

**ADDRESSING AFFECTIVE NEEDS
OF GIFTED CHILDREN**

The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) periodically issues policy statements dealing with issues, policies, and practices that have an impact on the education of gifted and talented students. Policy statements represent the official convictions of the organization.

All policy statements approved by the NAGC Board of Directors are consistent with the organization's belief that education in a democracy must respect the uniqueness of all individuals, the broad range of cultural diversity present in our society, and the similarities and differences in learning characteristics that can be found within any group of students. NAGC is fully committed to national goals that advocate both excellence and equity for all students, and we believe that the best way to achieve these is through differentiated educational opportunities, resources, and encouragement for all students.

Educational and counseling programs must provide all children with opportunities to develop understanding of themselves and their role in society. Because, by definition, gifted children differ significantly from others, these programs should be responding to the social-emotional or affective characteristics that distinguish gifted students from others. Furthermore, since significant differences also exist within the gifted population, appropriate services need to be designed and implemented to respond to individual differences.

Characteristics such as emotional and moral intensity, sensitivity to expectations and feelings, perfectionism, lofty goals and standards for themselves and others, and deep concerns about societal problems at an early age are found in a proportionally higher incidence among gifted and talented children. Those who have disabilities or differ in other ways, including culturally, linguistically, or socioeconomically may have additional affective needs.

NAGC believes that gifted children also require appropriate affective services including gifted-focused counseling interventions and career-development guidance programs if they are to develop their potential. NAGC recommends that these services be designed to:

- Provide orientation to gifted programming, including information about the selection process and the social, emotional, and academic implications of the giftedness
- Enhance relationships with others, including both those who are identified as gifted and those who are not
- Assist with long-term life planning, including opportunities to deal with issues related to multi-potentiality
- Provide counseling that addresses the increased incidence of perfectionism, unrealistic goals, emotional intensity, moral concerns, and the resultant stress and lower achievement in the gifted population

Some gifted and talented children, because of heightened intellectual and social-emotional needs, may experience difficulties that require professional intervention. NAGC believes that it is imperative that those who provide services at such times have expertise in understanding the impact of giftedness on a child's development.

Approved 5/95