

» <b>Back-to-School Survival Kit</b> .....	3
» <b>Mindsets Matter for Gifted Children.</b> .....	4
By Dr. Megan Parker Peters and Dr. Emily Mofield	
» <b>Letting Go While Holding On: Parent Guide to Teaching Self-Advocacy</b> .....	10
By Deb Douglas	
» <b>Changing Blah to Ahhhhh!: Student Guide to Being a Self-Advocate</b> .....	11
By Deb Douglas	
» <b>Selecting the “Right” Early Childhood Program for Your Precocious Preschooler.</b> .....	15
By Dr. Leigh Ann Fish	
» <b>From Identification to Ivy League: Nurturing Multiple Interests and Multi-Potentiality in Gifted Students</b> .....	19
By Dr. Kristina Henry Collins	

## » Inside

*Helping Your  
Gifted Child Grow*

### a note from the editor



It's back-to-school time again, which may bring trepidation to some parents of gifted children because a new school year often feels like “starting over.” In our family, a new school year often meant acquainting new teachers with our son's learning style, assessing placements and progress, and advocating for accommodations or changes, when appropriate.

The good news is that NAGC has you covered. There are many resources at [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org), where you'll find strategies and

advice from scholars, educators, psychologists, and fellow parents. Be sure to browse the *Parenting for High Potential* archives for answers to the issues you're facing this year.

This issue of *PHP* tackles topics to nurture academic and personal growth in your gifted child: mindsets, motivation, multi-potentiality, and managing the selection of the right PreK–K program for your young learner.

And, I'm excited about a new feature we're introducing in this issue: An article written

*directly to and for* gifted and talented tweens and teens. Please use the parent and student materials on pages 10–14 as a tool for helping your high-ability children develop strategies for becoming lifelong self-advocates.

I wish you and your family a very successful school year ahead. NAGC and *PHP* are here to support you along the way.

Kathleen Nilles, Editor in Chief



# Shining a Light on Gifted Children

at the **NAGC 64th Annual Convention**  
in Charlotte, NC, November 9-12, 2017

- Choose from more than **300 sessions**
- Explore the **Exhibit Hall** for cutting-edge resources
- Listen to **Tom Flynn**, screenwriter of acclaimed film **Gifted**
- Learn from **Angel Harris**, author of **Kids Don't Want to Fail**
- Network with high-profile leaders in the field of gifted education

## Family Day at NACC17!

Friends,

I invite you to join other moms, dads, and kids at the NAGC 2017 Convention in Charlotte, North Carolina. My wife, Michele, and I are the proud parents of four children with gifts and talents that challenge us every day to help them to reach for their personal best. We understand the need to talk with other parents of gifted children, get evidence-based information to decode what is going on in our children's bright minds, and have the opportunity to tap the knowledge of experts in the field of psychology, education, and counseling.

Working to fill this need, the NAGC team of professionals and volunteers created the first of its kind **Family Day on Saturday, November 11**, from **9 am to 3 pm**. Family Day is **FREE** for parents and their children to experience fun and engaging learning experiences designed for gifted children. Also featured at the event are opportunities to connect with other families with similar interests and time to talk with international experts on the nature and needs of gifted children.

Our team wants NAGC to be a home for all those who support gifted children, and more parents are joining. We've experienced a 22% growth over the past year! We are the place to get the information you can trust. We are the organization that helps parents advocate for their children at the federal, state, and local level. And, we want to create the space for you to build lifelong friendships with others in similar situations.

Please join us for Family Day and consider participating in the whole convention for even more learning opportunities designed for the adults who support gifted children. Our Family Day is free, and we reserved **discounted rates for parents** to attend the full convention.

Hope to see you in Charlotte!



M. René Islas  
NAGC Executive Director



**REGISTER TODAY!** [bit.ly/NACC17nc](http://bit.ly/NACC17nc)





# BACK TO SCHOOL SURVIVAL KIT

We combed through the *PHP* archives for practical, how-to articles to help parents navigate the upcoming school year. All articles appear in back issues of *Parenting for High Potential*.

Go to <http://bit.ly/NAGCphp>.

## ACCELERATION

Guilbault, K. (2014, December). *Advocating for grade-based acceleration*. 4(3), 8, 10–12.

Hertzog, N. B., & Chung, R. U. (2014, December). *Early entrance: How will my child do?* 4(3), 9, 16–18.

Luckey, J., & Grantham, T. (2017, March). *Acceleration 101*. 6(2), 14–16.

Scheibel, S. (2012, June). *Academic acceleration: Is it right for my child?* 1(7), 4–7.

## EARLY CHILDHOOD

Hertzog, N. B. (2012, October/November). *Five-star schools: Defining quality in early childhood programs*. 2(2), 12–15.

Various authors. (2016, Spring). *Special issue: Nurturing the young gifted child*. 5(3), 1–24.

## EDUCATION OPTIONS

Honeck, E., & Johnson, A. (2016, December). *Finding your child's best educational fit*. 6(1), 20–23.

## HOMESCHOOLING

Grantham, T. C., & Collins, K. H. (2013, July). *Upstander parents choosing to homeschool gifted Black students*. 2(8), 4–8.

Wessling, S. (2013, July). *Accidental homeschooler*. 2(8), 10–13.

## ONLINE LEARNING

Palevich, M. O., & Honeck, E. (2017, March). *Blended and online learning: How can it benefit my child?* 6(2), 17–21.

## STUDENT-LED CONFERENCES

Boazman, J. (2014, September). *It's time to revamp the parent-teacher conference process: Let's include the child*. 4(1), 10–13.

## TALENT DEVELOPMENT

Kierwa, K. (2014, March). *Seven ways parents can help children unleash their talents*. 3(5), 4–6, 18–19.

## TALENT SEARCH

Rushneck, A. S. (2012, April). *Finding your voice: Talent development centers and the Academic Talent Search*. 1(6), 8–11.

## TALKING TO TEACHERS

Brulles, D., & Brown, K. L. (2016, Summer). *How to start the school year on a positive note with your gifted child's teacher*. 5(4), 5–7.

Smutny, J. F. (2015, August). *Communicating effectively with your gifted child's school*. 4(7), 4–8.

## 2016–2017 Parent Editorial and Content Advisory Board

Janette Boazman, Chair  
Dallas, TX

Lisa Conrad  
Ambridge, PA

Austina De Bonte  
Woodinville, WA

Rosina M. Gallagher  
Chicago, IL

Stephanie Georgiades  
Tampa, FL

Kelly Lynne Harris  
Egg Harbor Township, NJ

Nancy B. Hertzog  
Lake Forest Park, WA

Michele Kane  
Long Grove, IL

Kristy Mall  
Murfreesboro, TN

Kathleen Robinson  
Parker, CO

Patti Garrett Shade  
Denver, CO

Joan Franklin Smutny  
Wilmette, IL

Carolyn Welch  
Northbrook, IL

NAGC Board-Parent Representative  
Keri Guilbault  
Bel Air, MD

Parent & Community Network Chair  
Tracy Inman  
Bowling Green, KY

NAGC Staff Liaison  
Kathleen Nilles

Published by  NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR  
Gifted Children

Editor in Chief: Kathleen Nilles

Editorial Assistant: Denise Notz

Layout & Design: Julie Wilson

*Parenting for High Potential is published quarterly, and is distributed as a membership benefit by the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC). The views expressed in the magazine are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the views of NAGC or its Board of Directors.*

Copyright © 2017. National Association for Gifted Children,  
1331 H Street NW, Suite 1001, Washington, DC 20005.  
202-785-4268. [www.nagc.org](http://www.nagc.org).



# Mindsets Matter for Gifted Children

By Dr. Megan Parker Peters and Dr. Emily Mofield

Consider the following analogy: Left alone, a gifted child's ability is like vinegar in a cup. It sits still and stagnant. But, when we provide children opportunity, motivation, and a mindset that loves challenge, we add baking soda to the vinegar. Those catalyzing ingredients interact with the vinegar, causing the mixture to bubble over. Our children's abilities can follow suit. When we strive to enhance motivation, provide appropriate opportunities, and promote a mindset that values effort, improvement, and a focus on learning, we can also support our gifted children's abilities to surge toward potential.

Based on the popular work of Carol Dweck, mindset is an important ingredient.<sup>1</sup> The realization of potential starts with how both we and our children think about abilities. As a parent, do you believe that intelligence is a static characteristic that cannot change? Or do you think that intelligence is a malleable trait that can continue to grow? What does your child believe about intelligence?

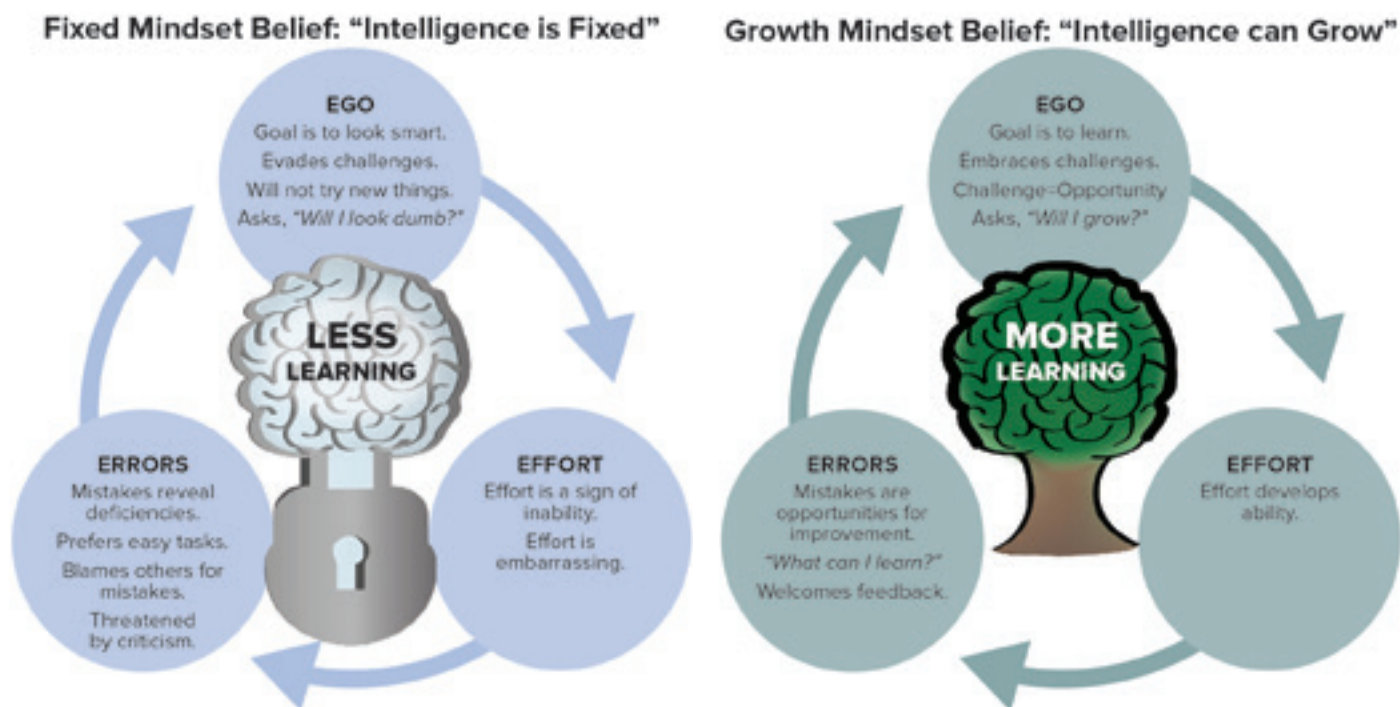
According to experts, intelligence is our capacity to learn, reason, problem-solve, and think abstractly. So, can these skills be consciously developed? Yes! We can sharpen our problem-solving skills and creativity. In fact, this is what many gifted programs strive to do. So, why is the belief—the *mindset*—that intelligence is malleable so important? It's important because our concept of ability influences our behavior.

Take the teacher who believes abilities are malleable versus





FIGURE 1. HOW EGO, EFFORT, & ERRORS INFLUENCE MINDSET



Adapted from Dweck's "Implicit Theories of Intelligence"

the teacher who believes intelligence does not change very much. The first teacher will be more likely to do everything possible to support his students by providing engaging, enriching, and challenging educational opportunities. This contrasts sharply with the teacher who believes that his students' abilities are set in stone. Now, consider what difference it would make for your child to have a parent who believes that abilities are changeable versus static.

Beliefs about intelligence can affect how children both approach school work and perform. It is why some gifted children tackle challenges with excitement while others feel threatened by challenges and avoid them. The mindset beliefs influence how the child views ego, effort, and errors (see Figure 1). Those with a fixed mindset believe that their potential has been defined, measured, and chiseled in stone. The child is more concerned with looking smart than getting smarter. The child's major goal is to prove his "chiseled potential" by looking smart at all costs, thereby protecting the "smart" ego.

In the elementary years especially, children are inclined to believe that if things come easy, then, "I'm smart!" Their identity as smart is reinforced through praise for getting work done or learning something quickly without even trying. When children eventually experience a task where they have to try hard, work, and get stuck, they think, "I must not be so smart at this since I

had to work at it." They develop the belief that working hard at something is embarrassing and a sign of inability, shattering their "smart" identity. These children believe errors are personal failings and will avoid challenging experiences. The result is less learning and less actualized potential.

In contrast, children with a growth mindset believe they have an unknown potential and strive to do all they can in order to develop it. When encountering a challenge, they think, "Will this be an opportunity to help me get smarter?" instead of "Will this make me look stupid?" They view mistakes as feedback and opportunities to improve. Since their focus is on continued improvement and growth, these children will learn more and be free to achieve their potential without the fear of losing their "smart" identity.

### Mindsets and Gifted

Mindsets matter for *all* students, but there are some additional considerations for what this powerful idea means for gifted students, who often do not have to persevere through a challenge or work hard until they reach college or graduate school. Here are some questions and misconceptions about giftedness and mindsets:

**Are gifted students more prone to developing fixed mindsets?** We recently conducted a comparison study and found

(Continues on p. 8)

# How to Promote a **GROWTH** Mindset

## GIVE APPROPRIATE PRAISE

Often parents and teachers might say, “*She is brilliant!*” “*He’s so talented!*” “*She’s a natural!*” These statements are intended to be positive and to describe a high level of performance or ability. However, Dweck’s research shows that statements like these can temporarily raise children’s self-esteem, but this boost lasts for only a short amount of time, until they experience a setback. The setback does not mesh with their vision of self as “brilliant, talented, and gifted.” Comments like these may make you as a parent feel better, but they do not necessarily translate into long-term learning and success for children.<sup>1</sup>

Rather than focusing on static abilities in your praise (e.g. “genius,” “brilliant,” “gifted”), focus on the process your child took to achieve a set outcome. Process praise helps children connect their success to the strategies and steps they took to be successful.

The quality of praise is key. Process praise should be specific and authentic. Look over your child’s work so that you can clearly state the positive things you see in it regarding their strategies, specific progress, and effort. This type of praise actually acknowledges and honors the time, effort, and thought your child devoted to the task.

## REINFORCE RISK TAKING

It’s important to get children out of their “easy” comfort zone. Encourage your child to take achievable risks, like sitting with someone new in the cafeteria or trying a new class or sport. These create opportunities to try new things without the pressure of being the best right away.

## OPPORTUNITIES FROM MISTAKES

Try to celebrate mistakes. Show how you learned from an error and how this impacted your next action. Take opportunities to verbalize the mistakes you make so that your child understands that mistakes are not shameful.

Dweck explains it’s also important to consider the power of “yet.” When your child has less than stellar performance on an assignment or activity, show them that this is not the final judgment. Explain to your child, “*You have not mastered this.... yet.*” “Yet” conveys that abilities can change.<sup>2</sup>

Also, consider how you as an adult handle mistakes. When you hide mistakes or gloss over them, this conveys to children that mistakes reflect a lack of ability or that you are not interested in learning from them in an effort to improve.



The acronym GROWTH describes six specific ways adults can nurture a love of learning and challenge in children.

## WATCH WHAT YOU SAY

When talking about smart, talented, successful professionals, do you mention the hours and hard work involved in becoming “more” talented and achieving success? Are you conveying that success is based on “natural talent” alone, or are you conveying that success is based on effort, persistence, passion, and learning?

Your words and actions provide the model for your child’s thoughts and future actions.

## TEACH MINDSET

Teach your child about the brain; tell him about what happens when we learn something new—that neurons form stronger connections, and our brains grow stronger as we learn more. Ask your child to consider how he can strengthen his brain when he takes on a challenge.

## HAVE A GROWTH MINDSET

Take time to reflect on your own beliefs about abilities and consider how your beliefs impact your children.

For example, when given the choice between a new challenge or opportunity and a safe choice, choose the challenge. Then, discuss how this choice helped support personal growth.

Also, interpret and model obstacles as opportunities for creativity and deeper thinking. Verbalize it so that your children hear this process: “*This method did not work; what is another way that we could tackle this?*”

Consider how you think about and talk about people who are better than you in a certain area (profession, hobby, etc.). Show your children that it is important to learn from someone who has greater expertise; this expert can provide new knowledge and skills to help you grow!

As parents, it is also important to monitor your fixed mindset triggers. Consider activities in which you may think, “*I was never good at that...I better not try this. I may look stupid.*” Watch your language and actions so that these thoughts do not travel from your mind to those of your children.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Dweck, C. (2000). *Self-theories: Their role in motivation, personality, and development (Essays in social psychology)*. New York, NY: Routledge.

<sup>2</sup> Dweck, C. (2014, November). *The power of believing that you can improve*. [Video file]. Retrieved from [https://www.ted.com/talks/carol\\_dweck\\_the\\_power\\_of\\_believing\\_that\\_you\\_can\\_improve](https://www.ted.com/talks/carol_dweck_the_power_of_believing_that_you_can_improve)

## FEEDBACK THAT PROMOTES GROWTH MINDSET

### SAMPLE FEEDBACK

“I see that you took your time on this! You included so many thoughtful details from your research.”

### HOW IT PROMOTES A GROWTH MINDSET

This acknowledges the work involved so that children view effort as valuable.

“I like the way you thought/created/chose/decided/designed....”

This acknowledges the thought processes involved in accomplishing the task. Children understand they had control over the outcome.

“You worked really hard on this!”

This shows you value effort. However, never praise effort that wasn't there. This is an especially important caveat since many gifted students do not have to put forth much effort in tasks.

“Tell me about how you did this.”

This encourages your child to focus on her process through explanation.

“Wow! This writing shows [you really know how to develop characters, you have put thought into shaping the theme, you use lots of descriptive language to develop the setting].”  
“Wow! You've got this! You really understand [fractions, ecosystems].”

This is specific feedback and acknowledges what the child knows and understands, which emphasizes the importance of learning.

(Continued from p. 5)

no differences between gifted and typical students' fixed mindset beliefs.<sup>2</sup> Other research has shown that gifted students actually hold higher growth mindset beliefs compared to typical students,<sup>3</sup> however, it is important to remember that specific environmental and personality traits do matter. Some gifted students may develop fixed mindsets and avoid challenging tasks—especially those with maladaptive, perfectionistic tendencies or those who like to stay in their comfort zone. And, while one child's comfort zone may be above grade level and appear “challenging,” based on what the student is actually capable of, it may not be “challenging” enough for that individual to make continual progress.

**Since intelligence is malleable, does this mean everyone can become gifted?** Everyone is capable of improvement and growth, but there are still developmental differences in ability levels for students. Educators should focus on how to help *all* children reach an unknown potential, and this will require differentiated responses to meet needs of gifted children who have exceptional, unique needs compared to their peers.

**Is it possible to acknowledge a child's high ability without promoting a fixed mindset?** Parents should be cautious in using fixed mindset traits or terms, such as being “*smart*,” or “*brilliant*,” but they shouldn't discount or hide the reality of their child's exceptional abilities. Some research points to the importance of how the message of giftedness is conveyed.<sup>4</sup> If parents explain giftedness as a malleable quality *while also* praising hard work, they can help prevent a fixed mindset. It's not only important to recognize talent, but to recognize how talent comes to fruition and needs continual nurturing.<sup>5</sup>

**Do gifted programs promote a fixed or growth mindset?** While some have made claims that the identification of “giftedness” or placement into a gifted program might serve as ability-praise and, therefore, promote a fixed mindset, our research findings show that identified gifted students are not more vulnerable to developing fixed mindset beliefs. Gifted programs and services seek to provide the challenge that is needed to promote a growth mindset and love of challenge. All students need to be challenged, and all students need differentiated instruction, gifted or not. But, for many gifted students, their needs are best met through special programming and appropriate curriculum adaptations, which may only happen through specialized gifted programming.<sup>6</sup> In fact, when their needs are not being met and they are not challenged, this could set the stage for fixed mindset beliefs to develop; students are not used to hard work, and they may avoid persevering through difficult tasks and intellectual risk-taking when they are finally faced with such challenges.

If you and your child believe that abilities can grow, then there is potential for further success and mastery—even for the already gifted child. In fact, the appropriate mindset can free your child from the fear of not living up to “smartness.” Instead, the focus is on a love of learning and continued improvement, the keys to leading your child to unknown heights. ☺



### Authors' Note

Megan Parker Peters, Ph.D., is an assistant professor and the director of teacher education and assessment at Lipscomb University. She is a licensed psychologist and a Nationally Certified School Psychologist. She specializes in researching and assessing gifted and twice-exceptional learners, serves on the board of the Tennessee Association for the Gifted, and is an editorial board member of NAGC's *Teaching for High Potential*. She and Dr. Emily Mofield received the 2016 NAGC Hollingworth Award for their research on mindsets, perfectionism, and underachievement.

Emily Mofield, Ed.D., is the consulting teacher for gifted education for Sumner County Schools in Tennessee. She has been recognized as the Tennessee Association for Gifted Children's Teacher of the Year and has co-authored (with Tamra Stambaugh) the *Vanderbilt PTY Advanced ELA Curriculum* series, winning multiple NAGC Curriculum Awards (2011, 2015, 2016) for this work. She currently serves as the chair-elect of NAGC's Curriculum Studies Network.

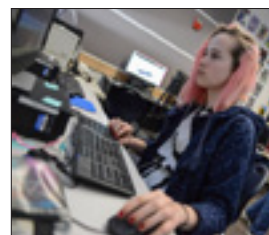
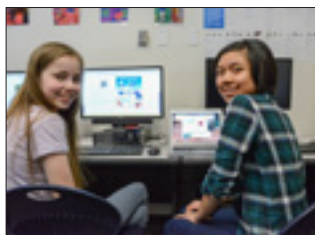
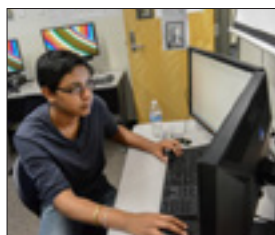
### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Dweck, C. (2000). *Self-theories: Their role in motivation, personality, and development (Essays in social psychology)*. New York, NY: Routledge.
- Dweck, C. (2006). *Mindset*. New York, NY: Bantam.
- <sup>2</sup> Mofield, E., & Parker Peters, M. (in press). Mindset misconception? Comparing mindsets, perfectionism, and attitudes of achievement in gifted, advanced, and typical students. *Gifted Child Quarterly*.
- <sup>3</sup> Esparza, J., Shumow, L., & Schmidt, J. (2014). Growth mindset of gifted seventh grade students in science. *NCSSMST Journal*, 19, 6–13.
- <sup>4</sup> Snyder, K. E., Malin, J. L., Dent, A. L., & Linnenbrink-Garcia, L. (2014). The message matters: The role of implicit beliefs about giftedness and failure experiences in academic self-handicapping. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 106, 230–241.
- <sup>5</sup> Siegle, D. (2012). Recognizing both effort and talent: How do we keep from throwing the baby out with the bathwater? In R. F. Subotnik, A. Robinson, C. M. Callahan, & P. Johnson (Eds.), *Malleable minds: Translating insights from psychology and neuroscience to gifted education*. (pp. 233–244). Storrs, CT: National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented.
- <sup>6</sup> National Association for Gifted Children. (2009). *Grouping* [position statement]. Retrieved from <http://www.nagc.org>.



## Online High School Starting with Eighth Grade

For Full-Time Students Living Anywhere in the U.S.



DESIGNED TO BE DIFFERENT

Application opens October 2017 for the 2018-19 school year

[www.DavidsonAcademy.UNR.edu/Online](http://www.DavidsonAcademy.UNR.edu/Online)  
[online@davidsonacademy.unr.edu](mailto:online@davidsonacademy.unr.edu)

# Letting Go While Holding On

Dear Parent,

Teaching our children to self-advocate is a lifelong gift. Though all people would benefit from speaking up for themselves, it's especially important for outliers like gifted kids. As they transition into middle and high school, they can begin to take charge of their own academic path.

Your child may be reticent about self-advocating because she believes the same myths as many misinformed adults: Gifted kids have it made. They don't need help. Other students have greater needs.

You can help your child understand that she not only has the right to an appropriate education, but she has a responsibility to lead the process.

As parents, you are the primary source of support for your child. To be effective, however, you must be knowledgeable. Both you and your child need to understand the nature of giftedness, your rights within the educational system, your child's learner profile, and possible options and alternatives.

Working together empowers your child to self-advocate for the rest of his life.

Deb Douglas

*The Power of Self-Advocacy for Gifted Learners:  
Teaching the Four Essential Steps to Success*



## 1 Begin by gathering information. Read and discuss:

- *The Gifted Teen Survival Guide: Smart, Sharp, and Ready for Almost Anything*, a good overview written for kids by Judy Galbraith and Jim Delisle (2011).
- Your school district's mission statement and its implications for gifted children.
- Your district's policies and plans regarding gifted education.
- Any state or provincial laws regarding gifted students' education.

## 2 Together consider options that match your child's learner profile.

- Help your child assess and reflect on her learner profile in five areas: cognitive ability, academic strengths, interests, learning preferences, and personal traits.
- Study your district's *Course of Study* booklet and, for comparison, those of neighboring districts.
- Discuss which options are available, which might be added, and which are best for your student.

## 3 Plan for success. Help your child take the lead in each of these:

- Choose a short- or long-term goal and create a step-by-step plan to achieve it.
- Communicate the plan to the adult advocates who can help make it happen.
- Put the plan into action.
- Regularly assess progress and make revisions as needed.
- Celebrate the student's success.
- Choose a new goal and begin again and again, each time with your child taking on more and more responsibility.

**Self-advocacy**  
is the process of  
recognizing and meeting  
the needs specific to your  
learning ability without  
compromising the dignity of  
yourself or others.

-Loring C. Brinckerhoff

Please share the article on the following pages with your gifted child. If your learner is ready, willing, and able to begin taking charge of his own education, your support and feedback at every step of the process may be your most important advocacy role from now on.



# Changing BLAH to AHHHHH!

Dear Student,

I'll bet you were handed this article by a super supportive parent who has been making important school decisions for you forever. But this school year may be the right time for you to reverse those roles and take charge of your own education.

Why? Because no one knows better than you what is going on in your head when you leave for school each day, sit in classes, walk the halls, and do your homework. You may not feel that this school thing is all it could be, even if you have high test scores and earn good grades.

Toni felt that way. She didn't mind school, but science and math never went deep enough or fast enough. Language arts meant books she'd read long ago. Band was fun, but the music was too easy. So she spent hour after hour and day after day waiting for something interesting and challenging.

Like Toni, you have the right to learn something new every day. The question is, what do you want to do differently? Read on to find out how you can change "blah" into "ahhhhh!"

Your Ambassador of Self-Advocacy,  
Ms. Douglas

## Your Rights

It's not wrong to want something different. In fact, it's your right. Look at what the Federal Definition of Gifted and Talented says:

## Federal Definition of Gifted and Talented

"The term 'gifted and talented' means [those] who give evidence of high achievement capability in such areas as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities."<sup>1</sup>

## Your Responsibility

As a student with "high achievement capability," you also have a responsibility to take charge of your own education.



## The Sky's the Limit

Of course, gifted kids are as different from each other as they are alike. But no matter what your unique strengths, interests, or personal preferences might be, there is no limit to what changes you might propose. Here are some ideas of what could be modified. There's more about the "how" in a bit.

### FIND APPROPRIATELY CHALLENGING ACADEMIC WORK

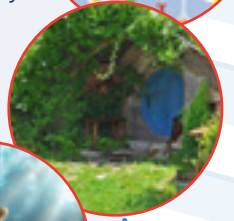
#### Do your classes move too slowly or do your assignments seem too easy?

These options might help: compact a class, test out of a class, replace a class with independent study, or accelerate in a subject or even a whole grade level.

First step? Choose a goal. Here are some "greater challenge" goal examples:

- Finish both algebra and geometry in 8th grade.
- Do civics as an independent study.
- Skip 8th grade English.
- Take as many science classes as possible.
- Enroll in college classes during high school.

*For example, Panhia's language arts skills were far above grade level, so her 8th grade teacher helped her set up an independent study. Instead of the regular curriculum she did an extensive comparison study of Harry Potter, The Lord of the Rings, and King Arthur. She also worked on individual creative writing projects and published a student anthology involving the whole school.*



#### Do you spend much of your school time in mixed-ability classes?

If you want more contact with kids who have similar abilities, try one of these options: residential and semester schools, study groups, summer programs, and extra-curricular clubs and teams.

"Hang out with other kids" examples:

- Join a writers group.
- Find other kids who want to learn to speak Tolkien Elvish.
- Check into Talent Search summer programs.
- Start a philosophy club.
- Find an online gifted kids community.

*For example, José created an academic quiz bowl and set up team practices and competitions during lunch. Although the team was open to any student, it primarily drew those kids who had a wide range of academic knowledge, enjoyed intellectual activities, and could hold their own in the friendly but competitive environment.*

### SPEND MORE TIME WITH OTHER GIFTED KIDS



### EXPLORE AN INTEREST

#### Is there something you're passionate about studying that isn't covered in your classes or offered in school?

Try one of these options: online courses, college classes, independent study, out-of-school mentorships, and community volunteer opportunities.

"Follow my passion" examples:

- Study Latin.
- Learn more about animation and Photoshop at the community college.
- Study in Sweden my last year in high school.
- Get a mentorship with the National Weather Service.

*For example, Sam was interested in medicine and thought he might want to be a doctor. He designed a mentorship/independent study that was approved by his high school and the local hospital administration. Every day after school he volunteered in the pathology lab, observing and assisting in whatever ways were legal and ethical. The physicians were so impressed with his work, they received permission for him to attend an autopsy—a thrill for Sam!*



## MAKE ADJUSTMENTS TO MEET YOUR PERSONAL NEEDS

Do you need to make changes in school or at home in order to match some of your personal characteristics? It's possible that traits like perfectionism, motivation, introversion, or intensities can add to or get in the way of your success.

"Adjust life to suit needs" examples:

- Create a quiet study hall at school.
- Figure out why I procrastinate.
- Start a support group for perfectionists.
- Change my math class to the afternoon.
- Set up the perfect study space at home.

*For example, Lucia was a night owl by nature and was able to change her*

*schedule so P.E. was her "wake-up" class first thing in the morning, and her most demanding classes were in the afternoon when her mind was more alert. Alan couldn't tolerate eating breakfast early in the morning. So, he got permission to stop in his counselor's office and eat a healthy snack mid-morning.*

## Getting Started

If you're tired of the same old, same old, you can fix that! But wishing for change won't make it happen. You need to self-advocate—know what you want and make it happen.

Take a moment to reflect on these questions:

How happy are you with the way things are going right now?

Do you ever find your school day dragging? If so, when?

Do you find classes too easy, homework a drag, or group work frustrating?

Is there something big or little that you'd like to change? If so, what?

## Plan Carefully

A four-column template is an easy way to get organized:

- Write down every step you need to follow in order to get from "here" to "there."
- Write the name of the person responsible for that step.
- Write the date that step will be completed.
- Check when done.

An action plan for math might begin this way:

### GOAL: PRE-TEST OUT OF SOME MATH UNITS

Step	Person	Date	Done
Research examples of pre-testing	Mom & me	Sept 1	✓
Look through math textbook	Me	Sept 5	
List concepts I feel I've mastered	Me	Sept 5	
Discuss the best way to approach my math teacher	Mom & me	Sept 5	
Make appointment to talk to my teacher	Me	Sept 6	

Don't take shortcuts when trying to bring about change. Being well informed, choosing your goal carefully, and articulating your plan clearly to others are three important steps. See *10 Tips for Talking to Teachers* on the next page.

# LET YOUR DREAMS SOAR

Your path to graduation and beyond can (and should) be as unique as you are. What will make you look forward to each new day? What adventures, investigations, contemplations, or collaborations will inspire you?

Imagine where you want to be tomorrow, next month, next year, 5, 10, or 20 years down the road, but be ready to change your destination as you experience more and more of life.

Remember, when you take charge through self-advocacy you can bring joy to each step of the journey. 🌟



## 10 TIPS FOR TALKING TO TEACHERS<sup>2</sup>

1. Make an appointment to meet and talk.
2. If you know other students who feel the way you do, consider approaching the teacher together.
3. Think through what you want to say before going into your meeting with the teacher.
4. Choose your words carefully.
5. Don't expect the teacher to do all of the work or propose all of the answers...make suggestions, offer solutions, bring resources.
6. Be diplomatic, tactful, and respectful.
7. Focus on what you need, not what you think the teacher is doing wrong.
8. Don't forget to listen.
9. Bring your sense of humor (not joke-telling kind, but ability to laugh at misunderstandings and mistakes).
10. If your meeting isn't successful, get help from another adult.

### ENDNOTES

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Department of Education, Office of Educational Research and Improvement. (1993). *National excellence: A case for developing America's talent*. Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office.

<sup>2</sup> Galbraith, J., & Delisle, J. (2011). 10 tips for talking to teachers. *The gifted teen survival guide: Smart, sharp, and ready for (almost) anything* (4th ed.) (pp. 133). Minneapolis, MN: Free Spirit Publishing.

Adapted from *The Power of Self-Advocacy for Gifted Learners: Teaching the Four Essential Steps to Success* by Deb Douglas. © 2017. Used with permission of Free Spirit Publishing Inc., Minneapolis, MN; 800-735-7323; [www.freespirit.com](http://www.freespirit.com). All rights reserved.

Deb Douglas is a teacher, mom, author, workshop leader, and advocate who helps students "seize their day." Go to [www.gtcarpediem.com](http://www.gtcarpediem.com) for more information.



# Selecting the “Right” Early Childhood Program for Your Precocious Preschooler

By Dr. Leigh Ann Fish

**A**s a parent of two young intellectually precocious girls, I struggled with where to send my children for school. How do I navigate the many options and assess whether a program is a “good fit” for my child? What happens if the program isn’t a good fit? The key, I found, is to learn about your options, prioritize what you want a school to provide, and talk to staff.

## Navigating the Options

The array of choices for early education can be overwhelming. Learning about the more prevalent approaches and their unique philosophies can help in selecting a program that works for your child.

**Childcare/Daycare.** Child care centers (also called nursery schools, learning centers, or child development centers) generally operate under similar guidelines as preschools and can be of very high quality. They tend to be relatively large

and open long hours. They can be just as focused on learning and development as preschool programs, and many daycare providers have received training in early care and education and are state-licensed. Family child care, which is typically run



# Questions to Ask When Evaluating an Early Childhood Program

1. What is your program's educational philosophy?
2. Are you accredited by the National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC)? If not, how do you address similar criteria?



3. Do you focus solely on academic goals?
4. My child excels at \_\_\_\_\_ (reading, working with numbers, etc.). How will you support his/her growth in this area?

5. My child is interested in \_\_\_\_\_ (Egypt, solar system, etc.)  
Does the curriculum ever emerge out of children's interests?



6. Do children get to make choices?
7. What kinds of play do children engage in?



8. What opportunities will my child have for creative and critical thinking?
9. What happens if my child has already learned something or masters it quickly?

10. How do you document, assess, and share children's learning and development?

11. What kinds of literacy, technology, and hands-on resources do you provide?



12. Will my child interact with others from diverse backgrounds? How do you celebrate diversity?



13. Do you incorporate [nature, the arts, or diversity] in your program? If not, are you willing to if you have help with ideas, activities, or organizing events?

14. How do you communicate with and involve families?

15. How do you promote health, nutrition, and safety?



16. What training and background does your staff have? Are any trained or experienced with the needs of children who are gifted and talented?

17. After starting the program, what do we do if we encounter difficulties?

out of a provider's home, may also be of very high quality.

**Early Entrance.** Parents may have the option to enroll a child in kindergarten before the recommended age. This process typically requires an evaluation of the child's readiness for kindergarten through a combination of individual testing and discussion. This often is done by a team including teachers, gifted staff, and the parent who considers the child's cognitive, gross and fine motor, communication, social-emotional development, and other factors that point to the likelihood of success. If the child is recommended for early entrance, a trial period may occur first, after which the placement becomes permanent.

**Head Start.** Head Start is a federally-funded, free program for children ages birth to 5 who are considered at-risk or are from low-income households. As a comprehensive program, Head Start is designed to meet each child's individual needs, while also supporting the family by providing health, nutrition, and community resources. Preschool classrooms use mixed-age groups, with children ranging from 3 to 5 years old. The curriculum promotes kindergarten readiness and children's physical, social, and emotional development. Head Start recognizes the role parents (and families) play in being the child's first, most important teacher, and emphasizes parent education and involvement. Teachers and staff are trained to be responsive to each community's unique cultural characteristics, including providing services in a child's native language.

**Montessori.** Montessori preschools, which can be public or private, allow children to learn at their own pace using hands-on materials and real-world experiences.<sup>1</sup> Any school can legally use the name "Montessori," and each may have different variations on the original philosophy. Classroom spaces are designed to be calm, uncluttered, and neatly organized to minimize distractions. Classrooms are multi-age, with teachers



who serve as educational guides, giving children freedom to experiment with specially designed Montessori materials individually and in small groups. The curriculum includes five main areas: sensorial (using the senses), practical life, language arts, mathematics, and cultural studies (includes music, geography, and science).

**Reggio Emilia.** It is said children have “a hundred languages” or ways of learning and of expressing their ideas: They draw, paint, sculpt, use music, and act out stories.

Mixed-age groups found in many settings can expose children to a wider range of experiences, interests, and ability levels than a same-age classroom can offer; however, it's important to ensure older children are being challenged.

Reggio-inspired schools follow a child-centered approach based on viewing children as curious, capable learners full of knowledge who interact with each other and the world in creative ways.<sup>2</sup>

The curriculum is not preplanned but rather emerges out of children's own questions and interests, with teachers encouraging hands-on, in-depth investigation and discovery via projects that last from several weeks to several months. Art, music, and movement are highly valued and are incorporated into project work. The Reggio approach is also known for careful documentation of a child's learning via transcripts, photographs, video, drawings, sculpture, and more.

**Waldorf.** Waldorf schools aim to create a better world through inspiring thoughtful, creative, and humane individuals. Although not associated with any particular religion, they aim to educate the whole child, nurturing the body, mind, and spirit simultaneously.<sup>3</sup> Children ages 1 to 7 may share the same classroom, and cooperation is emphasized. A Waldorf classroom creates a home-like setting using natural light, soft colors, and simple design; children interact with wooden toys, handmade playthings, and natural materials such as beeswax crayons. Toys are diverse with open-ended possibilities for creativity and social interaction. Early learning focuses on imaginative play and creativity rather than academics, and fantasy, music, drama, art, and outdoor play are woven throughout the curriculum.

## Selecting a “Good Fit”

### What do the experts say?

The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC) has set 10 standards for early childhood programs that can serve as guidelines to families in selecting a high-quality child care center, preschool, or kindergarten.<sup>4</sup> Although a program does not have to be NAEYC accredited to be a high-quality program, NAEYC's guidelines are an excellent starting point for evaluating programs, especially when considering health and safety, physical environment, and management/staffing concerns.

But what other considerations are there for the precocious preschooler? What should parents look for in an early learning program if they suspect giftedness? The National Association for Gifted Children's (NAGC) position on early childhood<sup>5</sup> outlines several core elements:

- **Recognition of children** as unique individuals who have different experiences, interests, strengths, and weaknesses.
- **Flexible pacing** that allows for acceleration to prevent repetition for some and additional time for others to explore topics in-depth.
- **Challenging curriculum** that provides opportunity for critical and creative thinking in all academic disciplines.
- **Learning opportunities** based on interest that promote investigation, exploration, and problem-solving.
- **Engagement** in a variety of experiences that stimulate learning and development, including imaginative play.
- **Access to a variety** of printed materials, technology, and hands-on resources.
- **Interaction and collaboration** with diverse peers, reflecting both like and different interests, abilities, and experiences.

### Prioritizing What Matters To You

**Consider your own values.** In addition to understanding what early childhood and gifted advocates suggest, it's also important to consider your own



priorities. What matters to you and your family? Location and cost are common considerations. Whether a program offers part-time, full-time, or extended care may be considerations for parents who work. Does having your child in a home-like setting appeal to you? Would you prefer smaller class sizes with a lower teacher-student ratio and possibly more one-on-one time with each child? Do you think interactions with mixed- or same-age peers would benefit your child?

Beyond the basics, other priorities might include programs with a faith-based or spiritual curriculum, a connection to nature, integration of the arts, emphasis on play, or exposure to others from diverse backgrounds. If you don't see or hear about something you prioritize, ask. Just because they don't have it doesn't mean they aren't willing to consider it.

**Tour.** Once you have determined your priorities, plan to tour the facilities that seem to fit best and speak with staff. Observe the formal classroom and informal playground or lunch spaces. Ask if you can sit in on a class or attend a family event. Talk with other families and

Programs that emphasize cooperation instead of competition, like Reggio and Waldorf, may be helpful for children who struggle with making and keeping friends.

gather information about their experiences.

**Ask questions.** I recommend parents ask several questions of any potential early childhood setting (*see sidebar on page 16*). Questions range from the program's educational philosophy to how teachers will support areas of strength and/or special interests.

### When the Fit Isn't Good

If it isn't going well, don't panic! You still have choices: communicate, get involved, or try a different program if you think it will better meet your child's needs.

**Communicate.** Don't be afraid to start a dialogue with the staff about your observations or feelings about your child's situation. Doing so can be enlightening for both parents and teachers, and may reveal a simple misunderstanding. Ultimately, educators and families must work together to create school environments that respond to the needs of young gifted learners. If you feel that your child's needs aren't being met, advocacy is a great option. Connect with a local, state-level, or national gifted advocacy group for resources to help staff better understand and plan for the needs of young children with gifts and talents.

**Get involved.** Does something feel missing from your child's program? Parents of young gifted children have helped with cluster groups, learning centers, and independent studies.<sup>6</sup>

**Make a change.** If your child is already in a setting that she likes, consider



Waldorf contends early exposure to media can negatively impact a child's capacity for imagination, so children interested in computers, television, robotics, and electronics may be encouraged to develop other pursuits.

working with the staff to make minor changes to solve a problem. If your child needs more of a challenge, help her pursue an area of interest. Taking time to study or investigate a topic in depth can be a rewarding experience. Switching from a half-day to full-day program, if available, might also provide additional learning opportunities.

Sometimes more major changes need to occur, like changing programs. Although changing programs is not an ideal situation, you shouldn't feel without options. Not all gifted children have the same needs or will respond well to all settings, so knowing your child is important. Most early entrance policies will have a trial or transition period before becoming permanent. If considering

(Continues on p. 23)

The new NAGC Select book is out!

**Early Childhood Gifted Education: Fostering Talent Development**

Nancy B. Hertzog  
Ann Gadzikowski

Order online at  
[bit.ly/NAGCshop](http://bit.ly/NAGCshop)

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR  
**Gifted Children**



From Identification to Ivy League:

# Nurturing Multiple Interests and Multi-Potentiality in Gifted Students

By Dr. Kristina Henry Collins

Jon was a scholar/athlete. A talented football player with a critical mind, he embraced his dual identity as a scholarly athlete and an athletic scholar—even when others pushed him to choose one or the other. He worked smart and hard, thought critically on and off the field, and set high goals for himself. He dreamed of attending an Ivy League college, one that held top tier status in both STEM research and athletics. He also distinguished himself over other student-athletes who felt compelled to prioritize their academic ability over athletic identity or vice versa.

## Fostering the Multi-Potential Child

Jon displayed what many gifted children do: multi-potentiality.<sup>1</sup> The multi-potential child excels in two or more different fields, be it football and math, painting and English, or chess and chemistry. These multiple interests, if not fostered appropriately, could disadvantage the gifted student, who may find it hard to choose or focus his many passions and talents.

Parents, positioned as a child's first teacher, inaugurate the nurturing process of the gifted student's multiple interests, talents, and potential.<sup>2</sup> With careful planning and support systems, parents can promote their gifted child's dual identity, while also fostering academic excellence, talent development, and maximizing potential.

In *Counseling Gifted and Talented Students*, Nicholas Colangelo suggests that parents, educators, and counselors help high-ability individuals with multiple talents in four ways:<sup>3</sup>

1. Remind students that they do not have to limit themselves to one career.
2. Use leisure activities as a way to continually develop areas of abilities and interest, apart from one's career goals.
3. Use career counseling as a value-based activity, exploring broad categories of life satisfaction.

4. Emphasize peer discussions and group work with other multi-potential youth so that one can see that he/she is not alone with concerns.

Some gifted students have very focused career interests at an early age while others do not develop them until late high school or start of college.<sup>4</sup> Research does not indicate an advantage to either.

However, for those students who are ready to seriously pursue dual interests, how can parents help map out a plan of action so that their child will not have to sacrifice one interest for the other? The chart on page 20 offers sample scope and sequence planning for talent development in areas as diverse as athletics and global awareness.

This is a scaffolded approach to supporting your multi-potential child that provides information and resources from middle school to the end of high school. This type of approach provides your child with a long-term plan and provides him confidence in his dual talents, enabling him to advocate for himself in an educational environment that often does not support the dual identity of the multi-potential child. In fact, many children are labeled "underachievers," when in fact they are uniquely skilled at prioritizing sometimes competing priorities.

(Continues on p. 22)

## Sample Scope & Sequence for Talent Development

This chart is intended to provide sample ideas of ways to nurture talent development from middle school through high school in students with multiple interests. It's important to remember that all gifted students are not alike. Parents need to know their child and their child's capacity to juggle multiple areas of interest. If your student exhibits signs of anxiety or stress, it may be time to reconsider and readjust.

	Middle School	HS – Freshman & Sophomore Years	HS – Junior & Senior Years	Selected Resources
<b>Academic Rigor &amp; Co-curricular Involvement</b>	Academic organizations and competitions Accelerated/ Pre-AP courses Interest and career exploration Project-based learning Summer programs/courses	Advanced/AP courses College and Career Pathway Academy Job shadowing and apprenticeships Research-based learning	Advanced math and science courses (Calculus AB/BC, Physics A/B, etc.) Dual and joint enrollment Internships	<b>Career Pathways</b> <a href="http://www.career-pathways.org">www.career-pathways.org</a> <b>College Board</b> <a href="http://www.apcentral.collegeboard.com">www.apcentral.collegeboard.com</a> <b>Science, Engineering, Communications, and Mathematics Enrichment</b> <a href="http://www.SECME.org">www.SECME.org</a>
<b>Gifted Programming &amp; Enrichment</b>	HS course credit by exam Saturday and summer programs	Gifted student organizations (GSO) and memberships Magnet school programming	Competitive honors program Early college enrollment State and national GSO involvement (conventions, initiatives, etc.)	<b>Gifted Programming Standards</b> <a href="http://www.nagc.org">www.nagc.org</a> <b>Supporting Emotional Needs of Gifted</b> <a href="http://www.sengifted.org">www.sengifted.org</a> <b>Talent Identification Program</b> <a href="http://www.tip.duke.edu">www.tip.duke.edu</a>
<b>Athletic Development</b>	School-based and seasonal sports exploration	Club/AAU competition sports School-based varsity sports	Blue-shirt enrollment <sup>1</sup> Collegiate-level sports camps	<b>Amateur Athletic Union</b> <a href="http://www.aausports.org">www.aausports.org</a> <b>NCAA</b> <a href="http://www.ncaa.org">www.ncaa.org</a> <b>Performance Analysis Tools</b> <a href="http://www.hudl.com">www.hudl.com</a>
<b>Leadership Development</b>	Martial arts Student government Vertical mentoring <sup>2</sup>	Hybrid/peer mentoring <sup>3</sup> Student organizations ROTC Leadership Program	Discipline-based mentoring Student government and other school organizations officer	<b>Boys and Girls State</b> <a href="http://www.alaforveterans.org/ALA-Girls-State">www.alaforveterans.org/ALA-Girls-State</a> <a href="http://www.legion.org/boysnation">www.legion.org/boysnation</a> <b>Toastmasters</b> <a href="http://www.toastmasters.com">www.toastmasters.com</a>
<b>Arts/Creativity Development</b>	Journalism, yearbook, etc. Performance and competition band and chorus	Fine arts courses Theatre troupes	Creativity in STEM focus Fine arts enrichment	<b>National Endowment for the Arts</b> <a href="http://www.arts.gov">www.arts.gov</a>
<b>Community Service (CS)</b>	Family and/or faith-based Independent community service initiatives and awareness	School, local, and national-level CS involvement	Service-Learning (SL) initiatives	<b>Key Club</b> <a href="http://www.keyclub.org">www.keyclub.org</a> <b>Lions Clubs</b> <a href="http://www.lionsclubs.org">www.lionsclubs.org</a> <b>Service Learning</b> <a href="http://www.servicelearning.org">www.servicelearning.org</a>
<b>Global Awareness</b>	Study abroad trips	Global studies for HS credit	Global studies for college credit	<b>EF Educational Tour</b> <a href="http://www.eftours.com">www.eftours.com</a> <b>Study Abroad</b> <a href="http://www.studyabroad.com">www.studyabroad.com</a>
<b>College Preparation</b>	College visits	Collegiate summer programs PSAT administration and standardized test prep	Residential programs Scholarship development and applications	<b>ACT</b> <a href="http://www.act.org">www.act.org</a> <b>College Board</b> <a href="http://www.collegeboard.org">www.collegeboard.org</a> <b>Fastweb Scholarships</b> <a href="http://www.fastweb.com">www.fastweb.com</a>

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Newberg, J. (2015). *One 'ship, two 'ship, green-shirt, blue-shirt*. Retrieved from <http://www.scout.com/college/football/recruiting/story/1509458-one-ship-two-ship-green-shirt-blue-shirt>

<sup>2</sup> Collins, K. H., Price, E., Hanson, L., & Neaves, D. (manuscript accepted). *Consequences of stereotype threat & imposter syndrome in STEM: The journey from STEM-professional to STEM-educator for four women of color*.

<sup>3</sup> Collins et al, (manuscript accepted).



# Jon's Story: A STEM-Scholar Athlete

Jon was born and raised in the southeastern part of the United States where the culture of sports takes on a life of its own. Jon's athletic identity development is evident as far back as 3 months old in baby pictures taken with football props.

As early as elementary school, Jon was referred to by his teachers as a leader and academically unique in his approach to learning. They noted his particularly high math problem-solving skills and creative thinking.<sup>1</sup> Jon's parents complemented his formal educational experience with a scaffold approach to identity and talent development. In the early years, academic and athletic development was a vehicle for play and bonding time. As Jon grew, they used both for skill development to nurture character building, leadership, and critical thinking.

They discovered that the brain fascinated Jon, and the way people rationalize thinking and decision-making. They found authentic ways for him to research and explore college majors and career choices; he competed in essay competitions related to career awareness; and they incorporated college visits and academic sightseeing into family vacations.

In middle school, his parents limited Jon to two extra-curricular activities each season. Summers were spent exploring additional topics and subjects that interested him through elective course enrollment and study abroad trips.

Going into high school, Jon had mapped out all of the appropriate courses he felt he needed to prepare for a major in neuroscience or biopsychology. His football teammates referred to him as the "mad scientist," describing how his academic and athletic identity seamlessly intertwined.

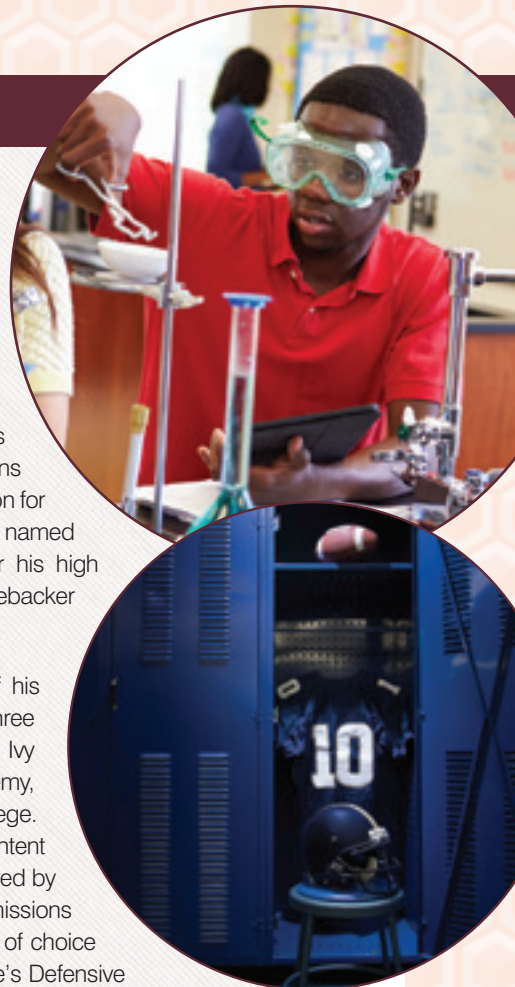
Jon's junior year was a critical one with entrance exams, scholarship applications, and athletic camps. Jon's day began at 5:30 a.m. with football conditioning. After a full day of classes, he went to football practice followed by long hours of completing homework, studying, and/or working on projects. In addition, on the weekends he decided to work a part-time job as a "scare" actor for a local theme park. He mastered important skills such as time management, organization,

and prioritization. That year he was named a Dr. Martin D. Jenkins Scholar by the Special Populations Network of the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC).<sup>2</sup> He was named Defensive Player of the Year for his high school, and ranked as the #3 Linebacker in the region.

Jon ended the first semester of his senior year with a list of his top three college choices that included an Ivy League school, a military academy, and a prestigious, private college. Just in time for National Letter of Intent (NLI) day, or Likely Letter as referred by the Ivies, Jon secured early admissions to commit to the tier one college of choice (where he later earned the league's Defensive Player of the Week during his freshman year).

Jon lettered all four years in high school varsity football and track, and graduated in the Top 10% of his class, having developed a very diverse academic portfolio that included magnet program enrollment; study-abroad and global studies; summer enrichment courses; dual-enrollment, joint-enrollment, gifted and AP courses; credit by exam; and a state-endorsed career pathway in career, technology, agriculture, and engineering (CTAE). Familiar with service learning theory and the benefits of vertical mentoring,<sup>3</sup> Jon's parents encouraged him to apply what he learned in class and his talents to serve his community by developing a tutoring program for athletes, an SAT/ ACT prep program, and a program that promoted pre-teen awareness about distracted and drunk driving.

Jon continues his education with over half a million dollars earned in academic scholarships to fund his pursuit of undergraduate, master's, and doctoral-level degrees. Jon's story confirms that if you are athletically talented, academically gifted, and well-rounded in potentiality, you can take your place among the best. ♡



## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup> Collins, K. H., & Grantham, T. (2014). Creative mindfulness in STEM talent development. *Gifted Education Press Quarterly*, 2(3), 10–14.

<sup>2</sup> More about Dr. Martin Jenkins Awards Scholar Program and the application process: <https://www.nagc.org/get-involved/nagc-networks-and-special-interest-groups/networks-special-populations/dr-martin-d>

<sup>3</sup> More on benefits of vertical and hybrid mentoring strategies: Collins, K. H., Price, E., Hanson, L., & Neaves, D. (manuscript accepted). *Consequences of stereotype threat & imposter syndrome in STEM: The journey from STEM-professional to STEM-educator for four women of color.*



# Effectively Nurturing Multi-Potentiality in Gifted, Scholar/Athletes

Effectively nurturing multiple interests, multi-potentiality, and the dual-identity of the gifted, scholar/athlete means creating an environment that allows her to maximize her gifts and talents. In doing so parents, parents are encouraged to:

- » Take primary responsibility to make sure their child's talents are developed
- » Work closely with counselors, coaches, etc. within their area of expertise to provide additional support and information as needed
- » Stay informed of the latest guidelines regarding student-athlete eligibility
- » Carefully monitor the appropriate number and level of courses that:
  - satisfy local and state academic requirements, and
  - maintain student-athlete NCAA "amateur" status
- » Scaffold identity and talent development from diverse sources to include:
  - STEM identity development,
  - athletic talent development,
  - arts/creativity development, and
  - leadership development



## Resource

Lauenstein, R., & Galehouse, D. (2017). *The making of a student athlete* (14th ed.). Sunnyvale, CA: Advisor Press.

(Continued from p. 19)

## Resources

- Greene, M. J. (2006). Helping build lives: Career and life development of gifted and talented students. *Professional School Counseling*, 10(1), 34–42.
- Shoemaker, S. E., Thomas, C., Roberts, T., & Boltz, R. (2016). Building a mentorship-based research program focused on individual interests, curiosity, and professional skills at the North Carolina School of Science and Mathematics. *Gifted Child Today*, 39(4), 191–204.
- Webb, J. T. (2014, Spring). Gifted children and adults: Neglected areas of practice. *The National Register of Health Service Psychologists*, 18–27.

## Author's Note

**Kristina Henry Collins, Ph.D.**, is an assistant professor of talent development at Texas State University. Dr. Collins has over 20 years of experience with STEM teaching and leading in Title I, rural, and community-based K-20 educational settings. Her research focuses on multi-cultural gifted education, STEM identity development, and culturally responsive STEM talent development. She was the 2011 recipient of the Mary Frasier Equity and Excellence Award presented by Georgia Association of Gifted Children for her work in advancing educational opportunities for under-represented students in gifted education. Dr. Collins currently serves on the board of directors for Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG) and holds both her Ph.D. and Ed.S. from the University of Georgia.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Hebert, T. P. (2012). Understanding their challenges and honoring their potential. In C. M. Callahan & H. L. Hertberg-Davis (Eds.), *Fundamentals of gifted education: Considering multiple perspectives* (pp. 331–342). New York, NY: Routledge.
  - <sup>2</sup> Collins, K. H. (in press). Unpacking SENG's mission, vision, & values: A framework and standard for comprehensive support of the gifted across the lifespan. *SENGvine Newsletter: Supporting the Needs of the Gifted*.
  - <sup>3</sup> Colangelo, N. (2002, Fall). *Counseling gifted and talented students*. Storrs, CT: National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented.
  - <sup>4</sup> Rysiew, K. J., Shore, B. M., & Carson, A. D. (1994). Multipotentiality and overchoice syndrome: Clarifying common usage. *Gifted and Talented International*, 9(2), 41–46.
- Rysiew, K. J., Shore, B. M., & Leeb, R. T. (1998). Multipotentiality, giftedness, and career choices: A review. *Journal of Counseling & Development*, 77, 423–430.



(Continued from p. 18)

early entrance, be sure to ask for a copy of your school's policy and discuss any timelines and procedures for reversing the decision if it truly isn't a good fit. Priorities can also change over time. Some families choose to homeschool when other options haven't been a good fit.<sup>7</sup> Homeschooling can work well for some gifted children and their families although it takes serious commitment and time.

## Conclusion

Being realistic means recognizing that making the "right" choice when choosing an early childhood program may not always mean it is a "perfect" choice. Not every school is a perfect match for your child. To feel empowered to find a good match, consider your options, reflect on your priorities, ask questions, and work with the school to support the needs of your gifted child. ♡

Early Entrance provides more accelerated academic content, however, it may be less focused on imaginative play or social-emotional development.

Reggio's emergent curriculum that springs from children's own interests may benefit the young gifted learner who is curious and asks a lot of questions. However, the emphasis on group work may be less appealing for some. If your child finds social interactions difficult or prefers to work alone, ask how your child will be supported.

## Resources

Gadzikowski, A. (2013). *Challenging exceptionally bright children in early childhood classrooms*. St. Paul, MN: Redleaf Press.

Hoagies Gifted Education Page. (2017). *How can I choose a school for my gifted child?* Retrieved from: [http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/choose\\_school.htm](http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/choose_school.htm)

National Association for Gifted Children (n.d.). *Advocate for your child*. Retrieved from: <http://www.nagc.org/get-involved/advocate-high-ability-learners/advocate-your-child>

Wana, J. (2010). *How to choose the best preschool for your child: The ultimate guide to finding, getting into, and preparing for nursery school*. Naperville, IL: Sourcebooks.

## Author's Note

Leigh Ann Fish, Ph.D., is an assistant professor of early childhood education at the University of Maine at Farmington, where she also teaches graduate courses in gifted education. Leigh Ann is a member of both NAGC and NAEYC and holds National Board Certification in Early Childhood Education. Leigh Ann has worked as an advocate for gifted and talented children, as a K–2 coordinator of gifted education, and as a gifted teacher in the primary grades. Her research interests include high-ability girls and young children with gifts and talents. She is also a proud mom to two precocious young daughters.

If your young learner seems to be exhibiting signs of asynchronous (uneven) development and/or twice-exceptionality (gifted plus a learning and/or physical disability), parents should seek educators with training in meeting the academic, physical, social, and emotional needs of young gifted children.

## Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> Follari, L. (2015). *Foundations and best practices in early childhood education: History, theories, and approaches to learning*. Hoboken, NJ: Pearson.
- <sup>2</sup> Follari, (2015).
- <sup>3</sup> Follari, (2015).
- <sup>4</sup> National Association for the Education of Young Children (n.d.). *The 10 NAEYC program standards*. Retrieved from <https://families.naeyc.org/accredited-article/10-naeyc-program-standards>
- <sup>5</sup> National Association for Gifted Children. (2006). *Early childhood* [position statement]. Retrieved from <http://www.nagc.org>.
- <sup>6</sup> Smutny, J. F. (2004, September). Differentiated instruction for young gifted children: How parents can help. *Parenting for High Potential*, 6–11.
- <sup>7</sup> Jolly, J., Matthews, M., & Nester, J. (2013). Homeschooling the gifted: A parent's perspective. *Gifted Child Quarterly*, 57, 121–134.



1331 H Street NW, Suite 1001  
Washington, DC 20005



## Bright Thinkers • Future Innovators

Center for Talent Development helps gifted students, age 4 – grade 12, reach full potential. Our pathways approach leads students on a journey of intellectual, emotional, and social growth.

- Assessment to identify strengths
- Rigorous, individualized online courses
- Weekend programs
- Residential and commuter summer programs
- Leadership and civic engagement programs

**Center for Talent Development  
Northwestern University**

EXPLORE ALL OUR PROGRAMS ONLINE  
[www.ctd.northwestern.edu](http://www.ctd.northwestern.edu) | 847/491-3782

**Northwestern** | CTD