

## Multiple Intelligences – 11/12/09

It makes sense that a child who gets straight A's in math and reading will go on to be a CEO at a Fortune 500 company. But what about the straight C student who struggles through said subjects, barely graduates from college after 6 years and changing majors, and goes on to become a highly successful entrepreneur?

Throughout human history, there's been recognition of different ways of being smart. In 1983, Harvard Professor Howard Gardner published his explanation. Gardner's theory of "multiple intelligences" explains that there is more than one way to be gifted.

Gardner has identified at least eight kinds of intelligence and is studying additional attributes to see if they meet his criteria. If you wonder how legitimate his ideas are, consider the amazing grace of an Olympic gymnast. Listen to the innovative musical constructs of a gifted musician. Marvel at how one person in an agitated crowd can move people to harmony.

Children are born with strengths which emerge and develop throughout their lives. A musical intelligence may be both inborn and nurtured by musically-inclined parents. In either case, it is a gift—a gift given to the child by his DNA and his parents, and a gift he brings into this world to give to the rest of us.

If you are wondering what kind of "smart" your child is, you can probably figure it out in some simple ways. Watch your child when she is playing or learning. If she runs and climbs during playtime and taps her feet when she's studying, she may be kinesthetically intelligent. If his first choice for play is hanging out with friends and making up some pretend scenario, he may be gifted in interpersonal intelligence.

If she likes to draw or read maps or take things apart and put them back together again, she's liable to have spatial intelligence. And if your little one is forever singing or humming, you don't need me to tell you that he has some degree of musical intelligence.

If she has bodily-kinesthetic intelligence but is challenged by math, she may benefit from using manipulative toys to learn math concepts. If he has interpersonal intelligence but struggles with linguistic tasks such as reading, he would do well to have small group discussions of his reading material.

Some degree of competence in all areas of intelligence is necessary for success in this world. A parent's task is to help a child use her gifts to face the challenges of her life, to build on her strengths, and figure out how to address tasks which don't come as easily.

Most of all, we can celebrate that the world is richer for the unique talent each child will contribute...at his own pace, in his own way, with his own style.