**Allow children the space to be average**

**Source: Shayama Chona, Padma Bhushan & Padma Shri , an Educationist & Social Activist**

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It seems that young parents today are running a race for their children. They have great expectations from their tiny tots. Each parent expects that his child must excel, and succeed, triumph and be the “first” in every sphere of his little world—must even be the first one to walk and talk or ride a tricycle. Must earn a stunning report card, and be chosen as the most gifted and talented child of the class. Not only this, the so-called super-child must be the star of the Annual Day at school, and also be the monitor of the class.

This psyche hammered by the parents into the mind of the child, day in and day out, for he is not only the [apple](https://indianexpress.com/about/apple/) of his parents’ eyes but also their only hope, to achieve the “perfect” life they themselves aspired for.

Who hasn’t heard of the refrain of young parents: “Dear child, we’re counting on you to do fantastic things in life. Don’t you disappoint us?” The child becomes the status symbol for the parents, who raise their expectations as he or she grows older. It is amusing to watch them vigorously competing with each other in bringing up the best dressed, the best fed, the best educated, the best mannered, the best behaved and the best cultured child. He must be the cynosure of relatives and neighbours.

Poor little thing! The hopes, dreams and ambitions of the entire family rest on the shoulders of the little one. In this atmosphere of fierce competition, the parent who produces this epitome of intellect and giftedness, are clearly holding the sweepstake ticket.

Truth is, exceptional children of the kind mentioned above, are indeed “exceptions”. On the contrary, the vast majority of children are average. It is just not easy for the parents to mould or make their child exceptionally brilliant or talented. Nature plays its role. Unfortunately, most kids at an early age require love and affection more than anything else. If only parents would understand this. Instead of running a race for materialistic or superficial success, let us set the stage for eliminating unrealistic pressures from the minds of the younger generation. For, if you do not do so, you are certainly heading for disappointment in the long run.

As parents, it is often good to remember, “The happiest people don’t necessarily have the best of everything; they just make the best of each and every thing.”