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Clifton Strengths Explorer®

PARENT GUIDE

Parent Guide

The Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer is an instrument based on 50 years of science. Gallup has conducted thousands of studies on the talents of individuals. From that rich history of research, this instrument was created to help youth, ages 10-14, **discover and develop the unique talents within them.**

HERE'S WHAT THIS CAN HELP YOU DO:

- Learn more about your son's or daughter's unique talents.
- Focus on your child's talents and strengths.
- Help your son or daughter understand and use their natural patterns of thought, feeling, and behavior in everyday life.
- Make an even more **positive impact on your child's life.**

This guide was created to help parents be part of the discovery and growth process. As parents, we seek to understand and communicate with our children. Sometimes we connect with them. Sometimes we misunderstand each other and have to try again to achieve understanding. Sometimes words have one meaning to us and a different meaning to our children. A common language facilitates communication and understanding. The Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer introduces a language that is intended to help you better understand your son's or daughter's talents by helping **define what makes your child wonderfully unique.**

We're all different — we respond to the world in our own way from the time we are born. The age span of 10-14 years includes a tremendous range of development, behavior, maturity, and thinking. Youths' perceptions of the world are naturally different from those of adults. Your child's report is specifically about their unique talents — and this guide will help you help your child by exploring aspects of their talent in greater detail.

You will be asked to complete some of the same exercises that appear in your child's workbook. Sitting down to compare notes and discussing what you each wrote would be time well-invested. **But remember, your child's answers are right for them — even if they are different from your own. Be sure to listen and affirm.** Consider each conversation an opportunity to learn more about your child.

We encourage you to make the most of this guide. Print it and make it work for you by adding notes and ideas. Come back to it again and again. This tool is designed to spark your ideas for helping your son or daughter excel and thrive in their areas of talent.

Exploring Your Child's Themes

For this guide, you'll need your own copy of your child's **Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer** report.

- 1. Read and highlight the words, sentences, or phrases in the report that you have seen in your child.
- 2. One way you could help your child become more aware of their talents in everyday life is to share a specific time or times when you saw your child use a particular talent at home, school, church, in the community, or with family or friends. Write about those specific times.

Theme Name

Time 1: _____

Time 2: _____

Time 3: _____

Theme Name

Time 1: _____

Time 2: _____

Time 3: _____

Theme Name

Time 1: _____

Time 2: _____

Time 3: _____

Perspectives in Time

LOOKING BACK

When children are very young, we notice all sorts of things about them. Some parents make mental notes while others make notes in baby books, journals, or scrapbooks. Think back about your child’s life, and make notes about moments when you saw each theme in your child. Make time to share these notes and observations with your child.

IN THE NOW

How is your child using their talents right now? List any ideas you have or observations you have made about how he or she is using these talents. Think broadly about the social, academic, intellectual, family, and faith aspects of your child’s life.

LOOKING FORWARD

Now look into the future. Consider the potential school, work, family, community, faith, and social aspects of your child’s life. Write your ideas about how he or she might use one or more of these themes in the future. Share them with your child.

Theme Name

Theme Name

Theme Name

Theme Name

Theme Name

Theme Name

Theme Name

Theme Name

Theme Name

Positive Perspectives

Make a (long) list of all the positive words you can think of to describe your child.

Review your child’s report and identify commonalities with your list. What connections can you find between your list and the words and phrases in your child’s report? Are there any items in your child’s report that stand out to you or help to expand your thoughts about your child’s talents?



Now that you have created this positive list, how can you use it?

- Share it on paper. Write it down and give it to your child.
- Sit down and discuss your list with your child. Talk about all the positive words that come to mind when you think of them.
- Think about who else has positive perspectives on your child’s talents. How could you share your positive perspectives with one another?

Understanding Perspectives: Yours and Theirs

It is important to remember that people see the world through their own personal filters. Our culture, upbringing, extended families, education, what we read, work experiences, our adult friends, and so on influence our filters. Our filters cause us to make judgments about things we see and hear. For instance, one parent's filters and labels might look something like this:

- An act of caring might be labeled as good.
- Telling a joke during school might be labeled as bad.
- Thinking about the future might be labeled as valuable.
- Getting upset about losing a baseball game might be considered overreacting.

Another parent, who looks at the same situation with their unique filter, might say it's a social talent to tell a joke at school, or it's a natural part of competitiveness to get upset about losing a game. We have different filters.

Our children have their own filters too.

Each Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer theme is a filter. A child with a powerful sense of humor will seize a moment to tell a joke. A child with a strong desire to learn may go back on the internet, even after a project is finished, to find out more. A child with Relating talent will take the initiative to meet the "new kid in school" even if their close friends don't. A child who is competitive will naturally be emotional about losing. A child who loves to organize may rearrange her room more often than a parent thinks necessary. Through theme filters, these acts can be seen as examples of talent in the Presence, Discoverer, Relating, Competing, and Organizer themes.

As the Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer report helps you better understand your child's filters, you can also understand how different those filters are from your own or those of their siblings and peers.

As parents, it's important for us to be our children's advocates — the people in their lives who help them see and focus on the best in them. There will always be plenty of people around our children who see their weaknesses and label their behaviors in less-than-positive ways. As a parent, you can be one of the people in your child's life who helps them see life from a strengths perspective.

Try to see various situations through one of your child's themes. How does it change your perspective? How does it help you be more effective as a parent in your child's development?

Developing and Strengthening Your Child's Talents

Each of the Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer themes has several ideas called "action items" for your child and you to consider. You'll find these action items in your child's Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer report. Action items are designed to put talents into action. Below are several ideas to help you take these actions. Refer to this page often, and keep taking action — it's critical to giving your child opportunities to use their talents.

1.

Read through the adult action items for the first theme, and pick one that you plan to do.

Theme Name: _____

What action do you plan to take?

2.

Pick an adult action item for your child's second theme.

Theme Name: _____

What action do you plan to take?

3.

Pick an adult action item for your child's third theme.

Theme Name: _____

What action do you plan to take?

Recognizing and Sharing

- You created a list of positive words about your child. Could you post it where your child and/or you will see it every day?
- As a parent, make it a goal to say 3, 5, or 10 things you like about each of your children over the course of the day, including moments when you observed their talents in action.
- Give each person in your family a pad of sticky notes. Encourage each person to write something he or she saw another person do that was nice, impressive, kind, or helpful. Leave them in funny places where the recipient will be surprised and happy to find them.
- At dinner or while traveling in the car, have each person share two good things that happened that day. Consider including other family members as you do an action item with your child.

Journaling

- If you keep a journal, select an adult action item and make note of it in your journal. Record your observations about your child's talents over time. Highlight patterns. Include what, when, where, why, and with whom you notice their talents in action. At different moments along your child's journey, read what you wrote and discuss it with them, or even other family members.
- Start a journal with your child. Make an entry about something you observed them doing well. Give it to your child and ask them to comment on it, fill in more detail, and think of a way to "take it to the next level" or ask a question. Then have your child pass it back to you. Keep doing this. See what you can learn about each other.
- Start a family journal. Write and pass, write and pass. Leave it for the next person on his bed, or on her dresser, or on his desk, or on mom's nightstand. Give the journal a name — maybe it's "Our Family's Talents." Get everybody commenting on and watching for what's right about each other.

Sticking With It

- Write your child's three themes on a small note card and put it where you will see it often — keep talents top of mind.

- Write an action item on a sticky note. Post it somewhere that you will see it. Look for ways for one week or one month to take that particular action.

- Choose a date when you will read through your child's Clifton Youth StrengthsExplorer report again. Mark it on your calendar or the family calendar.

Strengths in Action Every Day

Use this page to record times when you see your child using one of their themes in action. Add an entry as often as you can. Share what you write with your child in a way that fits you and the child best!

Here is a talent I see in you.	This is the specific time or instance.	That talent seems to go well with this theme.

Clifton StrengthsExplorer®

Remember, you can have a positive, lifelong effect by helping your child take advantage of their natural patterns of thought, feeling and behavior and showing them how important and valuable their unique talents really are.

So ...

Notice them.

Encourage your child to use them.

Help your child **share** them with others and the world.

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