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Introduction

The journey for children who are gifted and talented can be exciting and challenging. There are so many twists and turns, detours, and confusing signs that many parents feel they need some sort of road map to guide their children on this journey. Because each child is different, there is no one road map to follow. What this handbook can offer is travelling tips that parents can use to help their children get a good start on their educational road, so they have the best opportunities possible to develop the skills and attitudes they need to live a satisfying and happy life.

This handbook represents a synthesis of current research and effective practices for supporting children who are gifted and talented at home and at school. Because parents know best what makes a difference in their children's happiness and success, Alberta Learning collaborated with the Alberta Associations for Bright Children (AABC) in the development of this resource.

If you are the parent of a school-aged child who has been, or may be, identified as being gifted and having exceptional learning needs, this handbook will offer information and strategies you can use to nurture your child's growth and development. School-aged children who are gifted may have different strengths and needs, and may be very different from one another. The sample strategies in this handbook will not be effective or appropriate for all children who

are gifted and talented. As parents, it is up to you to consider what will work best for your child and for your family. For those children who are extraordinarily gifted (less than one in 10,000 children), these strategies may have limited application and parents will need to search out highly individualized solutions for these children. Throughout the resource the term "gifted and talented" will be shortened to "gifted."

This handbook is a compilation of information and sample strategies for parents. Information is aligned with current legislation, Alberta Learning policies and the *Standards for Special Education* (2003). For more detailed information on topics in this handbook, refer to the Web site addresses and document titles listed in the appendices.

This handbook is a companion to *Teaching Students who are Gifted and Talented* (2000), Book 7 in the *Programming for Students with Special Needs* series. It also complements *The Learning Team: A Handbook for Parents of Children with Special Needs* (2003). Both of these resources are published by Alberta Learning and are available for purchase from the Learning Resources Centre or can be downloaded as a free PDF file from the Alberta Learning Web site at www.learning.gov.ab.ca.

