Raising your Gifted and Talented Child; the Joys and the Challenges.

An information booklet for parents and caregivers.

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**Introduction**

Parents/caregivers generally have very specific questions about gifted and talented children. This book provides some answers to questions which were drawn up by parent members of the Gifted and Talented Children’s Association of South Australia and as a result of queries from concerned parents across the state. The answers were written in consultation with parents/caregivers and teachers.

The information in this book can be used as a guide for parents/caregivers and as a resource for educators and other professionals working with parents/caregivers.

**1. The Meaning Of Giftedness**

*What is the meaning of being gifted?*

Over the years many definitions and views have been put forward as to who are the gifted and what constitutes giftedness. Also the issue of whether giftedness can be inherited or is affected by the environment has been the subject of much discussion and opinion remains divided about the amount of influence exercised by each.

**Gagne’s Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent**

Gagne’s Differentiated Model of Giftedness and Talent has been adopted by most Australian States and it has several features that are attractive to educators and parents alike. Gagne makes a clear distinction between giftedness and talent. Giftedness is the possession of natural abilities or aptitudes at levels significantly beyond what might be expected for one’s age in any domain of human ability. (Module 1, Australian Government, Department of Education Science and Training (DEST), 2005: 4) As demonstrated in diagram 1, these natural abilities include several domains, for example, Intellectual and Creative. Talent is achievement or performance at a level significantly beyond what might be expected at a given age and is usually the result of systematically developed skills. (Module 1, Australian Government, DEST, 2005: 5) Giftedness then, can be viewed as potential whereas talent can be viewed as performance. It follows from this distinction that a child may be gifted and not talented and this may explain under-achievement in gifted students. It also follows that if we find a student with outstanding talent in one or more fields, that talent is being driven by a gift in one or more domains of human endeavour.

Another attractive feature of Gagne’s model lies in the importance Gagne places upon catalysts in the transformation of giftedness into talent. The Environmental catalyst values the role of parents, teachers and significant others in the development process. The Intrapersonal catalyst values the personal and mental qualities of gifted individuals and their capacity to change, grow and develop their potentialities. The Chance catalyst acknowledges the role that luck or chance can play in the development of talent. Gagne estimates that 10-15% of students may be gifted, an estimation that is more inclusive than
most other definitions of giftedness. Within this range it should be recognised that there are different levels of giftedness, ranging from mildly gifted to profoundly gifted.

For further reading on this subject please refer to Module One of the Gifted and Talented Education Professional Development Package for teachers: Core, Extension and Specialisation sections.


Diagram 1

Gifted behaviour can be displayed in one or more areas of human performance. It can be displayed in an academic area such as mathematics, science or language arts. For example, a five year old may be capable of working at a twelve year old level in mathematics or be reading material at a ten year old level. Gifted behaviour can also be displayed in a visual or performing arts area such as music, drama, art, craft or dance. For example, a high school student may show outstanding ability in playing the violin and take part in concert performances with an orchestra, or display a high degree of sophistication in wood carving or oil painting. Gifted behaviour can also be displayed in a socially valued area such as leadership or communication skills or in the areas of sport or mechanical skills.
Creativity—the capacity to come up with original solutions and ideas—is a factor that can be observed in aspects of human performance: the creative writer, the creative musician, the designer of cars, the inventor.

Individuals of all ages can display gifted behaviour in one particular area or in a number of areas.

**Do children display gifted behaviour all the time?**

No one is exceptionally outstanding all the time and it is quite normal, for example, for a child who is gifted in mathematics to make occasional mistakes in that area or to display average or even below average abilities in other areas such as reading, or in simple activities such as tying up shoe laces.

All children, including those who are gifted and talented, also need the opportunity to daydream, to experiment, to play with older and younger children and to mix with individuals of all ages in other words, to be children.

**How do I know if my child is gifted and talented?**

Children with hidden or demonstrated gifts come from varying social and cultural backgrounds, have their own characteristics and personalities and come in all shapes and sizes...

Educators have described children's behaviour which can indicate outstanding ability, perseverance and creativity. Behaviour indicating giftedness in your child can include all or some of the following, although this list is not exclusive:

- learning quickly and easily
- thinking of several solutions to a given problem
- exceptional memory
- developing friendships with older children
- pursuing an interest or hobby intensively for a time; for example, your child might "live", "eat" and "think" dinosaurs for months
- absorbing large amounts of information quickly and having the ability to recall this information
- asking a great number of relevant questions and expecting answers
- showing a fertile imagination
- working out complicated mathematics orally, rather than on paper
- showing outstanding curiosity, initiative or insight
- having a large vocabulary and using words effectively
- reading from an early age
- showing a keen sense of humour
- developing deep friendships with the opposite gender in early childhood (this generally changes as the child matures).

Behaviour which is less socially acceptable but can also indicate giftedness...
includes the following:

- getting bored easily both at home and at school
- being naughty or irrepressible in class
- being the "class clown"
- being inattentive and absorbed in a private world
- being unwilling to undertake tasks seen as irrelevant; for example, your child might not see any reason to keep his or her bedroom clean and tidy
- having "smart" answers to questions
- showing unconventional behaviour
- refusing to conform
- avoiding monotonous, repetitive written tasks.

However, we would like to stress that the above descriptions are indicators only and no one behaviour or characteristic can be used to detect giftedness. For example, not all children who are “naughty” are displaying gifted behaviour and in fact, many of the examples above can be common to many children.

You may need to seek advice as to what further opportunities need to be provided, both at home and at school, so that your child's specific giftedness and talent can be fostered to their full extent. Advice can be sought from teachers and professional advisers in the school system and those people with expertise within the community such as sports coaches, music tutors, Mathematics coaches, artists and dance instructors.

**Is the use of intelligence tests the only way to establish if my child is gifted and talented?**

Intelligence tests can provide specific information on your child's abilities in relation to age peers. These restricted tests are only administered by registered psychologists and include information about thinking, reasoning, numerical and verbal abilities. There are individual and group intelligence tests and while the overall score will give a guide to your child's ability, knowledge of what is actually achieved in each of the areas tested will probably be of more use to you and your child’s teacher. It should be noted that intelligence testing of children under the age of 4 years is not recommended.

While the results of intelligence tests can provide indicators of your child's performance, they have certain disadvantages which include the following:

- cultural and linguistic differences can distort the test results
- such tests do not usually pick out the child who can come up with creative or divergent answers
- scores can be affected by the situation in which the test is given and the emotional state of the child.
Intelligence tests are not the only way to establish if your child is gifted and talented. There are a number of other ways in which professional educators can detect gifted behaviour including the factors of aptitude, perseverance and creativity. The range includes:

- teacher assessment
- peer assessment
- parent assessment
- student self assessment where a student indicates that he or she has the ability and interest to take part in a particular activity
- samples of children's work: models, writing, paintings, inventions, mathematics, science
- participation in competitions, debates, and problem solving activities
- school records
- observations of behaviour made during the child's participation in a wide range of activities
- auditions.

A combination of these procedures can be used to detect giftedness and talent in your child.

At what stages of development should my child be assessed for giftedness and talent?

Finding out whether your child is gifted and talented should be a continuing process because your child's interests, needs and behaviour change. Also, your child's growth and development is uneven over time so continual monitoring and recording of behaviour is required to check needs and interests and to provide related experiences. This is of course true for all children.

Your child cannot demonstrate giftedness in a particular area without having experience in it. For example, your child needs to experience playing the guitar to show outstanding ability in that field. This exposure is likely to occur at different times in a child's life so it is important to be continually aware of how your child is reacting to new as well as continuing activities. Hidden gifts and talent cannot be displayed unless a child has time to persevere with appropriate activities. You may be alarmed when your child wants to spend what you judge to be excessive time pursuing a particular interest. The development of giftedness and talent, however, can be frustrated by rigid rules about how
your child is to use his time. There is a need for flexibility in the use of time to accommodate interests and encourage perseverance.

Exceptional giftedness and talent in your child will ordinarily be readily recognised. Outstanding performance and perseverance in a range of activities will demonstrate this. Of course, the more opportunities your child has to take part in a wide range of activities, the more likely it will be that giftedness and talent will be demonstrated. As a general rule of thumb, the earlier that your child is identified, the better.

**How can creativity be assessed?**

Creativity refers to the ability to combine what already exists into something new: an idea or a product, such as a piece of music or poetry; or a new procedure for carrying out a task, such as heating the home or designing a new car.

Your child may display creativity by offering many ideas on one topic, offering several solutions to a problem, coming up with unique or unusual ideas, creating fantasies, pretending, using imagination and taking risks.

Another way of assessing creativity is to observe your child's behaviour in everyday situations such as at play, or in tackling problems, as well as observing the ways in which she reacts to questions and activities that can be approached in a variety of ways.

"Don't be afraid to fall in love with something and pursue it with intensity. Know, understand, take pride in, practise, develop, use, exploit and enjoy your greatest strengths. Learn to free yourself from the expectations of others and to walk away from the games they impose on you. Free yourself to play your own game. Find a great teacher or mentor who will help you. Don’t waste energy trying to be well-rounded. Do what you love and can do well. Learn the skills of interdependence."

E. Paul Torrance, founder of the International Future Problem Solving Program.

2. **Understanding gifted and talented children**

**How can I help my child to accept the fact that s/he is different?**

We need to understand that all individuals are different, with different abilities, interests, needs, strengths and weaknesses. Children develop attitudes from the people around them: from parents/caregivers, teachers, other adults and children. In a family situation you need to encourage individuality and to discuss differences between individuals in a positive way. Differences between people can be highlighted by reading stories with your child, and viewing videos and DVDs. A list of film titles can be found in the Appendix.

An interesting alternative is to have discussions about how particular groups...
function although their membership is made up of a number of individuals, and how people belong to a number of groups based on such things as family, clubs, friends and school.

It is also important to consider your child’s self esteem and self confidence. It is probably socially important that s/he accepts the view that "It's all right to be different and everybody is different" and that you love your child for what s/he is, not for what s/he can do.

Sometimes people get caught up with a child's achievements rather than the child's individuality. All children need social acceptance in the family and among their friends. Brothers and sisters need to feel proud of what each of them can do and it is not helpful to make comparisons. Your child will be best supported when brothers and sisters are also held in respect in the family.

**How can I help my child who is being bullied and harassed?**

Some gifted children, may occasionally be subjected to bullying within the school because some of their characteristics such as intensity or passion for justice, may be seen by class peers as being different. If you consider that your child is being bullied at school, speak to the class teacher or principal to alert them and request that they put into effect some strategies from the school’s bullying/harassment policy to assist your child. If your child needs more intensive help it may be necessary to consult a registered psychologist.

**How can I help my child who feels lonely and isolated?**

Both you and your child need to be aware that all individuals experience loneliness and isolation to some extent, at some time in their lives. The development of your child's self confidence is again of vital importance in this situation and children need to feel comfortable with themselves.

It is important that your family life acknowledges, encourages and enjoys the development of your child's giftedness and talents. Criticism and ridicule are rarely effective. Children need to hear and feel that they can contribute to the family.

Your child needs to be encouraged to mix with children and adults of similar interests by joining appropriate clubs and participating in activities inside and outside school. In remote and isolated areas, communication with others through electronic means could be encouraged. In less isolated areas there may be a person in the neighbourhood who shares the same interest as your child, has expertise in that area and is willing to share this interest and knowledge. Such a person is called a mentor.

*It is also important to be aware that children sometimes prefer to pursue an activity on their own and enjoy their own company, and indeed, may prefer their own company.*
My child becomes terribly upset when faced with failure. What can I do?

Your child may live in an environment, both at home and at school, where expectations are high at all times that there is a constant fear of "failing". This fear of failure can prevent your child from taking risks and can also be a part of a quest for perfection, which is a much harder problem to solve. Your child may soon reach the stage where s/he is unwilling to try or learn anything new. Both you and your child need to understand that s/he is not expected to be faultless. Your child also needs to be aware that while s/he may demonstrate talents in one particular area, s/he may be of average ability in another area and that that is quite normal. It is important that your child realises that everyone makes mistakes but it is also important to realise that people learn from their mistakes. One way you can help in this area is to talk about the failures you have had, such as the burnt cake or the home made book shelves that fell down, and to laugh about them with your child while working out what went wrong. Your child is a unique human being who needs to have the self confidence to take risks and to experiment, knowing some things will work and some things won't and learning from that.

Henry Ford once observed: “Whether you think you can or you can’t, you are usually right.” An individual’s level of self-efficacy (or self-belief) towards a given task will determine how likely they are to attempt something, how much effort they put into the task and how resilient they will be in the face of failure. Those gifted students who may be afraid that they will not live up to the expectations of others give up quickly when difficulties arise. As a result they are likely not to be identified as gifted if this becomes habituated behaviour. (Module 4, Australian Government, DEST, 2005)

Parents can help their gifted sons and daughters develop high self-efficacy by:

• being a positive role model
• helping children to set realistic and achievable goals
• giving appropriate praise which matches the deed
• giving praise for effort as well as the product
• avoiding rescuing their children when they experience minor set-backs. Ironically, constant rescuing leads children to believe that they have to be helped because they can’t cope. This results in poor mastery of skills, low self-esteem and low self-efficacy.

For further reading on this subject please refer to:

Martin, A., 2003, How to Motivate Your Child, Australia, Bantam Books

Module Four of the Australian Government. DEST, 2005, Gifted and Talented Education Professional Development Package for Teachers: Core, Extension

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How can I cope with the gap between my child's intellectual development and the social, emotional and physical development? How can I help my child cope?

Most parents/caregivers would agree that the social, emotional and physical development of children is as important as intellectual development. However, there is a risk of expecting more mature behaviour from the child who displays outstanding intellectual ability. S/he could be deeply interested, beyond her/his years in problems such as politics, religion, war and environmental pollution but could be socially, emotionally and physically still a child. For example, a five year old who demonstrates reasoning ability well beyond that age can burst into tears at the sight of a terrifying monster on television. Children need to know they have the support and confidence of their parents/caregivers and that there are some problems or issues that can only be dealt with by adults. Your child's self esteem is an important factor in being able to cope with the differences between intellectual development and other areas of growth. Development of self esteem is not just a matter of intellect; it is built on valuing self, on being accepted as an individual and on being able to relate well with others.

Much social, emotional, physical and intellectual learning can take place through play. It can be a means of trying out new roles, relieving tensions, overcoming conflicts and self expression. Through play your child can explore, experiment and test ideas. Also, mixing with individuals of similar abilities and interests, in appropriate clubs, camps or out of school activities, can help with your child's social development.

3. The Home and Community Environment

How can I keep my child from becoming bored, continually "switched off" and underachieving?

Your child can become bored, "switched off" and underachieving both at home and at school for a variety of reasons. These reasons can include lack of stimulation and challenge, lack of responsibility for his/her own learning, lack of freedom to make decisions, lack of time to explore, lack of appreciation of effort and the experience of continually being "put down". In later years, peer group pressure "to conform" often increases in importance, so much so, that your child deliberately underachieves in order to be accepted. This particular issue is discussed in the chapter on The School Environment.

All human beings experience boredom and wise parents will help their children to see boredom as a positive rather than negative experience. Boredom can
be an impetus to change and to seeking new learning experiences. Students can be encouraged to be proactive rather than reactive in the face of boredom and to take a measure of responsibility for extending and enriching their own learning. This in turn enhances self-esteem and self-efficacy, especially in the teenage years.

Part of your child's learning will develop from having the freedom to make decisions and thus having the responsibility to be productive, interested or involved. To cope with boredom, however, and to perceive excitement in the deceptively simple things of our world is also part of growth towards maturity.

One of Art Costa's sixteen Habits of Mind is *Responding with Wonderment and Awe*. In Costa’s view, a "Habit of Mind" means having a disposition toward behaving intelligently when confronted with problems, the answers to which are not immediately known. (Costa and Kallick 2000) Encourage your child to respond to new knowledge and experiences with passion and amazement that such things can be. As Costa wisely observes, the Habit of Mind of *Responding with Wonderment and Awe* is "probably more caught than taught". (Costa and Kallick 2000: 91) Parents are in a unique position to model this disposition and the fifteen others that Costa has identified:

- Persisting
- Listening with empathy and understanding
- Managing Impulsivity
- Gathering data through all Senses
- Thinking flexibly,
- Creating, imagining and innovating,
- Thinking about your thinking
- Striving for accuracy,
- Taking responsible risks,
- Applying past knowledge
- Finding humour
- Questioning and posing problems
- Thinking interdependently,
- Thinking and communicating with clarity and precision,
- Remaining open to continuous learning.

(Costa and Kallick 2000)

For further reading on this subject please refer to the Habits of Mind website.

**What activities could be provided at home?**

Your child will thrive in an environment where a wide range of interests and activities can be explored and enjoyed. These may include music, painting, writing, drawing, gardening, cooking, reading, science experiments, technology, computing, visiting zoos and museums, sport, stamp collecting, craft work, learning a foreign language, animal husbandry, family games and discussions and inventing; the list is endless.
However, your child needs freedom to explore, experiment, make a mess, follow interests, make decisions for herself, and have the opportunity to waste time and not be continually involved in activities provided by you or other adults. You need to be sensitive to your child's skills and interests and take time to **listen**, discuss and **answer** questions, it is vitally important for all children, including those who are gifted and talented. You may also have to learn to live with a child who has boundless energy, needs less sleep than you do and is wholly absorbed in a particular area of interest such as jazz music, poetry writing or cartoon drawing. You can share in the enjoyment and excitement created by these interests. If you, too, have a wide range of interests that can also be shared in some way, it may encourage your child to widen the scope of activities.

If you provide opportunities that stimulate your child and allow some freedoms you will create an enriched learning environment.

**How can I encourage the giftedness and talent of my child without being detrimental to my other child/children?**

It is important to look for, encourage, enjoy and develop the individual strengths of each child in your family and not specifically focus on the accomplishments of one particular child. Musical, mathematical, artistic and sporting gifts, for example, may be easily recognised in your children while giftedness in leadership, for example, may be less noticeable. Children whose qualities are not recognised or acknowledged can resent those whose accomplishments seem always to be the centre of attraction. You and your children need to acknowledge and respect differences among family members so that everyone in the family knows they are valued as a person and not for what they can do. Your child can belong to particular associations or clubs which would enable other members of your family the opportunity to appreciate, recognise and enjoy the abilities of that individual.

Comparison of family members should be avoided at all costs as it can lead to competition and increased rivalry which can limit the development of mental health and resilience.

**What help can I get to enable me to understand the particular kind of discipline my child needs? S/he is eccentric in many ways and I don't know how much allowance I should make for the fact that s/he is different.**

For social living to be harmonious, certain rules need to be observed. Society itself imposes certain rules and disciplines and these are known to all; consider the problems of driving erratically in traffic. When these rules are broken, the resultant disciplinary action is also known. Therefore, if by "discipline" you mean such social rules, then most families have them. Your child will feel more secure in a predictable environment where the rules are clearly understood. For example, if the smooth running of family life depends on meals being served at certain times then s/he needs to observe this convention. If your child is to be
accepted s/he needs to learn what is socially acceptable in particular contexts. Disregard of minor social conventions which have little implication for others, such as wearing unconventional clothes or hair styles, or having an interest in unusual topics, ought not to be regarded by you as serious discipline problems. In your family life there needs to be a balance between rules to be observed and freedom to explore and experiment. Discussion between you and your child can be useful in recognising the social and personal consequences of some behaviour. It can also help to clarify expectations, feelings and needs. S/he needs to understand the range of behaviours available and their likely consequences. Just as basic academic skills need to be taught, so do social skills need to be taught and reinforced. As s/he becomes older, negotiations between you and your teenager will need to take place as to the rules to be observed for harmonious family life.

Many organisations conduct parenting courses which are valuable in helping parents/caregivers discuss family issues including discipline. You can obtain information related to these courses from various agencies and individuals including the following: doctors, psychologists (including guidance officers), school principals, school health services, school counsellors, social workers, the local council and the Department of Children, Youth and Family Services.

**What activities are available in the community?**

If you live in an urban area, your child could be encouraged to explore interests by joining clubs, the library, taking part in classes such as drama, pottery and language or forming a club with other children who have similar interests. This increases the potential to work and socialise with others who share and work at similar levels of interest and ability. There may be someone in the neighbourhood, either an older student or an adult, who shares the same interest and has a high degree of expertise and who can act as a mentor to provide challenge and stimulation to your child.

For children living in isolated areas there is a wide variety of extension courses available through the Internet and Distance Education. There are also holiday workshops organised for children with particular gifts, talents and interests such as music summer schools, writers’ groups and drama workshops. You can be involved, therefore, in providing opportunities for your child to pursue various activities.

4. The School Environment

*How much can I ask the school to do for my child without being a “pushy parent”?*

This is a very difficult question to answer and there is no one simple strategy to overcome this problem.

The education of all children is the joint responsibility of home and school.
Therefore cooperative relationships need to be established especially in regard to good communication between you and your child's teachers.

All parents/caregivers have the right to expect educational programmes that meet the needs of their children. However, it must be realised that schools and teachers vary considerably in their capacities to respond to parental requests, as well as in their abilities to cater for individual differences among children. Therefore, how you approach the school to discuss your child's needs is of vital importance and good rapport between you and the teachers is helpful. Once a positive relationship has been established, it becomes an easier task to make specific requests of teachers and schools and to discuss matters of concern in relation to individuals and groups of students. If time for you to be actively involved in the school activities is limited, there are still a number of ways you can show support for the school and staff by such things as making thoughtful responses to newsletters, indicating how much excursions or activities were enjoyed, attending interviews and parent evenings.

It may also be advantageous to acquaint yourself thoroughly with your school's policies, especially those relating to the education of gifted students. This will assist you to know requests which may go beyond what the school can reasonably offer. However, if you feel communications between you and the school are poor it can be helpful to involve a third person, who is outside the school environment but still within the educational system, in your discussions with the school.

Where cooperative relationships are established, conflicts are likely to be minimised and requests can be made without a parent being labelled "pushy".

**How can I help the school?**

This question has two aspects: you may want to assist the school regarding your own particular child or you may want to assist in the wider context of the school's program.

It is important that you share information about your child with teachers; particular passions, special experiences, particular strengths and weaknesses, out of school activities, books recently read, projects undertaken at home, relationships with others, particular needs and concerns and ways in which giftedness and talent are fostered at home. Conversely, teachers need to share their experiences with you, as your child might behave quite differently at home compared to school and this exchange of information can be most enlightening.

After establishing a cooperative relationship, its maintenance is a continuing process and one which you will probably need to re-establish from year to year if the teacher changes.

Also, you may feel that you have a special area of expertise such as art, craft, woodwork, computer technology, mechanics, electronics, poetry writing, music or science that would enrich the class programme. You could approach the
school and offer to work with small groups of children in these areas and, if time permitted, could become a mentor to gifted and talented children in a certain area or areas.

Another way to assist the school is for you to become a member of the parent's club or the school’s Governing Council where you can discuss with other parents/caregivers and staff the needs of all children, including those who are gifted and talented.

My child says s/he is bored and has been "turned off" learning at school. How can I get the school to cater better for him/her?

Again, this is a difficult question to answer and there is no one simple strategy for approaching this problem.

Initially there are two steps which can be helpful. The first is to discuss with your child what s/he sees as wrong; what are the reasons for him/her being bored and turned off and what is s/he going to do about it or what does s/he want to do about it. This is because the responsibility for avoiding boredom lies not only with you and school staff but also with your child.

Secondly, you need to be fully acquainted with school policies and the classroom programme as you can then approach the school confidently and discuss whether your child is perhaps repeating work done before, or is finding the work too easy and therefore is not being challenged or stimulated. It would also give guidance as to whether work is being completed quickly and more of the same is being given as a "reward". You can then more readily find out how the teacher perceives the situation as it relates to your child.

You can talk to school staff about ways of giving opportunities to your child for involvement in independent study, working with others with similar interests and needs and for more freedom to make decisions so that s/he is more actively involved in personal learning. If your child is gifted in one particular area such as art, there may be opportunities to work with older children in this subject at certain times during the school day. The issue of acceleration is discussed later in this section. There may be advisory support staff who can also give advice in this area.

You can also discuss with the school whether a mentor would be helpful in providing challenge and stimulation to your child and perhaps to others with similar abilities and interests.

What can be done for my child who enters school at five and has already been reading for two years or more?
It is important that you share this kind of information with teachers before formal schooling begins. The first day of school is not the best time to discuss your child's needs, concerns or interests as teachers and principal will be involved in settling children into the school routine. It may, therefore, be useful for you to make an appointment to speak with the teacher or principal a few days before the start of school so that information regarding books read at home and particular interests can be shared. This will alert teachers to the possibility that reading readiness activities or the reading of basic books may be of little use to your child.

When your child reads it is important that s/he understands what is being read and is not merely recognising a string of individual words on a page. Both you and your child's teacher need to make sure that s/he is reading for meaning and encourage such skills as making educated guesses at unknown words and self-correcting when words are read which do not make sense in the story. Some children may have learnt words by sight only and still need to learn about individual sounds.

Your child can choose books from the library based on personal interests and can share stories with the rest of the class or the family through activities such as model making, puppetry, painting, carrying out a science experiment, devising a television commercial to promote a particular story or using musical instruments to introduce characters. The nature of these activities will depend on your child's strengths and interests. S/he can take part in class themes, topics or units of work by using simple research skills to collect information to be shared by individuals and groups of children.

It may not follow that because your child can read, that writing skills are also advanced, and so activities and questions related to personal reading need to be open-ended so that s/he is able to respond in a variety of ways to show his understanding. Some ways could include making models, dressing up as a book character, painting, drawing, and making character puppets. Similarly, stories on space can motivate him to cut pictures from magazines to tell about the moon, stars, comets and other space phenomena. This can be an individual project or involve a group of children who are space addicts. Books about minerals could initiate the collection, labelling and display of rocks so they can be enjoyed by the whole class.

Your child needs access to a wide variety of books so that there is a time to read at a suitable level and a time to read books which you may feel are too easy but are still of interest. You may worry if your child continually chooses to read material well below an appropriate reading level. One way of overcoming this is for you to read to your child from a variety of books to motivate completing them.

The main aim of any reading programme for a young child is that s/he finds enjoyment and interest in what is being read, and that both you and the teacher can share in this enjoyment.
What are the specific social and emotional needs of gifted and talented girls in coeducational classes?

In some cases girls are not encouraged at home or at school and deliberately underachieve because they want to be socially accepted by their class mates. The peer group to which girls belong, especially at high school level, may not value high academic performance, ambition and career orientation and so the girls underachieve, not wanting to appear to have more ability than boys with whom they may wish to develop friendships. The attitudes of school and staff are important here and can play an important part in fostering individuality as well as excellence in all students, in non academic and academic areas.

Schools need to encourage and make opportunities for girls to take part in courses traditionally thought of as the domain of boys, such as engineering, mechanics, computer technology, mathematics and science.

For girls, traditional expectations and lack of peer group support can have a significant effect during adolescence. Both they and their parents/caregivers may need counselling in order to work out their roles as women, not only in the wider Australian society but within their own particular cultural community, as some communities may not value their particular abilities.


What are the specific social and emotional needs of gifted and talented boys in coeducational classes?

Gifted boys face some challenges. One is the steady decline in boys’ academic achievement and attitudes to schooling, especially in the middle years, from about Year 6 to Year 10. Another challenge, particularly strong in Australia and also targeting the middle years, is the growth of an anti-learning culture; the “cool to be a fool” syndrome which tells boys that it is not cool to be smart. Together they prevent many gifted boys from reaching their full potential.

Parents should be aware that gifted boys have some gender based characteristics which are inherently different from gifted girls. In general, they will tend to be:

- more analytical
- more focused on one idea at a time
- less able to think about several ideas simultaneously
- more developed in technology skills
- prefer to work alone rather than in teams

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Gifted boys who lack self-knowledge and awareness about their own learning, and who have not developed good study habits, may underestimate the amount of work required for success. Like all of us, they desire success and fear failure, so when they are surprised and disappointed by their failure or low results, they may “switch off” and become difficult to motivate. In extreme cases they may opt out of their education altogether.


**Why do some gifted children underachieve and what can be done at school and at home?**

Children are described as underachievers when standardised test scores show potential capabilities that are not reflected in school performance. Or it may be that both parents/caregivers and teachers, through observation, feel a child is not working to his or her full potential. There are many possible causes for this and initially it is wise to check the child’s health and physical condition. However, the cause can lie in either the home or the school environment.

In homes where education is regarded as being of little importance, children may well adopt negative attitudes towards schooling. Children can also feel that they are only valued for what they can do and not as individuals, and out of resentment deliberately underachieve. Children may also underachieve when parents do not present a united, positive front about the value of education.

Cultural group membership can often be more important than outstanding individual performance and children may deliberately underachieve to conform to the group identity.

However, reasons for underachieving can lie within the school environment. For instance, when children have always found work too easy and there has been little challenge or stimulation, there can be a tendency to do just enough to “get by” and no more. Some children may have specific learning difficulties, such as dyslexia or dyscalculia, which hinder them from displaying their full capabilities. Too much pressure can be put on a child to succeed at school, and again, resentment of this pressure is shown by underachieving.

As children get older, peer group pressure can also have a marked influence. Children sometimes deliberately underachieve because they feel that by doing so they are more socially acceptable. Stereotyping of girls and their role in society has meant that there has been a tendency for them to shy away from, or not to excel in, areas such as mathematics, science and engineering, which are
traditionally thought of as the domain of boys. This problem of stereotyping can also apply for boys in such areas as dance and drama.

Peer group pressure can be lessened where schools foster individuality and excellence in all students, in academic and non academic areas. It can also be lessened when a variety of curriculum options are provided and opportunities are made available for students to make decisions and to work with other students of similar abilities, needs and interests.

*Is it possible for a child to be gifted and also have a specific learning disability?*

Evidence indicates that two sub-populations of gifted students still require a more thorough understanding. It is possible for a child with an IQ in the gifted range to also have a specific learning disability such as dyslexia, dyscalculia, dysgraphia or several other conditions. The characteristics of the Gifted and Learning Disabled (GLD) student, or the Gifted student with ADHD, generally mean that the student will display subject-specific weaknesses, subject-specific strengths and often display poor organisational or time-management skills. Some students from these two populations may have academic weakness across the curriculum and demonstrate their ability with higher order thinking skills purely in an oral form!

Sometimes a GLD student will be identified because of recognised gifted characteristics, at other times identification is because the characteristics of a specific learning disability such as dyslexia or dysgraphia have been identified. Some students are never identified as gifted, or having a specific learning disability, and are regarded as “average” by their teachers. Knowledge regarding identification, characteristics and appropriate teaching methodology is vital if the GLD student or the gifted student with ADHD is to reach his or her true potential. Teaching which fosters success and builds upon strengths, is essential, as lack of success in school subjects links directly and negatively to motivation, perceptions of self- efficacy as a learner and self-image.

For further reading see:

*Is it possible for a child to be gifted and also have a physical impairment?*

It is possible for a child to be blind and gifted, or deaf and gifted, or to have any physical handicap and be gifted. The problem is that the physical handicap may take preference over the gifted characteristics.

*Is it possible for a child to be gifted and also have autistic spectrum disorder?*
A few children who are gifted have also been diagnosed with Asperger’s Syndrome.

For more information please go to the following web sites.

**Which schools will provide the best education for my child?**

There is no easy answer to this question, children and their needs differ, and schools differ. It is worthwhile taking the time to visit and meet with the Principal and/or other relevant personnel in possible schools for your child, to find “a good fit”. Be prepared to take your list of questions and to make notes. Many schools have open days where you can see teachers and students in action. Please refer to the article “Which school or pre-school?” in Appendix 1.

**What are some of the ways that schools and educational systems can cater for the needs of gifted and talented children?**

There is no method, strategy or model which, taken by itself, will cater for the abilities, needs, interests, learning styles and learning rates of gifted and talented children. Ideally a combination of methods, strategies and models should be used.

Following are the main ways in which schools and education systems enhance the education of gifted and talented children.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ENRICHMENT</th>
<th>GO WIDER</th>
<th>Enrichment activities add greater breadth to curriculum content.</th>
<th>Suitable for all students.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>EXTENSION</td>
<td>GO DEEPER</td>
<td>Extension activities allow areas of study / interest to be investigated in more depth.</td>
<td>Suitable for most students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACCELERATION</td>
<td>GO FASTER</td>
<td>Move through content at a faster rate.</td>
<td>Suitable for a limited number of students.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Note: Gifted students may be involved in more than one form of provision at the same time. Enrichment should be a feature of both acceleration and extension. Pohl, 1994


In addition to teaching basic skills, these provisions may be implemented in some of the following ways:

Individual classroom

- clustering of gifted students
- contract system where a joint agreement is drawn up between student(s) and teacher to complete a particular piece of work within a specific time
- higher order thinking skills
- independent study where students are given time to develop an individual unit of work
- individual learning plan
- pre and post testing, particularly in Science and Mathematics
- open ended tasks
- opportunity to study real life/authentic problems
- thematic integrated studies

School organisation

- acceleration either by subject or year level (see page 19)
- clubs
- competitions, either national or local
- experts in residence where schools use the expertise of an individual on a regular basis within the school setting to develop and extend a particular area of interest.
- individual timetabling which enables students to work at different year levels and at different ability levels
- International Baccalaureate
- part time withdrawal from regular classrooms
- special classes
- special interest schools
- vertical classes where students of differing age groups work together within the one class

School and the wider community

- cluster grouping of schools where groups of schools share human and material resources to enable them to expand options and opportunities for gifted students
- concurrent enrolment in university and secondary school.
• mentoring in the area of the child’s giftedness
• mini-courses, using expertise from industry, commerce, tertiary institutions, government agencies, and held in school time or after school for a number of sessions
• student workshops organised at weekends or in school holidays to enable children of similar abilities and interests to socialise and work together
• university summer schools

Are there special curriculum needs for gifted and talented children?

The curriculum is defined by many educators, as consisting of all the planned and unplanned learning experiences in schools which are appropriate to the needs, interests, abilities, learning styles and learning rates of children. Gifted and talented children need a wide range of experiences which will challenge them and extend their learning. Gifted students need the opportunity to complete work more quickly, to engage with abstract concepts and ideas, and to work at a greater depth and breadth than offered in the regular curriculum. The wide variety of individual differences which exists among gifted and talented children means that they cannot be treated as a homogenous group.

What is acceleration and is it suitable for my child?

Research strongly supports the benefits of acceleration. The Senate Committee (2001, p. XIV) says that “there is overwhelming research evidence that appropriate acceleration of gifted students who are socially and emotionally ready usually has highly advantageous outcomes”.

Acceleration should not merely involve learning the content of a subject as quickly as possible but should also involve time to reflect on what has been learnt in order to experiment with ideas and to use the learned content as a stepping stone to investigate and explore other areas. Time needs to be made available in the school programme for this to occur.

Acceleration can take several forms:

• subject acceleration where a gifted child can progress quickly in any subject where talents are displayed; for example, a six year old student could work with twelve year old students in computer study, or an eleven year old could work with sixteen year olds in music

• year level acceleration (grade skipping) e.g. a Year 4 child is promoted to Year 5 or 6 (Radical acceleration of more than one year is only of value for profoundly gifted students.)

• early entry when a gifted child displays academic and social readiness to begin a level of schooling at a younger age than their age peers, this may occur at pre-school, primary school, secondary school and tertiary education

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• condensing/condensing/compact/compacting/telescoping what is taught so that it is covered in a shorter space of time; for example, a three year course condensed into two years

• a student is involved in experiences that allow for greater depth (extension) and breadth (enrichment) of learning by using more advanced resources

There can be no set answer as to whether your child should or should not be accelerated in one way or another. Both you and the school need to work together when considering this issue, taking into account your child’s feelings, your attitudes, as well as those of the school and your child’s social, emotional and physical development. Your child may well be already socialising with people of similar ability who are at a different age level. However, some gifted children may be socially, emotionally and physically immature and thus unable to cope with acceleration by year level "skipping", for example.

Both you, the school Principal and/or relevant staff need to consider the following questions before making a decision about acceleration for your child:

• Does the social, emotional and physical development of your child match his/her outstanding ability or abilities?

• Is it possible to begin acceleration in the present classroom by using a mentor or independent study?

• Is it possible for acceleration to take place in a combined class of mixed age levels?

• Is the teacher to whose class your child will advance, flexible and accepting? This is vital!

• Will acceleration be monitored and will a learning plan be documented to assist with this?

• Will your child’s abilities, achievements, interests and learning styles be enhanced by acceleration?

To assess the appropriateness of a child for acceleration it is wise for parents and the school to consult the international guidelines on suitability for acceleration. www.boardofstudies.nsw.edu.au/manuals/pdf_doc/accelerated_guide.pdf(pp.37-38)

The provision of services and resources

FAQs:

• Do I need to have my child formally assessed?
It will be of assistance to ascertain the level of giftedness of your child in order to plan for placement and programming appropriate learning experiences or interventions.

• Where can I go to have my child formally assessed?
  Any registered psychologist is capable of doing a psychometric assessment to ascertain if a child is gifted. However, it is recommended that the psychologist has a specific interest in gifted children. GTCASA maintains a list of psychologists who have demonstrated expertise/knowledge in this area.

• Is there available information that I can read on gifted children?
  The GTCASA Resource Centre has a comprehensive collection of appropriate books on Gifted Education. See Appendix 5 for a list of useful web sites.

• Can my child begin preschool/school early?
  See acceleration guidelines page 19.

• Can my child progress to secondary school or tertiary institutions at a younger age than usual?
  Yes, this is a form of acceleration (see page 19)

• Are there teachers in schools who are trained to cater for the needs of gifted and talented children?
  Yes there are, but it is wise to ask individual schools about the formal qualifications of staff in Gifted Education, and also if the school has a written policy on the needs of gifted students. See appendix 1 – Which school or pre-school?

• Is there a special class/school for gifted and talented children?
  There is currently no specific school in South Australia solely dedicated to gifted children, however, there are some schools or clusters of schools which provide specific programs for gifted students. Wise parents would contact the Department for Education and Children's Services (DECS), the Association of Independent Schools of South Australia and Catholic Education Office for details of appropriate schools within the different educational systems.

This information is neither comprehensive nor complete but is intended to give a starting point for obtaining further advice and answers to the above questions within South Australia.

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APPENDIX 1  WHICH PRE-SCHOOL OR SCHOOL?

Following are some points that parents/caregivers may find useful when considering the most appropriate educational setting for their gifted child/ren.

Children need an educational environment:

- that respects diversity and provides safety and security
- that promotes and acknowledges an ethos of excellence across the creative, intellectual, physical, social and emotional areas.
- that sets high expectations and the opportunity to reach their full potential in all areas.

In addition to these crucial requirements, a gifted child may need some additional considerations.

Contrary to some perceptions, many gifted children do not automatically achieve at school. Without specific identification and intervention a number of them ‘coast’ along in their learning, underachieve, mask their abilities or disengage and may drop out of school early.

The following outlines a number of areas that may impact on the education your child will receive in their educational setting. It would be beneficial to you as a parent/caregiver to obtain information relating to the following in order to ascertain the level of support you may expect to receive in the education of your gifted child/ren.

PRESCHOOL & SCHOOL ADMINISTRATION

It would be desirable if the following provisions were in place at the Administrative level:

- A Policy on giftedness that incorporates the State Guidelines for Early Entry and outlines identification and intervention strategies
- A practice of Early Entry and other forms of acceleration such as year level or subject acceleration with the appropriate acceleration guidelines being used by parents/caregivers and school personnel
- Availability of resources for gifted education
- A focus person with dedicated responsibility for gifted education such as a Coordinator or Assistant Principal
- Use of Negotiated or Individual Education Plans for learners in the highly gifted range or gifted learners with significant complexities such as learning difficulties or learning disabilities
- Staff who have had professional development in gifted education and access to ongoing training
- Access to counselling for gifted students experiencing difficulties such as perfectionism, bullying, underachievement, school refusal or behavioural problems
- A policy of programming for gifted learners rather than ‘a gifted program’
• A placement policy that clusters gifted learners together and within the younger level of vertically grouped composite classes where possible to allow for natural acceleration

CURRICULUM & CLASSROOM

Some options may include:
• Flexible learning environments that support diverse learning styles and needs
• Differentiation of the Curriculum involving
  1. CONTENT – more complex, abstract and open-ended
  2. PROCESS – higher order thinking skills with modification of pace of teaching and approach
  3. PRODUCTS – problems and audiences connected to ‘real life’ instances
• Student-negotiated learning with individual learning contracts
• Access to enrichment and extension activities including Tournament of Minds, Future Problem Solving, University of N.S.W. Science, English and Maths competitions, Oliphant Science Awards, short term withdrawal groups for specific topics, mentoring/Learning Assistance Program [LAP] etc
• Pre-testing and ‘off-level’ testing to determine optimal learning levels for gifted children whose true abilities are not reflected in tests designed for their chronological age
• Compacting of curriculum to provide more time to pursue studies at a greater breadth and depth within school time

COMMUNITY

The Preschool/School may have links with:
• Cluster groups comprising a number of settings who share resources and expertise and provide opportunities for gifted children to associate with children of similar ability and interests [eg The Western SHIP Project comprising Hendon Primary, Grange Schools, Seaton High, West Lakes Shore schools and Westport Primary]
• The Department of Education and Children’s Services’ Ignite Secondary Program for Gifted Students. [website: www.igniteprogram.com]
• The Gifted and Talented Children’s Association of South Australia which provides workshops for children, parent and teacher support and a Resource Centre [telephone: 8373 0500: Email: info@gtcasa.asn.au: Website: www.gtcasa.asn.au]
• The Gifted Education Research, Resource and Information Centre [GERRIC], University of New South Wales which provides assessments of children and resource and support materials [Toll Free: 1800 626 824: Email: gerric@unsw.edu.au: Website: www.arts.unsw.edu.au/gerric/]

Written by Mary Minchin, previously Policy Officer – Gifted Education, Department of Education and Children’s Services

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APPENDIX 2: INTERNATIONAL GUIDELINES ON ACCELERATION

HO International Guidelines on Suitability for Accelerated Progression

Some of the guidelines used internationally to assist school Principals in determining gifted students' suitability for accelerated progression include the following:

1. It is not necessary for every gifted student to be psychometrically tested. However, in the case of students who are being considered for accelerated progression, there should be a comprehensive psychological assessment of their intellectual functioning, academic skill levels and social emotional adjustment by a trained psychologist.

2. Academically, the student should demonstrate skill levels above the average of the class they desire to enter.

3. Socially and emotionally, the student should be free of any serious adjustment problems. Principals should be aware, however, that in some gifted students social or emotional difficulties may have been caused by inappropriately low grade placement. In such cases the situation may be alleviated by accelerated progression.

4. The student should be in good physical health. The student's size, however, should be considered only to the extent that competitive sport may be viewed as important in later years.

5. It is important that the student should not feel unduly pressured by parents/guardians. The student themselves should be eager to move ahead.

6. The receiving teacher must have positive attitudes towards the grade advancement and must be willing to help the student adjust to the new situation.

7. Judgements about the student's social and emotional maturity should include input from the student's parents/carers and the psychologist. Gifted students are sometimes rejected by their classmates. It is important that teachers do not confuse the absence of close peer relationships with social immaturity.

8. Ideally, grade advancement should occur at natural transition points, such as the beginning of the school year. However, mid year advancement may sometimes be desirable where the student's prior teacher and receiving teacher may more easily confer about how best to help the student make a smooth transition.

9. All cases of accelerated progression should be arranged on a trial basis.

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of at least six weeks. The student should be aware that if the trial period is not a success, they will return to the original grade placement. It is important that in such a circumstance the student should not be made to feel that they have 'failed'.

10. Care should be exercised not to build up excessive expectations from grade advancement. A small minority of gifted students are so far advanced in their intellectual or academic development that one year of accelerated progression may still leave them bored at school. For such students further advancement may be advisable at a later period in their schooling.

11. Decisions regarding accelerated progression should be based on facts rather than myths. The research literature reveals that accelerated progression benefits the gifted student both academically and socially. Conversely, failure to advance a highly gifted student may result in poor study habits, apathy, lack of motivation and maladjustment.

More guidelines on Acceleration:

1. There should be a comprehensive evaluation of the child.

2. Intellectually the child should have an IQ of 130 or higher or should have a level of mental development that is at least one standard deviation from the mean.

3. Academically the child should demonstrate skill levels of at least one year above the class into which he/she would be advanced.

4. If the child is high in several academic areas but low in only one or two he/she may be advanced as long as there is help available in the weak subject/s.

5. If the child is advanced in only one or two academic areas he/she should remain in the present class but be allowed to work with a higher class for the subject in which he/she excels.

6. In most cases the child should be socially and emotionally free of any serious adjustment problems and have demonstrated persistence and motivation, however in some cases adjustment problems may have been caused by inappropriate grade placement and acceleration will alleviate the problem.

7. Physically the child should be in good health. Physical size should only be considered to the extent that competitive sports may be important in later years. Even that problem is unimportant if teams are chosen on age rather than grade level.

8. The child should not feel pressured to advance.
9. The teacher who will have the child in the advanced class should be positive about the acceleration and be prepared to help the child adjust to the new class.

10. Mid year and end of year acceleration are both acceptable. Mid year has the advantage of both teachers still working in the school so both can support the child. End of year has the advantage of all the children changing class. Placing the child in a vertically grouped class has advantages in that the child can join the class at the lower level, complete two years in one and then advance to the next class with an established social group.

11. Acceleration can be done on a trial basis. The child could attend the higher grade part time to establish whether it will work, or there could be a time limit within which the child is free to return if the acceleration is proving unsuccessful.

12. Caution is needed not to build excessive expectations from acceleration. The child should not be made to feel a failure if it does not go well.

13. Some children are so advanced that single grade acceleration is insufficient. This would happen if the child is 3 or more standard deviations above the mean or 4 or more years above the current year level. Depending on the child, it is useful to do such acceleration in several small steps over a period of time.

14. TEACHERS SHOULD BE AWARE THAT FAILURE TO ACCELERATE A GIFTED CHILD MAY RESULT IN POOR STUDY HABITS, APATHY, LACK OF MOTIVATION AND MALADJUSTMENT.

(from Feldhusen, John F. (1992) Early Admission and Grade Placement for Young Gifted Learners. GTC 15 2)

EARLY ENTRY GUIDELINES

1. Early entry should be at the discretion of the School Principal, the Reception teacher and Kindergarten staff, in consultation with the parents. All of the points below should be taken into consideration.

2. The further the child’s age is from the approved entering age the higher the IQ required. For example, a child who is 4¾ is required to have an IQ of 130 or higher and a child of 4½ an IQ of 145 or higher.

3. There should be a comprehensive evaluation of the child’s intellectual functioning, academic readiness and social and emotional maturity. Consideration should be given to the child’s health and motor development.

4. Academically the child should demonstrate readiness for school.
5. Socially and emotionally the child should be free of any serious adjustment problems and demonstrate a desire to learn. Candidates for early entry would be those who readily adapt to kindergarten experiences, or have friends in the Reception grade.

6. Physically the child should be in good health. The child should have sufficient gross and fine motor skills to be able to adapt to class and playground activities.

7. The receiving teacher should have a positive attitude toward the early admission of the child.

8. All cases of early entry should be on a trial basis. A trial period of 6 weeks should be sufficient. The teacher should monitor the child’s progress and adjustment and keep the parents and the principal informed. It is important to realise that many gifted children under achieve at school and Kindergarten so that they are not “different” and so they can fit into the milieu of the class room.

9. Care should be exercised not to build up unrealistic expectations of the child experiencing early entry. Parents need to have a realistic understanding of the school’s capability to meet the child’s individual needs.

(from Feldhusen, John F., (1992) Early Admission and Grade Advancement for Young Gifted Learners. GTC 15 2)
APPENDIX 3    BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX 4

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY: BOOKS

Costa, A and Kallick, B., (2000) Habits of Mind: A Developmental Series. Alexandria, VA., Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development. There are four titles in this series, of which Discovering and Exploring and Activating and Engaging would be the most useful for parents. A most interesting chapter in Activating and Engaging deals with Habits of Mind as Character Education for those parents who are concerned with teaching moral values and good citizenship. Other chapters deal with the Habits of Mind in relation to particular subject disciplines, for example, Mathematics, Art and Foreign Languages.

Martin, A., 2003, How to Motivate Your Child, Australia, Bantam Books. Dr, Andrew Martin is an Australian psychologist specialising in student motivation, This book is extremely helpful for parents and teachers and would deserve a four star rating if it were a motion picture. It contains really helpful strategies for boosting children’s motivation. Chapter 3, for example, deals with Increasing your Child’s Self-Belief. There are specific chapters on motivating boys and gifted students that have used successfully with disengaged adolescents. His latest book, published by Bantam Books in 2005, is How to Help Your Child Fly Through Life: The 20 Big Issues, looks to be just as useful.
APPENDIX 5  ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY: WEB SITES


In response to the findings of the 2001 Senate Employment, Workplace Relations, Small Business and Education References Committee Report, the Australian Government commissioned the Gifted Education Research, Resource and Information Centre (GERRIC) at the University of New South Wales to develop the Gifted Education Professional Development Package. CDs of the Package have been delivered to every school in Australia 2005-2006.

The Package consists of six modules that represent current research about particular areas of Gifted Education:

- Module One. Understanding Giftedness
- Module Two. The Identification of Gifted Students
- Module Three. Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Students
- Module Four. Underachievement in Gifted Students
- Module Five. Curriculum Differentiation for Gifted Students
- Module Six. Developing Programs and Provisions for Gifted Students

Each of the six modules contain Core, Extension and Specialisation sections which in turn contain practical components, for example, case studies. All levels of schooling are covered in a variety of educational settings.

Although the Package is designed for teachers who wish to undertake professional development in Gifted Education, parents will find the Package informative and accessible. Plain language is used and the modules are illustrated with apt cartoons. Coloured icons throughout the modules allow quick identification of research, case studies, information and activities according to individual needs.

Habits of Mind
http://www.habits-of-mind.net

This website provides resources to support understanding of Art Costa’s Habits of Mind. The site also provides information about the Habit of Mind resources available to educators and parents seeking assistance implementing Habits of Minds in classrooms and families. There is a whole section devoted to inspirational quotations that match each Habit of Mind.

Self-Efficacy
http://www.des.emory.edu/mfp/self-efficacy.html

This website contains a wealth of information about self-efficacy for parents and teachers alike. Professor Albert Bandura, Professor of Social Science in Psychology, Stanford University, appears to be the main guru in the self-efficacy field and his works are featured on this site. Other scientific papers related to the subject are presented, along with quotations, essays and

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whimsical items.

A guide to the Macquarie Bank Future Solving Program
The Macquarie Bank Future Problem Solving Program in Australia is a year-long program in which students learn to address complex scientific and social problems of the future through the use of a creative and comprehensive thinking process. The Macquarie Bank FPSP takes students beyond memorization. The process challenges students to apply information they have acquired by research to some of the most complex issues facing society. They are asked to think, to make decisions and, in some instances, to carry out their solutions. The challenging thinking process used in the Macquarie Bank FPSP is designed to help students learn how to think. Specifically, it motivates and assists students in:
- thinking creatively;
- developing an active interest in the future;
- improving communication skills (oral and written);
- solving problems using a six-step process;
- working cooperatively in teams;
- learning about complex social issues;
- developing research skills;
- and thinking critically and analytically.

Aussie Educator
The Aussie Educator general web-site has a specific page of links to Australian associations and useful articles from around the world. The link given here pertains to the page dealing only with information and issues in gifted education.

Andrew’s Web Hub: Education of gifted and talented students
http://www.geocities.com/andrew73/links34.html
Andrew’s web hub has lists of links to many subjects. There is an entire page given to gifted education with links to Australian associations, concepts and discussion, and world resources.

Di Rhody’s Resource page
http://www.dirhody.com/home.html
Diane Rhody is a mother with a gifted son who also has a learning disability. This condition is often called Gifted and Learning Disabled (GLD). The web site contains a history of the family’s struggles to ensure a good education for their son. There are links to other sites dealing with GLD and to home schooling. Other links lead users to: Know Your Fundamental Rights; Estimates of Levels of Giftedness; NAGC Position Paper on Acceleration Gifted Children with AD/HD; Giftedness as Asynchronous Development Highly Gifted Children in Full Inclusion Classrooms; Gifted Children & Homeschooling: An Annotated Bibliography; Helping Your Highly Gifted Child; How to Identify Gifted/Ld Kids; Gifted but Learning Disabled: A Puzzling Paradox; Identifying the Gifted.

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European Council for High Ability
ECHA provides courses in gifted education, reports on research and provides forums on different topics for teachers and parents. The refereed Journal of High Ability Studies is published twice a year. A conference is held every two years, alternating with the World Council on Gifted and Talented Children’s conference.

Gifted and Creative Services Australia
The authors of this site are Lesley Sword and David Harrison who are both Australians. Lesley has formal qualifications in psychology, education, consulting and counselling. She also has extensive training in the social & emotional development of the gifted and a deep interest in visual-spatial learners. David was a Primary Teacher before moving into other fields. There are links to key support agencies, the Australian State Departments of Education, and to information about gifted adults.

Education Queensland
The Learning Place
This site is maintained by the Queensland Department of Education, Training and the Arts. There are links to Professional Learning opportunities for teachers, understanding giftedness, identification, social and emotional issues, underachievement, differentiation, accelaration and an excellent glossary of terms used in gifted education.

Sof Web: Gifted Education
This site is maintained by the Victorian Department of Education. Gifted and high potential students will have this potential throughout their lives. Meeting their educational and social development needs is required across all aspects of schooling. There and links to general information on Gifted and High Potential Students; Learning and Teaching; Identification of Gifted and High Potential Students; Acceleration ; Supporting Diversity; and Resources.

Austega’s Gifted Resource Centre
http://www.austega.com/gifted/
This is a commercial site with links to the following: What is a gifted child?; Characteristics checklist; Moral development (Kohlberg); "Flow" and Csikszentmihalyi; Theory of Positive Disintegration; Living & learning with overexcitabilities; Parenting gifted preschoolers; Parenting & socio-emotional nurturing; Choosing a school; Dealing with problems at school; Good reading for gifted readers; Bibliotherapy for gifted students; Ability grouping;
Acceleration/flexible progression; Guidelines for acceleration; Curriculum compacting; Curriculum differentiation; Independent learning; Mentoring; Vertical unitised timetabling; Research synthesis on school provisions; Teacher G&T professional development; Home schooling; Montessori; Waldorf Steiner.

Hoagie’s Gifted Education Page
http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/readings.htm
Information on this excellent site comes from the Davidson Institute for Talent Development. There are links to the many issues parents of gifted children continually have to deal with, to journals of gifted education, and to research on gifted students. All of the links have a short annotation.

Gifted Children – Where like minds meet
This site is maintained by Rae Lyth, a parent of gifted children attending secondary and primary schools, and she has had first-hand experience in navigating the education system in Melbourne, Victoria. Her knowledge of gifted children and educational practices has assisted her ability to select schools with an active gifted policy. She found it beneficial to talk with like-minded people about issues of daily life and so established this web page. There are many links dealing with issues in home schooling of gifted students. Each link has a one sentence annotation. There are also links to a page on Identification, on Middle and High school issues, information for parents and “Unschooling”.

National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth
http://www.nagty.ac.uk/
This site provides information and links for gifted students, professionals working with gifted students, and recent research papers. The “Latest News” section is updated regularly and contains links to articles written this year. The professional section contains links to Whole School, Primary and Secondary Schooling and there are also some subject specific links such as Mathematics, English and Science. Other links lead to underachievement, assessment and higher order thinking skills.

Neag Centre for Gifted Education and Talent Development http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/
The National Research Centre for Gifted and Talented is based at the University of Connecticut, so it is no surprise that there are links to the work of Joe Renzulli and his School Wide Enrichment Model. However, there are also links to parent resources, research, underachievement, acceleration and to several gifted projects such as MP3.

Gifted Education in Australia
This page is intended to serve as a guide for parents of intellectually gifted children living in Australia, who are seeking an appropriate education for their

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child. There is information about what parents should be looking for when they choose a school for their gifted child, and there is a limited list of schools for each state in Australia which may have expertise in gifted education.

Superkids
http://www.superkids.com/
SuperKids reviews and rates educational software, reviews are written by teams that include educators, parents, and children from across the United States. There is a list of bestselling software with prices. There are educational tools for parents and teachers to download in mathematics and vocabulary. In addition there are some logic visual-spatial or critical thinking games which can be downloaded for free. SuperKids also presents timely investigative reports and interviews with intriguing figures.

Talent Ed
http://scs.une.edu.au/TalentEd/
This site, run by the University of New England, provides material about the education of the gifted and talented. There are competitions for students and downloadable resources for teachers in both Primary and Secondary areas. Some of these downloadable resources are subject specific, for example, English, Mathematics, Science, History, LOTE, and Drama.

Tournament of Minds
http://www.tom.edu.au/
Tournament of Minds is a problem solving program for teams of students from both primary and secondary years. They are required to solve demanding, open-ended challenges from one of the following disciplines; Language, Literature, Mathematics, Engineering, and the Social Sciences. Tournament of Minds is an opportunity for students with a passion for learning and problem solving to demonstrate their skills and talents in an exciting, vibrant, and public way. Teams are required to work together on a Long Term Challenge for six weeks without assistance from teachers, parents or peers. They are encouraged to explore possibilities and experiment with ideas as they endeavour to produce their best possible solution. Students present the product of their ideas - their challenge solution - to a panel of judges and an audience on Tournament Day.

Venture Hot List
http://www.midwayisd.org/etrip/Venture%20Hotlist/Venture%20Hotlist.htm
This page is designed for students and teachers. The different categories of links are divided into levels of schooling, and then into subjects such as Science, English, Mathematics, Technology, Social Studies and “just for fun”.

GATSS Web sites
This is simply an annotated list of twenty eight useful web sites for adults and children.

World Council for Gifted and Talented Children
http://www.worldgifted.ca/
The WCRTC is an international organisation for gifted and talented. As such, it hosts a world conference every two years in different countries. It also publishes a refereed journal several times a year.

Enrichment Units for the Middle Years
www.lynnekelley.com.au
This site, originally entitled Virtual School for the Gifted, contains teaching and learning units specifically designed for gifted and talented learners. The units cost $10 each and are an excellent addition to any teaching program, whether at school or at home.

Asperger’s Syndrome
http://www.aspergers.com/
This site is very informative about the nature of Asperger’s Syndrome.
http://www.udel.edu/bkirby/asperger/international.html
This site has been developed by OASIS (Online Asperger’s Syndrome Information and Support) and as its name suggests, it contains many useful links to AS groups.

Attention Deficit Disorder
This is a section about ADD and ADHD on an excellent website: Children and Youth Health. Parents can see advice on a wide variety of issues. http://www.cyh.com/

Enrichment Units for the Middle Years
www.lynnekelley.com.au
This site contains teaching and learning units specifically designed for gifted and talented learners. The units cost $10 each and are an excellent addition to any teaching program, whether at school or at home.

Specific Learning Difficulties Association of South Australia
http://www.speld-sa.org.au

Parents Chat-line
http://au.groups.yahoo.com/group/giftedfamilies/
This site is a chat-line for parents of gifted children. It is up to parents to register with the group, if they wish to take part.

Visual-Spatial Resource
http://www.visualspatial.org/

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Dr. Linda Silverman, who pioneered the concept of visual-spatial learners, is featured on this website which is specifically designed for parents and teachers of these children. There are e-books to download, articles to access, and practical suggestions about meeting the challenges involved in educating visual-spatial learners.

**APPENDIX 6**

**MOVIES CONTAINING GIFTED CHILDREN**

Some of these will be difficult to find.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Movie (Year)</th>
<th>Movie (Year)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Amadeus (1984)</td>
<td>Ma Vie en Rose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amazing Grace and Chuck</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angus</td>
<td>Matilda (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Billy Elliot</td>
<td>Mulan (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>My Father's Glory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy Who Could Fly, The (1986)</td>
<td>My Neighbour Totoro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brilliant Mind (A)</td>
<td>October Sky</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bug's Life, A</td>
<td>Pi (1999)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle in the Sky</td>
<td>Power of One, The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Castle of Cagliostro, The</td>
<td>Pretty in Pink (1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children of a Lesser God (1986)</td>
<td>Princess Bride, The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Act (1992)</td>
<td>Pump up the Volume</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cold Comfort Farm</td>
<td>Real Genius (1985)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact (1997)</td>
<td>Reduced Shakespeare</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curly Sue (1991)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dead Poets' Society (1989)</td>
<td>The Reduced Shakespeare Company</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elizabeth</td>
<td>Christmas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empire of the Sun</td>
<td>Remember the Titans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ever After</td>
<td>Rushmore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Explorers</td>
<td>Sandlot, The (1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding Forrester</td>
<td>Searching for Bobby Fisher (1993)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding Neverland</td>
<td>Secret of Roan Inish</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fly Away Home</td>
<td>Shaggy Dog, The</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gattaca</td>
<td>Sixteen Candles (1984)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hackers (1995)</td>
<td>Short Circuit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Harriet the Spy</td>
<td>Some Kind of Wonderful (1987)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Spellbound</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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APPENDIX 7  USEFUL CONTACTS

- Gifted and Talented Children’s Association of South Australia
  P.O. Box 1111, Unley. 5061
  Resource Centre 89 Greenhill Road, Wayville. 5034
  Phone 8373 0500    Fax 8373 0588
  E-mail: giftedsa@gtcasa.asn.au

- Department of Education and Children’s Services
  31 Flinders Street,
  Adelaide.
  South Australia. 5000
  Ph. 8226 1527

- Association of Independent Schools of South Australia
  301 – 303 Unley Road,
  Malvern.
  South Australia. 5061.
  Ph. 8179 1400
  www.ais.sa.edu.au

- Catholic Education South Australia
  Ph. 116 George Street,
  Thebarton.
  South Australia. 5031.
  8301 6600

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
  See district entries in the Adelaide White Pages Telephone Book

- Psychometric Assessment.
  Please contact the GTCASA Resource Centre 8373 0500 for a list of psychologists

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Tertiary Education
Flinders University 8201 3911    Education Faculty 8201 2441
University of Adelaide 8303 4455
University of South Australia 8302 6611