Ways Parents Can Help Their Gifted Child Fit In:

* Make sure your child is not doing anything to invite hurtful putdowns or bullying. Gifted students tend to use their verbal wit to ward off others and in the process may contribute to the climate of trash-talking and negative jokes that give rise to the more brutal aspects of bullying. In addition, they often display a know-it-all attitude that comes across as arrogant, and this makes an utterly inviting target.
* Explicitly teach your child basic social skills. Teachers and counselors who work extensively with gifted children remark at how often these children do not make eye contact with others, fail to smile at others or say good morning, use other children’s names, praise others, ask "How was your weekend," or make intentional efforts to be pleasant.
* Make it clear that you expect your child to learn to get along with all his classmates and to form friendships with some of them. There are many ways to do this. Tell your child how important being well-rounded, having social skills and making friends are to you. Look for opportunities to praise the character traits, skills and behaviors of other children. Avoid references to their intelligence. Instead, focus on traits like their ability to get along with others, their honesty, kindness, perseverance, cooperation, and their athletic, musical or performing skills.
* Push your child to form friendships with children who may not be his or her intellectual peers but have other things to offer. For some children, encouragement may be enough. For others, parents may need to arrange social occasions with other children at least once each week. You may need to coach your child on how to behave before these occasions and to follow up by discussing how they did behave. Gifted children can be so self-absorbed that they are unaware of how their behavior affects others.
* Encourage your child to become involved in activities where he or she will probably not be "the best." This will help your child learn that they are OK as a person, valued and valuable just for being who she is. To be resilient in life, a child needs to learn to try things, to enjoy activities without measuring the results, and to continue despite frustrations. Should you force your child to participate? If you must. Obviously it is better if your child participates in activities that interest her, but sometimes a child who fears "not-being the best-at-everything" must be compelled to participate. "You must try soccer now. If you really don’t like it at the end of the season, you can switch to swimming, dance or theater," you could say. Of course, these activities also help your child become more well-rounded.