

## Gifted Kids' Bill of Rights

by Marissa K. Lingen

October 1, 2000

Each gifted child can say...

- 1) I have the right to challenge myself. I should realize that my interests and my thoughts are valid and should be pursued. If you don't limit me, I'm less likely to limit myself.
- 2) I have the right not to have other people interfere with my learning. I am not a teacher's aide, nor am I the sole source of all group projects--I should not be treated as if I was.
- 3) I have the right not to be physically or mentally abused for being gifted. If a teacher looks the other way while others taunt me or beat me up, he or she is in the wrong--there is nothing wrong with me for being smart. If a teacher or other authority figure is doing the abusing, it is still wrong, and I have the right to recourse.
- 4) I have the right to be looked at as a human being. Nobody should ever assume that everything in my life is okay just because I'm smart.
- 5) I have the right to make mistakes. This right I must guard most closely against myself. Chances are pretty good I have always been my own worst critic. I must remember that I am not perfect, and that that's okay.
- 6) I have the right to ask for help. If you cannot help me, don't pretend--try to find someone who can. I learn quickly, but I don't learn by osmosis. Sometimes I will need a hand, and my needs are just as valid as those of students who learn slowly.
- 7) I have the right to be my age. If I'm a smart 7-year-old, I'm a smart 7-year-old, not a short 30-year-old.
- 8) I have the right not to be forced into your notions of childhood. If I want to be a marine biologist when my classmates want to be firefighters, so be it.
- 9) I have the right to an advocate. Please remember that the system is skewed against me, for you adults. If you see these rights being violated, speak for me, and help me speak for myself.
- 10) I have the right to some privacy. Not everything I do should be put on a microscope slide just because I'm smart. Let me decide what to share with the world and what to keep.