Social-Emotional Needs of Gifted Children: Understanding the Rainbow

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Asynchronous Development

Gifted children develop in multiple layers. They can appear very mature in some areas and less mature in others.

You could see all of the below items at the same time:

- Highly advanced intellect
- Advanced sense of humor
- Acutely aware of fairness and injustice in the world
- Unable to tie their own shoes
- Need to sleep with the light on
- Unable to express their advanced thoughts in writing

Asynchrony Definition of Giftedness:

- A markedly uneven development experienced internally due to different rates of cognitive, social, emotional, and physical growth and manifested externally due to a lack of fit with age mates and with societal expectations.
Non-Intellective Factors in Gifted Children

- Gifted children---
  - Don’t follow the rules.
  - Tend to be domineering.
  - Are argumentative
  - Tend to tune out.
  - Can be excessively competitive
  - Have a tendency toward tunnel vision
  - Have a sense of over excitability
  - May have a sharp sense of humor
  - Are often compulsive collectors.

Early Observations

- Alert, active
- Sensitive to environment
- Long attention span
- Exceptional memory
- Learns new things quickly
- May walk, talk early
- Extensive vocabulary
- Observant
- Curious
- Asks more complex questions

Early Observations

- Imaginary playmates
- Creative and imaginative
- Interest in books
- Ability to work puzzles
- Interest in time and numbers
- Sense of humor
- Intense frustration
- Perfectionistic
- Chooses older playmates
- Concern for morality and justice
Outside Influences

- Conformist School Culture
- Home Environment
- Expectations of Others
- Family Relationships
- Peer Relationships

Social and Emotional Needs

- Security
- Identity
- Belonging
- Purpose
- Competence

Security

- Awareness of feelings
- Caring
- Protect/Comfort
- Trust
- Personal Responsibility
- A Safe Environment
- Anticipation
- Expectations
- Choices/Consequences
Identity

- Self-Awareness
- Strengths/Weaknesses
- Physical Self
- Managing Emotions
- Love/Honor
- New Roles
- Heroes
- Celebrate Who I Am

Promoting Sense of Identity

- Build positive self-images by talking about the positive qualities you see in them.
- Focus on the discrepancy between the beautiful person inside and their behavior or the person they present to others.
- Discuss with them the characteristics they most admire in adults.
- Have them discuss their values and those characteristics they value in themselves.
- Help them make realistic assessments about themselves.
- Point out their dependable strengths or hidden talents.
- Have them talk about the myths others might believe about them.
- Teach them ways of handling put-downs.
- Help them see that they have choices in how they want to deal with their feelings. Help them express feelings in acceptable ways.
- Find ways to convey a sense of caring.

Accommodations for Intensity

- Help children with stress management
- Help with task analysis and time management
- Assistance with transitions
- Suggest involvement in Tae Kwon Do
- Discussions with student about triggers
- Counseling about intensity
- Do not attempt to “fix” the intensity.
- Children and parents need to accept intensity and develop strategies to accommodate for themselves.
Belonging

- Social Skills
- Empathy
- Differences/Commonalities
- Opportunities for Service Learning
- Traditions
- Connectiveness
- Responsibilities

Purpose

- Interests/Passions
- Problem Solving
- Goal Setting
- Relevance
- Organization/Study Skills
- Vision/Values

Making Being Gifted O.K.

- Understanding my giftedness
- Validation from people who matter
- Support and enthusiasm
- Gender issues
- Knowing my place in the world
- It’s okay to make mistakes and ask for help.
Competence

- Decision making
- Choices/options
- Mistakes/expectations
- Respond to intelligence
- Celebrate!

At-Risk Behaviors

Warning Signs

- Self-imposed isolation
- Shifts in school performance
- Rigid compulsive behavior
- Extreme perfectionism
- Eating disorders
- Self-depreciation
- Substance abuse
- Depression or continual boredom
- Frequent mood shifts
- Inability to control or express anger
- Withdrawal into a fantasy world
- Unusual fascination with violence
- Preoccupation with death

Characteristics of Gifted/Autistic Youth

- Poor social skills and understanding of social cues
- Autistic individual who shows signs of giftedness (approximately 10% of autistic population)
  - Preference for routine
  - Low IQ
  - Generally their giftedness will occur in areas other than intellectual
- Creative abilities
  - Artistic and musical
- Extreme possessiveness of unusual objects
  - Hypersensitivity to sensory stimuli
**Instructional Strategies for Autistic/Gifted Youth**

- Use hands-on kinesthetic activities
- Teach to their strengths
- Use physical, verbal, and visual aids to signify transition
- Infuse social and communication skills into the academic programming
- Provide structure and routine
- Include parent(s), clinical professional(s), and student when determining educational programming

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**Characteristics of Gifted/Asperger’s Syndrome Youth**

- Poor nonverbal communication skills
- Lack of coordination
- Exceptional memory
- Normal to high IQ
- Poor sense of time
- Inflexibility
- Difficulty transitioning between tasks
- Inability to explain their feelings and those of others
- Poor social skills

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**Instructional Strategies for Gifted/Asperger’s Syndrome Youth**

- Establish a daily routine
- Avoid sarcasm
- Teach students to deal with sudden change
- Develop social skills
- Provide a rubric when asking essay questions
- Develop an IEP that addresses student’s strengths and weaknesses
- Include parents, clinical professionals, and student when making decisions about educational programming
- Provide hands-on activities
- Arrange the room so that the gifted/AS child is near few distractions
Characteristics for Gifted/Emotional-Behavioral Disabled Youth

- Defiance
  - Aggression, violence, peer and adult conflict
- Loneliness
  - Withdrawal, depression, isolation, low self-esteem, self-rejection
- Stress
  - Hyperactivity, impulsivity, distractibility, and anxiety
- Socialization problems
  - Immaturity, criticism, humiliation
- Underachievement

Instructional Strategies for Gifted/Emotional-Behavioral Disabled Youth

- Incorporate multidisciplinary activities
- Provide supportive, sensitive and positive home/school environments
- Alleviate conflict and shape a positive self-concept
- Create intellectually challenging activities
- Make modifications to enhance learning atmosphere
  - Match methods to gifts/talents and disabilities
  - Utilize inclusion, modeling, cooperative learning, and authentic learning

Characteristics of Gifted/ADHD

- Inattentiveness
- Impulsive/hyperactive conduct
- Eagerness
- Compassion
- Fidgetiness
- Minimal need of sleep
- Strong-mindedness since early childhood
- Difficulty with lengthy assignments
**Instructional Strategies for Gifted/ADHD**

- Incorporate cooperative learning activities that allow the student to take a leadership role
- Teach organizational skills
- Stress appropriate social skills
- Utilize communication sheets with parents
- Create short, intellectually challenging activities
- Provide hands-on kinesthetic activities
- Differentiate the curriculum

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**General Characteristics of Gifted/Learning Disabled**

- Intelligence
- Ingenious problem-solving skills
- Poor social skills
- Exceptional memory
- Frustration
- Quick conceptualization of ideas
- Advanced abstract reasoning skills
- Academic achievement below academic potential

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**General Instructional Strategies for Gifted/Learning Disabled Youth**

- Develop social skills
- Establish a daily routine
- Differentiate the curriculum
- Encourage cooperation among teachers, parents, administrators, and student
- Allow for multiple program options
- Develop strengths so that student can compensate for disabilities
- Design activities to engage the learner in real-world learning
- Build self-esteem
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