

Families as Partners

Gifted
Programming
Family Handbook



LIGHTS

Learning and Instruction for **G**ifted,
Highly-capable, and **T**alented Students



Fountain-Fort Carson District 8

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Families as Partners

At Fountain-Fort Carson School District 8 we believe collaborating with families is essential to ensure our gifted students experience success and reach their full potential while enrolled in our district. This publication is designed to provide guidance and support to parents who have a child formally identified as a gifted learner according to our district and state criteria. We believe that gifted students have unique learning and affective needs, and it is our goal to work with parents to provide a challenging educational environment that is focused on high achievement and responsive support to each individual gifted student. As a partner in this process, we hope you will find this publication helpful and beneficial. Through our LIGHTS program we aspire to illuminate a pathway of success for your child.

Mission

The mission of FFC8 is to ensure that each child has equal access to receive an optimum educational experience. Our district recognizes the need to identify students from all backgrounds who demonstrate a potential for exceptional performance. Therefore, we are committed to providing relevant and challenging learning experiences to support the intellectual, behavioral, social, emotional, artistic and creative development of our gifted students.

Definition of Giftedness

District Definition

Gifted children are those students between the ages of four and twenty-one whose aptitude or competence in abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment in one or more domains are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs. Gifted students include gifted students with disabilities (i.e. twice exceptional) and students with exceptional abilities or potentials from all socio-economic, ethnic, and cultural populations. Gifted students are capable of high performance, exceptional production, or exceptional learning behavior by virtue of any or a combination of these areas of giftedness.

- General or specific intellectual ability.
- Specific academic aptitude.
- Creative or productive thinking.
- Leadership abilities.
- Visual arts, performing arts, musical, dance, or psychomotor abilities.

State Definition

The Fountain-Fort Carson District 8 definition of Gifted Children mirrors the state definition according to the Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA).

Identification

A four step process is used to identify Gifted Students in FFC8. A student may be referred for consideration by a parent/guardian, teacher, peer, self-referral, MTSS team, previous district identification, or assessment data (including universal screening information). A student new to FFC8 who was previously identified as gifted in another district/state will automatically be referred for the screening process. In order to be identified in FFC8, the student must meet state gifted criteria. A body of evidence is collected for a screening process. This body of evidence includes qualitative as well as quantitative data, such as cognitive ability data, criterion and norm-referenced achievement test data, norm-referenced observation scales, performance evaluations, checklists, interviews, and observations. Based on the student's learning profile, a trained educational team will convene to analyze the data and determine the level of appropriate identification and programming. If a parent, student or teacher does not agree with the identification decision, he/she has the right to appeal. The three levels of identification include:

- Performing at grade level
- Talent Pool (Highly capable) in one or more areas
- Meets criteria for formal gifted identification

Those students identified as gifted learners will receive an Advanced Learning Plan. (see page 14)

Four-Step Identification Process

Step I ~ Referral

A student may be referred for the identification process by:

- Parent/Guardian
- Teacher/MTSS Team
- Assessment results, including Universal Screening
- Previous gifted identification
- Self or Peer

Step II ~ Collect Data

An educational team trained in gifted identification and programming, consisting of classroom teachers, the building gifted coordinator, and a building administrator, will collect and review a body of evidence for the referred student. (see page 8) The educational team will make a recommendation for identification within 30 days of receiving the referral or inform the family about additional data being collected.

Step III ~ Identification

The educational team will recommend one of the following levels of identification based on the body of evidence:

Grade Level Learner: Body of evidence suggests the student is performing successfully on current grade level standards. Current grade level curriculum will enable the student to make academic growth.

Fountain-Fort Carson**Talent Pool (Highly-capable Learner):**

Evidence suggests the student demonstrates potential and/or ability above grade level standards. The student may require differentiated teaching strategies or curriculum to ensure academic growth.

Gifted Learner: Evidence strongly suggests the student demonstrates exceptional potential and/or ability. The student is identified as a Gifted Learner and an Advanced Learning Plan will be developed to ensure sustained growth and achievement.

The level of identification determined by the educational team will be communicated to families with a written determination letter.

Step IV ~ Appeal Process

Although our educational team carefully examines a complete body of evidence to determine identification, there may be times when the parent/guardian does not agree with the decision of the team. A parent, student or teacher has the right to appeal the identification decision. To initiate an appeal process the appellant should contact the building principal and complete the necessary documentation within 10 days of a determination. The appellant will also need to provide the team with any other additional information, work, or documentation that demonstrates gifted abilities. The educational team will contact the appellant within 1 week to schedule a time to review the body of evidence and the reasoning behind their recommendation and allow the appellant the opportunity to share any new evidence not previously considered.

Body of Evidence

A Body of Evidence, as defined by the Colorado Department of Education, is a collection of information from multiple sources and multiple types of data. It incorporates qualitative and quantitative data about achievement (CMAS and/or Illuminate), cognitive ability (CogAT), performance, parent/guardian and teacher input, motivation and observations of gifted characteristics/behaviors (SIGS). The body of evidence contains data to identify the strength area defined in the definition of gifted children and determine appropriate programming services. These same categories are used in data collection and for developing the Advanced Learning Plan. Gifted identification is not made by just using one score on one assessment. The only exception to this practice is if a student scores at the 95th percentile or above on one or more batteries of the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) or any other cognitive assessment given in another school or district; in this situation, the student automatically qualifies as a gifted learner. According to the Revised Rules for the Administration of the Exceptional Children's Educational Act 12.02(2)(c)(vii) - "When only cognitive ability assessment data meets criteria in a body of evidence, the review team may determine that the student is identified with general or specific intellectual ability. This identification meets the condition of portability."

Furthermore, not meeting criteria on a single assessment tool shall not prevent further data collection or consideration for identification, if other indicators suggest exceptional potential as observed in a body of evidence (12.02(2)(d)(ii)). Appropriate interventions will be provided to address student needs, and student performance will continue to be progress monitored through a formal talent pool process.

Bright Child	Gifted Child
Knows the answer	Asks the questions
Is interested	Is mentally and physically involved
Has good ideas	Has wild, silly ideas
Works hard	Plays around, but tests well
Answers the questions	Discusses in detail, elaborates
Is in the advanced group/class	Goes beyond the group/class
Listens with interest	Shows strong feelings/opinions
Learns with ease	Already knows—innate ability
Requires 6-8 repetitions	Requires 1-2 repetitions
Understands main ideas	Constructs abstractions
Enjoys peers	Prefers adults
Grasps the meaning	Draws inferences
Completes assignments	Initiates projects
Is receptive	Is intense
Copies accurately	Creates a new design
Enjoys school	Enjoys learning
Absorbs information	Manipulates information
Is a technician	Is an inventor
Enjoys sequential learning	Thrives on complexity
Is alert	Is keenly observant
Is pleased with own learning	Is highly self-critical

From Susan Winebrenner
The Cluster Grouping Handbook

Cognitive Assessments

The purpose of a cognitive assessment is to measure a child's ability or potential for general thinking and problem solving. The test results may indicate how well a student uses these skills to solve verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal problems.

- Verbal—Use of words and language
- Quantitative—Use of symbols and math
- Nonverbal—Use of pictures, shapes, puzzles

These abilities develop gradually throughout a person's lifetime. Experiences both in and out of school influence this development. The test does not appraise factors such as effort, attention, attitudes, or work habits that can also influence school achievement.

A cognitive assessment is not an achievement test. It does not measure the skills that are directly taught and practiced in school. Therefore, it is not measuring what a child has learned but rather the potential abilities a child has for learning. A cognitive assessment appraises general thinking skills that a student gradually develops from both in-school and out-of-school experiences.

A cognitive score can fluctuate throughout a child's time in school depending on different rates of development. This is why at FFC8 we administer the Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT) in 2nd, 5th, and 8th grades. If a student is new to the district, we will accept other cognitive assessments administered in another school. Primary cognitive assessments are also available when a team determines testing is appropriate for a student K—1.

Using the Cognitive Scores

A cognitive score is an essential piece of the gifted identification puzzle. Although we look at other supporting evidence, a student with a score of 95th percentile or above in either the verbal, quantitative, or nonverbal areas of the cognitive assessment will automatically be identified as a gifted learner in FFC8.

For those students who score below the 95th percentile on a cognitive assessment, other supporting evidence is examined to determine giftedness. If a student scores at the 95th percentile on a norm referenced test (Scantron Performance or Illuminate), also scores Exceeded on CMAS, and demonstrates achievement one-and-a-half years above grade level in the classroom, a team may consider a student for gifted identification. If all the other supporting evidence indicate giftedness, the cognitive score will not exclude a student from identification.

Cognitive scores provide us with information on a student's potential for academic growth and achievement. However, many of our students are gifted in leadership, creativity, or the arts. To determine giftedness in leadership, creativity, or the arts, teachers use observation, class performance, and portfolios of work to indicate talent in these areas. At the elementary level, we recognize students with special talents in these areas and provide them with opportunities to enhance these talent areas. Beginning in the fall of 2015, students in middle school and high school who demonstrate gifted abilities in leadership, creativity, and the arts will be formally identified. Students identified in these areas will also have an Advanced Learning Plan. (see page 14)

Understanding Your Child's CogAT Score

Abilities	National Age Scores			National Age Percentile Ranks				
	Standard Age Score	Stanine	Percentile Rank	Low	25	50	75	High 99
Verbal	121	8	91					■
Quantitative	95	4	38		■			
Nonverbal	100	5	50		■			
COMPOSITE	105	6	62		■			

Ability Profile 5E (V+): The number in the profile is the age stanine for the middle score on the three batteries. The score on the Verbal Battery is significantly higher than the scores on the Quantitative and Nonverbal Batteries. For more information, visit www.cogat.com.

Abilities	Raw Scores			Grade Scores	
	Number of Items	Number Att	Number Correct	National Stanine	National Percentile Rank
Verbal	65	65	55	8	89
Quantitative	60	34	27	4	32
Nonverbal	65	55	36	5	47
COMPOSITE				5	57

The Cognitive Abilities Test is given to all 2nd, 5th, and 8th grade students in FFC8. Following assessment, parents will be provided a sheet with their child's scores, similar to the above example.

3 Areas Assessed on the CogAT:

- Verbal:** Typically linked to reading and writing abilities
- Quantitative:** Typically linked to math and problem solving abilities
- Nonverbal:** Typically linked to spatial and creative abilities not using words or numbers; indicative of a strong command in general or fluid reasoning and the ability to conceptualize at an advanced level using the format of pictures and images
- Composite:** Overall score of the test

National Age Percentile Rank

This score tells how the student scored compared to students his/her same **AGE**. Looking at the example on page 12, compared to all other students in the nation, this student scored better than 91% of the other students his age in the Verbal area. Only 8% of the students scored higher.

A 50th percentile rank is considered **Average**. It is **NOT** like a school or class score where 50% would be considered failing.

National Grade Percentile Rank

Your child's Percentile Rank compared to other students in the same **GRADE**.

Standard Age Score

This score compares an individual's performance with that of other individuals the same age. The average score is 100.

Stanine Scores

Stanines range from 1—9 and may be regarded as broad groupings of percentile ranks.

For more information on scores: www.cogat.com

Advanced Learning Plans

An Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) is a formal plan developed individually for identified gifted students. Families are part of the creation of this plan. Once a student is formally identified as a gifted student, the family will be invited to assist in the completion of the ALP. The ALP is rewritten annually in grades K—12 and is developed within 60 school days for newly identified students. The ALP will contain educational goals for the student for those areas in which the student has been identified as gifted. The goals will be written in a format that contains ways to measure if the goal has been attained by the end of the school year. Your student's teacher, or an educational team member, will share the ALP with you and your student. At the end of the school year, the teacher will examine the measurable evidence and determine if the goal was:

- Attained
- Partially Attained
- Minimally Attained

Parent/Guardian Participation

Family input is a very valuable part of the ALP process. Parents/guardians know their child the best, and feedback is essential in helping us meet the student's academic, social, and emotional needs. Parents/guardians should consider the following questions:

1. When did you first become aware of your student's strengths? What type of behaviors did you observe in your student that indicated a specific gift or talent?
2. Please list your student's interests. Is there a subject for which your student is passionate? Is there a topic he/she knows a lot about?
3. Does your student have a specific goal he/she is working towards? (Example: A scouting badge; specific level of dance, karate, read a particular novel; accomplish a specific puzzle.)
4. Does your student participate in any activities outside the school setting? If so, please list these activities. (Example: Scouting, camps, music lessons, Big Brother/Sister, library reading club, religious organizations, hobbies.)
5. In what ways do you support your student's academic strengths at home? (Example: structured study time and area at home, check planner/homework, communicate with classroom teacher, encourage leisure reading, help with participation in community activities, provide summer learning opportunities.)
6. Do you have any concerns about your student's current academic, social, or emotional growth?

ALP Blended with ICAP

At the middle school and high school levels, the ALP will be created as part of the student's Individual Career and Academic Plan (ICAP). The ICAP is used to identify and establish personalized academic and career goals, explore postsecondary career and educational opportunities, align course work and curriculum, apply to postsecondary institutions, secure financial aid and ultimately enter the workforce. (22-2-R-2.00 (2), C.R.S.) As part of their ICAP, students will develop their own ALP goals based on their strengths and interests.

Academic ALP Goals

It is the goal of FFC8 to ensure that each child has equal access to receive an optimum educational experience and make one year's worth of growth in one year's time. Gifted students must be challenged with advanced content and instruction in their strength areas to ensure academic growth. Therefore, goals for the ALP will be written to show what educational programming will occur for your student to ensure growth. Goals may include a type of project your student might complete independently, a course in which he/she will be enrolled, or a specialized curriculum your student will receive.

We use many various assessments in our district to measure growth and to develop appropriate programming and ALP goals. These might include Colorado Measure of Academic Success (CMAS), Illuminate, reading inventories, curriculum assessments, district common assessments, class grades, grading rubrics, portfolios, performances, or checklists. When your student's teacher writes an educational goal, he/she will share with you how they intend to measure your student's progress and how they will determine if the goal was attained by the end of the year. Middle of the year goal progress will be communicated at Parent/Teacher conferences in February.

Realistically, there may be times when a goal set for your student was not attained. It is important to discuss with your student's teacher why the goal was not attained and how this information will be useful in the creation of ALP goals for the following year. Many factors can get in the way of students not performing to the level we expect. For more information on this, please see information in this booklet on underachievement and the major obstacles gifted children face.

Affective ALP Goals

In addition to an academic ALP goal, each student will also have an affective ALP goal. The purpose of an affective goal is to help with the development of personal, social, communication, leadership, and/or cultural competencies.

Gifted Programming

At your Advanced Learning Plan conference, you will hear about the specific programming your student will receive in order to ensure academic growth. Below is a list of possible programming options provided for students in FFC8. Some programming options are dependent on the grade level of your student.

Clubs

FFC8 provides many before and after school club opportunities for students. Some clubs require the student be invited to attend, while other clubs are open to all students. These clubs may include: National Honor Society, Foreign Language, Art, Math, Science, Spelling, Writing, Geography, FBLA, Drama, Dance, Music, Chess, and STEM. Check your student's school website or ask at the office for a list of building level clubs.

College Level Courses

At Fountain-Fort Carson High School (FFCHS), students may qualify to enroll in college level courses taught during the regular school day at FFCHS. Students can earn college credits for this course work. Request a list of available college courses and their requirements from the high school counseling office.

Advanced Placement (AP) and Pre-AP Courses

At FFCHS, students may enroll for Advanced Placement courses in English, Math, Science, Social Studies, and some arts/elective courses. At the completion of these courses, students may elect to take the AP assessment and potentially earn college credit for the course.

Honors Classes

In middle school and high school, a wide variety of honors classes are available to provide rigor and challenge to students who demonstrate a need for this advanced course work. Check with your student's school for a list of honors courses and the requirements for admittance into these classes.

Differentiation

Differentiating instruction is an approach that responds to a learner's needs through modification of the content a student is learning, the process used to instruct the learner, or the product the student creates. The learning environment may also be differentiated by students working in small groups or a student being pulled out of the regular classroom to work with a specialized teacher for a specific content area.

Grouping

Students may be grouped with other students of like ability for a specific content instruction. Students may work in small groups or in a specific class with other students who share the same academic needs.

Independent Study

Teachers may assign a specific project for a student to work on independently. The project supports a talent area of the student and provides the student the opportunity to investigate a specific topic in greater depth and complexity. Teachers may ask the student to create a project or demonstration to share with a specific audience.

Pacing

Teachers may vary the pacing of instruction for students who require less time for content mastery. A student may move through a unit or class at a faster pace, leaving time for higher level learning opportunities or participation in a supplementary curriculum.

Electives

In middle school and high school, a wide variety of electives are available for students. These may include: technology, foreign language, art, music, drama, and competitive athletics.

Content and Grade-Level Acceleration

A student who demonstrates mastery of grade-level content may be provided with a course one or two years earlier than is typical. The student may go to a different grade-level for a specific course and then return to the classroom with his/her same-age peers for the remainder of the day. It is extremely important that before a student is accelerated to another grade for a content level, the student has demonstrated complete mastery of the current grade-level content. Sometimes, differences in grade-level scheduling preclude a student from actually attending a class in a different grade-level. In this situation, the student can be provided the accelerated curriculum within his/her grade-level classroom and work independently on the advanced content with teacher assistance and instruction. In very rare cases, a student may demonstrate a profile where grade-skipping is considered in order to meet a highly-advanced student's academic needs. The student must demonstrate a developmentally advanced capacity, readiness, and motivation to move to the next grade level. This option is taken very seriously by school personnel and requires additional assessments to determine if the student is a good candidate for full grade acceleration.

Possible Concerns of Gifted Children

Strengths	Possible Problems
Acquires and attains information quickly	Impatient with slowness of others; dislikes routine and drill; may resist mastering foundation skills; may make concepts unduly complex
Inquisitive attitude; intellectual curiosity; intrinsic motivation; searches for significance	Asks embarrassing questions; strong willed; excessive in interests; expects same level of intensity and effort from others
Ability to conceptualize abstract ideas or concepts; enjoys problem solving and intellectual activity	Rejects or omits details; resists practice or drill; questions teaching procedures
Can see cause-effect relations	Difficulty accepting the illogical, such as feelings, traditions, matters taken on faith
Love of truth, equity, and fair play	Difficulty in being practical; worries about humanitarian concerns
Enjoys organizing things and people into structure and order; seeks to systematize	Constructs complicated rules or systems; may be seen as bossy, rude, or domineering
Large vocabulary; broad information in advanced areas	May use words to escape or avoid situations; becomes bored with school and age peers; seen by others as a "know-it-all"
Thinks critically; has high expectations; is self-critical and evaluates others	Critical or intolerant toward others; may become discouraged or depressed; perfectionist

Strengths	Possible Problems
Keen observer; willing to consider the unusual; seeks new experiences	Overly intense focus; may be gullible
Creative and inventive; likes new ways of doing things	May disrupt plans or reject what is already known; seen by others as different or out-of-step
Intense concentration; long attention span to areas of interest; goal directed behavior; persistent	Resists interruption; neglects duties or people during time of focused interest; seen as stubborn
Sensitivity; empathy for others; desire to be accepted by others	Sensitivity to criticism or peer rejection; expects others to have same values; need for success and recognition; may feel different or alienated
Independent; prefers individualized work; reliant on self	May reject parent or peer input; nonconformist; may be unconventional
High energy, alertness, eagerness; periods of intense efforts	Frustration with inactivity; eagerness may disrupt others; needs continual stimulation; may be seen as hyperactive
Diverse interests and abilities; versatile	May appear scattered and disorganized; becomes frustrated over lack of time; others may expect continual competence
Strong sense of humor	Sees absurdities of situations; humor may not be understood by peers; may become "class clown" to gain attention

The Parent's Guide to Gifted Children, by Drs. Webb, Gore, Amend, and DeVries

Major Obstacles Gifted Children Face

Perfectionism

Perfectionism is the inner drive to be perfect or flawless. Children who suffer from perfectionism have an intense fear of failure and will often not take risks or try new things for fear of failing. They often set unrealistic standards for themselves. These children have a high need for control. Children who are perfectionists need to have time for fun and relaxation. Families should try not to compare the child to other peers or siblings. These are children that should not be rewarded for good grades, but rather commended on their effort and hard work. Let them see you make mistakes and give them permission to sometimes be wrong.

Competitiveness

Some gifted children have an over-exaggerated level of competitiveness. They have a strong desire to always be the best. They thrive on opportunities to demonstrate their superiority. They have a need to outdo others. They often feel like things in life are “unfair.” They can often be aggressive. Families can support their competitive student by helping the student keep things in perspective. Stress the importance of learning versus winning. Don’t reward the “win”, but rather reward the effort. Make sure to point out the strengths of others. Outlaw the word “unfair” in your home.

Unrealistic View of Abilities

Gifted children may have unrealistic or exaggerated beliefs about their talents or abilities. They like to brag about their intelligence and don’t understand the idea of humility. They are overconfident in their abilities and this can in turn lead to severe disappointment or failure in the future. Children who envision their abilities to be greater than they really are may be unable to combat future struggles and challenges. As school and classes become more challenging, they may begin to feel like they are no longer “gifted” or not as smart as they once used to be. Encourage this child to act with humility and instead of talking about themselves, talk about others. Let them face challenges early and learn how to experience defeat. The greatest learning often comes from having to first struggle.

Rejection of Peers

The gifted child is often seen as the class “nerd” or geek. Other children may be jealous or resent the gifted child’s abilities. Gifted children often have difficulty establishing a relationship with their peers and prefer to spend time alone or with adults. They dislike socializing and working in groups. They have unrealistic expectations of others and have difficulty accepting criticism. As a result of peer rejection, gifted children may try to become “normal” or “dumb themselves down” to fit in with peers. They can exhibit depression, appear withdrawn or aggressive. They often try to hide the rejection by becoming nonconformist and trying to be the most “different” child in the class. For these children it is important to show empathy and understanding. Contact the school if you suspect harassment or bullying. Provide opportunities for your student to be with other gifted children. Keep the lines of communication open. Help your student develop appropriate social skills.

Parent/Social Pressure

It is only natural that when a teacher, parent, or guardian recognizes a student as “gifted” the expectations for the student become increased or elevated. Sometimes these expectations can be unrealistic. We often expect the gifted child to act like an “adult” or to be smart all of the time in all subjects. We often say, “I expected more from you than this.” We overbook them in camps, lessons, clubs, and school work. We often forget the gifted student is still just a child and should be allowed to act like a child. We need to make sure to honor the child’s values and allow the child to have free time for just fun. We need to have high expectations and encourage a high level of achievement in the talent area, but continually remind ourselves to not expect perfection and allow for mistakes. Gifted children can often sound like an adult, so often we make the mistake of expecting adult-level behavior from the child.

Underachievement

Underachievement is a term used when a student is not working to his or her full potential for a prolonged period of time. Underachievement often begins to be exhibited by children when they enter middle school. Gifted girls and minority children are at the most risk for underachievement. Underachievement is explored in greater depth on the next page.

Underachievement

Definition

Underachievement is defined as a discrepancy between a child's school performance and his or her actual ability. The word "underachiever" should not be a label placed on a child, but rather a definition used to describe a child's current progress in school. A child who is underachieving has a significant gap between his or her ability and what he or she is actually achieving at school.

There are four common pressure areas underachieving students frequently experience:

- Pressure to be the smartest
- Pressure to be different
- Pressure to be popular
- Pressure to be loyal to peer group or family

Children are more likely to be achievers if their family joins together with the school to give the same clear and positive message about school effort and expectations. Children become oppositional if one adult allies with them against a parent, guardian, or teacher.

Characteristics of Achievers

- Goal orientated
- Positive thinker
- Confident
- Resilient
- Self disciplined
- Demonstrates pride in abilities
- Proficient in basic skills
- Takes safe and appropriate risks

Characteristics of Underachievers

- Disruptive or quiet in class
- Poor attendance
- Low self-esteem
- Feels like a victim
- Low motivation
- Poor organizational skills
- Immature
- Not goal oriented
- Test anxiety
- Rebellious
- Withdrawn
- Not popular with peers
- Poor study habits
- Daydreams
- Procrastinates
- Aggressive with peers
- Under challenged
- Depressed, sad
- Tense, anxious
- “Lazy”
- Tired or sleepy
- Critical of self and others
- Complains of health issues
- Developmental delays
- Poor coordination
- Dependent on others
- Tries to hide by wearing large clothes or hair in face

How to Help an Underachiever

1. Create an environment that promotes achievement and motivation. Provide high but reasonable expectations.
2. Avoid power struggles. Try not to impose your will on your child. Working together produces results.
3. Developing a positive relationship with a parent and/or teacher is the most important factor to reverse underachievement.
4. Provide stimulation, interest, and challenge. Show how learning relates to the “real world.”
5. Establish appropriate goals and sub-goals. Emphasize effort rather than a grade.
6. Build on gradual success. Support small steps.

Up From Underachievement, by Diane Heacox

Reasons for Underachievement

- It's an attempt to fit in with peers; high achievement is not valued by classmates.
- The assigned tasks just do not seem interesting, relevant, or important to the student's life.
- It's an expression of the student's desire to show independence.
- It's a way for the student to gain power by taking control away from family and/or teachers. To gain control a student may express anger against family members or teachers by going on "strike."
- It's sometimes easier to drop out than to go along with others' demands.
- A child may fear that success will result in pressures; other will expect more and more.
- It's a way to get attention from family and teachers.
- It avoids risk-taking and the possibility of failure; saying "I really didn't try," can save face.
- It's an expression of dependency to get others to give attention and sympathize.
- There is too much emphasis put on extrinsic incentives for achievement rather than the intrinsic rewards of learning.
- The child is unable to think about future plans or goals.
- The child has poor study habits or has not learned ways to organize material.

-
- The child is distractible and impulsive, which hinders persistent academic work.
 - The child is disheartened because of a learning disability or learning deficit.
 - The child is preoccupied with concerns, such as family matters.
 - The child feels misunderstood, not valued, is discouraged, or has a low self-concept, possibly even depression.

Patterns of perfectionism, unusual sensitivity, extreme introversion, over-commitment to activities, and feelings of loneliness and alienation are common feelings for some gifted children to experience, especially in adolescence. Because of these characteristics, some gifted children do appear to be more at risk for social and emotional difficulties. If you see any of these characteristics at an extreme level, please make sure to let the school know about your observations. As a parent/guardian, if you feel these behaviors are to the point where you are concerned for the health and well being of your student, you may want to contact your student's physician and share your concerns.

A Parent's Guide to Gifted Children, by Webb

Multi-Tiered Systems of Support (MTSS)

Students who are not achieving to their potential and are at risk of underachievement will be referred to the district MTSS process for targeted intervention and support.

Supporting Your Gifted Student

At Home

- ~Model lifelong learning.
- ~Nurture the passion, strengths, and interests of your student.
- ~Be a good listener.
- ~Encourage safe risk-taking.
- ~Do not expect adult behavior from your gifted student.
- ~Don't compare your gifted student to his/her siblings.
- ~Avoid over scheduling your student after school.
- ~Offer choices rather than ultimatums.
- ~Reinforce the positive.
- ~Send the message that it is OK to make mistakes.
- ~Value hard work and effort.
- ~Encourage independence and responsible behavior.
- ~Provide guidance in organizational and time management skills.
- ~Allow for free time and play.
- ~Maintain a sense of humor.

Survival Kit for Families

Playing Cards

Keep a deck of cards around at all times. Card games help stretch your student's attention span, concentration skills, short term memory, and math ability. Conversations with your student are easier over a game of cards. Conversation also includes listening to your student's questions and concerns.



Birthday Candle

This symbolizes "surprise." Gifted students often take on adult type worries and concerns. They can seem overly serious or sad. To boost your student's spirit, surprise them now and then and allow them to celebrate childhood with fun and games.

Fountain-Fort Carson

Paper Sack

Use this paper sack to bag up all your student's inappropriate behaviors and throw them away. Often a gifted student sounds like an adult, but they are trapped in a child's body. We tend to forget about their developmental abilities because their mental acuity is so far ahead of their chronological age. We often expect perfection and are frustrated when they are not perfect.

Rubberband

Your gifted student needs to be stretched in many different directions. They need to spend time with intellectual peers and same age peers. Gifted children often only want to do what they are best at doing. Create an atmosphere where risk taking is OK. Allow them time to day-dream.

Kite String

A gifted child is like a kite. They are meant to be lifted. Allow your student to soar and fly in many directions. When the kite gets too high or near power lines, don't be afraid to pull back on the kite string if necessary.

TV Schedule

Make sure your student does not watch too much TV or play too many video games. These can have a very hypnotic effect and often act as a scapegoat for dealing with uncomfortable issues or situations. Video games could be an excuse to avoid interactions with others, doing chores, or homework.

Broken Pencil

Gifted children should not be given MORE work just because they are gifted. Work should be at a level of challenge and promote achievement and growth.

"Do Not Disturb Sign"

This is for you to hang on your door. Gifted children can be challenging and demanding and at times you just need a break and some quiet time of your own.

By Nancy L. Johnson

Recommended Reading

The Colorado Handbook for Parents of Gifted Children. Edited by Julie Gonzales, Colorado Association for the Gifted and Talented, 1989.

Dr. Sylvia Rimm's Smart Parenting. By Sylvia Rimm, Crown Publishers, Inc., 1996.

Fighting Invisible Tigers. By Earl Hipp, Free Spirit Publishing, 1985.

Gifted Kids Speak Out. By James R. Delisle, Free Spirit Publishing Co, 1987.

The Gifted Kids Survival Guide Teen Handbook. By James Delisle and Judy Galbraith, Free Spirit Publishing Co., 1996.

Growing Up Gifted. By Barbara Clark, Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1988.

How the Gifted Brain Learns. By David Sousa. Corwin Press. 2003.

How to Parent So Children Will Listen. By Sylvia B. Rimm, Apple Publishing Co., 1990

Keys to Parenting the Gifted Child. By Sylvia Rimm. Great Potential Press. 2007.

A Parent's Guide to Gifted Children. By Webb, Gore, Amend, and DeVries, Great Potential Press, 2007.

Parents Guide to Raising a Gifted Child: Recognizing and Developing Your Child's Potential. Edited by James Alvino and the editors of Gifted Child Monthly, Little, Brown, and Co., 1985.

Perfectionism - What's Bad About Being Too Good? (rev. ed.) M. Adderholdt-Elliot & J. Goldberg, Minneapolis: Free Spirit Press, 1999.

Raise Your Child's Social IQ: Stepping Stones to People Skills for Kids, C. Cohen, Silverspring MD: Advantage Books, 2000.

Raisin' Brains: Surviving My Smart Family, K.L.J. Isaacson, Scottsdale: Great Potential Press, 2002

Some of My Best Friends are Books: Guiding Gifted Readers from Preschool to High School, 2nd ed. J. W. Halsted, Scottsdale: Great Potential Press, 2001

Smart Girls, Gifted Women and Smart Girls II (Revised). By Barbara Kerr, Ohio Psychology Publishing Co., 1985, 1997.

Survival Guide for Parents of Gifted Kids. By Sally Walker. Free Spirit Publishing Co., 1991.

The Survival Guide for Parents of Gifted Kids: How to Understand, Live With, and Stick Up for your Gifted Child (rev.) S. Walker, Minneapolis: Free Spirit Press, 2000.

They Say My Kid's Gifted, Now What: Ideas for Parents for Understanding and Working with Schools, R. O. Olenchak, Waco, TX: Prufrock Press, 1998

Underachievement Syndrome: Causes and Cures. By Sylvia B. Rimm, Apple Publishing Co., 1986.

Up From Underachievement, By Diane Heacox, Free Spirit Publishing, 1991.

When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers. By Delisle and Galbraith. Free Spirit Publishing, 2002.

Why Bright Kids Get Poor Grades. By Sylvia Rimm. Great Potential Press. 2008.

The Young Gifted Child: Potential and Promise - an Anthology (perspectives on creativity) J. Smutny, New Jersey: Hampton Press, 1998.



Area Resources

Bemis School of Fine Arts

<https://fac.coloradocollege.edu/art-school/>

Challenger Learning Center for Space

<https://challengercolorado.org>

Cheyenne Mountain Zoo Children Camps

www.cmzoo.org/index.php/explore-learn/kids-teens/summer-camp/

Colorado Springs Children Chorale

<http://www.kidssing.org>

Colorado College Summer Gifted Program

<http://www.coloradocollege.edu/academics/dept/education/childrens-summer-programs/>

Pikes Peak Library Booklists for Children

<https://ppld.org/kids/read>

University of Northern Colorado Summer Gifted Program

<http://www.unco.edu/cebs/sep>

Web Links

Fountain-Fort Carson Gifted Website

www.ffc8.org/domain/47

College Planning from College Board

<https://bigfuture.collegeboard.org>

Colorado Association of Gifted and Talented

<http://www.coloradogifted.org>

Colorado Department of Education Gifted Website

<http://www.cde.state.co.us/gt>

Dr. Sylvia Rimm & Parenting Gifted Children

<http://www.sylviarimm.com>

Gifted Development Center

<http://www.gifteddevelopment.com>

General Gifted Information

<http://www.hoagiesgifted.org>

National Association of Gifted and Talented <http://>

www.nagc.org

***Renzulli Center for Creativity, Gifted Education,
and Talent Development***

<https://gifted.uconn.edu>

Center for Bright Kids

www.centerforbrightkids.org

Pikes Peak Association for Gifted Students

www.pikespeakgifted.org



Fountain-Fort Carson District 8

GIFTED PROGRAMMING

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