents and teachers of gifted students and publishes a quarterly magazine for its parent members, *Parenting for High Potential*.

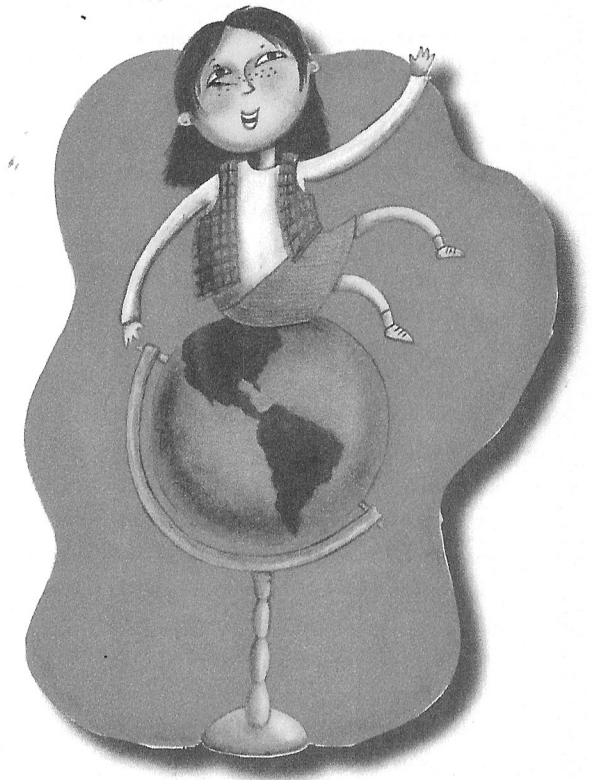
Our newest offering for parents is the Mile Marker Series, available on CD. The CD includes a selection from NAGC's vast online and printed resources for parents so that no matter where parents are on their journey in the world of gifted education – from wondering whether their child is gifted to visiting a state or federal legislator to advocate for gifted education – they will be able to find high quality information in an easy-to-use format.

### Well-informed parents DO make a difference.

Membership in NAGC is the best way for you to improve the future for gifted learners, especially your own. Here's how you'll benefit:

- **Access to trusted resources:** In addition to *Parenting for High Potential*, parent members receive the latest news and information from NAGC electronically in *Compass Points*.
- **Your voice amplified in Washington:** NAGC works with key legislators and other supporters to advocate for the unique educational needs of gifted and talented children.
- **Teachers trained and equipped:** NAGC funds scholarships for teachers from disadvantaged school districts that are unable to afford the resources they need to recognize and serve gifted children.
- **24/7 access:** Parents have access to the latest practical strategies on developing high potential youth and supporting their education. Visit [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org).
- **Opportunities to reach out to other parents:** Whether it's a quick question on an online forum or in a face-to-face learning environment, parents can rely on NAGC to assist them in connecting with other parents.
- **Connecting and communicating with teachers:** A regular feature of *Compass Points* is "Connecting for High Potential" that facilitates constructive communication with your child's teacher and other educators to advocate for your child.

Join at [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org) or call us at 202/785-4268.



## IS COLLEGE PLANNING DIFFERENT FOR GIFTED CHILDREN?

Frequently Asked Questions of the  
National Association for Gifted Children

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*This pamphlet is one in a series of Frequently Asked Questions brochures developed by the National Association for Gifted Children. The series addresses issues that regularly surface from parents and teachers of gifted and talented children across the country. In addition to serving as your introduction or overview on the topic, the brochure also provides a list of resources for additional reading. At NAGC, we believe a well-informed parent is a more effective parent advocate. For answers to your questions about gifted children or gifted education any time of the day or night, visit the NAGC website at [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org).*

College planning for gifted students must respond to the unique challenges faced by many bright individuals. For example, gifted youth often have the ability to do very well in a number of fields. As a result, they need more assistance in planning to pursue and integrate more than one career path or choose among several strong interests. Some gifted youth have outstanding abilities or interests that require training outside of traditional colleges (e.g. professional schools, immediate career entry, training in professional companies). Additionally, as a result of their abilities, gifted students may feel pressures from a variety of sources, either to set unrealistic goals or to limit their personal choices. These may result in conflicting expectations and can produce confusion about college and career plans.

### **When should college planning start?**

The best preparation for success in college is to take challenging courses and a comprehensive academic curriculum in high school. Gifted students and their parents should begin college planning no later than middle grades (5-8). The diversity of many bright students' needs and interests can demand additional planning time, particularly if students' talent areas require specialized training. Early planning is also crucial in order to schedule the sequence of high school courses required by their preferred colleges and to identify and apply for highly competitive scholarships.

### **How do we begin?**

Parents and their child should first consider what it is they're looking for in a college. Colleges differ in the quality of instruction, the type of social environment, extracurricular options, special programs such as honors or international study, the types of students they attract, their size and location, graduate school placement rates, and many other factors. They also vary in the types of counseling and support programs available. Parents and the student should determine what factors are most important to them and then search among the schools to find those that will best meet the needs and interests of the student.

A variety of resources are available to assist in this process. Check the school library or bookstore for the latest guides to college selection. Similar guides are available online. Many colleges and universities have websites that will allow a virtual tour of the campus. In addition to the school counseling staff, parents may want to seek information from families of advanced students in the area and learn from their experiences.

### **What can I do now to help my child get ready?**

There are many ways that parents can help their gifted children begin early to plan for college. They can make occasional references to "when you're in college" to plant the expectation that the child will be attending college. They can visit college campuses with the family when traveling. They can take a walk through a campus park, stop at the university library, see an interesting event on campus, or have a snack at the student union. If children have experiences on college campuses, they'll have an easier time imagining themselves as college students. They'll also come to understand that there are different kinds of colleges and that campuses "feel" very different from one another.

Parents also can help by encouraging their children to maintain a resume and a portfolio of their activities and accomplishments. Having a portfolio makes it easier to organize information for scholarship and college applications. Other ways parents can help their gifted children with college planning include:

- "Collecting information about private scholarship sources;
- Sending their children to one of the college summer camps that are available for high-potential youth;
- Talking positively about their own college experiences or those of friends;
- Communicating that they expect their child to save money towards college and helping them develop a savings plan; and
- Encouraging their children to take high school classes that prepare them well for college.

### **What about costs?**

The number one mistake that both students and parents make in planning for college is to consider cost first. Determining what they can afford is one of the very last decisions families should make in selecting a college, usually the second semester of senior year. Families should not allow "sticker shock" to eliminate a college that meets the needs of the student. Even the most expensive schools can be within reach of most families if they are willing to consider financial options available to them. It is possible to afford the school that is the best match for the student.

