Children can be taught to be more creative (Torrance, 1987).

Some researchers believe that all children possess the skills and processes necessary to produce creative work (Runco, 1993; Weisberg, 1986).

People tend to underestimate the originality of the work of others (Runco, 1989).

Children tend to be less creative when outside constraints are placed upon their creativity (Hennessey & Amabile, 1988).

Eminent creators such as Einstein, Picasso, and Martha Graham exhibited a high degree of self-promotion and lack of conformity (Gardner, 1993).

What is the NRC/GT?
The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (NRC/GT) is funded under the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act, Office of Educational Research and Improvement, United States Department of Education. The mission of the NRC/GT is to plan and conduct theory-driven quality research that is problem-based, practice-relevant, and consumer-oriented.

Products available from The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented...

Research-Based Decision Making Series
These papers are designed to advise practitioners and policymakers about the most defensible practices that can be implemented based on accumulated research evidence.

Research Monographs
Research Monographs describe research studies completed by the NRC/GT.

Practitioners’ Guides
These tri-fold brochures feature easy-to-understand research findings coupled with practical implications for classrooms and homes on topics of interest to educators and parents.

Video Training Tapes
Tapes are available of all our popular teacher training modules. Reproducible teacher resource guides are included with each tape.

Resource Booklets
These include information on various topics or sources of information in the field of gifted and talented education.

Collaborative Research Studies
Applied or action research is featured rather than a review of extant literature.

References
IMPLICATIONS

FOR

HOME and CLASSROOM

Recent research shows that creativity is present in all children, regardless of their age, race, socioeconomic status, and learning differences. Listed below are typically asked student questions followed by creativity-fostering suggestions for dealing with them:

“But why isn’t this the right answer?”
• Emphasize curricula and activities that avoid predictable, only one correct response outcomes.
• Try not to suggest (even implicitly) that your way is the best or only way.
• Be tolerant of children who exhibit nonconformity or tend to do things their own way.
• Allow children to take risks, challenge existing ideas, have time to reflect, and have time to “do their own thing.”
• Monitor your expectations and actions, especially the implicit ones.
• Reward early, creative performances and set up systems for positive feedback for continued performance in the same area.

“Can’t I work alone? Can’t we do something else?”
• Use alternative methods such as portfolios and performance-based assessments to assess creative potential.
• De-emphasize grades as the “goal” of learning. Accentuate the joy of learning and creating.

“Can’t I work alone? Can’t we do something else?”
• Allow independent work, even if it requires some additional effort and planning.
• Strive for balance between structured/unstructured tasks, independent/small group work, rich/open stimulus environments, and convergent/divergent tasks.
• Use concrete reinforcers instead of verbal reinforcers.
• Encourage the use of various learning and cognitive styles in all children.
• Use materials and techniques which require children to use various learning styles (e.g., hands-on, visual, aural, written) and content from different domains (e.g., music, math, physical education).
• Teach children the steps of revising, reworking, and refining their creative ideas, since creating an original idea is only the first step.

“But I’m not doing this at home/school.”
• Reinforce creative behaviors at home and at school. Teachers, let parents know what their child is doing at school and explain how parents can help at home. Parents, let teachers know what you’re doing at home with your child and ask teachers how you can reinforce the creative behaviors being taught in school.
• Discuss the concept of “creativity” with children—have them utilize fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration.
• Recognize that creativity incorporates a variety of processes (problem finding/solving, divergent/convergent thinking, self-expression), domains (arts, sciences, humanities), and motivational and personality factors (self-concept, self-confidence, intrinsic motivation).

“I can’t think of anything.”
• Provide environments that stimulate and encourage creative ideas. Reward a broad range of creative behaviors.
• Be a mentor to a child who displays interest in your particular domain or field of expertise.
• Teach students creativity enhancement techniques (e.g., SCAMPER, brainstorming, synectics, attribute listing) to use with their science fair projects, art activities, and writing assignments to design a more creative product.
• Expose your child to various types of tasks and activities, emphasizing variety in music, family and/or field trips, TV viewing, reading material, hobbies, toys, etc.

“...there are two lasting and important gifts we can give our children, one is roots and the other is wings.” —Hodding Carter

“Can I explain? I’d like to show it to the class/my friends.”
• Encourage children to share their creative work with other children and adults both within and out of school.
• Allow children to utilize divergent thinking skills, ask questions that require them to defend their reasoning, and expose them to constructive criticism.
• Ask children to describe their creative process and motivations if they give unexpected answers or complete unusual projects. Sometimes a seemingly incorrect or strange answer is achieved using an insightful, exciting approach.