



**Social Emotional Development  
and Needs of the Gifted**

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# JHU offers an 18-credit certificate in Gifted Education and a 33- credit Master of Science degree in Gifted Education

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# Objectives



- Discuss key issues related to the affective development and needs of the gifted.
- Understand research-based interventions and strategies that can be used in the classroom or at home to support the positive social and emotional development of the gifted.
- Learn about COMAR and state requirements to address affective needs of gifted and talented learners in MD.
- Discuss protective factors and risk factors common among the gifted.

# Websites for Parents

Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)

[www.sengifted.org](http://www.sengifted.org)

National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC)

[www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org)

Davidson Institute for Talent Development

<https://www.davidsongifted.org/>

Johns Hopkins University Center for Talented Youth (CTY)

<http://cty.jhu.edu/>

Maryland Coalition for Gifted and Talented Education

[mcgate.org](http://mcgate.org)

Hoagies Gifted Education

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

# Pre-Test: True or False?

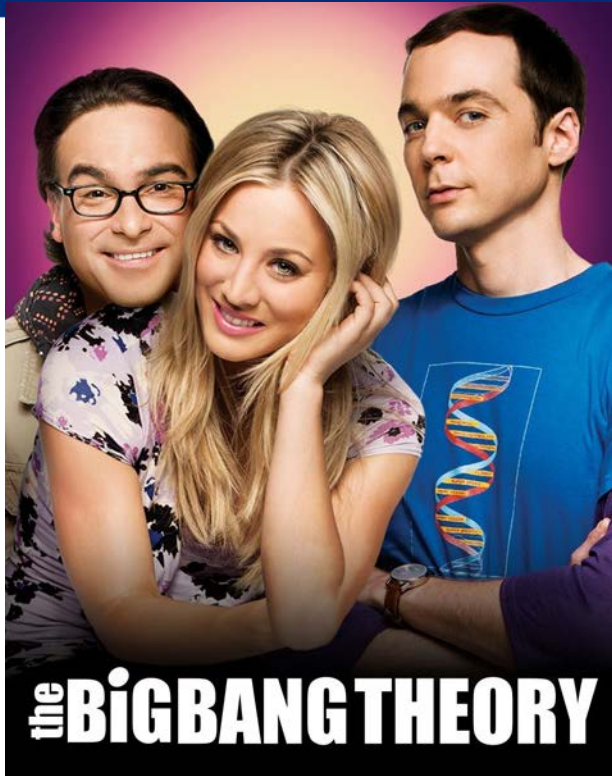
- 1) Gifted Children are more likely to be socially inept.
- 2) Some affective challenges are more common among the gifted than non-gifted classmates.
- 3) Perfectionism is a debilitating factor among the gifted.
- 4) Gifted males are more at risk than gifted females.
- 5) Asynchronous development can present challenges with social relationships.
- 6.) Underachievement is reversible.

# WARM UP



- How do you define “gifted?”
- What do you know or believe to be true about the social and emotional development of gifted learners?
- What are some common myths about the social and emotional development of the gifted?

# What are some common myths?



# Asynchronous Development

According to Morelock (1992), asynchrony is the term used to describe the mismatch between cognitive, emotional, and physical development of gifted individuals.



Download a hot sheet on [Asynchronous Development from NAGC here.](#)



# Asynchronous Development

The Columbus Group defined giftedness as follows in 1991:

*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.*

# Asynchronous Development and Levels of Giftedness

- The higher the ability, the greater the difference from the average, and the more likely it is that the student will not “fit” with other students of the same age.
- Gross stated, “The more highly gifted the child, the greater the likelihood that she will experience difficulties in social relationships with children of her own age.”
- Hollingworth “[socially optimal intelligence](#)”

See articles: [Play Partner or Sure Shelter](#) by Miraca Gross  
And [The Me Behind the Mask](#)

# What do you think?

Why should we be concerned with addressing affective needs of gifted learners in school?



# Rationale



“Social and emotional needs are at the heart of well-being and the foundation for achievement for all children. Many of gifted children need targeted assistance with peer relationships, perfectionism, asynchronous development, situational stressors, and post secondary planning.”

Neihart, M. (2016). The social and emotional needs of gifted children: What do we know. NAGC Webinar.

# Negative Outcomes

When gifted learners' social and emotional needs are not addressed, they may experience negative outcomes including one or more of the following:

- Underachievement
- Development of a “false self”
- Depression/Suicide



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=721baBnIK4U>

No empirical data support the myth that gifted students are at a greater risk for depression and suicide, except for students who are creatively gifted.

# COMAR Requirements

## Chapter 13A.04.07 Gifted and Talented Education

### 03 Programs and Services

C. Each school system **shall consider** implementing programs and services for gifted and talented students that:

(1) Provide a continuum of appropriately differentiated academic programs and services in grades PreK-12 during the regular school day for identified gifted and talented students.

**(2) Provide programs and services to support the social and emotional growth of gifted and talented students.**

(3) Provide programs and services to inform and involve parents/guardians of gifted and talented students.

Download the [GT COMAR here](#).

# COMAR Requirements



## Chapter 13A.04.07 Gifted and Talented Education

### 04. Professional Development

A. Teachers and other personnel assigned specifically to work with students who have been identified as gifted and talented shall engage in professional development aligned with the competencies specified by the Gifted and Talented Education Specialist certification §13A.12.03.12.

# COMAR Regulation

- (a) Complete 15 semester hours of graduate course work in Gifted and Talented Education from an IHE, which includes a balance of content in the following competencies: ...
- (ii) Understanding the unique cognitive and affective characteristics of gifted and talented students, including the learning differences of gifted and talented students with disabilities and those from diverse backgrounds;
- (vi) Understanding how to create learning environments that foster the social and emotional well-being of gifted and talented students, including the development of self-awareness, coping skills, positive peer relationships, and leadership;



# Turn and Talk

What are some examples of social and emotional challenges that your gifted child, family member or student has faced?



"Mr. Wickers called me 'gifted' in front of the whole class. I'm ruined."

# Traits and Characteristics

Cognitive	Affective	Behavioral
<p>Keen power of abstraction</p> <p>Interest in problem-solving and applying concepts</p> <p>Voracious and early reader</p> <p>Large vocabulary</p> <p>Intellectual curiosity</p> <p>Power of critical thinking, skepticism, self-criticism</p> <p>Persistent, goal-directed behavior</p> <p>Independence in work and study</p> <p>Diversity of interests and abilities</p>	<p>Unusual emotional depth and intensity</p> <p>Sensitivity or empathy to the feelings of others</p> <p>High expectations of self and others, often leading to feelings of frustration</p> <p>Heightened self-awareness, accompanied by feelings of being different</p> <p>Easily wounded, need for emotional support</p> <p>Need for consistency between abstract values and personal actions</p> <p>Advanced levels of moral judgment</p> <p>Idealism and sense of justice</p>	<p>Spontaneity</p> <p>Boundless enthusiasm</p> <p>Intensely focused on passions—resists changing activities when engrossed in own interests</p> <p>Highly energetic—needs little sleep or down time</p> <p>Constantly questions</p> <p>Insatiable curiosity</p> <p>Impulsive, eager and spirited</p> <p>Perseverance—strong determination in areas of importance</p> <p>High levels of frustration—particularly when having difficulty meeting standards of performance (either imposed by self or others)</p> <p>Volatile temper, especially related to perceptions of failure</p> <p>Non-stop talking/chattering</p>

# Research on Social and Emotional Issues for the Gifted

- Overexcitabilities
- Asynchronous development
- Perfectionism
- Self-Esteem/Identity Issues
- Introversion
- Stress, depression, anxiety, bullying
- Self-criticism
- Multipotentiality
- Leadership skills
- Career guidance and exploration, multipotentiality
- Organization and study skills
- Underachievement, procrastination
- Peer and family pressure
- Existential depression, suicide

Clark, B. (2013). *Growing up gifted: Developing the potential of children at school and at home.* (8<sup>th</sup> ed.). Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson.

# Protective Factors

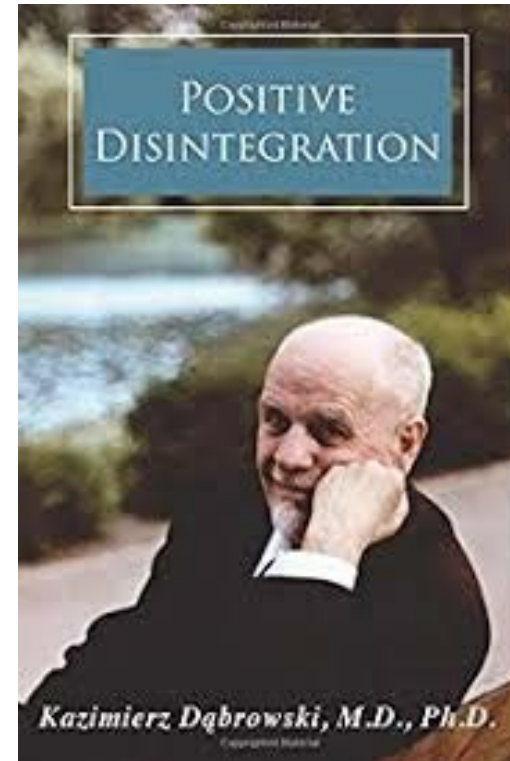
Some characteristics common among the gifted are considered protective factors:

- High intelligence
- Problem-solving ability
- Advanced social skills
- Androgyny
- Advanced moral reasoning
- Outside interests
- Sense of humor



# Dabrowski's Overexcitabilities

- Psychomotor
- Sensual
- Intellectual
- Imaginational
- Emotional



Not all gifted individuals have OEs, but there may be more people in the gifted population with OE than in the general population. [See this article for more information.](#)

# Dabrowski's Overexcitabilities

These students may have:

- Higher than average response to stimuli
- Reactions that are over and above average in intensity, duration and frequency
- Children do not grow out of these supersensitivities. A child with intense emotional feelings will experience the same depth of emotion as an adult.
- Emotional overexcitability is most commonly seen in gifted students

Note: Researchers at Northwestern University are debating OEs. See some [new research by Dr. Daniel Winkler here.](#)



# Psychomotor OE



- This is often thought to mean that the person needs lots of movement and activity
- Trouble smoothing out the mind's activities for sleeping
- Lots of physical energy and movement, fast talking, lots of gestures, sometimes nervous tics
- One of the earliest signs is less need for sleep in infancy

# Sensual OE



- Love for sensory things or a powerful reaction to negative sensory input.
- Sensitive to bright lights, harsh sounds.
- Aesthetic awareness -- the child who is awed to breathlessness at the sight of a beautiful sunset or cries hearing Mozart.



# Intellectual OE

- Strong "logical imperative," loves brain teasers and puzzles, enjoy following a line of complex reasoning, figuring things out.
- A love of things academic, new information, cognitive games, etc.
- Curiosity, concentration, introspection, extensive reader



# Imaginational OE



- These are the dreamers, poets, strong visual thinkers; use lots of metaphorical speech
- They day dream, have vivid (color) dreams or nightmares
- Have an active fantasy life, may believe in magic and have imaginary friends

# Emotional OE

- Intensity of emotion, but also a very broad range of emotions
- A need for deep connections with other people or animals.
- If unable to find close and deep friends they invent imaginary friends, make do with pets or stuffed animals
- Empathy and compassion. A child who needs a committed relationship will think herself "betrayed" by a child who plays with one child today and another tomorrow.
- This is also the OE that makes the kids susceptible to depression

# Strategies for all Overexcitabilities

- Help students develop strategies for recognizing stress reactions and coping skills.
- Help students understand their own behaviors and how their behaviors impact others.
- Acknowledge that to the child these emotions are real. Avoid statements that cast their behavior as “overreacting” or “too sensitive.”
- Practice mindfulness.

# Self-Esteem Issues

Self-esteem issues may stem from:

- They know how much they don't know.
- Frustration that they cannot solve the world's problems and injustices- feeling the weight of the world on their shoulders.
- Feeling out of place, feeling isolated.
- Lack of intellectual challenges leads to feelings of doubt when challenge is finally presented.
- Fear of loss of image if they reveal fear or self-doubt.
- Lack of validation from teachers and other adults (“If you are so smart, why can't you \_\_\_\_\_?”)





# The Importance of an Accepting School Culture for the Gifted

- Does the school culture value intellectual diversity and strengths as much as athletics, or the arts?
- What messages do advanced learners receive in the school?
- Are gifted learners grouped together for instruction for part of the day?
- Are gifted learners used as peer tutors when they finish work early or do they get to pursue passions and make continuous progress?
- Is academic acceleration practiced?

# Jim Delisle



“Our kids are normal, they just aren’t *typical*.”

<http://www.davidsongifted.org/Search-Database/entry/A10711>





# Strategies



- Counseling
- Mentoring
- Bibliotherapy
- Cinema therapy
- Discussion Groups
- Cluster grouping and ability grouping
- Career guidance
- Role Playing (teach social skills)
- Teach self-advocacy



# Strategies

Bibliotherapy is the process of helping the reader learn about and cope with any social or emotional struggles or developmental needs by identifying with a character in a book who shares a similar struggle or need.



- [Books lists for Bibliotherapy with the gifted](#)
- Good [overview of the process](#) and stages
- [Hoagies reading lists-](#) books about gifted kids, books on special topics

[See this article](#) on using bibliotherapy with gifted students by Tamra Fisher. And this one on [Bibliotherapy for dealing with perfectionism.](#)

# Strategies



Help your child develop self-regulation skills

- Time Management
- Set regular study periods
- Set realistic goals
- Use a regular study area
- Prioritize tasks
- Learn to say no to distractions
- Self-reward success

# How We Can Help



- Attend to basic needs (sleep, exercise, nutrition)
- Help them identify and name their stressors
- Help them make connections with cognitive peers
- Relaxation techniques, yoga
- Help set realistic goals
- Model self-acceptance
- Empower them to explore possible solutions – self-advocacy

# Applications

- Ensure access to cognitive peers with similar interests abilities and motivation.
- Avoid one size fits all solutions.
- Let evidence and research inform decisions regarding services.



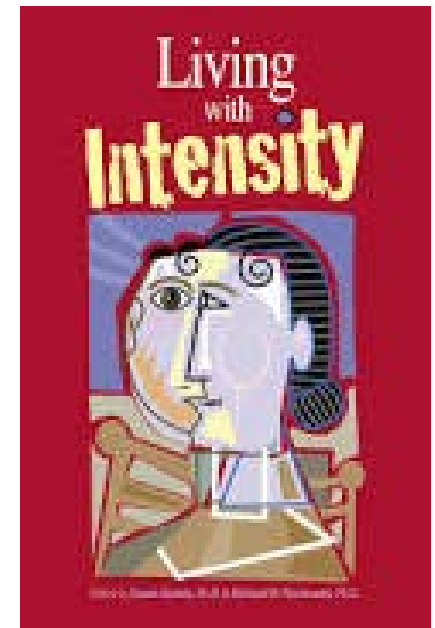
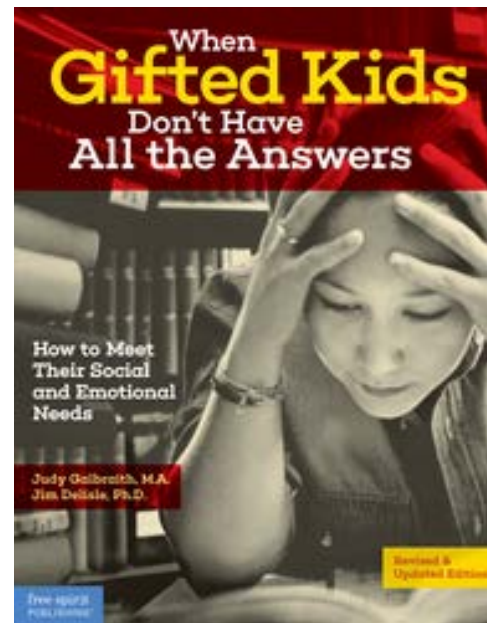
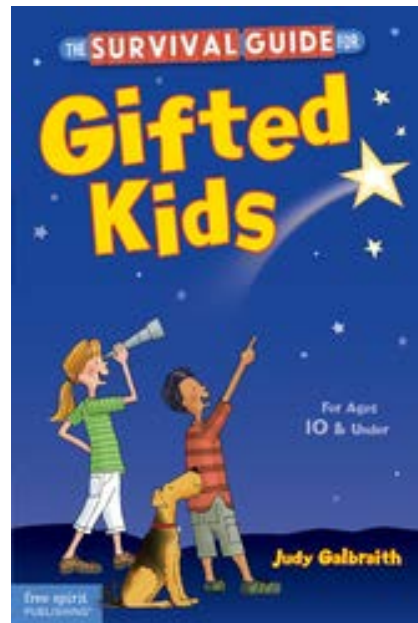
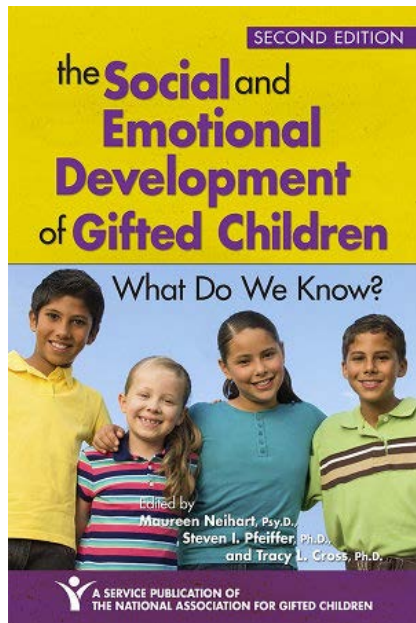
“Giftedness is a greater awareness, a greater sensitivity and a greater ability to understand and transform perceptions into intellectual and emotional experiences.”

[Annemarie Roeper](#)

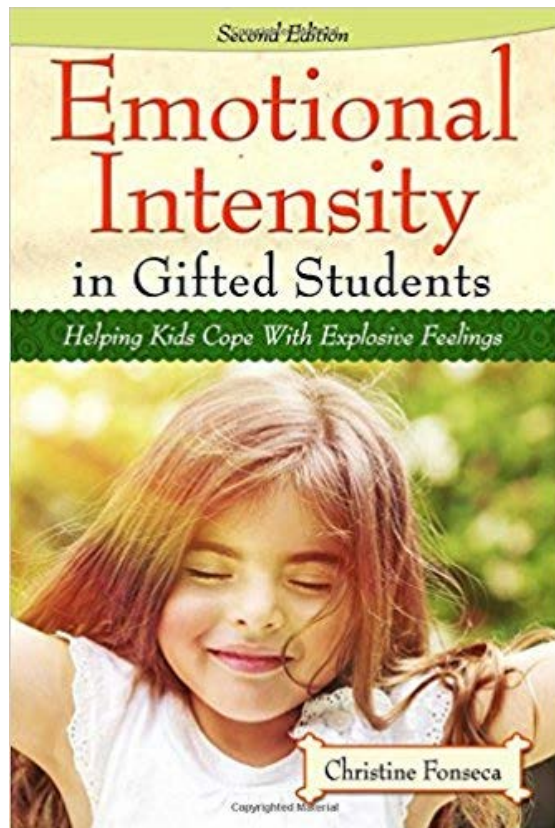


# Resources

- Free Spirit Press <https://www.freespirit.com/>
- Prufrock Press <http://www.prufrock.com/>
- [CASES Rubric](#)



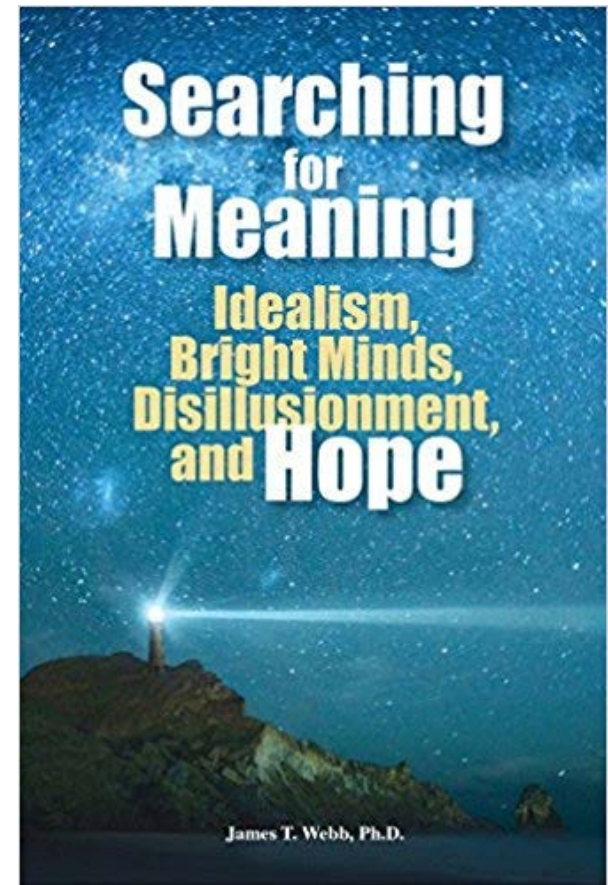
# Resources



Christine Fonseca



Judith Halsted



James Webb



# Post-Test (T/F?)



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- 4) Gifted males are more at risk than gifted females.
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- 6.) Underachievement is reversible.



# Post-Test Answers

- 1.F contrary to popular media portrayal, debunked by Terman's studies
- 2.T gifted are a diverse group, however, there are many challenges that may seem more prevalent among the gifted due to mismatch between student and environment, and are more intense or appear earlier than the norm
- 3.F It can be negative or positive. Some positive perfectionist tendencies can lead toward achievement and satisfaction, negative perfectionism can be debilitating or result in risk avoidance
- 4.F Research in the 90s showed gifted females to be more at risk, however, in some areas this is changing. Mixed results from research on gender differences. Depends on the cultural context.
- 5.T Yes, but it is not that there is anything inherently "wrong" with the gifted, just the asynchronous development that makes them out of sync with classmates
- 6.T Yes, especially if caught early on. By 3<sup>rd</sup> grade many gifted learners begin to show signs of underachievement.

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<http://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources/national-standards-gifted-and-talented-education/pre-k-grade-12>

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