

Section 11 – Parent and Family Connections

Parents and families play an extremely important role in whether or not a gifted child will reach potential. In addition, parents are much better at identifying giftedness in their children than teachers, unless teachers have had specific on-going training in identification of gifted children. Since it is the parent who profoundly influences children, it is the job of educators to help parents with this awesome responsibility.

Section Includes:

- FAQ's for Parents
- Gifted and Talented Description
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FAQ's for Parents

Gifted & Talented Education - Frequently Asked Questions for Parents

(This document is intended to provide guidelines for interpreting 704 Kentucky Administrative Regulation (KAR) 3:285. Programs for the gifted and talented. Kentucky Department of Education is here to assist in the implementation of this interpretation and/or the regulation.)

Gifted and Talented (GT)
Primary Talent Pool (PTP)
Gifted Student Service Plan (GSSP)

GIFTED & TALENTED STUDENTS

Q: According to 704 KAR 3:285. Programs for the gifted and talented, what defines a GT student?

A: According to state regulation for gifted and talented programs, a gifted and/or talented child is defined as a category of "exceptional students" who are identified as possessing demonstrated or potential ability to perform at an exceptionally high level in general intellectual aptitude, specific academic aptitude, creative or divergent thinking, psychosocial or leadership skills, or in the visual or performing arts.

PROGRAMMING FOR THE GIFTED & TALENTED

Q: What should quality GT programming look like?

A: In any school district, high quality gifted programming requires careful planning, maintenance, and evaluation. Quality GT programming necessitates: clearly articulated policies, procedures and services, primary through grade twelve; a grievance procedure through which a parent, guardian, or student may resolve a concern regarding the appropriate and adequate provision of primary talent pool services or services addressed in a formally identified gifted and talented student's services plan; employment of properly certified and professionally qualified personnel; evidence of appropriate professional development for all personnel working with gifted and talented students; and equitable opportunities for consideration for services at the primary level and in each category of service in grades 4-12.

Q: Can parents have input on local district programming for GT services?

A: District policies and procedures shall ensure that a program evaluation process shall be conducted annually and shall address parent(s) attitudes toward the program.

Q: Must a district assign a GT coordinator for the program?

A: Yes. A district receiving state funding shall designate a properly endorsed GT program coordinator.

Q: What are some of the duties of a GT program coordinator?

A: Some duties include: the oversight of the district GT program; to serve as a liaison between the district and the state; to ensure internal compliance with state statutes and administrative regulation for GT programs; and to administer and revise the GT program budget.

CURRICULUM FOR GT STUDENTS

Q: Should GT students have the same curriculum that is provided for all students?

A: A comprehensive framework or course of study for GT students shall be based on a district or school's curricula that shall be differentiated, supplemented or modified to assist students to further develop their individual interest, needs and abilities.

FORMAL IDENTIFICATION

Q: When are students formally identified for gifted services?

A: Initially, students may be formally identified in the fourth grade. Students who show evidence of giftedness any time during the school year or subsequent grade levels may also be considered. The district shall provide a system for continual diagnostic screening.

Q: When screening for G/T students, is one instrument used?

A: Screening for gifted and talented students must include all five categories of giftedness (general intellectual aptitude, specific academic aptitude, creative or divergent thinking, leadership, and the visual or performing arts). A district shall develop a system for searching the entire school population on a continuous basis for likely candidates for services using both informal and available formal, normed, standardized measures, including measures of nonverbal ability, in all areas.

Q: What can be done if a parent/guardian feels their child has been missed during the identification process?

A: A district must provide a petition system as a safeguard for a student who may have been missed during the identification process.

Q: Can a formally identified GT student be reevaluated for giftedness?

A: No. Once a student is formally identified, a student remains identified and receives gifted services until the student graduates from high school. A student's service options may be reevaluated periodically, and is encouraged, as students' interests, needs and abilities change over time.

Q: If a child is identified as gifted in general intellectual intelligence, does it mean he/she is gifted in all areas of giftedness?

A: No. General intellectual intelligence is one area of possible giftedness. There are five categories of giftedness recognized in Kentucky through regulation; general intellectual aptitude, specific academic aptitude, creative or divergent thinking, leadership, and the visual or performing arts. A student identified in one area does not directly indicate identification in another. Students may be identified in one area or several.

Q: Can formal identification be accepted if a student comes from another school district in Kentucky?

A: Yes. All students in Kentucky, according to the regulation governing gifted and talented programs, must be identified with at least three pieces of qualifying evidence. Therefore, the identification of GT and PTP students from other districts should be honored. Service options may need to be adjusted for those students coming from districts that have less stringent qualifying criteria.

Q: Can formal identification be accepted for a student who moves from another state to Kentucky?

A: No. In order to receive gifted and talented services, the student must meet the identification requirements according to Kentucky's regulation. The students transferred records with evidence or qualifying test data that supports giftedness may be considered; but identification does not transfer from another state to Kentucky.

GIFTED STUDENT SERVICE PLAN (GSSP)

Q: What is a GSSP?

A: A GSSP is an educational plan that matches a formally identified gifted student's (Grades 4-12) interests, needs, and abilities to differentiated service options and serves as the communication vehicle between the parents/guardians and school personnel.

Q: Is a GSSP required for every GT student?

A: Yes. Every formally identified student in grades 4-12 must have a GSSP. A parent/ guardian of a GT student shall be notified annually of services included in the GSSP and given access to specific procedures to follow in requesting a change in services.

Q: May parents/guardians play a role in the development of the GSSP?

A: Yes. A local school district shall implement a procedure to obtain information related to the interests, needs, and abilities of a GT student from the parent/guardian for use in determining appropriate services.

Q: Is the school required to provide any feedback on students' progress?

A: Yes. The school personnel shall report students' progress related to the GT services delineated in the GSSP at least once each semester.

PRIMARY TALENT POOL

Q: What is the Primary Talent Pool?

A: The Primary Talent Pool is a group of primary students (P1-P4; Kindergarten through Third Grade) informally selected as having characteristics and behaviors of a high potential learner and further diagnosed using a series of informal and formal measures to determine differentiated services during the primary program.

Q: What is the benefit of selecting students for the PTP?

A: The benefit of selecting students to participate in the PTP provides early enrichment for those

students whose gifts and talents need to be nurtured in order for those talents to develop further. Additionally, talent development may assist in the formal identification process in fourth grade.

Q: When students become eligible for formal identification in the fourth grade, are PTP students automatically identified as GT?

A: PTP students are not automatically identified as GT once they reach the fourth grade. Specific and more stringent criteria must be met to formally identify a GT student.

Q: Can formal testing be used to select students for the PTP?

A: Yes. However, data from formal, normed measures shall not be used for the purpose of eliminating eligibility for services to a child in the primary program. Formal, normed measures may be used to discover and include eligible students overlooked by informal assessments.

Q: Can a student be selected for the PTP one year and not the next?

A: No. Once a student is in the PTP, the student remains in the talent pool until exiting the third grade (P4). Services may need to be periodically adjusted to fit the individual child's specific needs.

Q: Are parents/guardians to be notified that their child is in the PTP?

A: There is no reference in the GT regulation that parents/guardians are to be notified of student selection for the PTP. Individual districts may decide whether to notify or not and this can be addressed in the district's policies and procedures.

Q: How are services delivered to PTP?

A: For a student in the primary grades, services shall allow for continuous progress through a differentiated curriculum and flexible grouping and regrouping based on the individual needs, interests, and abilities of the student. Emphasis on educating gifted students in the general primary classroom, shall not exclude the continued, appropriate use of resource services, acceleration options, or other specific service options. A recommendation for a service shall be made on an individual basis.

SERVICE DELIVERY OPTIONS

Q: What important information should parents/guardians know about GT service delivery options?

A: Some important information to know: service options are to be provided primary through grade 12; services are to be differentiated to meet individual student needs; grouping and multiple service delivery options shall be utilized in a local district education plan; grouping formats shall include grouping for instructional purposes based on student interests, abilities and needs, including social and emotional; and there shall be multiple service options with no single service existing alone.

Q: According to 704 KAR 3:285. Programs for the gifted and talented, what is differentiation?

A: Differentiation is a method through which educators establish a specific, well thought out match between learner characteristics in terms of abilities, interests, and needs; and curriculum opportunities in terms of enrichment and acceleration options, which maximize learning

experiences. Differentiated service options are educational experiences that extend, replace or supplement learning beyond the standard curriculum.

Q: How are counseling services matched to the needs of gifted children?

A: Recommended best practices suggest that a counselor with any GT students in his/her service population should be prepared to address the needs of those students. Counselors, by the nature of their work, are to be aware of the special needs of the GT population and should prepare through courses of professional development.

Q: What services should be provided for a student identified in visual/performing arts and has no matching class in his/her schedule?

A: All classroom teachers must be made aware of students' identification area(s). Differentiation may be used in terms of interests, products, process, enriched content, etc. Other ideas include securing a mentor, providing a periodic pullout session, independent study, looking to individuals in the community, parents, school personnel, etc. All teachers' input should be reflected on the students' GSSP.

Q: Are there any specific qualifications for a teacher who works with GT students?

A: Direct services to GT students shall be provided by appropriately certified personnel having an endorsement for GT education.

Q: Is it good practice to allow a GT child to tutor another child?

A: If your goal is continuous progress, do not use a GT child as a tutor. If a GT child has mastered a concept or skill, and is partnered with a struggling student, the GT student will not learn anything more by tutoring. However, leadership or other skills may be enhanced, but not the mastered concept or skill.

Q: What recourse does a parent/guardian have if there is a concern regarding appropriate and adequate provision of talent pool services or GT services addressed in a student services plan?

A: A school district shall establish a grievance procedure through which a parent, guardian or student may resolve the concern(s). It is recommended that parents and school districts work together to meet the needs of the individual child.

POLICIES/PROCEDURES

Q: Can a district write more stringent and/or specific guidelines than those outlined in 704 KAR 3:285. Programs for the gifted and talented?

A: Policies and procedures can be written to reflect individual district population and need. The guidelines in 704 KAR 3:285 are minimal requirements.

Q: Can a parent/guardian have access to the district policies and procedures for GT programming?

A: A local school district shall have in operation, and available for public inspection, local board approved policies and procedures which address each requirement in the administrative regulation for GT programming.

References:

- 704 Kentucky Administrative Regulation (KAR) 3:285. Programs for the gifted and talented.
- Primary Talent Pool Frequently Asked Questions; A Publication of the Kentucky Advisory Council for Gifted & Talented Education & the Kentucky Department of Education
- KDE Website: <http://www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Instructional+Resources/Gifted+and+Talented/>

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Gifted and Talented Description

What is it?

Gifted and talented education services provide appropriate instructional/service options for qualifying P-12 students. "Gifted and talented student," a category of exceptional students included within the definition of "exceptional children," 157.200 (1)(n), are those identified as possessing demonstrated or potential ability to perform at an exceptionally high level in general intellectual aptitude, specific academic aptitude, creative or divergent thinking, psychosocial or leadership skills, and/or in the visual or performing arts.

When did it get started?

Kentucky first funded gifted education on a competitive grant basis in 1978. Continued work by gifted education advocates lead to statewide services, endorsement in gifted education for teachers, and a regulation which governs identification and services. The current administrative regulation for gifted and talented education, 704 KAR 3:285, became effective in 1999 following the passage of the Kentucky Education Reform Act (KERA, 1990) and House Bill 519.

How does it work?

A local school district is required to adopt policies and procedures which shall provide for identification and diagnosis of strengths, gifted behaviors and talents through informal selection and diagnosis in the primary program, P1-P4, formal identification and continuous diagnosis of a student in grades four (4) through twelve (12), and provision of multiple service delivery options in primary through grade twelve (12). The system for diagnostic screening and identification of strengths, gifted behaviors, and talents shall provide equal access for racial and ethnic minority, children from low socio-economic backgrounds, and children with disabilities. School personnel shall take into consideration environmental, cultural, and disabling conditions that may mask a child's true abilities that lead to exclusion of otherwise eligible students.

Operational Standards:

- ❖ Articulated, primary through grade twelve (12), multiple service delivery options that are qualitatively differentiated
- ❖ Primary program services provided within the framework of the primary program requirements allowing for continuous progress through a differentiated curriculum and flexible grouping and regrouping based on individual needs
- ❖ Primary program services that shall not preclude the continued, appropriate use of resource services, acceleration options, or specialized service options made on an individual basis
- ❖ An educational plan, Gifted and Talented Student Services Plan (GSSP), grades 4-12, that matches a formally identified gifted student's interests, needs, and abilities to differentiated services
- ❖ Grouping for instructional purposes and multiple services delivery options
- ❖ Grouping formats based on student interests, abilities, and needs, including social and emotional

Student Standards:

- ✓ A comprehensive framework or course of study for children and youth who are diagnosed as possessing gifted characteristics, behaviors and talent with services provided during the regular school day
- ✓ Differentiated, replaced, supplemented, or modified curricula to facilitate high level attainment of the learning goals established in KRS 158.6451
- ✓ Assistance for students identified and diagnosed as gifted and talented to further develop their individual interest, needs and abilities.

What should parents look for?

- Clearly articulated policies in Comprehensive District and School Improvement Plans
- Articulated services, primary through grade twelve (12)
- Knowledge of grievance procedure through which a parent, guardian, or student may resolve a concern regarding the appropriate and adequate provision of talent pool services or services addressed in a formally identified gifted and talented student's GSSP
- Evidence of appropriate professional development for all personnel working with gifted and talented students
- Equitable opportunities for consideration for services at the primary level and in each category of service in grades 4-12

Evidence of Success:

- Opportunity to provide information related to the interests, needs, and abilities of an identified student
- Clear and annually updated Gifted Student Services Plan specifying multiple service options related to the interests, needs, and abilities of the student
- Student progress report, a minimum of one / semester, which is related to goals outlined in the GSSP
- Opportunity for dialogue related to student progress

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Why Choose Math

by Espen Andersen, Associate Professor, Norwegian School
of Management and Associate Editor, Ubiquity

[The following article was written for *Aftenposten*, a large Norwegian newspaper. The article encourages students to choose math as a major subject in high school – not just in preparation for higher education but because having math up to maximum high school level is important in all walks of life. Note: This translation is slightly changed to have meaning outside a Norwegian context.]

Why you should choose math in high school

A recurring problem in most rich societies is that students in general do not take enough math – despite high availability of relatively well paid jobs in fields that demand math, such as engineering, statistics, teaching and technology. Students see math as hard, boring and irrelevant, and do not respond (at least not sufficiently) to motivational factors such as easier admission to higher education or interesting and important work.

It seems to me we need to be much more direct in our attempts to get students to learn hard sciences in general and math in particular. Hence, addressed to current and future high school students, here are 11 reasons to choose lots of math in high school:

1. *Choose math because it makes you smarter.* Math is to learning what endurance and strength training is to sports: the basis that enables you to excel in the specialty of your choice. You cannot become a major sports star without being strong and having good cardiovascular ability. You cannot become a star within your job or excel in your profession unless you can think smart and critically -- and math will help you do that.
2. *Choose math because you will make more money.* Winners of American Idol and other “celebrities” may make money, but only a tiny number of people have enough celebrity to make money, and most of them get stale after a few years. Then it is back to school, or to less rewarding careers (“Would you like fries with that?”). If you skip auditions and the sports channels and instead do your homework -- especially math -- you can go on to get an education that will get you a well-paid job. Much more than what pop singers and sports stars make -- perhaps not right away, but certainly if you look at averages and calculate it over a lifetime.
3. *Choose math because you will lose less money.* When hordes of idiots throw their money at pyramid schemes, it is partially because they don’t know enough math. Specifically, if you know a little bit about statistics and interest calculations, you can look through economic lies and wishful thinking. With some knowledge of hard sciences you will probably feel better, too, because you will avoid spending your money and your hopes on alternative medicine, crystals, magnets and other swindles -- simply because you *know* they don’t work.
4. *Choose math to get an easier time at college and university.* Yes, it is hard work to learn math properly while in high school. But when it is time for college or university, you can skip reading pages and pages of boring, over-explaining college texts. Instead, you can look at a chart or a formula, and understand how things relate to each other. Math is a language, shorter and more effective than other languages. If you know math, you can work smarter, not harder.
5. *Choose math because you will live in a global world.* In a global world, you will compete for the interesting jobs against people from the whole world -- and the smart kids in Eastern Europe, India and China regard math and other “hard” sciences as a ticket out of poverty and social degradation. Why not do as they do -- get knowledge that makes you viable all over the world, not just in your home country?
6. *Choose math because you will live in a world of constant change.* New technology and new ways of doing things change daily life and work more and more. If you have learned math, you can learn *how* and *why* things work, and avoid scraping by through your career, supported by Post-It

Notes and Help files -- scared to death of accidentally pressing the wrong key and running into something unfamiliar.

7. *Choose math because it doesn't close any doors.* If you don't choose math in high school, you close the door to interesting studies and careers. You might not think those options interesting now, but what if you change your mind? Besides, math is most easily learned as a young person, whereas social sciences, history, art and philosophy benefit from a little maturing -- and some math.
8. *Choose math because it is interesting in itself.* Too many people -- including teachers -- will tell you that math is hard and boring. But what do they know? You don't ask your grandmother what kind of game-playing machine you should get, and you don't ask your parents for help in sending a text message. Why ask a teacher -- who perhaps got a C in basic math and still made it through to his or her teaching certificate -- whether math is hard? If you do the work and stick it out, you will find that math is fun, exciting, and intellectually elegant.
9. *Choose math because you will meet it more and more in the future.* Math becomes more and more important in all areas of work and scholarship. Future journalists and politicians will talk less and analyze more. Future police officers and military personnel will use more and more complicated technology. Future nurses and teachers will have to relate to numbers and technology every day. Future car mechanics and carpenters will use chip-optimization and stress analysis as much as monkey wrenches and hammers. There will be more math at work, so you will need more math at school.
10. *Choose math so you can get through, not just into college.* If you cherry-pick the easy stuff in high school, you might come through with a certificate that makes you eligible for a college education. Having a piece of paper is nice, but don't for a second think this makes you ready for college. You will notice this as soon as you enter college and have to take remedial math programs, with ensuing stress and difficulty, just to have any kind of idea what the professor is talking about.
11. *Choose math because it is creative**. Many think math only has to do with logical deduction and somehow is in opposition to creativity. The truth is that math can be a supremely creative force if only the knowledge is used right, not least as a tool for problem solving during your career. A good knowledge of math in combination with other knowledge makes you more creative than others.
12. ** Choose math because it is cool.* You have permission to be smart, you have permission to do what your peers do not. Choose math so you don't have to, for the rest of your life, talk about how math is "hard" or "cold". Choose math so you don't have to joke away your inability to do simple calculations or lack of understanding of what you are doing. Besides, math will get you a job in the cool companies, those that need brains.

*This point was added by Jon Holtan, a mathematician who works with the insurance company If.

You don't have to become a mathematician (or an engineer) because you choose math in high school. But it helps to choose math if you want to be smart, think critically, understand how and why things relate to each other, and to argue effectively and convincingly.

Math is a sharp knife for cutting through thorny problems. If you want a sharp knife in your mental tool chest -- *choose math!*

Characteristics of Creative Gifted

- A. High sensitivity
- B. Excessive amounts of energy.
- C. Bored easily and may appear to have a short attention span.
- D. Requires emotionally stable and secure adults around him/her.
- E. Will resist authority if it not democratically oriented.
- F. Have preferred ways of learning; particularly in reading and mathematics.
- G. May become easily frustrated because of his/her big ideas and not having the resources or people to assist him/her in carrying these tasks to fruition.
- H. Learns from an exploratory level and resists rote memory and just being a listener.
- I. Cannot sit still unless absorbed in something of his/her own interest.
- J. Very compassionate and has many fears such as death and loss of loved ones.
- K. If they experience failure early, may give up and develop permanent learning blocks.

Gifted children may also withdraw when they feel threatened or alienated and may sacrifice their creativity in order to "belong". Many children that we test exhibit a high IQ, but they often exhibit "frozen" creativity as well. Often there is an ability to express their feelings initially. We work to assist the child to become open, flexible and to be able to accept failure by developing higher frustration levels.

Leah Ellis

Communicating with Culturally Diverse Parents of Exceptional Children

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Teachers and other professionals providing education-related services to exceptional children from different cultural backgrounds need to be aware of unique perspectives or communication styles common to those cultures. The ways people deal with feelings--especially disappointment, anxiety, fear, embarrassment, and anger--vary considerably, and often it is not easy to discern how parents are reacting to the realization that their child has a disability. It is especially important to help parents who have been outside the mainstream of U.S. education understand the educational options available. To do this, professionals need to be sensitive to the different values, experiences, and beliefs that may be held by members of various cultural and ethnic groups toward special education.

USE LANGUAGE PARENTS CAN UNDERSTAND AND USE SENSITIVITY IN COMMUNICATING.

To facilitate communication, educators should use the following guidelines:

- * Send messages home in the parent's native language.
- * Use an appropriate reading level.
- * Listen to messages being returned.

Courtesy, sincerity, and ample opportunity and time to convey concerns can promote communication with and participation by parents from different cultural backgrounds (Johnson & Ramirez, 1987). During meetings it is important to provide ample opportunity for parents to respond without interrupting. If a parent is formulating a response and has not expressed himself or herself quickly, this delay should not be viewed as a lack of interest in responding. Educators need to listen with empathy and realize that parents can change from feelings of trust to skepticism or curiosity as their understanding of programs and policies increases. It is important to realize that this reaction is normal and that parents may feel hostile or desperate as they attempt to sort out facts from their fundamental beliefs about education.

In communicating with families from different cultural groups, educators should keep in mind their diverse cultural styles. There is no one set of characteristics that can be ascribed to all members of any ethnic group. Instead, the cultural traits of individuals range from those traditionally attributed to the ethnic group to those that are descriptive of a person who has been totally assimilated into the majority culture (Carter & Segura, 1979). Unfortunately, much of the literature describing individuals from minority groups reinforces existing stereotypes. This digest offers some observations about different cultural styles that should be considered cautiously in communications with families of differing cultural backgrounds (Cloud & Landurand, 1988; Johnson & Ramirez, 1987; Taylor, 1989).

Sharing Space. People from different cultures use, value, and share space differently. In some cultures it is considered appropriate for people to stand very close to each other while talking, whereas in other cultures people like to keep farther apart. For example, Hispanics often view Americans as being distant because they prefer more space between speakers. On the other hand, Americans often view individuals who come too close as pushy or invading their private space.

Touching. Rules for touching others vary from culture to culture. In Hispanic and other Latin cultures, two people engaged in conversation are often observed touching and individuals usually embrace when greeting each other. In other cultures, people are more restrained in their greetings. In the Asian/Vietnamese cultures, for example, it is not customary to shake hands with individuals of the opposite sex.

Eye Contact. Among African Americans it is customary for the listener to avert the eyes, whereas Euro-Americans prefer to make direct eye contact while listening. Among Hispanics, avoidance of direct eye

contact is sometimes seen as a sign of attentiveness and respect, while sustained direct eye contact may be interpreted as a challenge to authority.

Time Ordering of Interactions. The maxim "business before pleasure" reflects the "one activity at a time" mindset of U.S. mainstream culture. Some cultures, however, are polychronic, that is, people typically handle several activities at the same time. Before getting down to business, Hispanics generally exchange lengthy greetings, pleasantries, and talk of things unrelated to the business at hand. Social interactions may continue to be interwoven throughout the conversation.

PROVIDE PARENTS WITH INFORMATION.

Much of the need for information can be satisfied through regularly scheduled meetings, conferences, and planning sessions for a child's individualized education program (IEP). Educators may assume that their own familiarity with public policy is shared by parents of children with disabilities. Usually, this is not the case. Most parents of culturally diverse children with disabilities need help in understanding the basic tenets of the law, including their own rights and responsibilities.

SUPPORT PARENTS AS THEY LEARN HOW TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SYSTEM.

Schools must make a sincere commitment to consider parents as partners in their children's education. Professionals who are attempting to work and communicate with parents of children with disabilities should be prepared to support the parents' rights and responsibilities. In essence, professionals should adopt the role of advocate. Parents from culturally diverse backgrounds should be encouraged to join parent organizations and share their cultural points of view. Educators and other professionals should recognize parents' needs for the following:

- * Assurance that they should not feel guilty about their child's disability.
- * Acceptance of their feelings without labeling.
- * Acceptance of them as people, rather than as a category.
- * Help in seeing the positive aspects of the future.
- * Recognition of what a big job it is to raise a child with disabilities and help in finding programs, services, and financial resources to make it possible for them to do the job with dignity.

Using these guidelines for communication, teachers and other professionals can assist parents of culturally diverse children with disabilities not only to combat feelings of isolation, but also to achieve a sense of belonging.

ENCOURAGE PARENTAL PARTICIPATION AT HOME.

A growing body of research evidence suggests that important benefits are gained by school-aged children when their parents provide support, encouragement, and direct instruction at home and when home-school communication is active. Children who receive parental help read much better than children who do not. Even instruction by highly competent specialists at school does not produce gains comparable to those obtained when students are tutored by their parents at home (Hewison & Tizard, 1980). Even illiterate parents can promote the acquisition of reading skills by motivating their children, providing an environment that promotes the acquisition of literacy skills, providing comparative and contrasting cultural information, asking the children to read to them, and encouraging verbal interaction about written material.

RESOURCES

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Parent Involvement

http://www.comalisd.org/Handbooks_Brochures/2007_08Curriculum/GT%20Handbook.pdf

Parents share an important responsibility with the schools in helping their children to achieve their maximum potential. Comal ISD has an active parent advisory council that meets periodically to discuss issues and opportunities concerning gifted/talented education. Meeting days and times are posted on the district website and all parents are encouraged to attend.

The following are some common goals of parent groups:

- Meet with others for support and encouragement
- Find other children with similar interests with whom you child may interact
- Find more information about gifted/talented children and their needs
- Arrange speakers and contacts to provide guidance in addressing these needs and their associated joys and problems
- Provide a forum for discussion of ideas about program options
- Be an instrument in planning and improvement of program options
- Disseminate information about enrichment activities
- Network with parents from other support groups in other communities

What Gifted Students Want from Their Parents

http://www.comalisd.org/Handbooks_Brochures/2007_08Curriculum/GT%20Handbook.pdf

According to a survey by Galbraith and Delisle in *Gifted Kids Survival Guide*, these are the top ten things gifted students wish their parents would do (or not do):

1. Be supportive and encouraging; be there for us; be on our side.
2. Don't expect too much of us; don't expect perfection.
3. Don't pressure us, be too demanding, or push too hard.
4. Help us with our schoolwork/homework.
5. Help us to develop our talents.
6. Be understanding.
7. Don't expect straight A's.
8. Allow us some independence; give us space; trust us, because chances are we know what we're doing.
9. Talk to us; listen to us.
10. Let us try alternative education/special programs.

What Parents Can Do

<http://gtrg-d303.org/d303docs/district303gthandbook.pdf>

Love, laugh, learn, and listen. Encourage the support of extended family and friends. Raising and nurturing a gifted child can be exciting, yet daunting and challenging!

Learn to be positive. Giftedness can be an exciting challenge or a chore, depending on how you see a child's characteristics. For example, persistence and stubbornness are the same trait.

Understand the way that your child's giftedness affects his or her needs: intellectual, social, emotional, and physical. For example, ideas forged by eight-year-old minds may be difficult to produce with five-year-old hands.

Read aloud to your child. It is important that parents read to their gifted child often, even if the child is already capable of reading.

Help your child discover personal interests. Stimulation and support of interests are vital to the development of talents. Parents should expose their children to their own interests and encourage each child to learn about a wide variety of subjects, such as art, nature, music, and sports, in addition to traditional academic subjects.

Speak and listen to your child with consideration and respect. From the time he or she can talk, a gifted child is constantly asking questions and will often challenge authority. "Do it because I said so" often doesn't work well. Generally, a gifted child will cooperate more with parents who take the time to explain requests.

Teach your child how to find information and resources in a variety of ways. Gifted children need to know, to learn, to solve, and to ponder. There will be times when your child's expertise on a topic will be greater than yours, and you will not be able to provide answers or solutions. Prepare them for the future!

Become involved in a local, state, or regional parent group, or join an e-mail listserv. Parents of gifted children need opportunities to share, and many of them are great teachers!

Be a knowledgeable advocate. The brighter the child, the greater his or her emotional complexity and potential vulnerability. Approach schools in a positive, cooperative manner.

Be a vocal advocate! Federal, state and local government agencies need to hear your voice... OFTEN...about the need for continued support for and expansion of gifted education opportunities in our schools.

The key to raising gifted children is to respect their uniqueness, their opinions and ideas, and their dreams. It can be painful for parents when their children feel out of sync with others, but it is unwise to put too much emphasis on the importance of fitting in. Children get enough of that message in the outside world. At home they need acceptance and appreciation for being themselves.

Adapted from S. Berger's Keys to Raising a Gifted Child. Learning Network, <http://familyeducation.com>

Understanding the Social and Emotional Issues of Gifted Kids

Pat Schuler, Ph.D., NCC, LMHC

(Text below came directly from a formatted PowerPoint presentation.
However, formatting for that presentation was lost during importing.)

Giftedness

“Exceptional children” who are identified as possessing demonstrated or potential ability to perform at an exceptionally high level in general intellectual aptitude, specific academic aptitude, creative or divergent thinking, psychosocial or leadership skills, or in the visual or performing arts.

--Kentucky

Giftedness

Giftedness is asynchronous development in which advanced cognitive abilities and heightened intensity combine to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively different from the norm. This asynchrony increases with higher intellectual capacity. The uniqueness of the gifted renders them particularly vulnerable and requires modifications in parenting, teaching, and counseling in order for them to develop optimally.

Intellectual Characteristics

- ___ exceptional reasoning ability
- ___ intellectual curiosity
- ___ rapid learning rate
- ___ facility with abstraction
- ___ complex thought processes
- ___ vivid imagination
- ___ early moral concern
- ___ passion for learning
- ___ powers of concentration
- ___ analytical thinking
- ___ divergent thinking/creativity
- ___ keen sense of justice
- ___ capacity for reflection

Personality Characteristics

- ___ insightfulness
- ___ need to understand
- ___ need for mental stimulation
- ___ perfectionism
- ___ need for precision/logic
- ___ excellent sense of humor
- ___ sensitivity/empathy
- ___ intensity
- ___ perseverance
- ___ acute self-awareness
- ___ nonconformity
- ___ questioning of rules/authority
- ___ tendency toward introversion

--Columbus Group, 1991

Intensity Takes Many Forms

- Thought** “Her mind is always whirring.”
- Purpose** “Once he makes up his mind to do something, he’s not satisfied until it’s accomplished.”
- Emotion** “She internalizes everything anyone says about her.”
- Spirit** “He’s always looking out for someone less fortunate who needs help.”

Soul

“She asks questions that philosophers have asked for centuries and gets upset when we can’t give her definitive answers to them.”

Delisle, 1999

Perfectionism & Gifted Adolescents

HEALTHY THEME

Order & organization

FACTORS

- Support Systems
- Friends, teachers, parents
- Personal Effort
- Acknowledged abilities
- Hard working
- Personal Traits

UNHEALTHY THEME

Concern over mistakes

FACTORS

- Perceived Expectations
- Parents, peers, teachers,self
- Perceived Criticism
- family, peers, teachers,self

Schuler, 1997

Learning Styles of the Gifted

Accelerated:

- interested in mastering & integrating increasingly complex material
- ability to learn fast
- recall large amounts of information fast
- highly efficient information-processors
- crave new information, harder problems
- sense of fulfillment: mastering higher & higher levels of material & applying it to solve problems of increasing difficulty
- high achievers in well-defined discipline
- succeed in curricular systems-stress knowledge acquisition, linear skill building, logical analysis
- may be indifferent to academic subject areas
- **sources of stress:** lock-step learning, endless drill & practice, fear of failure, socially immature
- **need:** help setting realistic goals, social skills

Enriched:

- wholly involved or immersed in a problem-forms a “relationship” with a problem
- focus on the problem as an end in itself rather than as a means to obtain more knowledge
- their relationship to problem
- and the learning process
- highly emotional, imaginative, internally motivated, curious, driven to explore
- reflective and emotionally mature
- passionate about a subject, project, cause
- aren’t especially concerned with achievement
- invest great deal of emotional energy
- **require** teachers who are sensitive to intensity
- feelings: frustration, passion, enthusiasm, idealism, anger, despair
- **need:** adult support to persist and/or harness energies more efficiently

(Colangelo & Zaffran)

Learning Styles

- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------|----------------------|
| • Visual | • Individual | • Written Expressive |
| • Auditory | • Group | • Sequential |
| • Bodily-kinesthetic | • Oral Expressive | • Global |

Introversion

- territorial-private time/space
- happy to be alone-lonely in crowd
- become drained in groups
- need time alone to recharge
- prefers to work alone
- acts cautiously meeting people
- reserved, quiet, deliberate
- do not enjoy being center of attention
- do not share private thoughts with just anyone
- form a few deep attachments
- select activities carefully, thoughtfully
- think carefully before speaking
- see reflection as very important
- concentrate well, deeply
- become absorbed in thoughts and ideas
- limit their interests but explore deeply
- communicate best 1:1
- get agitated, irritated without enough time alone or undisturbed

Strategies to Help Introverts in School

- internal reflective focus-honor need for structure, quiet, small groups
- independent studies, small group instruction, collaborative learning activities, tiered instruction, debate, dramatics or role-playing, journaling, quiet time, book clubs, etc.

Strategies to Help Extraverts in School

- high stimulation, movement and activity throughout classroom
- lots of contact with others

Strategies to Help Introverts at Home

- provide private space
- guarantee quiet time
- model “alone” not “lonely” talk
- protect their right to say “enough”
- provide small group activities

Extraversion

- social, need other people
- demonstrate high energy and noise
- communicate with excitement, enthusiasm
- draw energy from people, love parties
- lonely and restless when not with other people
- establish multiple fluid relationships
- engage in lots of activities and have many interest areas
- have many best friends and talk to them for long periods of time
- are interested in external events not internal ones
- prefer face-to-face verbal communication rather than written communication
- share personal information easily
- respond quickly

Burris & Kaenzig, 1999 SENG

- like lectures, expository & deductive modes of instruction
- need wait time, warning about what they are expected to do
- activities with minimal noise and stimulation
- down time built into schedule
- moderate amounts of small group work

- open spaces for working
- like open discussions and discovery activities

- provide coping strategies for those times when they have to act extraverted
- talk about your own personality needs
- discuss books that feature introverts-bibliotherapy

Burris & Kaenzig www.sengifted.org

Framework for Understanding Gifted Children/Adolescents

Manaster & Powell 1983

3 CONDITIONS WHICH DEFINE ADJUSTMENT PROBLEMS

1. Out of Stage
2. Out of Phase
3. Out of Sync

Out of Stage

Gifted children/adolescents are different from average adolescents in their stage of cognitive and related development and/or in the quality and variety of their talents

Type of Problem

- boredom
 - frustrated by traditional instruction
- multi-talented
 - isolated interests & talents
- perfectionism
 - discontent-short of own goals
- pressures for success
 - pressure to achieve
 - unrealistic expectations of being gifted
- success masks student's needs
 - desensitizes us to their needs
- uneven development
 - asynchrony

External Barriers for Cognitive/Affective Growth of Gifted Students

- Low expectations-parents, family members; teachers; stereotypic beliefs and myths
- Grouping by age
- Policy-national, state, local (one-size fits all; fear of causing arrogance?)
- Lack of understanding of social/emotional/cognitive needs
- Family conditions: perceived lack of support and nurturance; family problems

(Nevitt, 1999; Roberts, 2001)

How to Deal with Issue of BOREDOM

- Examine your child's definition of boredom
- Speak with your child's teacher about the situation
- Speak with other parents. Your child may not be the only one experiencing this problem.
- Explore other alternatives that will "liven up" an otherwise dull assignment.
- Ask your "friendly" librarian for suggestions regarding possible sequels to assigned literature.

Perfectionism

- perfectionism is influenced by environment positive motivator or stressor
- recognize your own & others' perfectionistic tendencies
- set priorities, help your child to set them as well
- model acceptance of mistakes
- set high but realistic standards
- time, effort, not giving up
- see themselves as problem-solver, hard worker, healthy
- negative emotions are normal-expressed in healthy ways
- help child improve self-evaluation skills-emphasize process & improvement
- show child inherent dignity & self-worth-avoid comparisons
- recognize, support, nurture interests, passions
- use humor, have fun
- teach that health is important-encourage relaxation
- seek professional counseling if child is unable to act or becomes fearful of rejection

Statements:

- Yard by yard it's hard. Inch by inch it's a cinch.
- Teach courage: I know you can try
- You kept on trying even when you didn't know how it would turn out.
- What did you learn while you were doing this?
- What part did you enjoy the most?
- What might you try next time?
- How might you do it differently next time?
- Call work "practice"

Out of Phase

Gifted children/adolescents, possibly because they are Out of Stage, have abilities & interests at variance from their average peers & are themselves unable or unwilling to fit in socially due to these apparent differences

Socialization - the ability to adapt to the needs of the group

Social Development - a deep, comfortable level of self-acceptance that leads to true friendships with others

Type of Problem

- **Alienation**
 - distance from/without peer groups
 - divergent thinking/creativity
 - especially early adolescence
 - versus wish to be accepted
- **Sensitivity**
 - mixed blessing: asset, liability (manipulating others)
 - to issues not relevant to peers
 - to interpersonal relationships
- **Deficit Social Skills**
 - higher IQ-sometimes more difficult to become socially adjusted

Social Coping among Gifted Adolescents/Preadolescents

Six Factors

- denying giftedness
- focus on popularity
- social interaction
- **Males:** more likely to use humor
- **Females:** social interaction greater, denial of giftedness at older ages
- **Issues of popularity:** rises in middle school, levels off in high school
- Swiatek, 2002
- humor
- conformity
- denying effect of giftedness on peer acceptance

When your child feels left out...

- Are your child's perceptions accurate?

- Restate the problem & try to get your child to think through what happened & what his or her options were
- Ask:
 - Why do you think he or she left you out?
 - What else could you have done?
 - Could you have played with someone else?

Out of Sync

Gifted children/adolescents, either because they are **Out of Stage** or **Out of Phase**, or **both**, feel that they are different, whether in positive or negative, self-enhancing or self-deflating ways, and feel they do not, should not or cannot fit in.

Type of Problem

- self-concept problems
 - self-image problems
 - excessive self-criticism
 - poor self-concept
- insecurity and anxiety
 - due to perceived: physical deficits, different interests, self-direction
- too much, too cognitive
 - attention given to cognitive development than to emotional needs- “burn out”-tired of extra work
- severe psychological problems
 - caused by accumulated environmental insensitivity
 - maladjustment increases with age

Irrational Beliefs of Some Gifted Children

1. Everyone must like me.
2. I must like everyone.
3. There's nothing left to learn and no one around who can teach me anything.
4. If I'm not popular than I'm a social outcast.
5. The majority is always right.
6. The majority is always wrong.
7. If I'm so smart I should be able to make friends easily.
8. No one will find me physically attractive enough to want to date me.
9. Friendship doesn't matter as long as you like yourself.
10. Boys are supposed to be smart, girls are supposed to be popular.

Adolescents

Needs

Independence
 Self-directions
 Models
 Defining oneself
 Taken seriously
 Acceptance, rejection
 Process of adolescence

Gifted Adolescents

Issues

Ownership
 Dissonance
 Risk-taking
 Others' expectations
 Impatience
 Identity
 Sexuality

Predictable Crises of Gifted Adolescents

- underachievement and pressure to conform
- fear of success by adolescent females because of conflicting social messages
- developmental immaturity, especially by boys with visual/motor developmental lags
- multipotentiality (overchoice dilemma)
- nonsuccess or “paralyzed perfectionism” due to stronger competition & higher goals

Blackburn & Erickson, 1986

Mistakes Gifted Young People Too Often Make

- Misunderstand what giftedness actually means in their lives
- Hold unrealistically high expectations for their own achievement
- Confuse the means and the ends of their accomplishments
- Overvalue their cognitive dimensions at the expense of their affective natures
- View giftedness as an entitlement

Kaplan, 1983

Symptoms of undesirable levels of anxiety in gifted children

- decreased performance
- reluctance to work on team
- excessive sadness/rebellion
- extremes of activity/inactivity
- repetition of rules & directions to make sure they can be followed
- avoidance of new ventures unless certain of the outcome
- deep concern with personal powerlessness
- expression of low self-esteem
- reluctance to make choices or suggestions
- a change in noise or quietude
- other marked changes in personality

Dirkes, 1983

Three kinds of depression associated with gifted children/adolescents

- perfectionism: desire to live up to standards of morality, responsibility & achievement they may have set impossibly high
- alienation: feeling cut off from other people
- existential: intense concerns about the basic problems of human existence; personal worry about the meaning of the child’s own life

Webb, Meckstroth, Tolan, 1983

Signs that Individual Counseling is Needed

- intense competitiveness
- social isolation
- alienation within the family
- inability to control anger
- excessive manipulateness
- chronic underachievement
- depression or continual boredom
- sexual acting out
- evidence of abuse of any kind
- recent traumatic experiences/ loss of a loved one

How adults can help gifted children/adolescents be good at some things that are unpopular with their friends

- connect child with others-near peers-who recently lived through the same fears of social ostracism
- encourage young artists, activists, & chess champs to surround themselves with others like themselves
- remind them that life changes, that things do get better
- remind them to be on guard against their own half-buried stereotypes

Delisle, 1992

Suggestions for Educators, Parents, Counselors

1. Encourage controlled risk-taking
2. Provide myriad social experiences for gifted students
3. Inventory family similarities and differences as compared to schoolmates
4. Encourage reading of biographies of eminent people
5. Provide mentorship opportunities for gifted students
6. Love and respect gifted students for who they are
7. Encourage a self-concept that extends far beyond the academic self-concept

Cross, 1998

The most important task a gifted Child/adolescent faces:

Building a “Comfortable Alliance” with their abilities and talents

Successful Gifted Adults Recall

- a parent or relative who took personal interest in their talent area
- parent(s) who valued their talents
- parent(s) who assumed they wanted to develop their special talents
- parent(s) who encouraged and rewarded development of the talent through home activities

Bloom & Sosniak (1981)

Three Critical Family Dynamics

- interacting cooperatively (as democratically as possible)
- minimizing conflict (don't hide it, work things out respectfully)
- maximizing freedom of personal expression

(Bloom & Sosniak, 1981; Cornell & Grossberg, 1987; Goertzel & Goertzel, 1987)

Model Families

- place high value on learning (not just schooling)
- cultivate the joy of learning and support the need to create
- recognize and respect their gifted child's talents
- maintain strong social values and convictions
- are intolerant of excessive childhood rebellion
- have stable family environments

Seeley, 1989

Families of the Gifted Can:

- monitor the family context
- allow broad freedom
- establish clear rules and expectations
- emphasize and model inner control & reward
- offer challenging opportunities
- invest time and effort toward excellence
- separate the act from the person
- avoid letting giftedness become central focus of relationships
- express love & care openly

Cskiszentmihalyi, 1987

ADVOCACY : PARENTS AS PARTNERS

FIVE "KNOWS" For Parent Advocates:

- Know yourself and where you stand
- Know what you are facing
- Know the law and how to make it work for you
- Know who's who in the school system
- Know when, where, and how to contact people in education

Humphreys, GCT, 1987

BUILDING BLOCKS:

- Be a welcome person in your child's school
- Consider how you can enhance the system's needs, control, prestige
- Invest in your personal relationship with school personnel
- Ask your child how you can help & what you can discuss with the teacher
- Express appreciation for the teacher for a specific behavior
- Talk with the teacher about your child's strengths, interests, & sensitivities as perceived at school & at home
- Monitor & document
- Subscribe to gifted periodicals & pass them on to teachers
- If you are angry, stay home. Go to school when you are ready to support & negotiate

Meckstroth, *Understanding Our Gifted*, 1989

ADVOCATING FOR GIFTED CHILDREN

- Obtain an accurate assessment of your child's abilities
- Work hard to establish a good relationship with your child's school
- Provide school, church or synagogue, and other community agencies, with information about gifted children
- Remember - you are paving the way for other families
- Gradually teach your child to advocate for himself or herself
- Work with others to establish state & federal mandate guaranteeing the rights of gifted children to a free & appropriate public education
- Finally, take care of yourself.

Kearney, *Understanding Our Gifted*, 1993

Self-Advocacy for Gifted Children !!!

- Understand your rights and responsibilities
- Assess your learner profile
- Educational data
- Student interest
- Personality
- Learning styles
- Just for fun
- Consider available options
- Connect with advocates

Douglas, *Parenting for High Potential*, Dec.'04

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