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MY SON, THE GENIUS

by Ruth Prins

Millie's big blue eyes were filled with tears ad she spilled out her hopes, ambitions, and efforst for making her two year old son a genius. "I've read everything. I've bought the very best and I've tried so hard." All mothers, especially new mothers, want the very best for their children. It puzzles me, however, how some young mothers equate "best" with "super-intelligent-genius!"

Like many other young mothers, Millie had read one or more studies (cf. Lovell and Sheilds, England) itemizing the qualities a gifted child has: keen powers of observation (recognizes form and particulars); large vocabulary of quality; high ability to observe, to remember, to reason; relational thinking; above avergge in physical traits and anunusual ability for quick, sustained attention. Millie read all such material avidly and then measurèd her child against such criteria. She read books to him that she found dull because she'd read a recommendations somewhere. She~~x~~ took him to a playfield and put him through his paces like a show dog. Lost somewhere was her enjoyment of him and his of her. The day I visited she called him and he eased himself warily around the door jamb. Her face was not welcoming but intent as she watched him walk towards her. "What's wrong with his balance? Why is one foot sometimes toeing out? Doesn't he seems small for his age? Why doesn't he say something? He'll answer when I ask him to but why isn't he using more words? Can you understand him?"

PRINS
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The time for the push to college would come soon enough. These should be golden days of joyous smiles and warm hugs, of laughter as mother and son (or even better, mother, father, and son) read together and played together and laughed together.

To all Millies: take your small child to the store with you and see what materials intrigue him. Encourage your child to talk, to question, to argue, to demand evidence by listening, answering, and investigating with him. Above all, don't judge, don't worry but ENJOY! ENJOY!

But as I left I bumped into a cardboard box, glanced down and saw a cat who was snug, warm, and protected from small, grabbing hands. "That's Cat," said Millie morosely. "He's been in that box for hours. Doesn't have brains enough to get out. I think he's retarded. Too."