

WEST OSO

INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

Gifted



Talented

Education Program



*Personalization. Collaboration. Trust.
Every Student. Every Hour. Every Day.*

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PHILOSOPHY/PURPOSE

West Oso ISD embraces the philosophy/purpose of providing “an education in relation to each child’s ability to learn.” The gifted and talented students are a group of students whose learning styles and thinking abilities demand challenging experiences, which are outside the educational norm. Therefore, the West Oso ISD gifted program attempts to ensure each student of alternatives which teach, challenge, and expand his knowledge while stressing the development of an independent learner who can question, apply, and generate information.

WOISD GOALS FOR THE GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENT

The student will:

- Experience a variety of research methods and products
- Generate independent, authentic research methods and products
- Generate, send, and receive verbal and non-verbal messages
- Demonstrate the ability to communicate effectively in appropriate ways to authentic audiences
- Create questions, not just answers
- Learn autonomously
- Solve problems in innovative ways
- Take educational and academic risks

STATE GOAL FOR SERVICES FOR GIFTED/TALENTED STUDENTS

Students who participate in services designed for gifted/talented students will demonstrate skill in self-directed learning, thinking, research, and communication as evidenced by the development of innovative products and performances that reflect individuality and creativity and are advanced in relation to students of similar age, experience, or environment. High school graduates who have participated in services for gifted/talented students will have produced products and performances of professional quality as part of their program services.

PROGRAM OVERVIEW

The district's gifted and talented program reflects the community's dedication to excellence coupled with an understanding of the unique cognitive and affective needs of potentially gifted and talented children. The program emphasizes higher-level critical thinking skills, problem solving techniques and inquiry in order to differentiate the curriculum of academically talented learners.

The WOISD objectives for our gifted and talented students are aligned with the Texas State Plan for the Education of Gifted Students' Goals:

1. Student Assessment:

Assessment instruments and gifted/talented identification procedures provide students an opportunity to demonstrate their talents, intelligences, and diverse abilities.

2. Service Design:

A flexible system of viable service options provides a research-based learning continuum that is developed and consistently implemented throughout the district to meet the needs and reinforce the strengths and interests of gifted/talented students.

3. Curriculum and Instruction:

The district meets the needs of gifted students by modifying the depth, complexity, and pacing of the curriculum and instruction ordinarily provided by the school.

4. Professional Development:

All personnel involved in the planning, creation, and delivery of services to gifted/talented students possess the knowledge required to develop and provide appropriate options and differentiated curricula.

5. Family Community Involvement:

The district regularly encourages community and family participation in services designed for gifted/ talented students.

DELIVERY OF SERVICES

GRADES K-5

Eligible kindergarten students will be identified gifted and talented (G/T)-general academic ability and placed in the gifted and talented program before March 1st of the school year. G/T – general academic ability students will be served by a GT trained teacher within the general classroom. General education teachers are responsible for providing instruction appropriate for the G/T students and subject matter. General education teachers shall differentiate curriculum by providing activities that include a focus on creativity, higher order thinking skills, and advanced academics. In addition, trained teachers will support students in completing a yearly Texas Performance Standards Project.

GRADES 6-8

At the end of 5th grade, current G/T students will be re-evaluated for subject- specific ability. Starting in 6th grade, identified students will be served in one or more of the following areas: Language Arts, Mathematics, Science, and Social Studies. General education teachers are responsible for providing instruction appropriate for the G/T students and subject matter. General education teachers shall differentiate curriculum by providing activities that include a focus on creativity, higher order thinking skills, and advanced academics. Students will be placed in Pre-AP classes to support their learning.

GRADES 9-12

Gifted and talented students are served with advanced students in Advanced Placement (AP), Pre-Advanced Placement (PAP), and Dual Credit (high school and college credit) classes. AP, PAP, and Dual Credit classes are designed to accelerate, provide greater depth, and expand the basic objectives of the subject matter. Gifted students are served in AP and PAP classes in the core academic areas.

Dual credit courses offered include U.S. History, English IV, Government, Economics, College Algebra, Pre-Calculus, and Speech. Through the PAP, AP and Dual Credit classes, critical analysis, research skills, cognitive development, creativity, and academic aptitude will be nurtured. See the WOHS student handbook or contact the counselors or principal who will answer questions about eligibility requirements and program services.

DESCRIPTIONS OF THE LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES WEST OSO ISD OFFERS OUR G/T STUDENTS

DIFFERENTIATION

Differentiation is an instructional model guiding teachers in developing classrooms actively attentive to the needs of academically diverse student populations. The approach of differentiating instruction advocates active planning for student differences in the classroom.

In a differentiated classroom, students have multiple options for

- taking in or accessing information (content)
- making sense of ideas (process)
- expressing what they learn (product)

G/T CLUSTER GROUPING

Cluster grouping is a method that West Oso ISD uses to meet the academic needs of G/T students. In West Oso ISD schools, G/T students are clustered with a G/T trained classroom teacher. The G/T cluster teacher is responsible for teaching the core content academic curriculum as well as differentiating instruction for the G/T students.

REFERRALS

Referrals of students for the gifted and talented program may be made by administrators, teachers, counselors, or parents in writing and given to the campus counselor. All students who are referred will be considered for assessment and evaluation by district personnel trained in the practice of gifted and talented education. Assessment and evaluation of referred students include data from multiple sources, both qualitative and quantitative. The WOISD G/T application window will be released each fall and published on the district website, and on social media sites.

IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

Students in grade K-12 shall be assessed, and if identified, provided gifted & talented services. Identification criteria for referred students will include the student's achievement test scores, intellectual ability tests, teacher and parent inventory scores, and assessments based on creative thinking. Please contact your student's campus counselor for questions concerning the gifted and talented process.

NOTIFICATION

Parents of referred students will be notified in writing by the end of the current school year as to the results of the G/T evaluation. Participation in any program or services provided for gifted students is voluntary.

APPEALS

Parents must appeal in writing to the campus counselor within ten school days as indicated on the notification letter. After the request for an appeal, the G/T committee will respond with their decision in writing to the person making the appeal within ten school days of the meeting. Should a person want to appeal the placement decision of the G/T committee, and he/she has followed the campus appeal procedures, a letter of appeal should be submitted to the coordinator of gifted and talented.

TRANSFER STUDENTS

Students transferring into WOISD may be placed in the G/T program with appropriate information of previous G/T placement in the sending district for the remainder of the school year.

FURLOUGH

The selection committee may place students on furlough who are unable to maintain satisfactory performance or choose not to participate in specific subject areas within the structure of the gifted and talented program. A student may be furloughed for a period of time not to exceed one school year. If a student does not return for readmission to the G/T program at the end of the furlough period, the student will be exited from the program. The exited student may apply for admission to the G/T program again at any time in the future, at which time the application will be processed following standard screening and placement procedures.

EXITS

Parents may request a student be removed from the WOISD gifted and talented program at any time. At this time the Exit Form will be completed and the student will be placed in the regular program. Student progress will be monitored in the program. If a student is not progressing satisfactorily, a teacher, counselor, or administrator may request a selection committee meeting to consider probation. If probation is appropriate, the parent, the student and the G/T specialist will enter into a Growth Contract, describing the time limits and the situation that must be improved. If the situation is not improved by the end of the period stated in the Growth Contract, the student may be exited from the program.

The exited student may apply for readmission to the G/T program again after one year, at which time the application will be processed following WOISD standard screening and placement procedures.

PROGRAM EVALUATION

The gifted program shall be evaluated annually in the form of program evaluation questionnaires. Teachers, students, and parents involved in the WOISD gifted and talented program will complete the questionnaires. Information gained from the evaluation shall be shared with board members, administrators, teachers, counselors, students in the gifted and talented program, and the community.

CURRICULUM

WOISD Gifted and Talented Program expands and/or extends the WOISD district curriculum. In grades K-12, G/T trained classroom teachers help G/T students master these skills in the foundation curricular areas and add depth, breadth, and complexity to the curriculum by modifying content, process, and products. In K-12, students are provided opportunities for acceleration in areas of exceptional strength. Progression through the years provides the advanced learner the academic skills in the following areas: research, analysis, organization, critical thinking, and presentation knowledge and skills. These skills help to prepare students for higher education and productivity as a citizen of the United States.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

All teachers offering services to G/T Program students in the foundation curricular areas will have received the required training as stipulated in the Texas State Plan for Gifted Education:

- Foundational 30-hour G/T Training in the three strands as mandated by state law
- Annual 6-hour G/T Update Training as mandated by state law

All administrators and counselors who have decision-making authority for gifted programs have completed 6 hours of training in Nature and Needs of G/T students and Service Options for the G/T student.

COMMUNITY AWARENESS

The district shall ensure that information about the WOISD gifted and talented program is available to parents and community members and that they have an opportunity to develop an understanding of and support for the program. A gifted and talented program meeting will be held each year on every campus usually as a part of open house. Student/Parent handbooks for each campus contain information about special programs.



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PRINCIPLES OF A DIFFERENTIATED CURRICULUM
FOR G/T STUDENTS

- Present content that is related to broad-based issues, themes, or problems.
- Integrate multiple disciplines into the area of study.
- Present comprehensive, related, and mutually reinforcing experiences within an area of study.
- Allow for the in-depth learning of a self-selected topic within the area of study.
- Develop independent or self-directed study skills.
- Develop productive, complex, abstract, and/or higher level thinking skills.
- Focus on open-ended tasks.
- Develop research skills and methods.
- Encourage the development of products that use new techniques, materials, and forms.
- Encourage the development of self-understanding, e.g., recognizing and using one's abilities, becoming self-directed, and appreciating likeness and/or differences between oneself and others.
- Evaluate student outcomes by using appropriate and specific criteria through self-appraisal and criterion referenced and/or standardized instruments.
- Integrate basic skills and higher level thinking skills into the curriculum.



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West Osos ISD Gifted and Talented Forms

- Form #1 G/T Referral Form for Parents, Teachers, and/or Students
- Form #2 G/T Referral Notification (Should accompany Form 2 and be returned, signed).
- Form #3 G/T Permission to Evaluate (MUST be signed and returned by parent/guardian.)
- Form #4 G/T Program Parent Consent (MUST be signed and returned by parent/guardian.)
- Form #5 G/T Program Parent Consent—Transfer Student
- Form #6 G/T Program Notification of Evaluation Results
- Form #7 G/T Program Selection Matrices
- Form #8 G/T Committee Recommendations
- Form #9 G/T Request for Student Furlough
- Form #10 G/T Program Exit Notice
- Form #11 G/T Program Growth Contract





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Referral(s) for Gifted/Talented Program

FORM 1

Date: _____

Grade: _____

Name of Person Making Referral: _____

I hereby refer the following students for consideration for placement in the West Oso I.S.D. Gifted and Talented Program.

PLEASE PRINT

Student Name

ID #

Date of Birth



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West Oso ISD Gifted and Talented Referral Notification

FORM 2

Dear Parents,

Your child, _____ has been referred for the gifted program in West Oso ISD. Students can be referred by teachers, parents, counselors, or other interested persons.

Gifted and Talented students in West Oso ISD are those who excel consistently or show potential to excel in general intellectual ability and specific subject matter aptitude. Students identified as gifted and talented may come from all races, socio-economic groups, and environments. West Oso ISD believes that its gifted students need educational experiences that go beyond those offered as part of the regular school program. Therefore, the gifted program attempts to ensure each student of alternatives which teach, challenge, and expand his/her knowledge while stressing the development of an independent learner who can question, apply, and generate information. The program emphasizes higher-level critical thinking skills, problem solving techniques, and inquiry in order to differentiate the curriculum of the academically talented learners.

Referred students are evaluated according to established criteria. The criteria for assessment may include but not be limited to the following: achievement tests, intelligence tests, behavioral checklists completed by teachers and parents, teacher referrals based on classroom observations, and student work samples. A selection committee selects those students for whom gifted program services are appropriate. Parents and students are notified in writing upon selection of the student for the gifted program. Participation in any program or services provided for gifted students is voluntary. The District obtains written permission of the student and the parents before a student is placed in a gifted program.

Student Name: _____ Grade: _____ Teacher: _____

My signature indicates that I have been informed of my child's referral for Gifted and Talented assessment/evaluation.

Parent
Signature: _____ Date: _____





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FORM 3

West Oso ISD Gifted and Talented Permission to Evaluate

Student: _____

Campus: _____

Grade: _____

Teacher: _____

My child has been referred for the West Oso ISD gifted and talented program. I understand that my child will be evaluated using multiple criteria.

_____ I give my permission for the school to conduct any special testing or individual assessment that is part of the screening and identification process.

_____ I do not wish for my child to be screened for placement in the West Oso ISD gifted and talented programs at this time.

Parent Signature

Date





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FORM 4

West Oso ISD Gifted and Talented Program Parent Consent
(Permission to Participate)

Student Name: _____

Campus: _____

Grade: _____

I understand that my child has qualified for placement in the Gifted and Talented Program at West Oso ISD for the school year_____.

I give permission for my child to participate in the G/T program.

I do not wish for my child to participate in the G/T program at this time.

Parent's Name

Parent's Signature

Date

Please return this letter to your child's counselor upon receipt.





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FORM 5

West Oso ISD Gifted and Talented Program Parent Consent
Transfer Student
(Permission to Participate)

Student Name: _____

Campus: _____

Grade: _____

Students transferring into West Oso ISD may be placed in the G/T program with appropriate evidence of previous G/T placement in the sending districts for the remainder of the school year. The students will be screened according to WOISD standards to determine continued placement in the G/T Program

I accept in the WOISD Gifted and Talented Program for my child. I understand that my child will be monitored to determine continued placement in the G/T program.

I do not wish to have my child placed in the WOISD Gifted and Talented program

Parent's Name

Parent's Signature

Date

Please return this letter to your child's counselor upon receipt





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FORM 6

West Oso ISD Gifted and Talented Program
Notification of Evaluation Results

Date: _____

Dear Parents,

Your child _____ has completed evaluation for identification gifted and talented in the academic area(s) of language arts, science, math, and/or social studies. Enclosed is a copy of your child's selections criteria summary sheet.

To be identified as gifted and talented in one or more of the academic areas, students were evaluated holistically using the following indicators (check all that apply):

- Kingore Planned Experiences
- Naglierri (NNAT-3) test of non-verbal abilities
- Renzulli Teacher Inventory (learning, motivation, creativity, leadership)
- Renzulli Parent Inventory (learning, motivation, creativity, leadership)
- Sages II Achievement Test (Math, Science, Language Arts, Social Studies)
- STAAR/EOC Tests
- Other (please indicate): _____

- Your child has met the criteria for identification as gifted and talented in: _____
- Your child has not met the criteria for identification as gifted and talented.

If you have any questions, please call me at (361) 806-5900.

Sincerely,

Counselor





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FORM 8

West Oso ISD Gifted and Talented
Committee Recommendations

Student Name: _____

Campus: _____

Grade: _____

Date of Committee Meeting: _____

Recommendations of the Gifted/Talented Committee

___ This student has met the criteria for gifted and talented in K-5.

___ This student has met the criteria for gifted and talented in math.

___ This student has met the criteria for gifted and talented in science.

___ This student has met the criteria for gifted and talented in English Language Arts.

___ This student has met the criteria for gifted and talented in social studies.

___ This student HAS NOT met the criteria for enrollment in the gifted and talented program at this time.

Committee Member Signatures:

Counselor(s):

G/T Trained Teacher(s):



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John F. Kennedy Elementary School G/T Identification Matrix Holistic Approach						
Identification Number:		Recommended G/T Placement:			Yes	No
Name of Student	Last	First		Middle		
Date of Birth		Age		Gender		
School		Grade		Consideration Date		
Instruments / Methods	Benchmark Score	Actual Score	+ / ~	Comments		
Naglieri (NNAT)	80					
Renzulli Teacher Inventory				Other Characteristics:		
Learning	55-66	out of 66				
Creativity	44-54	out of 54				
Motivation	55-66	out of 66				
Leadership	32-42	out of 42				
Parent Inventory				Other Characteristics:		
Learning	32-40	out of 40				
Creativity	36-48	out of 48				
Motivation	24-32	out of 32				
Leadership	22-28	out of 28				
KOI Planned Experience	2	Experience One:	Two:	Three:	Four:	
Committee Signatures:						
1.			4.			
2.			5.			
3.			6.			
Comments:						



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West Oso Elementary School G/T Identification Matrix Holistic Approach					
Identification Number:		Recommended G/T Placement:		Yes	No
Name of Student	Last	First		Middle	
Date of Birth		Age		Gender	
School		Grade		Consideration Date	
Instruments / Methods	Benchmark Score	Actual Score	+ / -	Comments	
Naglieri (NNAT)	80				
Renzulli Teacher Inventory				Other Characteristics:	
Learning	55-66	out of 66			
Creativity	44-54	out of 54			
Motivation	55-66	out of 66			
Leadership	32-42	out of 42			
Parent Inventory				Other Characteristics:	
Learning	32-40	out of 40			
Creativity	36-48	out of 48			
Motivation	24-32	out of 32			
Leadership	22-28	out of 28			
Sages II (Only given to 5 th graders)				Other Characteristics:	
Math / Science	121				
Language Arts / Social Studies	121				
Reasoning	121				
Committee Signatures:					
1.			4.		
2.			5.		
3.			6.		
Comments:					



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**West Oso Junior High School
 G/T Identification Matrix
 Holistic Approach**

Identification Number:		Recommended G/T Placement:			Yes	No
Name of Student	Last	First		Middle		
	Date of Birth	Age		Gender		
School		Grade		Consideration Date		

Instruments / Methods	Benchmark Score	Actual Score	+ / ~	Comments
Naglieri (NNAT)	80			

Renzulli Teacher Inventory			Other Characteristics:
Learning	55-66	out of 66	
Creativity	44-54	out of 54	
Motivation	55-66	out of 66	
Leadership	32-42	out of 42	

Parent Inventory			Other Characteristics:
Learning	32-40	out of 40	
Creativity	36-48	out of 48	
Motivation	24-32	out of 32	
Leadership	22-28	out of 28	

Sages II			Other Characteristics:
Math / Science	121		
Language Arts	121		
Social Studies	121		
Reasoning	121		

Committee Signatures:	
1.	4.
2.	5.
3.	6.

Comments:



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**West Oso High School
 G/T Identification Matrix
 Holistic Approach**

Identification Number:		Recommended G/T Placement:	Yes	No
Name of Student				
	Last	First	Middle	
Date of Birth		Age	Gender	
School		Grade	Consideration Date	

Instruments / Methods	Benchmark Score	Actual Score	+ / -	Comments
Naglieri (NNAT)	80			

Renzulli Teacher Inventory	Other Characteristics:
Learning	55-66 out of 66
Creativity	44-54 out of 54
Motivation	55-66 out of 66
Leadership	32-42 out of 42

Parent Inventory	Other Characteristics:
Learning	32-40 out of 40
Creativity	36-48 out of 48
Motivation	24-32 out of 32
Leadership	22-28 out of 28

STAAR/EOC	Masters	Other Characteristics
Math		
Science		
English		
Social Studies		

Committee Signatures:	
1.	4.
2.	5.
3.	6.
3.	6.

Comments:



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West Oso ISD G/T Request for Student Furlough Form

Form 9

Name of Student: _____ Date: _____

Reason for furlough:

For the year 20____ - 20____ Fall Semester Spring Semester

Request initiated by: Student Parent Teacher Counselor

 Signature of Parent or Guardian

 Signature of Student

 Signature of Counselor

Contacted parent? Yes _____ No _____

The decision of the screening committee is to grant deny the furlough.

Signatures of Screening Committee Members

Date _____



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Form 10

West Oso ISD G/T Program Exit Notice

Name of Student: _____

Date: _____

Name of Course: _____

Reason for exiting:

- Beginning with Fall Semester
- Beginning with Spring Semester
- Beginning immediately

Signature of Teacher or Counselor

The decision of the screening committee is to grant deny the request.

Signatures of Screening Committee Members

Date

Please sign this notice and return one (1) copy to the principal's office.

Signature of Parent

Date



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Form 11

West Oso ISD G/T Program Growth Contract

Beginning Date: _____

Student Name: _____

ID#: _____

Campus: _____

Grade Level (Elementary)/Course(s) (Secondary):

Condition or Status to be improved such as grades (s), project (s), etc:

Minimum Condition/Status to be attained to continue receiving G/T Services (provide specific measurement):

Date of Completion (end of marking period): _____

We know that the above-named student has the ability to perform in a manner sufficient to overcome the problem(s) indicated above. The purpose of this contract is to provide information to everyone involved – parent, teacher(s), student, and staff – and to offer whatever help, facilities, and/or support the student needs to succeed and therefore remove this probationary status. However, if, in spite of this help and support the student is not able to meet the conditions of the contract as stated above, the campus Admission – Review – Exit Committee will remove him/her from program. The student may apply to receive G/T services in the succeeding school year by following the standard district identification and screening process at the time they are normally scheduled for the district.

Counselor Signature: _____

Student Signature (6-12): _____

Parent(s) Signature: _____

Date: _____



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How Parents Can Help

Below is a composite for parents offering suggestions from several authorities in the field of gifted/talented education.

PARENTS should:

- ✓ Realize they are teachers and they teach by example.
- ✓ Provide varied materials for learning.
- ✓ Interact with their child verbally. The gifted/talented child needs to hear the many ways words are used and have the opportunity to use new words.
- ✓ Interact with their child intellectually. A gifted/talented child needs to take part in discussions to learn to reason and communicate.
- ✓ Interact with their child socially and emotionally. Social settings should be established in which the child can express, yet control his/her emotions.
- ✓ Encourage the child's questions and answer those questions in terms that are easily understood.
- ✓ Demonstrate respect for reading and learning by their own behavior.
- ✓ Tell stories to the child and encourage and listen to the child as he tells stories.
- ✓ Provide an assortment of books and magazines for reading aloud, discussion, and enjoyment.
- ✓ Be willing to collaborate and communicate with your child's teachers.
- ✓ Educate themselves about giftedness. (See references in the publication.)



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Gifted and Talented Websites

Texas Education Association	http://www.tea.state.tx.us/
Texas Education Association Advanced Studies Dept.(you can join the Texas Gifted/Talented Education mailing list)	http://www.tea.state.tx.us./gted/
Texas Association for Gifted and Talented (we recommend joining)	http://www.txgifted.org
About NAGC (National Association for Gifted Children)	http://www.nagc.org
Hoagies Gifted Education Page (information about and activities for gifted and talented students)	http://www.hoagiesgifted.org
Education – Gifted Index (check out these links to articles and research)	http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/pages/ed.gifted.html
Center for Talented Youth – Johns Hopkins University	http://www.cty.jhu.edu
The Council for Exceptional Children (including gifted and special education)	http://www.cec.sped.org
American Mensa	http://www.us.mensa.org
The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented (NRC/GT)	http://www.gifted.uconn.edu/NRCGT.html
Education Program for Gifted Youth: On-line secondary through advanced undergraduate courses. Registration and tuition are required.	http://www-epgy.stanford.edu
World Council for Gifted and Talented Children	http://www.WorldGifted.org
National Foundation for Gifted and Creative Children	http://www.nfgcc.org
Wisconsin Center for Academically Talented Youth	http://www.wcaty.org
Eduhound – A site that allows creation of an individual’s own web page with a theme and list of links relating to the theme. Users can access the library of lists. Registration is necessary,	http://www.eduhound.com
2e: Twice-Exceptional Newsletter – free monthly email briefing for parents of twice exceptional children.	http://www.2eNewsletter.com



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Gifted and Talented Books

- Smart Girls by Barbara Kerr
- Smart Boys by Barbara Kerr and Sandy Cohen
- In the Eyes of the Beholder: Critical Issues for Diversity in Gifted Education by Diane Boothe and Julian Stanley
- How the Gifted Brain Learns by David Sousa
- Misdiagnosis and Dual Diagnoses of Gifted Children by James T. Webb
- Grandparents' Guide to Gifted by James T. Webb and Janet Gore
- Re-Forming Gifted Education by Karen B. Rogers
- Cradles of Eminence-Childhoods of More than 700 Famous Men and Women by Ted George Goertzel
- Academic Acceleration, Knowing Your Options by the Institute for the Academic Advancement of Youth at Johns Hopkins University
- Gifted Children: Myths and Realities by Ellen Winner
- When Gifted Kids Don't Know All the Answers by Jim Delisle and Judy Galbraith
- Gifted Kids Speak Out: Hundreds of Kids Ages 6-13 Talk About School, Friends, their Families, and the Future compiled by James Delisle
- The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide for Ages 10 and Under by Judy Galbraith, et al.
- The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide: A Teen Handbook by Judy Galbraith and Jim Delisle
- Guiding the Gifted Child: A practical Source for Parents and Teachers by James Webb
- Raising Champions: A Parent Handbook for Nurturing Their Gifted Children by TAGT
- Some of My Best Friends are Books: Guiding Gifted Readers from Preschool to High School by Judith Wynn Halsted
- The Survival Guide for Parents of Gifted Kids: How to Understand, Live With, & Stick Up for Your Gifted Child by Sally Yahnke Walker and Susan Perry
- Olivia by Ian Falconer
- True to Form by Elizabeth Berg
- Millicent Min, Girl Genius by Lisa Yee
- The Outcasts of 19 Schuyler Place by E.L. Kongisburg
- Savvy by Ingrid Law
- Perfectionism: What's Bad About Being Good by Miriam Adderholdt



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Characteristics of Gifted and Talented Students

- They see relationships earlier than their peers.
- They learn quickly and remember more.
- They display unexpected depth of knowledge in one or more areas.
- They are analytical and creative problem solvers.
- They are interested in basic questions – “What is the meaning of life?”
- They often ask for explanations and are not satisfied with, “It’s the rule.”
- They have a strong sense of justice and concern for the world around them.
- They seek out challenge.
- They learn to cope, can work out ways of coping, and learn to compensate.
- Due to their differences, they can become anxious about their relationships with their peers, but lack the experience to resolve conflict.
- They can be single-minded in pursuit of an interest to the point that it is difficult to redirect them into other activities.
- They seek out the company of others with similar interests.
- They have a kind of style, and ease of performance.

Adapted from Dr. Miriam Goldberg at the Kentucky State Conference on Gifted and Talented Children and Youth.

* As with any list of “generalized” characteristics, the above statements are stereotypical, and all characteristics do not apply to all students.



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Possible Stressors Experienced by Gifted Students

Gifted/talented people may experience stress for many reasons. These include the following:

1. They experience life more intensely.
2. They tend to be highly sensitive, more intense, and to have deep emotional responses. They are more aware. This may cause them to wonder why things seem to bother them more than other people. Thus, they may view themselves as less able to cope.
3. Because gifted/talented people are usually curious and have more questions, they may assume they are less intelligent and know less than others. They may work slower because they are processing more information.
4. Because they learn things easily, they expect many activities and learning to be effortless. Being in a gifted/talented program could require them to exert themselves and they may resist this.
5. Parents and school personnel tend to generalize a gifted/talented child's abilities and expect high performance in all areas. Only some abilities may be exceptionally high. Emotional, physical, and intellectual growth develop at different rates.
6. Differences from peers in abilities, emotions, and knowledge may create tensions. Realizing they sometimes see, feel, know, and do things that others do not may be frightening and alienating.
7. With their vivid, keen imaginations, gifted/talented people may be more frustrated from wanting to pursue a greater number of possibilities.
8. Gifted/talented people are usually more conscious of the whole situation. They may experience more stress seeing the complexity and multiple solutions of an issue.
9. They tend to be perfectionists and to feel they are valued because of their accomplishments.
10. They hesitate to ask for help because others act as if they should succeed without help. They may have feelings of shame and abandonment and regret that other people probably would not understand anyway.
11. Frustration comes because of limits on resources and time or trying to actualize the most possible options. They are often compromising their ideal and denying more than they are actualizing.



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Misconceptions and Misunderstandings about Giftedness

There are many misconceptions about what it means to be gifted/talented. Here are ten of the most common myths/misconceptions/misunderstandings we've encountered over the years:

MYTH #1: Gifted/talented kids have it made and will succeed in life no matter what. They don't need any special help in school or anywhere else.

FACT: Everyone needs encouragement – and help – to make the most of their abilities and succeed in life.

MYTH #2: Gifted/talented kids should love school, get high grades, and greet each new school day with enthusiasm.

FACT: Most schools are geared for average learners, not gifted/talented learners, which makes it hard for gifted/talented students to get excited about going. Some of the most talented students in the United States actually choose to drop out of school altogether.

MYTH #3: Gifted/talented students come from white, middle- and upper-class families.

FACT: They come from all cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.

MYTH #4: Gifted/talented kids are good at everything they do.

FACT: Some gifted/talented students are good at many things; others are exceptionally able at only a few things. Some gifted/talented students are also learning disabled, which means they might not be very good at schoolwork.

MYTH #5: All teachers love to have gifted/talented students in their classes.

FACT: Some do, some don't. Certain teachers feel uncomfortable with gifted/talented students.

MYTH #6: If gifted/talented students are grouped together, they will become snobbish and elitists.

FACT: Some will, some won't. What's especially harmful about this MYTH is that some adults use it to rationalize decisions about not allowing gifted/talented students to work or study together or not providing them with opportunities that meet their needs.

MYTH #7: All gifted/talented kids have trouble adjusting to school and forming friendships.

FACT: Some do, some don't – just like other kids.

MYTH #8: Gifted/talented students don't know they're "different" unless someone tells them.

FACT: Most gifted/talented kids don't need to be identified or labeled before they know they're not quite like their age peers.

MYTH #9: Gifted/talented students must constantly be challenged and kept busy or they'll get lazy.

FACT: They might get bored, but they won't necessarily get lazy.

MYTH #10: Gifted/talented kids are equally mature in all areas – academic, physical, social, and emotional.

FACT: That would be convenient, but it's not a reasonable expectation. On the other hand, it's not fair to assume that just because someone is advanced intellectually, he or she will lag behind in other developmental areas.

Adapted from: The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide, A Teen Handbook by Judy Galbraith, M.A. and Jim Delisle, Ph.D.



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What Gifted/Talented Students Want and Need from their Parents

1. Be supportive and encouraging, be there for us, and be on our side.
2. Don't expect too much of us; don't expect perfection.
3. Don't pressure us, be too demanding, or push too hard.
4. Help us with our schoolwork/homework.
5. Help us to develop our talents.
6. Be understanding.
7. Don't expect straight A's.
8. Allow us some independence, give us space, and trust us because chances are we know what we're doing.
9. Talk to us; listen to us.
10. Let us try alternative education/special programs.

Adapted from: The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide, A Teen Handbook by Judith Galbraith, M.A. and Jim Delisle, Ph.D.



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Frequently Asked Questions

Parents of gifted/talented children, like any other parents, constantly face questions regarding school and home practices. Many of their questions come from trying to decide whether a given school assignment will benefit or harm their child. Often they have remained uneasy with decisions they have made.

Questions on whether they should encourage or discourage certain activities, how they handle uneven abilities within the family, and others plague them.

The questions that follow have been gleaned from contacts with many parents, both individually and in groups. They represent many of those most commonly asked. Brief responses are given as suggestions rather than as complete answers to maximize time and space. The questions are regarded as a framework for discussion perhaps in parent study groups.

1. How can I train him/her to get his/her homework done and not leave it to the last minute? Should parents enforce regular periods of study?

It is important that parents, by their own example, provide respect for intellectual and aesthetic pursuits. Homework can be a tool to instill strong study habits in students as well as reinforce concepts taught in the classroom. Parents should encourage students to complete homework assignments, but should monitor the amount of homework to be sure the assignments are appropriate in rigor and time spent. All children need to have time to pursue outside activities. If a child becomes stressed with the amount of time being required to complete assignments, a conference should be scheduled between the parent, teacher, and child (if appropriate).

Organizational skills may be encouraged through:

- Geographic organizers
- Checklists
- Time requirements set by parents
- Time management classes

2. How do you handle the other children when this one seems to know more than the rest?

Avoid comparison. Comparison invites competition. Even and amply distributed love and affection and recognition for various accomplishments of different kinds will let each child know he is valued for himself. If questions arise, discuss them on the context of each person's being especially good at something: one child likes books, another one art; another is especially good at sports or music, cooking, helping others, or whatever particular contribution the individuals can make. Some learn earlier while others take a little longer. The use of any learning for worthwhile contributions is the important thing.

3. How can we keep them from developing “an attitude?”

Avoid centering on a child’s “giftedness.” The child who is singled out and set apart for any attributes can easily develop erroneous attitudes toward himself and others. This applies to the handicapped as well as the gifted/talented. In the case of the gifted/talented, a child may develop an unrealistic view of his own importance and become quite obnoxious. Then it often helps to sit with the child, ask him to assess the impact on the others of his specific behavior, and ask him how he might change the relationships for the better. The discussion should be on a private, person to person basis, analytical in nature, with the child providing analysis.

Trouble may also arise when adults become impatient with youth’s views and forbid their expression. It is important that children have full opportunity to discuss topics such as politics, ethics, religion, values, fears, discrimination, or strong feelings on any subjects with adults who respect and understand them. The home should provide a secure base within which the child can express his feelings and examine them honestly with others. Any question at any age deserves a thoughtful response.

4. Is it good to let the faster learners help the slower children?

Not if it is done on a regular basis. This cuts down on the time the fast learners have for their own learning, and the child is working as a teacher substitute at the expense of his own education. An added danger in consistent help to the slower children is that other children in the class may react to “teacher’s pet.” There may not be a problem if the help is occasional and for a specific need. The experience is more valuable if the bright child plans the teaching experience, carries it out, and evaluates it with the teacher afterwards.

5. What can you do with a child who is a perfectionist and becomes discouraged?

Often gifted/talented children will tackle topics so general they are unable to handle them. They become frustrated as they attempt to complete their studies. Parents can help by discussing their projected plans and by assisting them to choose realistically. Encouragement and support are helpful, but parent expectations must be realistic. “Do the best you can with the time you’re given – prioritize.”

6. Is there a danger in putting too much pressure on young gifted/talented children too soon?

The answer to this question must be “yes.” However, anxiety concerning this subject has been founded on the practice of assigning large quantities of material rather than on the use of topics of real interest to children, and on the imposition of adult requirements rather than on the use of child interests. When pressure is self-imposed in the sense that children are intrigued with a problem and want to find out all they can, pressure is enjoyable. Self-imposed pressure can produce great satisfaction in a task well done. Harmful pressure may also operate when the gifted/talented child is pressured to conform to the middle ground to be average.

7. My child has more homework than ever before and doesn’t seem to have much time for relaxation. Should this be so?

No. Just as with adults, children should have time for play and relaxation and for doodling, dreaming, and idling. A problem of this sort should be discussed with the teacher.

8. How can we as parents prevent negative feelings of others toward our child's being identified as gifted/talented?

Avoid discussion of the fact with others. The knowledge is important to you and the teacher in understanding the child and in working with him appropriately. No useful purpose is served by overt pride in the "chip off the old block." Children should be valued as children, and not as labels. They should not be used for the satisfaction of adult needs. Parents who boast about their child over the back fence guarantee resentment and hostility.

9. Is it good for children to know they are gifted/talented?

Most gifted/talented children know they achieve better than others, although occasionally children may feel vaguely different and even suffer from inferiority complexes. Gifted/talented children generally can be expected to meet reasonable demands and can be asked to work out real-life problems with adults with a comment that they are bright and can do so competently. Parents should look at this "gift" as a means for the child to help others. Gifted/talented children should be encouraged to become involved in community, school, and church projects where their gifts may be shared with others. Programs such as Scouts, Leadership High School, PALS, 4-H, Student Council, and Junior Achievement are valuable vehicles for leadership opportunities.

10. How do I know if my child is working up to capacity?

A child is working up to capacity if the child's expected achievement and academic achievement is fairly equivalent. These would be measured through population norms from standardized tests rather than through teacher made tests. Another index, though informal, may be the type and extent of reading interest. It is important to remember that "working up to capacity" is something that very few adults do and that a child needs time for childhood



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Glossary of G/T Terms

Abilities Test –

These tests replace the old IQ tests. These tests measure the ability level of each child – separate from “Achievement Tests” which measure learned skills & knowledge. Examples of Abilities Tests are the Naglieri Nonverbal Abilities Test (NNAT) and Cognitive Abilities Test (CogAT).

Ability grouping –

Class assignment based on perceived ability of the students in WOISD.

Acceleration –

A strategy which is used when a student demonstrates competencies, knowledge, abilities, and/or skills which exceed that which is outlined in the planned course or text for his/her chronological or grade placement level. This can be determined by advanced work demonstrated in the classroom and pre-tests or diagnostic tests in the skill areas. The district’s role is to identify the level of acceleration and make the appropriate educational adjustment in placement and pace.

Achievement Tests –

Instruments that measure what your child knows academically and what he/she can do academically. Example: Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS). These tests reveal strengths and weaknesses in your child’s academic abilities. They should also help educators improve instruction, aid in forming goals and objectives for the curriculum, and determine content and skills.

Advanced Placement Program (AP Classes) –

A College Board program of college level courses taught by high school teachers; some colleges give credit for these courses upon successful completion of the AP exam. Students pay the exam fee, but the courses are free where they are offered.

Cluster Grouping –

Assigning several identified gifted students in the same classroom. Clustering gifted students in the regular classroom allows the teacher to differentiate learning activities for a group of identified students rather than one or two students.

Compacted Courses –

Students complete courses in a content area in an abbreviated time.

Concurrent or Dual Enrollment – By the state definition, concurrent enrollment is the practice of enrolling in a college or university to earn college or university credit while in high school; dual enrollment occurs when a student is enrolled in a college or university credit while enrolled in a high school for the purpose of earning high school and college credit simultaneously.

Convergent Thinking –

Focusing on one particular answer, convergent thinking or production is one of the elements found in Dr. J.P. Guilford's research model of the structure of intelligence. Divergent thinking focuses on many answers. Convergent thinking focuses on a single answer. Most intelligence tests require convergent thinking.

Cooperative Learning –

Refers to a set of instructional methods in which students work in small, mixed ability groups. The students are responsible not only for learning material, but also for helping their teammates learn. TAGT & NAGC Research indicates this is not a preferred instructional strategy for G/T students. It is okay as an infrequent option.

Credit by Examination –

Students enter an advanced level course or receive credit upon satisfactory completion of a comprehensive examination or upon certification of mastery. (Daniel and Cox, 1988).

Differentiated Curriculum –

A set of activities, a program, or a plan of instruction that is designed to meet the unique needs of special children. Gifted children may not deserve more than other children in our public schools, but they do deserve different. Different for gifted children means curriculum that allows for acceleration, stimulation of high-level thinking, divergent thinking, and convergent thinking.

Differentiation –

Differentiated education or services means the process of instruction which is capable of being integrated into the school program, and is adaptable to varying levels of individual learning response in the education of the gifted and talented, and includes adding depth, breadth and/or complexity to the regular curriculum.

1. A differentiated curriculum embodying a high level of cognitive and affective concepts and processes beyond those normally provided in the regular curriculum of the local educational agency.
2. Instructional strategies which accommodate the unique learning styles of the gifted and talented.
3. Flexible administrative arrangements for instruction both in and out of school, such as special classes, seminars, resource rooms, independent study, student internships, mentorships, research field trips, library media research centers, and other appropriate arrangements (U.S. Office of Education in Academically Gifted Programs, 1976).

Divergent Thinking –

Another element of J.P. Guilford's research model for the structure of intelligence. Your gifted child is doing divergent thinking when he/she comes up with new and unique ideas about things. The ideas may not always be practical. In many ways, divergent thinking is the opposite of convergent thinking.

Enrichment Programs –

Learning activities that go beyond the regular curricular activities.

John Gowan and George Demos (The Education and Guidance of the Ablest, Springfield, IL, Charles C. Thomas, Publisher, 1964) suggested that enrichment programs will be successful if the student:

1. is encouraged to search for new information;
2. is provided with leadership opportunities;
3. is able to pursue personal interests;
4. is able to engage in creative assignments;

5. can develop his/her own initiative; and
6. engages in in-depth activities that are, in fact, broadening.

Enrichment programs usually take the form of special classes or special schools for the gifted. They might also involve itinerant teachers who provide classroom teachers with help for their gifted students.

These teachers might also “pull out” the gifted students from the regular classroom in order to involve them in special activities. The NISD elementary program uses both in-class and pull-out grouping instructional strategies.

Exceptional –

Refers to those persons evaluated and found to be either hearing impaired, mentally gifted, mentally retarded, physically handicapped, learning disabled, brain damaged, speech and language impaired, socially and emotionally disturbed, visually impaired, or severely multi-handicapped.

Flexible Pacing –

Any provision that places students at an appropriate instructional level, creating the best possible match between students’ achievement and instruction, and allows them to move forward in the curriculum as they achieve mastery of content and skills. Flexible pacing may be achieved by a variety of methods.

Furlough –

A temporary reassignment out of the G/T program.

Grouping –

Assigning students to a class or teacher within a school.

Heterogeneous Group –

All ability or achievement levels in a class. Research indicates this is not an effective method for G/T students (Rogers, 1994 & Gentry, 2000).

Higher Level Thinking –

Emphasizes tasks and activities that involve:

1. analysis, synthesis, and evaluation,
2. viewing situations from various perspectives,
3. finding several “layers of meaning” by using metaphors, analogies, paradoxes, and
4. generating different possible solutions by showing fluency, flexibility, originality, and elaboration of thought.

Homogeneous Grouping –

One ability or achievement level in a class. This ability grouping is the most effective instructional strategy for G/T students and is practiced for gifted students in NISD K-12.

Honors Program –

Courses or programs offered in high schools and college for high achievers. These courses are usually planned to motivate the intellectually gifted learner. The content is broader, the curriculum accelerated, and the instructor carefully selected. WOISD Honors Courses, grades 6-12 are designed for high-achieving students in each of the four-core subject areas. Identified gifted students in WOISD are scheduled into G/T classes (grades 6-8), Honors Math and/or Pre-AP/AP (grades 9-12).

Individualized Education Program (IEP) –

An IEP is a written statement of the special education and related services that an exceptional child needs in order to be educated appropriately. The IEP must describe any modifications that will be needed to the child's regular education classes. A school district must provide for all programs and services contained in an approved IEP. (In Texas, IEPs do not apply to gifted education). Many school districts in Texas and many other states use a version of these (e.g., Talent Development Plan or TDP) for identified G/T students.

Independent Study –

A self-directed style of learning. Independent study is usually done with the help of a teacher; however, the role of the teacher is limited. The student completes various activities on his/her own time. One important goal of independent study is to teach children that there are several ways to gather information and learn things. Some gifted students have become locked into a "book learning" mode. An in-depth independent study program will stretch the gifted student into discovering new ways of researching an idea, such as conducting interviews, viewing films and writing letters to authorities related to a topic.

Mentor –

Matching a student on a one-to-one basis with an adult member of the community or older student who can provide expertise and/or advice in a field of study or other community endeavor.

Referral –

A recommendation for consideration of a student for a specialized or categorical program, such as a gifted/talented program or one of its options.

Overachiever –

The overachiever is a figment of someone's imagination. If a child performs at a higher level than we would normally have expected, then our estimates were wrong, not the child's performance. The performance cannot exceed the capacity (Ehrlich, 1985).

Pull-out Program –

Any program that takes one or more students from the regular classroom during the school day. All WOISD elementary G/T students are pulled out by the G/T facilitator a minimum of 1 hours per week.

Risk Taker –

Not afraid of failure, willing to take chances in order to learn new things. Many gifted children are perfectionists and do not like to get involved in new activities unless they know or believe they can do it easily and correctly. Unfortunately, some gifted children learn to be average in school because they have never learned to be risk takers. An important goal of many gifted programs is to provide opportunities for risk taking (leadership activities, creative problem- solving programs, simulation games, etc.).

Screening –

Screening consists of first-step assessment procedures aimed at selecting students who may have special needs. Two separate components may be identified: 1) mass screening or sweep screening from the preschool or school-age population, and 2) individual screening from a population of preschool or school- aged children referred from mass screening or other sources to identify specific academic or behavioral problem areas which need further in-depth evaluation.

Self-esteem –

A feeling about one's self-worth or self-concept. A positive self- image is the key to success for most people, children included. When a gifted child lacks confidence in his/her abilities, no amount of outside motivation will turn him/her into a high achiever. Students with high self-esteem believe in themselves. High achievement and high self-esteem go hand in hand. Self-esteem for G/T children will usually be the third of a 3-step program:

1. Self-knowledge
2. Self-acceptance
3. Self-esteem

Special Education –

A basic education program planned to meet the educational needs of exceptional persons. It is designed for students whose needs fall outside of regular classroom services.

Underachiever –

A child whose schoolwork is not consistent with the teacher's estimate of his or her ability to learn.