The social and emotional needs of gifted children: What do we know?

© Maureen Neihart, Psy.D.
National Institute of Education
Maureen.neihart@Nie.edu.sg
AIM

To review key principles and concepts about the social and emotional development of gifted children found in the empirical literature
Objectives

- Evaluate strengths and limitations of supports for social and emotional development of gifted children in your context.

- Identify two priorities for improving supports for social and emotional development of gifted children in your context

- Explain in your own words the two provisions that are minimally necessary to promote optimal social and emotional development of gifted children.
Today’s Process

Findings

Applications

Discussion
Psychosocial conditions that must be met to ensure well-being and high achievement.

**Defining Social and Emotional Needs**
Social and emotional needs are at the heart of well-being and the foundation for achievement for all children. Many of gifted children need targeted assistance with peer relationships, perfectionism, asynchronous development, situational stressors, and post secondary planning.
What Does the Research Tell Us?

Know a lot more about . . .
- Twice-exceptional children
- Factors involved in motivation, underachievement & high-ability grouping
- Psychosocial aspects of talent development

Little progress regarding . . .
- Profoundly gifted children
- Intensity
Four Broad Themes Stand Out

- The importance of challenge and a “match” with the environment
- The importance of culture and context
- The nonlinearity and dynamism of many social or emotional phenomena
- The growing convergence of research on psychosocial variables in talent development with the research on the social and emotional development of gifted children.
What Conclusions Have the Best Science?
Gifted children are not more likely to be socially inept.

Some challenges are more prevalent among the gifted.
Research on perfectionism has moved from a focus on types of perfectionism to a focus on the core factors of positive strivings and evaluative concerns. Positive strivings correlate with positive outcomes while evaluative concerns correlate with negative outcomes.
Gifted children's asynchronous development can present challenges for social relationships.

No Clear Divide Between Genders
Underachievement can correspond with a broad range of intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental issues, including depression, anxiety, perfectionism, anger, low self-esteem, maladaptive strategies, social immaturity and unrecognized learning deficits peer pressure, family dynamics, low SES, teaching style, and curriculum.
The highest levels of achievement are typically the result of nonintellectual factors, especially perseverance.
Gifted children are not more likely to be socially inept.

The psychosocial variables associated with talent development can be taught and systematically strengthened.
Children manifest optimal motivation for learning when their learning contexts stress mastery and progress goals over performance goals. When performance goals are emphasized, positive achievement behaviors significantly decline.
Students who hold a growth mindset are more likely to attempt challenging tasks and persevere through difficulties than students who hold a fixed mindset.
Denial of provisions for challenge at school can have a negative, cyclical effect on twice-exceptional students by impacting their motivation and self-concept.
There is Also a Lot We Don’t Know
the prevalence of gifted students with mental health problems

the prevalence of different disorders or sub-clinical problems

the role of empathy and morality in gifted students’ peer relationships,

the psychosocial functioning of gifted children from diverse cultures or from underrepresented students, including those in lower SES groups,
We don’t know whether the prevalence rate of completed or attempted suicidal behavior is different for gifted students
the psychosocial functioning of children gifted in nonacademic domains

the efficacy and effectiveness of many of the interventions recommended for gifted children’s social and emotional development

the long-term impact of gifted programs in terms of social-emotional development on ‘soft’ but important distal outcomes such as character strengths, emotional intelligence, empathy, and concern for the welfare of others.
When recommendations are made in the literature, there is typically little evaluation of the effectiveness of those interventions.
3 GUIDING PRINCIPLES

Ensure access to peers with similar interests, abilities and drive

One approach does not fit all.

Services are informed by the *best possible evidence* base.
Ensure access to true peers
One approach does not fit all
Services are informed by the *best possible evidence* base.
What do we do next?
Objective: To develop or improve school services that address the social and emotional needs of high ability students.

Evidence: A menu of documented supports, interventions, and policies that support the social and emotional needs of gifted students in Wellspring School District.

Tasks: Identify current provisions, determine priorities for improvement, and develop an action plan for making improvements.
Your Assessment
Summary & Conclusion
Assessing Services to Meet the Social and Emotional Needs of High Ability Students


The key: 1—not at all; 2—to a limited extent; 3—satisfactory; 4—exemplary.

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<tbody>
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<td>1.</td>
<td>All personnel have had training in the social and emotional needs of gifted students and the psychosocial skills necessary for talent development</td>
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<td>2.</td>
<td>All HA students have frequent access to others with similar interests, ability, and drive.</td>
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<td>3.</td>
<td>All HA students are challenged in the regular classroom.</td>
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<td>4.</td>
<td>A range of acceleration options is available.</td>
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<td>5.</td>
<td>There is a written policy for acceleration.</td>
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<td>6.</td>
<td>The differentiated needs of HA students from culturally diverse backgrounds are recognized and addressed.</td>
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<td>7.</td>
<td>Guidance personnel work collaboratively with teachers of high-ability students to address social and emotional needs and to strengthen psychosocial skills needed to develop talent.</td>
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<td>8.</td>
<td>Differentiated guidance services are offered for HA students at the elementary level.</td>
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<td>9.</td>
<td>Differentiated guidance services are offered for HA students at the middle school level.</td>
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<td>10. Differentiated guidance services are offered for HA students at the high school level.</td>
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<td>11. Parents regularly receive information related to the social and emotional needs and psychosocial skills of their HA children.</td>
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<td>12. There is districtwide agreement concerning desired psychosocial outcomes for HA students.</td>
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<td>13. Broad goals for meeting social and emotional needs of HA students have been identified at the elementary level.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14. Broad goals for meeting social and emotional needs of HA students have been identified at the middle level.</td>
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<td>15. Broad goals for meeting social and emotional needs of HA students have been identified at the high school level.</td>
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<td>16. There is an identified curriculum to develop and strengthen psychosocial skills necessary for talent development and well-being with a scope and sequence across grade levels.</td>
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