

Let Us Make Man

The Gathering to Reclaim Black Manhood



“Behold, the only thing greater than yourself!”

Recognizing the Genius in
Black Youth

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Awakening the Genius in Black Children

INTRODUCTION

"Curiosity about life in all of its aspects, I think, is still the secret of great creative people" - Leo Burnett

How do you Awaken the Genius in Black Children in an automated manner? Are you using 20th Century Strategies to Educate 21st Century Scholars? In American schools, Children of African descent are under- represented in accelerated programs such as Gifted, however; as stakeholders, we have an obligation to ensure more representation in these programs, as well as in alternative programs such as entrepreneurship, STEM, coding, etc. According to studies gifted children are found in all cultures and socio-economic status. As a result, many researchers have studied the causes for the underrepresentation of children of color in gifted programs and other programs that Black children can benefit from now with more equitable assessments. Solutions to the issue of under representation of non- white children in the aforementioned programs include:

- a. Alternative Assessments: use of standardized tests that are biased and unfair to non- white students and economically disadvantaged students.
- b. Empathetic Selection Process: more positive and understanding attitudes towards non-white students, which lead to selective referrals.
- c. Success Model: focus on the strengths of non-white students that make recognition of strengths less difficult.

Strategies for developing solutions to the problems with bias assessments are essential. In addition, strategies for improving the referral process and development of a system of stressing cultural strengths rather than deficiencies are also essential. (Frasier, 1995)

We must create educational programs that focus on awakening the genius in our children. This requires the entire community to participate in the educational process. This process begins before schooling begins. In fact, this process begins before conception of the child. The education of children begins with the education of parents.

According to one of our great scholars, Amos Wilson, there is a relationship between intelligence and experience. The quality or the experiences we have from birth affects the quality of our intelligence. Furthermore, the quality and variety of experiences we have during infancy and early childhood is the most important factors that determine the character and depthless of later intelligence. This is why our communities must be intentional about designing stimulating, fulfilling, and appropriate environments for our children. (Wilson, 1992)

Within this module, we will list some of the strategies that can be used to release and develop the intellect of our children. Moreover, we will demonstrate through activities and real world examples during the actual interactive presentation. We will briefly discuss a few of the obstacles blocking the intellectual fulfillment of our children; yet, we will offer more solutions for breaking through these barriers.

General Tips for Awakening the Genius:

Encouraging, Inspiring, and Empowering the Children/Scholars

Following are a list of recommendations for stimulating the intellectual functions of children. The recommendations are taken from Amos Wilson's book *Awakening the Natural Genius in Black Children* and are merely a sample of the many recommendations given. We strongly encourage the purchase of this book so you will have the full range of recommendations:

Social/ Emotional Develop:

- Respond to the child's need for adult attention and approval with verbal and non-verbal expression of praise and support and by appropriate setting of limits.
- Provide as much "quality time" as possible. This includes body to body and emotional contact through mutual touch, smiling, vocal play and talking to the child; through the gentle rocking and massaging of the infant, the maintaining of eye contact, the encouraging stimulation of and responding to the infant's interest in the outside world.
- Support the development of an independent, healthy sense of self and social responsibility, of self and social interest and self- control through activities, which allow the expression and mastery of a range of feelings and emotions.
- Provide adequate space and objects for both personal and interactive behavior.

Language and Communication Development

Communicate with the child in a manner appropriate to their developmental level and permit them to express feelings, desires and needs without fear of abusive responses. Engage in immediate and reciprocal responses to the child's beginning self- initiated attempts at communication.

Model desired behavior verbally and behaviorally for the child and support and reinforces his imitative efforts.

Encourage the child's cooperation and interactions with other children. Engage in games that facilitate their communicative competence.

Other recommendations

- Provide your children with maximum opportunity for exploration and investigation by making your home as safe and accessible as possible
- Remove fragile and dangerous items from low shelves and cabinets, replace them with old magazines containing positive African images, pots and pans, plastic measuring cups, and other suitable playthings
- Respond to your children promptly and favorably as often as you can, providing appropriate enthusiasm and encouragement
- Set limits- do not give in to unreasonable request or permit unacceptable behavior to continue

Ten Parent Tips for Awakening the Genius in your Child

1. Be actively involved in the educational process (learn the language of the School System, get involved with the decision making for your school district, research the best ways to teach your child, etc.)
2. Request regular feedback from the school (i.e. Weekly Progress Reports, Discipline Reports, Parent-Teacher Conferences, etc.)
3. Be your child's primary teacher and hold yourself accountable for your child's education (i.e. Help them to determine the way they learn best, read to and with them, Create a stimulating and interactive environment, etc.)
4. Create a designated time and place for homework and studying and assist the child with goal setting and time management (You are an extension of the school when your child arrives home with an assignment, Set rules (Curfews, consequences, etc.) and stick to them – Consistency is the Key)
5. Eliminate excessive TV watching, destructive music, and Video Game playing (Our youth spend an average of 4 hours per week studying and 38 hours a week watching TV, listening to music and playing Video Games)
6. Be a Good Finder (i.e. Encourage, reward, and praise for doing well, and support them when they don't do as well, identify and magnify their strengths)
7. Provide emotional stability through quality time, discussions, and encouragement
8. Create WIN/WIN situations for your child (i.e. build relationships with other concerned parents, build rapport with school officials, and expose your child to as many experiences, trips, activities and other opportunities as possible)
9. Prepare meals that consist of a diet that is balanced and healthy (research the effects of foods and consume those that are beneficial to brain development and health)
10. Teach, model, and require honesty, respect, self-love, cultural competence and awareness, and knowledge and respect of self

Ten Student Tips for Awakening your Genius

1. Learn how to speak another language (language development stimulates your brain)
2. Learn how to read music and play an instrument (reading music and playing instruments stimulates your brain)
3. Speak intelligently and read regularly (expand your vocabulary and integrate the new words in your conversations)
4. Listen to a variety of music and eliminate the use of destructive music (studies show music affects mood, behavior, and tolerance for destructive behavior)
5. Surround yourself with progressive, studious, and culturally competent peers
6. Consume a diet that is balanced and healthy (research the effects of foods and consume those that are beneficial to brain development and health)
7. Take opportunities to travel, visit museums, and expose yourself to as many opportunities as possible (quality experiences are related to intellectual development)
8. Stay active, and exercise regularly (exercise and movement is related to physical health development which relates to psychological health)
9. Plan your Future well in advanced (determine your strengths, research the careers that you enjoy which fit your strengths, create a plan and execute)

Learn your history, read articles and books written by African centered scholars and use your talents to improve the conditions of your family, community, and people!