

SPECIAL MEMBERS TRACK**Whole Family/Child Friendly Activities***(Mensa 101)*

Learning Objectives:

After a presentation and group discussion, each participant will be able to:

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| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. State the difference between the member we usually see at events and the “average Mensan” and explain why, 2. List three whole family activities you could do in your local group and how to announce them, 3. State why whole family activities are a better first goal than activities solely for gifted youth, | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Describe different ways in which the newsletter can be used to reach families with children, 5. Explain the role of the Gifted Children’s Coordinator, 6. List the benefits of networking with other programs for gifted youth, 7. Locate the Gifted Children’s Program Handbook on the AML Web site. |
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Preparation:

Presenters should have the Gifted Children’s Program Handbook.

Objective 1: State the difference between the member we usually see at events and the “average Mensan” and explain why.

Our typical member is a male in his 40s with children at home, whereas the typical attendee of Mensa events may be completely different at your own local events, perhaps depending on the activity and its format. Your group may not be reaching the majority of those who actually join Mensa in your area. To learn why, ask participants to proofread their newsletter and ask, “Does it appeal/serve our typical member now? How many events could a family with children attend? Does the newsletter make this clear?” There are usually few events for children to attend on a newsletter calendar. When there are, the events must mention prominently that children are welcome with parental supervision. If the calendar item is silent, many members will assume it is not so. Events, which are not appropriate for children, should also be obvious from the calendar.

Objective 2: List three whole family activities you could do in your local group and how to announce them.

Examples of successful whole family/child friendly activities are field trips to local museums, parks, and sports events, potlucks and barbecues. Also, youth — state the recommended age or interest range in the announcement — can be made a part of general activities of Mensa groups. Examples include different SIGs such as Investment or book groups, recipes and cooking, and any games activities including trivia, card and board games. The newsletter is the best way to reach/serve most members. You will be surprised how many members you have who may become active if family or parent-oriented activities appear.

Objective 3: State why whole family activities are a better first goal than activities solely for gifted youth.

Our first goal must be to serve members, not groups of non-member children. A few of our members are kids, but many of our members have gifted children. Whole family events can do this better than “kids only” activities, not to mention sidestepping logistical and potential liability problems which include the need for permission slips, two unrelated adults supervising each activity with at least one passing the required background check and who is in charge until late parents pick up their children. See Section 5.3.2 of the 2005 AML Gifted Children’s Program Handbook.

Objective 4: Describe different ways in which the newsletter can be used to reach families with children.

A regular place in the newsletter for gifted children should be a part of the expected responsibility of any GCC (Gifted Children’s Coordinator). Ideas are available through the national GCP. Local groups may copy gifted children’s articles from *Interloc* and other local groups. This is the primary method for letting families know what is available for them (see Section 4.2.3 in the Handbook for more resources).

Objective 5: Explain the role of the Gifted Children’s Coordinator.

The Gifted Children’s Coordinator (GCC) is generally responsible for keeping track of all YM members, their ages, and possible interests, establishing regular communication with the families of young Mensans via the newsletter, local Web site and email, sharing relevant information about gifted children with the entire local group via regular newsletter articles, identifying other local activities, resources and groups that benefit gifted youth, and setting up regular activities for Mensa families that are interesting, safe, and welcoming across the age range in the local group. The GCC should also endeavor to recruit parents of gifted child and youth members as assistants so that activity responsibilities need not fall entirely to the appointed GCC. The national Gifted Children’s Program (GCP) will cover the cost of these additional background checks. His or her first goal should be at least one family event per month on the calendar.

Objective 6: List the benefits of networking with other programs for gifted youth.

Local Gifted Children’s Coordinator (GCC) should become a member of state and local gifted children organizations. Although the local group can buy a club membership, GCP funding is also available to defray some of these costs, and local groups can contact the Marketing Director at the National Office for grant information, brochures, and additional hardcopies of the current GCP Handbook. Excerpting information of interest to parents of gifted children to reprint in your local newsletter (“XYZ Group brings important speaker next month to our town.”) is one of the most useful things a GCC can do.

The GCC should be the liaison to create Mensa networking opportunities with other gifted networks and organizations. For instance, such groups always need judges for Odyssey of Mind, Science Fair etc. The GCC can be a valuable resource to the LocSec and Proctor or Testing Coordinator by using this networking to keep current tickler file of where to send children for Mensa qualifying testing in your area and of other low cost resources, such as graduate schools in Psychology or Guidance and Counseling.

Objective 7: Locate the Gifted Children’s Program Handbook on the AML Web site.

Anyone interested in becoming more involved in serving the families and youth of Mensa members can contact the Marketing Director at the National Office, giftedoutreach@us.mensa.org, or gpcpc@us.mensa.org for more information, where to find copies of the Handbook on line, or how to have a hardcopy mailed to you. Finally, anyone interested in learning more about Mensa’s Gifted Children’s Program and associated resources can use this link: www.us.mensa.org/giftedchildren.