

The Joy and the Challenge: Parenting Gifted Children

Readings and Resources

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Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted

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Introduction

National Parenting Gifted Children Week

One article in this collection begins as follows: "You are not alone! Whether you need help finding friends for your gifted children or helping them 'fit in' with peers in school, whether you are struggling with your child's over-sensitivities or existential depression, there are other parents of gifted children struggling with the same things."

Parents of gifted children know the ups and downs of striving to meet the needs of intense, sensitive, driven learners. Often they need help to understand the social-emotional traits of high-potential children and to support their growth.

To celebrate the joys and challenges of raising, guiding, and supporting bright young minds, SENG (Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted) sponsors National Parenting Gifted Children (NPGC) Week, which was established with the National Special Events Registry in 2007. In 2010, SENG issued seven daily newsletters during NPGC Week, each with its own theme, an article by a SENG Team Member, and a list of further resources.

As part of our celebration for NPGC Week 2011, SENG is making available here, for free, the contents of those issues, complete with new and updated links to further reading. If you enjoy and benefit from these articles, please tell others about this valuable, free resource.

In 1981, SENG was formed to bring attention to the unique emotional needs of gifted children. Its mission is to empower families and communities to guide gifted and talented individuals to reach their goals: intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually. SENG is an independent, non-profit 501(c)(3) organization led by a highly dedicated volunteer Board of Directors to provide free and low-cost programs to address the social and emotional needs of gifted children and the families, educators and health professionals who serve them. SENG envisions a world where gifted, talented and creative individuals are supported to build

gratifying, meaningful lives and contribute to the well-being of others, and, to this end, reaches out to diverse communities that share our mission across the nation and the globe.

Learn more about SENG and sign up for our free monthly newsletter, the SENGvine, at our website: www.sengifted.org



Day 1: Identifying and Recognizing Giftedness

By Tiombe Kendrick



Did your child begin reading before the first day of preschool? Do you know a child who is extremely talented in the visual and performing arts? Does your godchild exhibit an in-depth understanding of math and science? Are you an athletic coach for a highly talented swimmer, golfer, or basketball player? Do you have a student in your classroom who manifests the type of leadership skills required to negotiate peace around the world? Answering yes to any of the above questions most likely means you have been in the presence of a gifted child.

The process of identifying gifted and talented children in general is a very complex and highly controversial topic. Much of the available literature focuses on the recognition and identification of intellectually and/or academically gifted children. Many of these children are identified by intellectual or academic achievement assessments administered by teachers, school districts, psychologists, and academic talent search programs. Typically, children identified as intellectually and academically gifted must score at, or above, a specified cutoff score to qualify for educational programming provided by school districts and private organizations. Some school districts also use portfolios and other non-traditional assessments to help identify gifted students, but this varies among states and school districts.

There are a few important things people should understand about identification procedures for gifted children. Federal law does not mandate public school districts to identify or service gifted students. States are given the option to identify and service gifted students. States that choose to identify and service gifted children receive very little guidance on identification practices and curriculum development for gifted children. As a result of the latter, school districts often have very different identification procedures, eligibility requirements, and programming from each other. In addition, unlike the assistance they receive to help with the costs of educating students with disabilities, states are not provided with financial assistance for the costs of educating gifted students.

Many parents, therefore, often endure the burden of having their child evaluated to determine giftedness. Unfortunately, many parents experience a difficult time locating appropriate educational services for their child once they are classified as gifted, or if they relocate to a state that does not provide gifted services. Parents from low income backgrounds or culturally and/or linguistically diverse populations often experience significant challenges getting their children evaluated by school districts or private practitioners, which often contributes to the underrepresentation of children in gifted programs from low income families and culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds.

Some experts in the gifted field insist that gifted children be identified as early as possible, while others deter parents from seeking identification unless the child is experiencing some type of distress or when the child reaches middle and high school. It is important for parents to understand that gifted programming is a type of educational service and not a class for “privileged” children only. Parents should also consider the educational and social and emotional needs of their children when making the decision whether to have their child assessed for giftedness. Parents must have a good understanding and working knowledge of the specialized needs of gifted children in order to advocate effectively for their needs. Therefore, it is very important that gifted children are identified as early as possible for the purposes of future educational planning.

SENG Director Tiombe-Bisa Kendrick, S.S.P., NCSP, is a nationally certified school psychologist and is licensed to practice school psychology in the state of Florida. She has been employed with the Miami-Dade County Public School District as a school psychologist since 2005. Ms. Kendrick has a very strong passion for addressing the needs of gifted students from culturally and linguistically diverse populations and has been instrumental in significantly increasing the numbers of culturally diverse students participating in the Gifted Program at her schools.



More Resources

SENG ARTICLES

["Asynchronous Development," by Jean Goerss](#)

Asynchronous development is the hallmark of giftedness and in a very real sense, as gifted children mature they "grow into" their intellect and become more balanced, more normal. The more extreme the intellectual advancement is; the more extreme is the asynchrony. Social and emotional development depends on the way we perceive and process information and therefore is profoundly influenced by our intellect...

["Can We Capture and Measure the Creativity Beast?" by Rose Blackett](#)

There appears to be ongoing debate and discussion about what creativity is and how to identify and enhance it. Many question if it can be measured at all. Traditionally, the person, process or product has been the focus in the search to capture creativity and give it meaning. Sometimes products are not accepted at a given point in time: their originality slowly emerges and is only acknowledged and appreciated by new generations. Many famous artists have died in poverty, yet their work is now considered that of a "genius"...

["Is My Child Gifted?" Free Service Bulletin from SENG and NAGC](#)

All children are special and have their own areas of strength. However, some children have unusually advanced abilities that require special adjustments at home and school to help them grow and learn. As you watch your child grow and develop, you may notice skills or characteristics that are quite different from those of other children the same age...

["Making Sense of I.Q.," by Nadia Webb](#)

An individual's IQ test result is a sample of demonstrated abilities. A good evaluation should identify if there was any concern about a child putting forth his or her best effort. Even under appropriate testing conditions with full effort, IQ scores remain estimates of ability; it is more accurate to say that we are 90% or 95% certain that the true IQ is within a certain range. Making a distinction between children with measured IQ of 130 or 140 is just silliness. Both children could have the same IQ since the rule of thumb is that the IQ score is really +/- 6 points. There is never a point where we can peer into your soul and find "IQ of 129" floating there...

["Overexcitability and the Gifted," by Sharon Lind](#)

A small amount of definitive research and a great deal of naturalistic observation have led to the belief that intensity, sensitivity and overexcitability are primary characteristics of the highly gifted. These observations are supported by parents and teachers who notice distinct behavioral and constitutional differences between highly gifted children and their peers. The work of Kazimierz Dabrowski, (1902-1980), provides an excellent framework with which to understand these characteristics...

["Young Gifted Children," by Beverly Shaklee](#)

Young children in general are very complex. They are amazing in the tasks, abilities and areas that they develop in the first five to eight years of their life; some researchers estimate upwards of 80% of all of their deep knowledge is constructed at that time. Having a young child who is also cognitively gifted gives added dimension to that complexity. Although there are many issues that arise during this period of development, probably one of the most difficult to understand and address as a parent and teacher is the difference between aspects of a child's development that are age-appropriate and those that are developmentally advanced...

BOOKS

Artistically and Musically Talented Students, edited by Enid Zimmerman (Corwin Press, 2004)

Early Gifts: Recognizing and Nurturing Children's Talents edited by Paula Olszewski-Kubilius, Lisa Limburg-Weber, and Steven Pfeiffer (Prufrock Press, 2003)

Five Levels of Gifted, by Deborah Ruf (Great Potential Press, 2009)

High IQ Kids: Collected Insights, Information, and Personal Stories from the Experts, edited by Kiesa Kay, Deborah Robson, and Judy Fort Brenneman (Free Spirit Publishing, 2007)

ONLINE

Duke University Talent Identification Program: <http://www.tip.duke.edu/>

Davidson Institute for Talent Development: <http://www.davidsongifted.org/>

Johns Hopkins University Center for Talent Youth: <http://www.cty.jhu.edu/>

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC): <http://www.nagc.org/>

Northwestern University Center for Talent Development: <http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/>

Western Academic Talent Search: <http://www.centerforbrightkids.org/index.html>



Day 2: The Challenges of Parenting a Gifted Child

By Vidisha Patel



It is summer. Time for some quiet fun, late mornings, relaxed unstructured days, and NO HOMEWORK. Right? Not if you are the parent of a gifted child. Whoever said parenting was easy, especially parenting gifted children?

As a mental health professional and the mother of two gifted children, I can attest to the fact that parenting gifted children poses unique challenges.

Gifted kids are on a different timeline from the average child. They generally process information at a different rate and in a different style from their peers. They react differently in social situations and tend to be highly emotional and easily frustrated. As a result, they are easily bored.

Johnny can figure out the math problem faster than the time it takes to write it down. So why does he have to write down all the steps? Yet the teacher takes points off because he doesn't show all his work! His grades don't reflect his knowledge of math.

Sally came home from school crying because someone squashed a spider at the lunch table. She is vegetarian and she can't understand why the other kids thought it was funny and normal to kill the bug. She could literally feel the pain that the spider felt when it was squashed.

Jean has daily tantrums in the summertime. Her parents can't understand her. They thought she would welcome the quiet, unstructured time at home after a challenging year of middle school. For Jean, the structure gives her security. She knows what is coming next. Even if it is lots of homework or an arduous dance practice, she knows what to expect. The mornings when she wakes up and has no schedule are scary for her.

Tim locked himself in his room and refused to come out when his parents threw him a surprise party for his 13th birthday. He doesn't like surprises. He would rather have known about the event so that he would have time to prepare himself.

What do these kids have in common? They are all highly gifted kids, and, as a result, they tend to be highly sensitive and emotional. Parenting a highly sensitive and emotional child can be extremely challenging. As parents, we feel we have a responsibility to raise secure, confident, well-adjusted children. But, sometimes, our gifted children take us by surprise. So what can we do to help ourselves in these situations?

Take a step back and assess the situation. Is your child upset about the specific situation, or is the reaction a symptom of another problem? Johnny's performing poorly in math is more about the fact that he doesn't write down the steps to the solution than an understanding of his abilities.

Take time to talk with your children. We underestimate the time we actually spend having a conversation with our children. Frequently, we just talk at them instead of talking with them.

Take time to BE with your children. Many times we think we are spending time with our children, but we are not present. We are doing other things, or our minds are on something else. Focus entirely on your child for even a few minutes. The time spent will make them feel special.

Do the best you can, and recognize that sometimes they will have to work through their own emotional roller coasters.

Recognize your limitations, and know when it is important to seek outside assistance. Even if your child's behavior is considered normal for a gifted child, recognize that it may be too much for your family to handle, and you need to seek outside assistance.

Most of all, remember to have fun. Parenting may be a challenge, but we have a short window of time with our children, so enjoy your time with them as much as you can!

SENG Director Vidisha Patel has a doctorate of Education in Counseling Psychology and practices as a therapist in Sarasota, Florida, where much of her work is with gifted children and their families, with a focus on stress and anxiety. Dr. Patel is active in her local community and regularly speaks at conferences, schools, and parenting groups throughout the community and the state. Dr. Patel holds an MBA from Columbia University and worked in finance on Wall Street and overseas before obtaining her doctorate in psychology. Dr. Patel is the mother of two gifted children.



More Resources

SENG ARTICLES

["Benny and Me: A Father Sees Himself Through His Son," by Michael Postma](#)

We learned, the hard way sometimes (and with much consternation on my part), that dealing with Ben was going to take a little extra. You see, I work in the field of gifted and talented education and, by 2001, already had some experience working with what we have since labeled the twice- or multi-exceptional child. Ben, it turned out, had Asperger's Syndrome, something that I, the so-called expert, didn't see in my own child. Nor did I see it in myself. Yet, as we grew up together, I saw and relived my own childhood as a multi-exceptional student through living with, chasing, laughing, lecturing, supporting, admonishing, dragging, and, yes, advocating for Ben...

["Dos and Dont's for Raising Your Gifted Kids," by Deborah Ruf](#)

Many parents, like their own parents before them, figure that someone in the schools will tell them if the child is gifted; therefore, if they are the only ones thinking something is amiss, something must be wrong with them (or their kid). Fortunately, sometimes the parent has enough confidence and courage to persevere on behalf of the child despite all the apparent odds. It is a good sign if you are a parent reading this article. You have taken some important steps to

learning what you can about what ails your child, and about what you might do to make it better. Here are some ideas to get you started...

["Elementary Lessons for Mom," by Amy Price](#)

Problems quickly surfaced. Although he initially achieved perfect scores on daily timed addition and subtraction tests, my son's scores quickly declined. Reed was not completing timed tests and was answering basic questions incorrectly. I knew that he had already mastered multiplication and division. How could these simple problems provide such a great challenge? Even worse, this once-articulate child now seemed unable to organize his thoughts on paper. Simple tasks like using vocabulary words in sentences became hurdles. Reed was reduced to tears in reporting that he was finding the physical process of writing exhausting and difficult. With the onset of class lessons in cursive writing, his misery increased. So, too, did the phone calls and notes from the school...

["On Being Too Much to the Right of the Curve " by Heidi Molbak](#)

Often gifted individuals are "too much" for the people who surround them in their daily lives. And they know this because they are told as much on a frequent basis. Their thoughts, feelings, and ideas do contribute significantly to humankind. It's just that humankind doesn't always let them know how much they are appreciated...

["Parenting Lessons," by Shari Hill](#)

As we begin another year, we tend to reflect on the past. Though I find the "should haves," "could haves," and "wish I had's" a waste of energy, I do have some constructive thoughts to share from parenting my own brood. I wish I knew then that...

["Through His Eyes and Through His Mother 's Eyes," Holly Hughes and Joseph Hughes](#)

Joseph Hughes once read more than 1,000 books to win a first grade contest. A high achiever, they all said. In elementary school, he'd complete class assignments "perfectly" before the other kids. But he'd quickly find himself in trouble for having done it before the teacher even reviewed the instructions. Impulsive, they all said...

["What Your Kids Want You to Know," by Jane Hesslein](#)

As a teacher of the gifted, I am involved daily in the relationships between students and parents, working to keep each "team" apprised of what the other is thinking. At the beginning of the year,

I tell parents what I have learned from earlier classes about what it is like to be 10 and very bright. During the year, the students and I chat informally about many of their social and emotional issues...

BOOKS

A Parent's Guide to Gifted Children, by James Webb, Janet Gore, Edward Amend, and Arlene DeVries (Great Potential Press, 2007)

Parenting Gifted Kids: Tips for Raising Happy and Successful Children, by James R. Delisle (Prufrock Press, 2006)

The Survival Guide for Parents of Gifted Kids: How to Understand, Live With, and Stick Up for Your Gifted Child, by Sally Yahnke Walker (Free Spirit Publishing, 2002)

SENG's Parenting the Gifted Recommended Reading:

http://www.sengifted.org/articles_booklist.shtml#parenting

Free Spirit Publishing Parenting Books: <http://www.freespirit.com/parents/parents.cfm>

Great Potential Press Parenting Books: <http://www.giftedbooks.com/products.asp?Grouping=29>

Prufrock Press Parenting Books: <http://www.prufrock.com/showproducts.cfm?WPCID=1059>

ONLINE

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) Parents Page:

<http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=48>

Parenting for High Potential Magazine: <http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=1180>

Davidson Institute for Talent Development: Tips for Parents Articles:

http://www.davidsongifted.org/db/browse_articles_114.aspx

Hoagies Gifted Education Page: Parenting Resources:

<http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/parenting.htm>


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## Day 3: Underachievement Issues and Twice Exceptionalism

### "Don't Get Caught in the Lazy Trap"

By Linda Neumann



How many times did I hear the phrase coming out of a teacher's mouth: "He's smart, but lazy!" Usually this comment about one of my boys was followed with, "He could do better if he tried, but he chooses not to try."

For a long time—far too long—I bought into this assessment. I could see that my sons were bright, and I could see that their work and their effort often failed to measure up to expectations. I had no better explanation for what was going on.

Finally, one day, it came to me that my kids were not choosing to underachieve. I still had no explanation for their behavior, but I felt certain that something was holding them back. That realization started me on a quest that I'm still on, to understand bright children who underachieve—my own as well as others.

I found validation for my change in perspective from a book that I often recommend to others: *The Myth of Laziness*, written in 2003 by Dr. Mel Levine. In it, he talks about the many factors that affect work output. Of course there are the dysfunctions and weaknesses that come with learning disabilities, attention deficit, and other learning challenges. A gifted child who must

contend with these can be left without the self-confidence, abilities, and energy that it takes to achieve in the classroom. But a bright child need not be twice exceptional to be an underachiever. Levine talks about other factors as well that affect achievement. Some are external, such as stress, competition, role models, and family values. Others are internal, such as the level of optimism, flexibility, and adaptability a child displays.

As I've searched for information on this topic, I've come across many good suggestions for reversing underachievement and many acknowledgements from experts that it is often not an easy task. The longer it goes on, they say, the harder it is to reverse the negative thought patterns that surround underachieving. Parents and teachers must expect that it will be a long, slow process, marked by small successes along the way.

Along with changing thought patterns, here are some other suggestions for parents and teachers that experts seem to agree on:

- \* Encourage activities outside of school that the child finds rewarding.
- \* Build on a child's interests and talents, both at home and at school.
- \* Focus praise on the child's efforts rather than on results.
- \* To the extent possible, make work you assign to the child meaningful.
- \* Help the child in setting realistic goals and planning how to achieve them.
- \* Don't deny the child challenging work because of underachievement.
- \* Additional suggestions for 2e students are to provide the accommodations and to teach the compensation strategies that the child needs in order to achieve.

To this list, I add my own suggestion. Educate yourself on the topic of underachievement. There are no easy answers or quick fixes; but the more you know, the better able you will be to help a bright underachiever find success. Keep in mind this exchange from a session on underachievement given at the 2009 NAGC conference. After hearing the presentation, a parent asked why the speaker had not addressed what he felt was the main cause of underachievement, laziness. The presenter, educator Kathy Lundstrom, replied, "Laziness does not exist, according to research." She explained that there are reasons why children underachieve, like those she presented in her session, and we need to uncover them.

*Former SENG Director Linda C. Neumann is the editor of "2e: Twice-Exceptional Newsletter" (www.2eNewsletter.com), a bi-monthly publication aimed at parents, educators, advocates, and others who help twice-exceptional children reach their potential. She is also the author of the "Spotlight on 2e Series" of booklets that explore the combination of giftedness and learning deficits in children.*



## **More Resources**

### **SENG ARTICLES**

["Gifted Education: What I Wished I Knew Sooner!" by Carolyn Kottmeyer](#)

Many people assume that gifted and learning disabled are opposite ends of the same scale. Teachers may assume that a child, identified as gifted but struggling in school, is simply lazy or unmotivated. At the same time, they may assume that a child identified as learning disabled cannot possibly be gifted. I wish I'd known sooner that neither of these assumptions is true...

["If They Only Came With Manuals!" by Linda Neumann](#)

At one time or another I think all parents have probably wished that their child had come with a manual - a document that would spell out everything they needed to know to understand and raise their child. Most likely, parents of gifted children have wished this more intently and parents of twice exceptional (2e) children even more...

["Motivating the Gifted Child," by Lori Comallie-Caplan](#)

Parents can be both surprised, and distressed, when gifted students underachieve. Sometimes learning disabilities are at fault, but other times it is a lack of motivation. Many times children lack motivation because they don't see a connection between the work they are being asked to do and their goals and interests. Sometimes children lack motivation because they haven't yet been exposed to what might be a life passion...

["Parenting Twice-Exceptional Children," by Dina Brulles](#)

David is a nice kid. He is smart and quiet. He blends in well enough that not many people, including teachers, notice the learning difficulties he has. He does not usually draw attention to himself; he does not get into trouble; he gets by OK. David, who is highly gifted, also has been

diagnosed with severe Attention Deficit Disorder (ADD - no "H"), is highly gifted, has an Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD - Tricotillomania), and a learning disability (LD -dysgraphia and dyslexia)...

["Through His Eyes and Through His Mother's Eyes," by Joseph Hughes and Holly Hughes](#)

Then, as he grew older, he didn't "measure up" academically in the school's viewpoint either. Written work seemed disjointed, almost incoherent - unless someone discussed it with him to discover the huge leaps of logic and reasoning that carried him from place to place. When creating art, the pencil was snatched from his hand to demonstrate how to do it "right"...

## **BOOKS**

*Different Minds: Gifted Children With Ad/Hd, Asperger Syndrome, and Other Learning Deficits*, by Deirdre V. Lovecky (Jessica Kingsley Publishers, 2004)

*Dreamers, Discoverers & Dynamos: How to Help the Child Who Is Bright, Bored and Having Problems in School*, by Lucy Jo Palladino (Ballantine, 1999)

*The Myth of Laziness*, by Mel Levine (Simon and Schuster, 2003)

*Uniquely Gifted : Identifying and Meeting the Needs of the Twice Exceptional Student*, Kiesa Kay (Avocus Publishing, 2000)

*Why Bright Kids Get Poor Grades And What You Can Do About It: A Six-Step Program for Parents and Teachers*, by Sylvia Rimm (Great Potential Press, 2008)

## **ONLINE**

2e: Twice-Exceptional Newsletter: <http://www.2enewsletter.com/>

Eide Neurolearning Blog: <http://www.eideneurolearningblog.blogspot.com/>

Free Spirit Publishing: Special Needs Gifted/LD/ADD:

[http://www.freespirit.com/catalog/catalog\\_detail.cfm?CAT\\_ID=29](http://www.freespirit.com/catalog/catalog_detail.cfm?CAT_ID=29)

Uniquely Gifted: Resources for Gifted Children with Special Needs:

<http://www.uniquelygifted.org/>

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Day 4: Gifted Minorities, Gifted Boys, and Gifted Girls

"Advocating for Better Understanding of Giftedness in Minority Groups"

By Rosina Gallagher



In the 1993 National Excellence Report: *A Case for Developing American Talent*, Secretary of Education, Richard Riley, alerted us to the “quiet crisis” in the way top students are being educated in our nation’s schools. “The problem,” he stated, “is especially severe among economically disadvantaged and minority students, who have access to fewer advanced educational opportunities and whose talents often go unnoticed.” (Preface, p. 1)

The Report provided a definition of gifted and talented:

Children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience or environment. These children and youth exhibit high performance capability in intellectual, creative, and/or artistic areas, possess an unusual leadership capacity, or excel in specific academic fields. They require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools. Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata and in all areas of human endeavor.
(p. 3)

Since 1993, researchers have identified three major groups that are underrepresented in gifted education: students from low-income background, the ethnically/culturally and linguistically diverse, and those who exhibit atypical learning profiles. My research into diversity, however, has led me to consider three groups whose needs warrant further understanding:

- * Creative performers who exhibit a learning disability
- * Third Culture Kids (TCK) who have been raised in several cultures
- * Children of affluence, what Madeline Levine considers the “privileged” and “new at-risk group”

The balance of this article highlights basic characteristics of these groups, some challenging behaviors they may manifest, and potential interventions to support appropriate services. Finally, several profiles of individuals are described, which, in my opinion, represent each group.

CREATIVE PERFORMERS

Positive Characteristics

- * Have powerful imagination
- * Play with ideas and concepts
- * Overflow with ideas
- * Are independent
- * Improvise
- * Are visual-spatial learners

Challenging Behaviors

- * May daydream
- * May not focus on task at hand
- * Have difficulty starting or finishing a project
- * May have difficulty working in a group
- * Question need for mastery
- * Question authority

Potential Interventions

- * Teach goal setting
- * Limit choices
- * Teach organization skills
- * Model teamwork
- * Teach creative problem-solving
- * Build strengths and pursue passion
- * Teach self-advocacy

CREATIVE PERFORMERS WHO OVERCAME DIFFICULTIES

John “Jack” Horner

- * American Paleontologist
 - * Dyslexic; did not complete college due to inability to pass required German language exam
 - * Published formidable senior thesis on fauna of the Bear Gulch Limestone in Montana, most famous preserved site fossil in the world
 - * Provided first clear evidence that some dinosaurs cared for the young
- Technical advisor for all of Jurassic Park films

Gillian Barbara Lynne

- * British Dancer
- * Choreographer
- * Underperformed at school, constantly distractible and fidgety at age five
- * Mother consulted pediatrician who observed Gillian dancing to radio music and stated, “You’re child is not sick...She’s a dancer! Enroll her in ballet classes.”
- * Ms Lynne became a renowned ballerina with Royal Ballet, choreographer of Cats and The Phantom of the Opera, theatre director and owner of Lean Two Productions for TV and film

Temple Grandin

- * Doctor of Animal Science, professor, author and consultant to the livestock industry in animal behavior
- * Diagnosed with high-functioning autism at age two. Began talking at age four
- * “Middle school and high school were the worst parts of my life.” Called a “nerd” and teased as “tape recorder” because she repeated things over and over again.
- * Dr. Grandin is noted for her work in autism advocacy and inventor of hug machine designed to calm hypersensitive persons

THIRD CULTURE KIDS (TCK)

The term TCK was coined by sociologist Ruth Hill Useem and refers to “someone who, as a child, has spent a significant period of time in one or more culture(s) other than his or her own, thus integrating elements of those cultures and their own birth culture, into a third culture.”

Benefits

- * Joy of discovery
- * Learn several languages
- * Become bi- or tri-cultural
- * Likely to graduate from college
- * Tend to mature early
- * Maintain global dimension throughout lives

Challenges

- * Developmental issues
- * Struggle to find identity
- * Constantly moving, restlessness
- * Experience heartbreaking loss

Potential Interventions

- * Use a “Whole Child” developmental approach: Promote intellectual challenge; & Cultivate social skills and character; Teach child to understand and manage emotions.

(Pfeiffer, 2009)

- * Use multicultural curriculum
- * Connect with students in day-to-day life
- * Identify stages of cultural identity
- * Recognize problematic behavior patterns
- * Journaling
- * Connect with others based on interests

Established by the International School of Geneva, the International Baccalaureate Program was originally designed to provide a consistent curriculum for families who moved frequently across the globe.

FAMOUS THIRD CULTURE KIDS

Barack Obama

- * President of the United States of America – January 2009
- * Born in Honolulu, HI
- * Raised by single American mother
- * Father from Kenya
- * Lived in Indonesia
- * Graduate of Occidental College, Columbia University and Harvard Law School
- * Community Organizer in Chicago
- * Constitutional Law Professor
- * Lost Seat House of Representatives in 2000
- * Won Senate Seat in 2004
- * Won Nobel Peace Prize 2009

Actress Katy Jurado

- * Born in Guadalajara, Mexico
- * Studied journalism
- * Married to Victor Velazquez
- * Started acting in Mexico City

- * In 1950s she began acting with Anthony Quinn, John Wayne and Marlon Brando
- * First Mexican national to be nominated for Academy Award
- * Married actor Ernest Borgnine
- * Lived and worked in the USA, Italy and Mexico throughout her life
- * Died of heart attack in Cuernavaca, Mexico, 2002

Benjamin Netanyahu

- * Israeli Prime Minister
- * Born in Tel Aviv, Israel
- * Russian ancestry
- * Father was professor of Jewish History at Cornell University
- * Graduated from high school in a suburb of Philadelphia
- * Graduate of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and Harvard
- * Served in Israeli Armed Forces
- * Married three times
- * Considered a “hawk” regarding the Arab world

THE PRIVILEGED: A NEW AT-RISK GROUP

Benefits

- * Economic security
- * Educational opportunity
- * Enriched environment
- * Cultural enrichment through travel
- * Tutoring or special classes (music, art, summer camps)
- * Positive role models
- * Professional parents
- * Extend through generations
- * Family closeness wards off psychological problems

Challenges

- * High family expectations
- * Experience highest rate of depression, substance abuse, anxiety disorders, somatic complaints and unhappiness
- * High competition at private academies
- * Depression: begins in middle school
- * Family stressors may turn them to teens with poor values
- * Gifted individuals--capable of elevating the world to a higher plane, but can be targets of ridicule
- * Problems, concerns may be dismissed, trivialized
- * Outward success can be deceiving

Potential Interventions

- * Use a “Whole Child” developmental approach: Promote intellectual challenge; Cultivate social skills and character; Teach child to understand and manage emotions. (Pfeiffer, 2009)
- * Teach resilience skills: happiness comes from within
- * Promote realistic optimism
- * Teach goal setting behavior
- * Promote problem-solving skills
- * Identify strengths and passion
- * Allow personal struggle to build character
- * Promote the pursuit of excellence
- * Promote healthy self-efficacy
- * Encourage bibliotherapy: reading about like-minded individuals

The reader may wish to view the YouTube video clip, “Race to Nowhere,” a trailer for the documentary, “The Dark Side of America’s Achievement Culture.”

Children from “affluent” or “royal” families are not exempt from tragedy and difficult circumstances.

We are reminded daily through the media that these individuals might benefit from counseling and interventions, as they develop their talents and assume responsibilities according to their stature.

AFFLUENT AND ROYAL FAMILIES

The Rockefeller Family

- * British and German ancestry, resided in Cleveland, Ohio
- * Oil magnates branched into industry, banking and politics
- * Children were provided an allowance and financial books were closely scrutinized
- * Participated in house chores, learned to cook, and raised rabbits for sale
- * J. D. Rockefeller represents 6th generation, with 150 blood relatives still living.
- * Estimated wealth \$110 billion

America's Royal Family: The Kennedys

- * The Irish American, Catholic family amassed great fortune on Wall Street
- * The Kennedys are said to have had a 64-year run of a family member holding elective office in Washington, D.C.
- * The 2nd generation of Joseph and Rose Fitzgerald had nine children
- * While the sons enjoyed physical and intellectual freedom, they were also pitted against each other in sports and scholastic achievement
- * Have suffered a series of tragedies, including the assassinations of Jack and Robert, the controversial Chappaquiddick incident, and four airplane crashes, three fatal, Joe, Jr., Kathleen and John, Jr.
- * Statesmen include Jack, Robert, Ted and currently Patrick, scheduled to leave Congress in 2011

Queen Elizabeth of the United Kingdom

- * Elizabeth Alexandra Mary became queen at age 26, after her father died and her uncle Edward abdicated
- * Her father was George VI and Mother Elizabeth Bowers Lyon
- * During her reign, half of her realm have become republics

- * She has four children, Charles Prince of Wales, heir to the throne, Princess Ann, and Princes Andrew and Edward
- * In 2012, Queen Elizabeth will celebrate 60 years on the throne.
- * She is patron of 460 charities
- * Estimated wealth \$450 million

There are many more neglected groups of talented individuals who, although not statistically significant, merit consideration. I leave those for another day.

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Wikipedia

SENG President Rosina M. Gallagher, Ph.D., NCSP, is a psychologist and educational consultant who was born and raised in Mexico City through early adolescence. Her 30-year career includes being evaluator of bilingual programs, coordinator of Special Education Services, and administrator of gifted programs in a large urban school district. Dr. Gallagher is adjunct faculty in the graduate program in gifted education at Northeastern Illinois University, and president elect of the Illinois Association for Gifted Children. She has served as Chair of the Special Populations Network and a member of the Diversity and Equity Committee of the National Association for Gifted Children. She has also been a member of the Illinois Advisory Council on the Education of Gifted and Talented Children. Dr. Gallagher and her husband are the proud parents of three adult sons and two granddaughters.

More Resources

SENG ARTICLES AND PROGRAMS

["Gifted Students from Culturally Diverse Populations," by Tiombe Kendrick](#)

In 2005, I began my journey as a school psychologist in one of the most diverse and largest school districts in the country. I had no way of knowing that this journey would lead me to develop a life long passion for Gifted/Talented (G/T) students in general and specifically those from culturally diverse backgrounds...

["An Interview with Janet Davidson: Reflections on Gender and Giftedness," by Michael F. Shaughnessy](#)

Some gifted children purposely underachieve in an attempt to be socially accepted by their peers; this underachievement in gifted children is more likely to occur for girls than for boys...

["An Interview with Wenda Sheard: Gifted in Paris," by Michael F. Shaughnessy](#)

The term "third culture kids" applies to people who have spent time living away from their home country during childhood. Although adults living in other cultures observe the cultural differences around them, children living in other cultures absorb parts of those cultures and create, internally, a "third culture" that is a blend of the child's home and host country cultures...

["Resilient Hispanic Women," by Rosina Gallagher](#)

In my professional experience, I have had the privilege of engaging many Latin-American women, in their teens, middle and late adult years, who, armed with these attributes, have risen above adverse conditions to emerge strong adults leading gratifying lives...

["Rising to Juilliard: A Profile of a Gifted Young Actor," by SENG](#)

The biggest challenge I have faced was the challenge of staying on the right track as a teenager with everything that is happening in our world and the things I have been exposed to. I have had many friends get caught up in the street life and the trouble that comes with it. My biggest challenge was to stay out of it, and it was certainly a challenge...

["Social and Emotional Issues Faced by Gifted Girls in Elementary and Secondary School," by Sally M. Reis](#)

Perfectionism can cause talented women to set unreasonable goals for themselves and strive to achieve at increasingly higher levels. It also can cause women to strive to achieve impossible goals and spend their lives trying to achieve perfection in work, home, body, children, wardrobe, and other areas...

[The James T. Webb Scholarship Program](#)

The James T. Webb Scholarship currently extends the opportunity for identified gifted and talented students from minority populations and their parents to participate in the SENG Annual Conference. Students attend the program for children or teens. Parents attend concurrent adult sessions.

[SENG Articles in Languages Other than English](#)

BOOKS

And Still We Rise: The Trials and Triumphs of Twelve Gifted Inner-City Students, by Miles Corin (Harper Perennial, 2001)

Bright, Talented and Black: A Guide for Families of African-American Learners, by Joy Lawson Davis (Great Potential Press, 2010)

Smart Boys: Talent, Manhood, and the Search for Meaning, by Barbara A. Kerr and Sanford J. Cohn (Great Potential Press, 2001)

Smart Girls: A New Psychology of Girls, Women, and Giftedness (revised edition), by Barbara A Kerr (Great Potential Press, 1997)

ONLINE

"The Challenges of Being Gifted in a Rural Community" by Duke Gifted Letter:

<http://www.tip.duke.edu/node/842>

"Identifying and Teaching Gifted Native American Students," by Tamara Fisher:

http://blogs.edweek.org/teachers/unwrapping_the_gifted/2008/01/identifying_and_teaching_gifte.html

"Implications for Educators of Gifted Minority Students," an OpenSourceWare Webinar by

Diane Boothe: <http://ocw.uci.edu/lectures/lecture.aspx?id=295>

My Gifted Girl: <http://www.mygiftedgirl.com/>

"Nurturing Global Citizens for the 21st Century," by Rosina Gallagher:

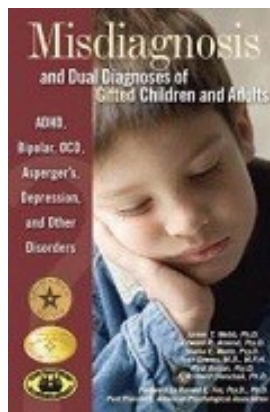
http://www.sengifted.org/articles_multicultural/Gallagher_schools_parents_other_countries.shtml



Day 5: Misdiagnosis and Depression in Gifted Youth

"Existential Depression"

by James T. Webb, Edward R. Amend, Nadia E. Webb, Jean Goerss, Paul Beljan, F.
Richard Olenchak



The following excerpt from Misdiagnosis and Dual Diagnoses of Gifted Children and Adults: ADHD, Bipolar, OCD, Asperger's, Depression, and Other Disorders is reprinted with permission of Great Potential Press (<http://www.giftedbooks.com>). Special thanks to the generosity of the authors, who have ensured that SENG receives royalties for every purchase, to fund important programs for those that SENG serves.

There is relatively little inherent in being a gifted child or adult that makes them more prone to depression than others. Most often, it is a poor fit between the gifted person and the environment that creates the problem. A lack of understanding and support from teachers, peers, or family can precipitate very real problems of various kinds, including depression.

Existential depression is an exception; it seems to emerge in most environments, though some circumstances prompt it more than others. Existential depression is particularly likely among

persons who are highly gifted, even though it is not a category of depression that is recognized in the DSM-IV-TR. Some have written about existential depression (e.g., Camus, 1991; Frankl, 1963; May, 1994; Sartre, 1993; Yalom, 1980), but few have related it to gifted children and adults. In our experience, professionals generally overlook the gifted component, mistaking existential depression for depressions that arise from other causes.

The concept of existential depression has a strong connection to gifted characteristics; it arises from the ability to contemplate issues about existence and asynchrony that is inherent in giftedness. Gifted children develop the capacity for metacognition—thinking about their thinking—early (Schwanenflugel 1997), in some cases even before they develop the emotional and experiential tools to deal with it successfully. They are able to see issues on a global scale, along with implications. Combined with their metacognition are their idealism, their intensity, and their sensitivity, which often result in feelings of alienation from the world around them. Existential depression is more commonly seen in young adults or adults. However, for gifted children, this type of depression can begin as early as middle school or high school as these bright youngsters contemplate their future.

This existential type of depression comes from the ability to think, to idealistically see how things might be, but also from the realization of being essentially alone. We have even heard of children as young as age seven saying they don't want to live any more because life is too hard.

Persons who suffer existential depression are particularly at risk for suicide if they are rejected by the significant people in their lives. Often called “geeks” or “nerds,” they may feel alone in their peer group and in their family, as well as society. They see how the world should be and despair of ever making a significant difference. They may have no one who shares their concerns and, often, no spiritual guidance. It is easy for them to ask then, “Why bother?”

Existential depression is not just a stage that kids outgrow.* Once the bell has been rung, it cannot be un-rung, and the sense of differentness from others and pervasive alienation continues. A common feeling or fantasy among highly gifted children is that they are like abandoned aliens waiting for the mother ship to come and take them home—but if they tell this to others, it can lead to misdiagnoses, which can obscure the actual existential depression beneath.

There are three key components in treating existential depression: (1) conveying a sense that someone else understands the feelings, (2) showing that the person's ideals are shared by others, and that he is not alone, and (3) pointing out that he can join common efforts with others and can make an impact. Often these people will get intensely involved in social, political, or religious causes, which helps them to feel less alone and more empowered.**

The task is to convey to children and young people that the care and repair of the world is an obligation that they cannot shirk, but neither are they responsible for single-handedly doing the entire job. The mending of broken and hungry people, an injured environment, and the collective hurts that groups of individuals have inflicted on one another are our shared responsibility. Even little gestures may seem inconsequential because they lack drama and glamour can be important. Picking up a soda can from the sidewalk is a small repair of the world. A visit to someone who is ill or a kindness to a pet is important. These individuals can learn that physical touch, such as a hug, can be a powerful way to feeling that they are connected with others and that others care about them.

Notes:

*The existential depression in gifted children is somewhat like the mid-life crises of adults, in which the adults are searching for meaning and asking, "Is this all there is to life? I didn't expect life to be this way."

**Often these people will jump from cause to cause over a period of a few years.

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Camus, A. (1991). *The myth of Sisyphus, and other essays* (reprint ed.). New York: Vintage.

Frankl, V. E. (1963). *Man's search for meaning: An introduction to logotherapy*. Boston: Beacon Press.

May, R. (1994). *The discovery of being: Writings in existential psychology* (reprint ed.). New York: W. W. Norton.

Sartre, J. P. (1993). *Being and nothingness* (reprint ed.). New York: Washington Square Press.

Schwanenflugel, P. J. (1997). Metacognitive knowledge of gifted children and non-identified children in early elementary school. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 41(2), 25-35.

Yalom, I. D. (1980). *Existential psychotherapy*. New York: Basic Books.



More Resources

SENG ARTICLES AND BROCHURES

["ADHD," by Stephen Pfeiffer](#)

If a bright or gifted child only evidences ADHD-like symptoms in the classroom, but not in other settings, then the reason for the ADHD-like behaviors might be based on boredom and lack of intellectual stimulation...

["Attention and Passion," by Nadia Webb](#)

Despite both us being trained in mental health, we have resisted the temptation to apply a diagnosis. Besides the fact that it wouldn't be helpful to our marriage, it also wouldn't help clarify the problem...

["At-Risk Gifted," by Therese Clifford](#)

The social and emotional needs of gifted individuals need to be taken into consideration and treated with concern and compassion. I shudder to think of the unfulfilled lives and the talent gone to waste in our world due to misunderstanding, misdiagnosis, and the simple lack of insight we have for the gifted...

["Does Your Child Need Professional Help?" by Steven Curtis](#)

Deciding whether a particular gifted child is "normal" or "disordered" is complex and often depends on a child's culture, the background of the provider, and the tolerance of the concern by a particular caregiver...

[Selecting a Mental Health Professional for your Gifted Child, a SENG Brochure](#)

It is not always easy to determine if a child could benefit from professional help. Certain periods in a child's development, such as the "terrible two's" and adolescence, are commonly more

difficult than other phases. But how difficult is too difficult? And what if the child does not grow out of the behavior in a reasonable amount of time? To help decide, consider the following...

BOOKS

The Mislabeled Child: Looking Beyond Behavior to Find the True Sources and Solutions for Children's Learning Challenges, by Brock and Fernet Eide (Hyperion, 2007)

The Power to Prevent Suicide: A Guide for Teens Helping Teens, by Richard E. Nelson and Judith C. Galas (Free Spirit Publishing, 2006)

The Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Children: What Do We Know?, edited by Maureen Neihart, Sally M. Reis, Nancy M. Robinson, & Sydney M. Moon (Prufrock Press, 2001)

When Nothing Matters Anymore: A Survival Guide for Depressed Teens, by Bev Cobain (Free Spirit Publishing, 2007)

ONLINE

"Can You Hear the Flowers Sing? Issues for Gifted Adults" by Deirdre V. Lovecky:

http://www.sengifted.org/articles_adults/Lovecky_CanYouHearTheFlowersSing.shtml

"Depression and Gifted Children," by Maureen Niehart: <http://www.tip.duke.edu/node/584>

Hoagies Gifted Education Page: Depression and Suicide:

<http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/depression.htm>

"Misdiagnosis of Gifted Adults: Dysfunctions Versus Aptitudes," by Douglas Eby:

<http://highability.org/65/dysfunctions-versus-aptitudes/>

"Tips for Parents: Gifted Adolescents and Depression," by Tracy Cross:

http://www.davidsongifted.org/db/Articles_id_10522.aspx

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## **Day 6: Advocacy for Gifted Children**

**By Lori Comallie-Caplan**



They say that, in real estate, the key is location, location, location; in advocacy, it is information, information, information.

### **Know Your Child**

The first source of information should be your child. Make sure you have an understanding of your child's strengths and needs in the following areas: cognitive functioning, academic learning strengths, personality characteristics (including overexciteabilities), learning preferences, and personal interests. Karen Rodgers, author of *Reforming Gifted Education*, also recommends that you keep a list of books that your children have read and enrichment activities that they have participated in. You are the expert on your child. Before there are any problems, you can advocate for your child in a positive way by making sure that your child's teacher has as much information as you do about your child.

### **Know the Research**

Other resources that should be on the mandatory reading list for parent advocates are these:

\* *A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students*, Vol. I & II, otherwise known as the Templeton National Report on Acceleration. This is a

comprehensive report for parents and educators, and can be downloaded at

[http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/nation\\_deceived/](http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/nation_deceived/)

\* *Developing Math Talent: A Guide for Educating Gifted and Advanced Learners in Math*, by Susan Assouline, Ph.D., Ann Lupkowski-Shoplik, Ph.D. (2005)

\* *Growing Up Gifted*, by B. Clark, (2007)

\* *Stand Up for Your Gifted Child: How to Make the Most of Kid's Strengths at School and Home*, Smutny, J.F. (2001)

\* *The Survival Guide for Parents of Gifted Kids*, Walker, S.Y. (2002)

### **Know Your State and District Policies Regarding Servicing Gifted Children**

The third source of information should be about what educational services your school district is required to provide for gifted children. This is generally established by state law. You can get this information by contacting the state department of education in your state. The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) maintains contact information for state departments of education at Gifted by State: <http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=37>

Contact your district office as well, and ask if they have a written policy statement on the services provided to gifted or high ability students. Ask specifically for their policy statement on acceleration. If your school already has a program in place, you can contact the special education director, gifted education coordinator, curriculum coordinator, or gifted education teacher for more information.

### **Know How to Communicate**

Now get information about communicating effectively. Effective communication skills are a very important asset in working with the school to address your child's needs. Particularly if you are the one who initiated the meeting, plan to play an active role in the structure and flow of the meeting. It is best to appear confident without being overbearing. A book that can help you with these skills is *Wrightslaw: From Emotions to Advocacy*, 2nd Edition by Pam Wright & Pete Wright (2005).

Dr. Joan Franklin Smutny in her article “Communicating Effectively with Your Child’s School”, (Parenting for High Potential, NAGC, 2002) gives some useful pointers for getting the most out of your teacher conference:

- \* Expect the teacher to be reasonable and understanding, no matter what you’ve heard from other parents or your child. Even unsympathetic teachers respond better to parents who approach them positively than to those who seem already on the defensive.
- \* Start out by thanking the teacher for giving you this time. Express in your tone and manner that you are a reasonable parent who recognizes the daily demands on a teacher and that you appreciate this opportunity to confer with him.
- \* Get straight to the point. State the reason why you felt it necessary to meet with the teacher, and say it in a diplomatic way.
- \* Listen carefully to what the teacher says. Objections to certain requests aren’t necessarily rejections. Keep pressing for other options.
- \* Work for a consensus. Since your goal is to find a solution for your child, try to find some common ground. Be flexible in areas where you can be flexible, but firm on the points that really matter.
- \* Before you leave, make sure all your questions have been answered and that you both know what has been resolved. Repeat back to the teacher what you heard and what you understand has been agreed upon.
- \* Have a timeline for any planned follow-up. Without some agreement about when certain things will happen, chances are, they won’t happen.
- \* Thank the teacher for giving you the time, and say that you will stay in touch.

### **Know Your Legal Rights**

The last area of information that you will need is information about your legal rights. Sometimes, despite your best efforts, your child’s educational needs will not be considered. It’s important to consider next steps. Find out if your state has dispute resolution procedures, such as mediation

and due process. These formal options are not available in all states for issues pertaining to gifted education. Where available, mediation for disputes over educational provisions can be conducted with parties involved and an appointed mediator. Contact your state department of education to determine whether formal mediation and due process are available in the context of gifted education disputes in your state.

Join with other parents for emotional support. Being a parent of a gifted child (or children) is difficult. As unique as each gifted child is, they all need a unique education. A one size fits all education will not meet your child's needs. You are the most important person in ensuring your children receive the education that they deserve. Never give up!

*SENG President Elect Lori Comallie-Caplan is on the Gifted Education Faculty at New Mexico State University and an Independent Educational Consultant. She works with twice exceptional students as a Behavioral Technical Specialist for Las Cruces Public Schools. She is also a Frasier-Talent Assessment Profile Trainer for the State of New Mexico. Over the last 25 years, Ms. Comallie-Caplan has gained public school experience in the field of gifted as teacher, counselor, educational diagnostician and program specialist.*



## **More Resources**

### **SENG ARTICLES**

["Advocacy," by Edward R. Amend](#)

If we are truly to be advocates for our gifted children, if gifted children are to have the support and services they need, we must take every opportunity we can to educate others about the characteristics and needs of gifted children to fight the prevalent negative stereotypes...

["Basic Recipe for Parent Advocates," by Mary Lovell](#)

Sometimes we achieve successful accommodations. Oftentimes we become frustrated, angry, and exasperated. When advocacy goes well, it can be a pleasure to work with others who also care for your child. When it does not, there are sometimes ways to turn it around...

["Do We Know if Gifted Children Are Being Served Appropriately?" by James R. Delisle](#)

My answer to the question of whether we know if gifted children are being served appropriately goes back to a question often asked, wrongly, by parents and educators interested in doing the best for their children. They ask, "Does my school district have a gifted program?"...

["Homework: The Good and the Bad," by Linda Neumann](#)

Homework can serve a meaningful role, and it should enhance your child's learning experience. Appropriate homework will not steal away family fun time and can even strengthen a partnership between parents and teachers...

["Parent-Teacher Conferences," by Arlene DeVries](#)

As a parent, educate yourself regarding school policies, including state and local guidelines for gifted/talented programs. Know your child's strengths and weaknesses. Be comfortable with your child's giftedness...

## **BOOKS**

*Genius Denied: How to Stop Wasting Our Brightest Young Minds*, by Jan Davidson, Bob Davidson, and Laura Vanderkam (Simon and Schuster, 2005)

*Re-Forming Gifted Education: How Parents and Teachers Can Match the Program to the Child*, by Karen B. Rogers (Great Potential Press, 2002)

*Stand Up for Your Gifted Child: How to Make the Most of Kid's Strengths at School and Home*, by Joan F. Smutny (Free Spirit Publishing, 2001)

*They Say My Kid's Gifted: Now What? Ideas for Parents for Understanding and Working with Schools*, by F. Richard Olenchak (Prufrock Press, 1998)

*Wrightslaw: From Emotions to Advocacy*, 2nd Edition, by Pam Wright & Pete Wright (Harbor House Law Press, 2005).

## **ONLINE**

Davidson Institute - Advocating for Exceptionally Gifted Young People (pdf) :  
[http://print.ditd.org/young\\_scholars/Guidebooks/Davidson\\_Guidebook\\_Advocating.pdf](http://print.ditd.org/young_scholars/Guidebooks/Davidson_Guidebook_Advocating.pdf)

Gifted Association of Missouri: <http://www.mogam.org/www/advocacy.shtml>

Hoagies Advocacy Page: <http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/advocacy.htm>

NAGC's Advocacy Toolkit: <http://www.nagc.org/index.aspx?id=36>

A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students, Vol. I & II  
(Templeton National Report on Acceleration):

[http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/nation\\_deceived/](http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/nation_deceived/)

Northwestern University Gifted Advocacy Resources:

<http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/resources/topics/articles/?ResourceCategoryIDs=2>

"Supporting Gifted Education through Advocacy," by Sandra Berger (pdf) :

<http://www.txgifted.org/files/pdf/Supporting%20Gifted%20Education%20Through%20Advocacy.pdf>



## **Day 7: Parenting Supports and Resources**

**By Carolyn Kottmeyer**



You are not alone! Whether you need help finding friends for your gifted children or helping them “fit in” with peers in school, whether you are struggling with your child’s over-sensitivities or existential depression, there are other parents of gifted children struggling with the same things. But how does a parent find them?

### **Online Support Groups**

There are many gifted support communities online. TAGFAM and GT-World, as well as the Davidson Gifted Issues Discussion Forum are some of the most popular parent resources. TAGFAM includes mailing lists for gifted families in general (TAGFAM), for homeschooling gifted families (TAGMAX), and for families of those “more than just plain gifted” kids (TAGPDQ), as well as a list for professionals dealing with gifted students (TAGPROF). The TAGFAM lists can be reached via their website: [tagfam.org](http://tagfam.org). [A full list of hyperlinks for resources in this article appear at the end.]

GT-World is a similar community, with a general list (GT-Families), and two lists for families of our most unique gifted children, the twice-exceptional (2e) or gifted and learning disabled child (GT-Special), and the homeschooling 2e family (GT-Special-Home). GT-World also includes

lists for gifted adults to explore issues relating to their giftedness (GT-Adults), and for gifted adults to explore issues not relating to giftedness (GT-Talk). GT-World lists, as well as a resources website are located at [gtworld.org](http://gtworld.org).

The Davidson Gifted Issues Discussion Forum is a resource provided by the Davidson Institute for Talent Development (DITD). Find the forum at [giftedissues.davidsongifted.org/BB](http://giftedissues.davidsongifted.org/BB). In addition to their forum, DITD also offers a large database of articles on many aspects of giftedness: [www.davidsongifted.org/db](http://www.davidsongifted.org/db).

### **Student Programs**

If you are the parent of an exceptionally or profoundly gifted child ages 5-18 (5-16 at application), the Davidson Young Scholars (YS) program is a completely free program offering parents a variety of resources, including consulting services, an online community, annual and local get-togethers, Ambassador Program, guidebooks and more: [www.davidsonyoungscholars.org](http://www.davidsonyoungscholars.org). If your child qualifies for the YS program, there are many positives to becoming a member of this one-of-a-kind program.

Talent Search programs are available across the U.S. from one of four organizations, depending on your state. Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth (CTY) [cty.jhu.edu](http://cty.jhu.edu) includes students in 19 states, including the east and west U.S. coasts, plus several international locations, Northwestern Center for Talent Development (CTD) [ctd.northwestern.edu](http://ctd.northwestern.edu) includes eight Midwestern states, Duke Talent Identification Program (TIP) [tip.duke.edu](http://tip.duke.edu) covers students in 16 states in the south and southeast, and Center for Bright Kids (CBK) / Western Academic Talent Search (WATS) [centerforbrightkids.org](http://centerforbrightkids.org) covers students in seven Rocky Mountain states. There are also smaller Talent Search programs, including Carnegie Mellon Institute for Talented Elementary Students (C-MITES) in Pennsylvania [cmu.edu/cmities](http://cmu.edu/cmities), and Belin Elementary Student Talent Search (BESTS) in Iowa and Florida [www.education.uiowa.edu/belinblank/TalentSearch](http://www.education.uiowa.edu/belinblank/TalentSearch).

Talent Search programs are characterized by their identification method. Thanks to Julian Stanley of Johns Hopkins, research shows that giving high-achieving students above-level standardized tests results in a new set of results, with the gifted students scoring above the 50th percentile on achievement tests 2-4 grades above their current grade level. The most common Talent Search tests are the SAT and ACT, given to gifted students in 7th or 8th grade instead of



11th or 12th grade. And while taking the SAT or ACT in 7th grade may sound frightening, most gifted children like the challenge of above-level testing, and love the challenge and peer group of the Talent Search classes and camps they can qualify for with these programs.

In addition to your child's test results on a comprehensive above-level achievement test, each Talent Search center offers additional resources, varying by center, including test interpretation materials, assessment services, Duke Gifted Letter [dukegiftedletter.com](http://dukegiftedletter.com), Imagine Magazine [cty.jhu.edu/imagine](http://cty.jhu.edu/imagine), Cogito online community for academically talented youth [cogito.org](http://cogito.org) and more.

## **Resources**

No list of resources would be complete without *A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students* ([nationdeceived.org](http://nationdeceived.org)), a national report that "highlighted the disparity between the research on acceleration and the educational beliefs and practices that often run contrary to the research." This Templeton National Report on Acceleration, endorsed by the National Association for Gifted Children, is published in two volumes that may be downloaded directly from the site. Volume I details over 50 years of positive research on dozens of accelerative options for gifted students. Volume II contains the research that supports Volume I. *A Nation Deceived* has been translated into seven languages: Arabic, Chinese, French, German, Japanese, Russian and Spanish.

Gifted Homeschoolers Forum (GHF) offers discussion forums, conferences, articles, and resources for homeschooling gifted parents: [giftedhomeschoolers.org](http://giftedhomeschoolers.org).

Hoagies' Gifted Education Page is a collection of annotated links, articles, and resources on every aspect of parenting and educating gifted children: [hoagiesgifted.org](http://hoagiesgifted.org) This award-winning comprehensive resource is so large that it's best to use the search box on each page to locate answers to your questions. Or visit and spend time investigating pages of resources for Parents, Educators, and Gifted Kids and Teens.

## **Events and Conferences**

Gifted events and conferences occur in communities large and small across the U.S. and the world. Often the best resources can be found at these conferences, whether you find other parents

and educators facing the same challenges that you face, or your children find other gifted kids who share their passions and intensities, or you find great teaching resources in the vendor area that often accompanies gifted conferences.

### **National, State and Local Gifted Organizations**

Check with your nearest gifted organization for additional resources and information on local activities for gifted children, parents and educators. These organizations are a great place to find other parents and educators, and to share information and ideas. And where there are gifted parents and educators, your kids will find other gifted kids who may just be the peers they crave!

### **Facebook**

It may sound funny, but Facebook has quickly become a great way to find other gifted parents, educators, resources, and more. Many gifted organizations have Facebook community pages. Be sure to check out my favorites: Ingenious, Gifted Homeschoolers Forum, and, of course, Hoagies' Gifted Education Page. And consider creating a Facebook community page for your gifted group... it's a great way to make new friends and share resources!

This variety of resources for parents and educators of gifted children is but the proverbial tip of the gifted resources iceberg. Wherever you live, whatever your needs, remember... You are not alone.

### **Links Mentioned in This Article**

Belen Elementary Student Talent Search:

<http://www.education.uiowa.edu/belinblank/TalentSearch>

Carnegie Mellon Institute for Talented Elementary Students: <http://cmu.edu/cmities>

Center for Bright Kids/Western Academic Talent Search: <http://centerforbrightkids.org>

Cogito Online Community: <http://cogito.org>

Davidson Articles Database: <http://www.davidsongifted.org/db>

Davidson Gifted Issues Discussion Forum: <http://giftedissues.davidsongifted.org/BB>

Davidson Young Scholars Program: <http://www.davidsonyoungscholars.org>

Duke Gifted Letter: <http://dukegiftedletter.com>

Duke Talent Identification Program: <http://tip.duke.edu>

Gifted Homeschoolers Forum: <http://giftedhomeschoolers.org>

GT-World Mailing Lists: <http://gtworld.org>

Hoagies' Gifted Education Page: <http://hoagiesgifted.org>

Imagine Magazine: <http://cty.jhu.edu/imagine>

Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth: <http://cty.jhu.edu>

A Nation Deceived: [http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/nation\\_deceived/](http://www.accelerationinstitute.org/nation_deceived/)

Northwestern Center for Talent Development: <http://ctd.northwestern.edu>

TAGFAM Mailing Lists: <http://tagfam.org>

*SENG Director Carolyn Kottmeyer is the founder and director of Hoagies' Gifted Education Page and Hoagies' Kids and Teens Page. She is a software engineer by training and trade, with bachelors and masters degrees in software engineering. She developed an interest in gifted education a few years after the birth of her first child, when she noticed how different her daughter was, and how the 'normal' path through education didn't seem to fit her. Since 1998, she has written for gifted newsletters and journals around the world, including Our Gifted Children, Gifted Education Communicator, Hollingworth's journal Highly Gifted Children, SENG's newsletter, and a variety of state and local gifted newsletters.*



## More Resources

## SENG ARTICLES

### [SENG-Model Parent Support Groups](#)

SENG Model Parent Groups are structured to bring together 10 to 20 interested parents of gifted and talented children to discuss such topics as motivation, discipline, stress management, and peer relationships. The co-facilitators of the group, though they are knowledgeable about parenting and about educating gifted/talented children, do not attempt to give expert advice to families. Instead their facilitation provides a non-judgmental and nurturing atmosphere....

### ["Coming Full Circle," by Jane Hesslein](#)

When the review of *Guiding the Gifted Child* (Webb, Meckstroth, and Tolan) was published in *The Wall Street Journal* in 1982, my father carefully clipped it out and mailed it to me with a note that said simply: "You need this book"...

### ["Encouraging Emotional Intelligence," by Steven I. Pfeiffer](#)

Gifted children with well-developed social intelligence are at ease with peers and adults, self-confident, able to rein in emotional impulse and master stress, and accurately read social cues and tolerate frustrating situations. They present themselves as friendly and appealing, almost as if they have taken a Dale Carnegie course in "How to Make Friends and Influence People!"...

### ["Gifted Intensities: Liability or Asset?" by Lori Comallie-Caplan](#)

My own child has sensual, imaginal, and emotional overexcitabilities. He is now 25 living in Los Angeles, and I wish there had been a SENG Model Parent Group when he was young. I wish I had the wise advice of other professionals and parents when I was actively parenting him...

### ["Overexcitabilities and the Gifted," by Sharon Lind](#)

Overexcitabilities are inborn intensities indicating a heightened ability to respond to stimuli. Found to a greater degree in creative and gifted individuals, overexcitabilities are expressed in increased sensitivity, awareness, and intensity, and represent a real difference in the fabric of life and quality of experience...

### ["Using Books To Meet the Social and Emotional Needs of Gifted Students," by Judith Wynn Halsted](#)

Reading and then discussing books with children is an easy, readily available, inexpensive, and very pleasant way of helping children think and talk about the situations they face--a non-threatening approach, because they are talking about someone else...

## **BOOKS**

*Early Gifts: Recognizing and Nurturing Children's Talents*, edited by Paula Olszewski-Kubilius, Lisa Limburg-Weber, Steven Pfeiffer (Prufrock Press, 2003)

*Emotional Intensity in Gifted Students: Helping Kids Cope With Explosive Feelings*, by Christine Fonseca (Prufrock Press, 2010)

*How To Talk so Kids Will Listen and Listen so Kids Will Talk*, by Adele Faber and Elaine Mazlish (Avon, 1999)

*Living With Intensity: Understanding the Sensitivity, Excitability, and the Emotional Development of Gifted Children, Adolescents, and Adults*, edited by Susan Daniels and Michael M. Piechowski (Great Potential Press, 2008)

*Raising Your Spirited Child*, Mary Sheedy Kurcinka (Harper Collins Perennial, 1992)

*What Kids Need to Succeed: Proven, Practical Ways to Raise Good Kids* (Revised, Expanded, and Updated Edition), by Peter L. Benson, Judy Galbraith, and Pamela Espeland (Free Spirit Publishing, 1998)

Free Spirit Publishing Parenting Books : <http://www.freespirit.com/parents/parents.cfm>

Great Potential Press Parenting Books: <http://www.giftedbooks.com/products.asp?Grouping=29>

Prufrock Press Parenting Books: <http://www.prufrock.com/showproducts.cfm?WPCID=1059>

## **ONLINE**

Hoagies' Gifted Education Page: <http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/conferences.htm>

Mindware: <http://www.mindwareonline.com>

Ingeniosus Gifted Twitter Chat (#gtchat), hosted by Deborah Mersino:

<http://www.ingeniosus.net/gtchat>

Royal Fireworks Press: <http://www.rfwp.com/index.php>

Talent Development Resources: <http://talentdevelop.com/>



## **About SENG**

In 1981, SENG was formed to bring attention to the unique emotional needs of gifted children. It provided adults with guidance, information, resources, and a forum to communicate about raising and educating these children.

Today, SENG has expanded its goals to focus not only on gifted children, but also on gifted adults. Many schools, communities, and organizations focus on the intellectual needs of gifted individuals. SENG brings attention to the unique social and emotional needs of gifted individuals, which are often misunderstood or ignored. By underwriting and providing education, research, theory building, and staff development, SENG promotes environments where gifted individuals can develop self-esteem, thrive, and utilize their talents.

SENG is an independent, non-profit 501(c)(3) entity with a diverse Board of Directors. Thanks to the generosity of a few of its long-time supporters, SENG has developed the ability to offer a wide variety of services. With the goal of further expanding its activities and reaching more people, SENG also accepts contributions of all sizes from individuals and organizations. Please join us in our work to increase understanding, knowledge, and services for gifted children and adults.

### **Mission**

SENG's mission is to empower families and communities to guide gifted and talented individuals to reach their goals: intellectually, physically, emotionally, socially, and spiritually.

### **Vision**

SENG envisions a world where gifted, talented and creative individuals are supported to build gratifying, meaningful lives and contribute to the well-being of others. To this end, SENNG reaches out to diverse communities that share our mission across the nation and the globe.

**Connect with SENNG**

Web: <http://www.sengifted.org>

Twitter: [http://twitter.com/SENG\\_gifted](http://twitter.com/SENG_gifted)

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/SENGifted>