In this issue, we reach beyond national borders to address the ongoing challenges of parenting gifted and talented youth around the globe.

Authors in the issue address the problems familiar to all of us: scarcity of resources in schools and neighborhoods; limited views about what giftedness is and why it should be addressed; parental struggles to support their children’s talents in their homes and communities; and the special challenges of the “invisible gifted”—those who, because of ethnicity, socioeconomic background, geography, underachievement, or behavior issues, do not often show their abilities. Despite these hurdles, parents worldwide are encouraging their children’s natural curiosity and hunger to learn, whether in daily life or through more structured programs.

One thing parents around the world agree upon is that raising a gifted child is a delicate art. Children with few resources and little encouragement may wilt on the vine. Those with many resources but excessive pressure to succeed may also struggle due to fear of failure, rebelliousness, or lack of interest.

My hope is that readers find inspiration in these reports. They reveal not only our common struggles, but the parenting qualities that most sustain and assist gifted youth whatever their language, culture, or nationality.

Joan Franklin Smutny
Guest Editor

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Inside
A Global Look at Giftedness
The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) embraces a vision to bring forth a world where giftedness is fully recognized, universally valued, and actively nurtured. The NAGC Board of Directors, our national office, and its members embarked on a plan—Minds. Policies. Practices.—to make this vision a reality. I am happy report to you that together we are having an impact here in the United States and abroad.

In our strategic framework, we define the goal of changing minds as increasing the public's urgency to support the needs of gifted and talented children. NAGC leverages the sound research and expertise of its member leaders and the broader research community to communicate that message. One way NAGC measures its impact is the amount of coverage on the needs of gifted children in traditional and new media outlets. Since 2015, the reporting on giftedness and NAGC has grown exponentially. The public's awareness and appetite for supporting gifted children as they reach for their personal best continues to increase.

Over the last few years, NAGC has focused on outreach to organize supporters to call for increased support for gifted children. We are primarily focused on developing and cultivating external relationships with thought leaders within states, districts, schools, and communities. Organizations ranging
from the American Federation of Teachers (AFT)—to the San Francisco 49ers—to the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation are partnering with NAGC to spread the word about the needs of gifted children.

NAGC’s presence is also felt beyond this country’s borders in a variety of ways. Membership includes individuals and organizations across the globe. Using resources such as research, position statements, and draft policy recommendations, international members are advocates for gifted children in their own countries.

Also, NAGC regularly responds to inquiries from international educational and policy leaders. Recently, NAGC consulted with leaders from China, India, and Mexico, among others, about leading movements to increase support for gifted education in their respective countries. And, at the grassroots level, parents and educators from North America, South America, Europe, and Asia frequently ask NAGC for advice and best practices on how to identify, assess, nurture, and advocate for their high-ability children.

NAGC is proud to be a leader on the global scene in providing highly sought-after research, policies, education, resources, community building, and advocacy support. The more we can all join hands to support gifted children, the greater our reach and ultimate impact. Together we will model to our children how to collaborate and be productive citizens of the world.

Author’s Note
M. René Islas is the executive director of the National Association for Gifted Children.
Self-Select Bridges the Gap for Australian Adolescents

By Christine Ireland

A group of very clever students in my Year 8 science class complained bitterly when I announced yet another unit on the solar system. These students loved science, but they were bored by the repetition of the curriculum we had to follow. Instead of studying, they began to do what many bored gifted children do: act out.

With no funding for a gifted science program in the rural region I taught in, I had to improvise. I asked them to research the Hubble Space Telescope and present their work to the class in a manner that they had never used before. In other words, no posters or PowerPoints allowed—just lots of creativity instead.

The results were remarkable. One musically talented student produced original music and lyrics crammed full of high-level analysis. Another presented a detailed and accurate account of Hubble’s life, aspirations, and achievements in science through a dramatization that included time travel to the present day. All of the students were incredibly proud of their work and told me that this was the most challenging thing they had done all year. Other members of the school and parent community were amazed, informed, and entertained.

Australia’s Underserved Gifted Students

Unfortunately, Australian curricula falls short for gifted students across the nation—and many teachers aren’t able to confidently improvise solutions. Our international test scores, the Program for International Assessment (PISA) and Trends in International Math and Science Study (TIMSS), have been declining over the past two decades, especially among top-end students. Furthermore, analysis from the Organization for Economic and Co-operation Development (OECD) has painted a poor picture of education for Australian students from lower socioeconomic backgrounds, as well as from provincial and remote regions. Australian data shows that, in 2015, 78% of students in major cities completed their Year 12 Certificate, while only 43% completed it in very remote areas. Similarly, a very low percentage of students in these remote areas continue on to university.

In 2017, the Australian government commissioned an Independent Review into Regional, Rural, and Remote Education (IRRRRE) to try to improve the education of students in rural areas. The initial focus was to fund studies on the needs of these students, who often are of an indigenous background, a historically underserved population. This year, IRRRRE is further focused on providing information on pathways beyond school for regional, rural, and remote students.

Advice for Gifted Education in Rural, Remote, and Low Socioeconomic Areas

When I began to examine this issue in my own professional circle, many parents and educators told me that they did not have enough time, resources, or training to confidently address the needs of these gifted students. Furthermore, many teachers do not have the type of historical and cultural knowledge that enables them to understand where their students and their families are coming from.

Best-practice advice for teachers in these schools includes avoiding the too-common assumption that something is wrong, broken, or missing from these children. In Australia, indigenous students have been tagged as having poor incoming skills, different attitudes, poor health, and issues with criminal contact, substance abuse, and generational underemployment. It is
important for teachers to overcome these biases in the rural classroom.

It is also important that these teachers acknowledge the history between indigenous Australians and “white/Western” institutions. This means that teachers are often not trusted until strong relationships develop, both with students and their parents or caregivers. I advise patience and a gentle, genuine sense of humor.

Finally, making learning relevant to students’ experiences is an essential step for all students, but it is especially vital for indigenous students. In one study, two teachers were able to build on this tenet of a respectful classroom by focusing on students’ needs, creativity, and goals. Their classrooms revolved around self-direction; self-regulation; social support; connectedness to the world; narrative; and cultural knowledge.2

Developing a Short, Sharp, Memorable Tool

One teacher told me, “I just need something that’s quick and easy to understand, to remember and to do, especially out here in the middle of nowhere. And don’t forget, mate, it’s got to be free.”

Hence, the RICE—Respect, Intrigue, Challenge, and Exhibit—tool was born. The tool explains some of the easiest, but essential ways to recognize, extend, and develop a successful extension program for highly able students—especially for those troublemaker students, like my gifted eighth grade cohort. The RICE tool works well as a fast diagnostic for teachers and parents looking for the most significant gap in the learning environment for a highly able student.

Extending and Accelerating Students Through “Self-Select”

An intriguing new concept in the New South Wales (NSW) education system is helping to bridge the gap in gifted education left in gifted education left by Australian curriculum. Called Self-Select, the program targets Year 7–9 students and is designed to enhance the existing curriculum. Based on a framework of student self-determination, it extends and accelerates student learning.

Self-Select is subject-focused. For example, a student might opt to do Self-Select English, or perhaps Self-Select Science, because he has an affinity for that particular subject. Importantly, entry to a Self-Select class is not dependent on previous academic scores. A Self-Select student doesn’t have to be an “A” student, just motivated. In rural and indigenous regions, where biases may prevent students from reaching their full academic potential or may push students to act out, this facet of Self-Select is especially vital.

Data shows that students in a Self-Select class over a period of two years had a much higher rate of improvement in that subject compared to similar ability students in non-Self-Select classes. It did not matter that a third of the Self-Select class initially scored as below average. All students showed the same stellar rate of improvement. Lesson by lesson, students were taking the opportunity to shine. And, sometimes the brightest light was coming from students who normally had been typified by their teachers as “rather dull.”

The Importance of Developing the Right Learning Environment

One reason Self-Select works is that it fosters learning and risk-taking. Let’s be honest: High-level differentiation can be difficult in a typical mixed-ability mainstream classroom. However, if that same type of class is united by one factor— their common desire to achieve more in a specific subject—it is much easier to provide a range of options that lead to improved results for individual students. Educators agree that intrinsic motivation is one of the most powerful factors in achieving success.3 In a Self-Select class, student choice and self-determination is fundamental.

Furthermore, the importance of “like-minded” grouping is well documented. Self-Select addresses both documented catalysts of talent development: the environment and interpersonal traits.4 It is essential for highly able students to have the opportunity to be in a classroom environment where the expectations are set higher, as well as where their peers are all striving to reach their
own personal goals. Self-Select students typically “egg each other on” to do better than they had ever done before. In fact, the only rule in the Self-Select classroom is that no one has the right to stand in the way of another’s learning.

Self-Select: Rewarding, But Not an Easy Ride for Teachers

Students in a Self-Select class work harder and faster, but they also have more say in their learning. What this means is that teachers must work harder and faster, too. In fact, I worked much harder to prepare for my Self-Select Science and English groups, as I did not want to let the team down. Self-Select teachers need to adopt a posture of learning and be prepared to work hard at discovering more about the students and about the profession of teaching. Since groups are mixed ability, teachers also need to utilize every differentiation strategy they can to address those students who struggle with basic skills.

However, this hard work pays off. One of the most wonderful things about working with a Self-Select group is watching individual students who had previously appeared “lackluster” take the lead and reveal hidden ability, creativity, and strength. Teaching in this sort of environment is a matter of learning to like being surprised, and to expect the unexpected. Self-Select is a wonderful tool to help lift the masks from talented children in a mainstream setting.

Advocating for All Children in Your Classrooms

Programs like Self-Select and Victoria’s Gifted Awareness Week shed light on the needs of all students, in all regions. Yet, clearly there is much to do. Wherever you are—be it rural Australia or urban United States—supporting and joining non-profit organizations focused on gifted education is essential.

Finally, all of us—parents and teachers alike—must convince all teachers that while equity may provide the same education for all, justice provides the education that each child needs. This includes the highly able and gifted, the rural and under-resourced, and children of all socioeconomic backgrounds. Holding students back to achieve “equity” is unjust and socially destructive.

Author’s Note

Christine Ireland is past president of the Australian Association for the Education of the Gifted and Talented. She has published chapters in Let the Tall Poppies Flourish and Giftedness Illuminated by Creativity. A secondary teacher for 20 years, she has been the gifted education coordinator in several secondary and primary schools. Christine has also lectured at Melbourne University in gifted education and at the Australian Catholic University. She is currently completing her doctorate in education.

Endnotes


The Power of Parent Advocacy in New Zealand

By Rosemary Cathcart

Historically, through the decades, gifted children received little official recognition or support in New Zealand. New Zealand has always had a strong child-centered education system, but also has a very strong egalitarian culture—and gifted children were viewed as the product of “elitism.”

There were, however, always individual educators and parents who strove for change, and the New Zealand Association for Gifted Children has quietly but consistently sought to encourage teacher awareness through its journal and conferences. One key change came about 20 years ago, with the 1999 national election. Prior to the election, our One Day School held a “Meet the Candidates” pre-election event, requesting that each party speak about their gifted education policy. In that meeting, one spokesperson said that, if elected, he would set up a Ministerial Working Party to evaluate gifted education. His party was elected, he kept his promise, and the resulting Working Party led to a change in regulations, making it mandatory in New Zealand for schools to identify and support gifted children.

While this has not been as actively enforced as needed—partly due to government change and partly because there was so much catching up to do—it greatly lifted the number of teachers who became aware of gifted children and provided a platform from which to argue for more provisions.

The most important point about this process is that it demonstrates the power of parent advocacy. It’s a given that parents have a responsibility to love and understand their children, value their individuality, set behavioral parameters, help them manage their feelings, and teach them to be humble. But parents may feel different about another equally important role—namely to advocate—to develop the essential skills to effectively work with family members, teachers, and, yes, government officials, to bring about change.

In order to affect change, parents must to be committed advocates for the long haul. Government powers ebb and flow. That’s why it’s important for parents to stay vigilant even when support seems to wane. After a decade of success in the early 2000s, progress for gifted children stagnated in New Zealand. But, with a recent change in government leadership, there’s reignited interest in supporting high-ability children.

I’m pleased to report that, in September 2018, the New Zealand government announced that gifted children will now be included in the draft Disability and Learning Support Action Plan. This proposed change will place New Zealand among a small number of countries, like Scotland, that acknowledge the special needs of gifted students as part of a fully inclusive education system.

This is a huge win for New Zealand gifted and talented children. However, it didn’t happen overnight. Thanks to the collective efforts of passionate parents and educators, the needs of gifted children have remained visible, step-by-step, one day at a time.

Author’s Note

Rosemary Cathcart has spent nearly three decades writing, teaching, and advocating throughout New Zealand to improve support for gifted learners. She developed the REACH model in the 1980s, founded New Zealand’s first gifted education center in 1995, oversaw development of the One Day School, and now heads REACH Education, which provides professional development to educators of the gifted. A frequent presenter and author, she has also served on the boards of the New Zealand Association for Gifted Children and giftEDnz.
Parents Make a Difference: Creating a Parental Intervention Program in Brazil

By Renata Muniz Prado, Denise de Souza Fleith, and Daniela Vilarinho-Rezende

Family environment and the quality of parent-child relationships have a significant impact on the adjustment of gifted children. Parental awareness of their children’s demands may prevent emotional problems and contribute to optimal social development. However, most parenting books on development do not address the gifted. On top of that, parents of gifted children often feel isolated, with no support in dealing with their children’s unique characteristics and accomplishments.

A preventive intervention for gifted children and their families can help to recognize and address gifted children’s unique attributes and learning needs. And, it provides strategies for parents and families in learning how to support and manage the social-emotional needs of their gifted children.

Parental Interventions: Providing Counseling to Parents of Gifted Children

Brazil faces many challenges in gifted education. Programs for the gifted are offered mainly at the public level. However, the amount of governmental investment has been drastically reduced due to the economic and political crises that the nation currently faces, as well as the belief that the investment in gifted education is
a waste compared to investment in other areas of education.1

As in the United States, parents of gifted children in Brazil are often left to advocate for their children with little support from the educational system. That’s why we created a parental intervention program at the University of Brasilia to offer parents an opportunity to express the concerns and difficulties they face, obtain information about giftedness, and discuss strategies to enhance and cultivate children’s talent development.

The program includes six sessions of 2 ½ hours conducted every other week by a team of two psychologists and a small group of undergraduate psychology students. The methodology involves an experience report, paper and video discussion, group dynamics, and problem-solving strategies. Topics discussed in the meetings include challenges faced by the parents, conceptions and myths about giftedness, socioemotional development of gifted children, bullying at school, parenting styles, the family’s role in talent development, and fostering talent at home and school.

The sessions end with “homework” based on the integration of the Enrichment Triad Model (ETM) activities into a family context. While the ETM consists of three different kinds of enrichment activities (See sidebar on page 11), this program incorporates Types I and II. Through Type I, parents are encouraged to identify experiences that allow their children’s interests to emerge and to provide the opportunity to immerse them in new areas, fields, or topics in as many different ways as possible. In Type II, parents are encouraged to find specific ways for their children to train or learn new skills related to their areas of interest.

Session 1: Definitions and Myths of Giftedness

We begin by explaining the purpose and the dynamics of the counseling program, and the participants introduce themselves. We encourage parents to present their expectations. An overview of misconceptions is also provided in order to clarify the knowledge on the gifted phenomenon. We ask parents to discuss, in small groups, sentences about giftedness. For example, one group might discuss the sentence, “Giftedness is a rare phenomenon,” while another talks about the idea that “Gifted children always perform well at school” or “Most gifted students will have a brilliant future.”

At home: Observe your child for ways they don’t conform to your expectations. Pay close attention to their interests, behaviors, social interactions, and conversations. Note your reactions and feelings.
Session 2: Characteristics of Giftedness
In this session, we ask parents to describe their children with respect to their characteristics and interests. In small groups, they mention three words that best represent giftedness, according to their perceptions.

At home: Encourage your kids to pursue a breadth of opportunities in their field or interest area. Give them support to explore their interests.

Session 3 and 4: The Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Children
These sessions focus on social and emotional challenges faced by gifted children. Parents describe their children’s experiences and report strategies they use to help them.

At home: Be attentive to the relationship between parents, siblings, and gifted children and to changes in behavior or attitudes toward school.

Session 5: Gifted Education: Partnering with the School
An experienced teacher from an enrichment program for gifted is invited to talk about his work, as well as provide strategies for success with their children’s schools.

At home: Expose children to formal instruction on identified interests and observe if their motivation persists in the field or project.

Session 6: “Putting It All Together”
We conduct a group dynamics session in a game format in order to verify the parental needs and demands that persist. We conclude with an evaluation of the program.

At home: Create an online group where you can stay connected, empowered, and extend your network to advocate for your child’s needs. This could be as simple as creating a WhatsApp or Facebook group.

Intervention as Prevention
Throughout the training sessions we’ve conducted, we noticed that one of the main challenges mentioned by parents of gifted children is the family-school relationship. Many parents claim that educators are not prepared to meet the needs of gifted students. Also, parents report feelings of guilt with respect to the talent development of their children. This counseling program can be considered one of the preventive interventions for gifted populations, allowing parents to help students stay engaged in the classroom and at home.

Benefits of Preventative Interventions
Preventative interventions provide many benefits to parents and their gifted children, including:

- Enhancing parents’ understanding of giftedness.
- Improving parenting skills.
- Promoting a social support network, or a positive interaction between families with similar experiences.
- Offering family psychoeducational support and a motivational experience to encourage parenting skills development in favor of their children’s well-being.
- Contributing to parent involvement in their children’s education and improving the quality of parent-child relationships.
- Offering families an opportunity to share their expectations, concerns, doubts, feelings, and experiences.

Resources

Endnotes

Authors’ Note
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Denise de Souza Fleith, Ph.D., is a psychologist and a professor of psychology at the University of Brasilia, having received her doctoral degree from the University of Connecticut in gifted and talented education. She is a member of the executive committee of the World Council for Gifted and Talented Children, and has authored several books and articles on creativity and giftedness.

Daniela Vilarinho-Rezende, Ph.D., is a psychologist and a professor at the UniAnchieta, São Paulo. She received her doctoral degree from the University of Brasilia in processes of human development and health. Her research interests include creativity and innovation, digital technology in education, talent development, and giftedness.

What is the Enrichment Triad Model?
The Enrichment Triad Model encourages the creative productivity of young people by exposing them to various topics, areas of interest, and fields of study, and to further train them to apply advanced content, process-training skills, and methodology training to self-selected areas of interest.

• **Type I** enrichment is designed to expose students to a wide variety of disciplines, topics, occupations, hobbies, persons, places, and events that would not ordinarily be covered at school.

• **Type II** enrichment consists of materials and methods designed to promote the development of thinking and feeling processes.

• **Type III** enrichment involves students who become interested in pursuing a self-selected area and are willing to commit the time necessary for advanced content acquisition and process training, where they obtain first-hand experience.

Source:
University of Connecticut, National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented. https://nrcgt.uconn.edu/underachievement_study/curriculum-compacting/cc_section2/
Gifted Dropouts: How This Dutch Program Helps Struggling Students Get Back On Track

By Tijl Koenderink and Femke Hovinga

Meet Freddy, a fictional representative of a teenage gifted child. Diagnosed with autism spectrum disorder by a school psychologist, 15-year-old Freddy didn’t have friends in school, faced daily bullying, and received grades well below average. While he was technically qualified to go to a pre-university track school, he ended up in a vocational program, where he grew severely depressed, missed peers to study and spend time with, and wasn’t challenged at all. As winter came, he decided not to conform to rules and regulations anymore. He was deemed unteachable and dropped out of the school system, with nowhere to go.

Dutch Mentality

Unfortunately, Freddy’s story is not unique in the Netherlands. The Netherlands is a tiny country. (In fact, it fits into the United States 237 times.) The small population of about 17 million speak Dutch, and inhabitants are known to be tolerant and direct. The national credo, however, may just be, freely translated: “Please behave normally, because that’s crazy enough.” Interestingly, the Dutch tend to put a lot of effort and financing into programs similar to No Child Left Behind, while historically putting very little emphasis on educating top performers.

These cultural traits feed a popular misconception that is held not just in the Netherlands, but worldwide: that gifted children always receive high grades and test scores. In reality, the correlation between IQ and school performance goes down as the level of education goes up.¹ A bright mind, like Freddy’s, is not automatically a high achiever.

Reasons for Dropping Out

So why are gifted students, despite their talents, at risk for dropping out? Research shows that gifted dropouts start to cognitively disengage during the elementary school years, as their learning environment becomes less stimulating.² Three factors lead to dropping out: factors that push children out of school, such as failing classes; those that pull students from school, such as anxiety, pregnancy, or illness; and factors that cause kids to fall out, or disengage. This means students do not see significant improvement in the affective and/or academic aspects of their schooling over time and disengage. Environmental factors play a role too, as Joseph Renzulli and Sunghee Park state in their research: Many gifted dropouts are from low socioeconomic-status families and racial minority groups, have parents with low levels of education, and participate less in extracurricular activities.³

“Falling out” of education is a rampant problem among gifted children and adults.
in the Netherlands. In fact, the Institute for Gifted Adults in the Netherlands indicates that only 60% of gifted adults have a diploma that matches their learning potential. An educated guess is that one-third of the gifted adults are unhappy with where they are in their lives and careers. Furthermore, high school dropouts are 30.8% more likely to live in poverty and have a 63% higher chance of being incarcerated. The loss of talent and production for society is also enormous, with an estimated cost of more than €600,000. The good news: As a parent or teacher you can make the difference by seeing the whole gifted child, creating materials to match educational needs, and advocating for appropriate programs and services.

**Fitting Education: The Dutch Way**

In the Netherlands, we do several things to prevent gifted kids from dropping out. The Dutch variety of No Child Left Behind is called *fitting education*, which, at its most basic level, is a regional budget allocated to schools in order to keep as many children as possible in regular education. This is partially possible because a majority of Dutch schools are public: Only 0.04% of students receive private education. Moreover, people with proven extra needs are sometimes eligible for personal budgets for mental healthcare.

**Feniks Talent: Dropout Center**

So, what about our representative gifted teenager, Freddy? Freddy's parents searched for solutions, now that their teenager stayed home, gaming, and eating candy all day. They soon encountered Feniks Talent, a dropout center that is one of a kind. Feniks Talent focuses solely on gifted dropouts, many of whom are twice-exceptional. Feniks Talent staff estimate that 75% of the youth they serve (10–22 years old) come in with a trauma, many who are depressed or suicidal. This is often related to school or self-image.

At Feniks Talent, staff gather gifted youth in groups of 60, exposing them to the peer group that many never encountered in their school career. In these group sessions, students learn how to develop and reintegrate into society, either through school or through learning on the job.

Feniks Talent follows a six-step procedure, based on decades of experience with dropouts and insights from literature:

**Recover and stabilize.** These dropouts are often depressed, lonely, and exhausted. They need to build up stamina to go out into the world on a daily basis.

**Activate.** Using small steps, students sample and experience different things, proving to themselves that indeed they can learn and have interests.

**Participate.** They take part in the programs that are offered, varying from traditional educational classes like math and language arts to less traditional areas of study like mindfulness, woodworking, and design. This is the step which stimulates long-term commitment to education.

**Learn and develop talent.** What is it that makes them different from others? Are they self confident in those areas? Slowly, students begin to pursue specific areas and meet goals.

**Explore.** They widen their vision by talking to others outside of the center at other programs, schools, and jobs. Together with staff, the youth look at options for internships, direct application (skipping high school) in specific vocational or arts programs, or any type of meaningful joyful future.

**Fly out!** Students go out on their own—with follow-up coaching and counseling provided.

(Continues on p. 20)
Every country views giftedness through its own cultural lens. Here are four organizations from four different countries—each serving high-ability children in a slightly different way.

**Greece**

**Situation:** Giftedness has not been officially recognized in Greece, which creates space for multiple interpretations and the use of the term “giftedness.”

**PHI, Center for the Advancement of Neosis—Athens, Thessaloniki, Komotini**

**Mission:** Offers differentiated programs and services for gifted and talented individuals, based on individual characteristics—and the inner need of all people to evolve through self-awareness and self-development.

**Offerings:** Gifted education programs for children and adults focused on cognitive, social, and emotional development, and talent development programs in a wide range of categories, such as academics, arts, and athletics.

One-on-one and group sessions for adults on parenting gifted children, teacher training on giftedness and how to support a gifted student in the regular classroom, and free monthly lectures to raise awareness.

**Gifted innovation:** It is the first center of its type in Greece and the only one that emphasizes not only the cognitive and achievement aspects of gifted and talented individuals, but also provides social and emotional support. Focuses on gifted education programs for children and teens (4–17 years old) and seminars for gifted adults.

**Contact:** Danae Deligeorge, danaekd@gmail.com

**Her advice to parents:** “Teach your gifted children while striving for excellence to advocate for themselves with honesty and tact.”

**Peru**

**Situation:** Giftedness is perceived as relating mainly to high achievement. There are some state and privately funded education opportunities for high achievers of linguistically diverse, low-socioeconomic backgrounds.

**Mente Futura (Future Minds)—Lima**

**Mission:** To support highly able and talented youth (6–17 years old) to reach their academic, emotional, and social potential by providing challenges based on ability and interest, and respecting the ethnic-linguistic and cultural diversity of each child.

**Offerings:** Since 1998, more than 7,000 students and 1,000 teachers have participated in programs run by Mente Futura.

Advocacy programs include books, best practices documents, and consulting with senior officials of the Peruvian administration on design of public policy related to gifted education.

Events include International Seminars on Creativity, Intelligence, and Technology, and free, in-service teacher training programs in collaboration with the Ministry of Education.

**Gifted innovation:** Approximately 25 state-funded, residential Academies for Academically Talented Youths, have served 8,000 students in Grades 9–11 from ethnic-linguistic diverse backgrounds, from places such as the Andes Mountains, Amazon rainforest, and coastal shantytowns.

**Contact:** Sheyla Blumen, sblumen@pucp.pe

**Her dream for all gifted children:** “That every girl and boy, independent of their ethnicity, religion, gender, or background might be able to foster their talents with integrity and ethics in order to build a better, peaceful, global world. Think global, act local.”
Czech Republic

Situation: Giftedness is perceived positively as a gift, but the school system does not accommodate or support the development of giftedness. For the last 50 years, contests have been considered the way to identify gifted pupils.

Talentcentrum, NIDV—Praha

Mission: To develop systemic support of giftedness via regional talent support networks in the Czech Republic.

Offerings: An online environment, rich with structured opportunities for research, development, inquiry, and problem-solving activities to deliver learning “when needed” and with subject experts ready to guide teams or individuals who are interested in their field.

Gifted innovation: Out-of-school enrichment activities implemented with the help of field experts from local communities.

Contact: Stanislav Zelenda, zelenda@nidv.cz

Views on the impact of nurturing high-ability children: “Some students who have had success in contests have been inspired to work as innovators in the field of medicine. Participation in systemic research activities has led students to develop international cooperatives and to discuss future scientific research. I hope all gifted children will become strong and ready enough to solve the most complicated and dangerous problems of life on earth and in society.”

Ireland

Situation: Giftedness is not recognized as a special need within the school system. Consequently, resources are allocated to children on the other end of the spectrum. Extracurricular and out-of-school options are the only available supports for gifted children in Ireland.

Centre for Talented Youth, Ireland—Dublin

Mission: CTY Ireland was established at Dublin City University in 1992 to meet the needs of high-ability students aged 6 to 17 years from Ireland and abroad. Since the first summer program, over 35,000 students have attended or participated in CTY Ireland programs.

Offerings: Fast-paced college courses, Talent Search, parent and teacher support.

Gifted innovation: Early university entrance program run by CTY Ireland at Dublin City University allows students to take college courses while still in high school.

Contact: Colm O’Reilly, colm.oreilly@dcu.ie

His advice to parents: “From a young age, parents should try and expose their children to as many new and exciting possibilities as they can. They should try and allow their children to reach their potential by ensuring they are sufficiently challenged academically and have a chance to meet other gifted children to develop their social skills.”
The International Torrance Legacy Creativity Awards

By Joan Franklin Smutny

A prolific author who is widely regarded as “the father of creativity,” E. Paul Torrance developed ground-breaking programs and models that continue to tap the creative potential of children and adults in the United States and abroad. A man who was “comfortable as a minority of one” and who exhibited the courage to question traditional assumptions in education, he touched people’s lives with his gentle spirit and support—and his conviction in the power of creativity as an untapped resource.¹

The International Torrance Legacy Creativity Awards competition honors this legacy. Through my work at the Center for Gifted, I collaborated with John Kauffman at the Scholastic Testing Service to launch this creativity competition in 2009. The competition seeks works from gifted youth between the ages of 8–18 across four major categories: creative writing, visual arts, music composition, and inventions. At the conclusion of the judging process, the Center for Gifted/Midwest Torrance Center for Creativity publishes an online magazine of winning entries for students, families, and sponsoring schools and institutes.

In every category, we hope to reach talented students from across the globe. Each year, creative writing contestants choose a theme from a suggested list and use it as a catalyst for composing original poems and stories. The visual arts category allows students to submit any form of a 2D or 3D composition, including painting, collage, printmaking, photography, and sculpture. In music, applicants compose original pieces in a specific genre. Examples in past years
include piano and voice, guitar and voice, sitar, and orchestra. Our inventors create original products within three areas: arts and leisure, toys and games, and science and engineering. They design a prototype with detailed instructions and a three-dimensional graphic. (In fact, a former first place winner, Tripp Phillips, now age 12, just landed a deal on the popular television show *Shark Tank* for his Le-Clue invention for LEGO® bricks!)

The enthusiasm of gifted youth has grown as more parents, teachers, and schools encourage them to submit their most imaginative work. The magazine of award-winning poems, stories, visual art pieces, musical scores, and inventive designs has become clear evidence that despite obstacles and hardships, our many gifted young people are able to pursue creative endeavors.

**Endnote**


**Author’s Note**

Joan Franklin Smutny is the director of the Center for Gifted and Midwest Torrance Center for Creativity. She has authored, co-authored, and edited many articles and over 21 books on gifted education for teachers and parents, including *Parenting Gifted Children: The Authoritative Guide from the National Association for Gifted Children* (2011). In 2009, she co-founded The International Torrance Legacy Creativity Awards for gifted writers, artists, musicians, and inventors around the globe. In 2012, Joan received the E. Paul Torrance Award in Creativity, conferred by NAGC.

To read the online magazine for the 2017 International Torrance Legacy Creativity Awards or to download application forms for the 2019 competition, go to www.centerforgifted.org.

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**Japanese Wall**

Maimoona Adel Janabi, age 17
Busaiteen, Bahrain
2nd place

**Pure and Blue**

Tahera A. Aziz Heraiz, age 15
Muharraq, Bahrain
1st place

**Pelican**

Soyoung Hur, age 13
Seoul, South Korea
1st place
A Wolf Behind Trees
Edward Deng, age 14
Lake Forest, IL, USA
3rd place
Seascape
Hannah Steinberg, age 10
Santa Monica, CA, USA
1st place

Ordinary?
Minyoung Shin, age 16
Seoul, South Korea
1st place
The Feniks Talent youngsters typically come in four days a week for the duration of a year. Depending on their needs, they are guided by professional counselors, subject matter experts, and educational psychologists. All children have a mentor who tracks their day-to-day progress. Interestingly, a majority of the Feniks Talent youth come in with a diagnosis. Some of them “recover” from their misdiagnoses of Autism Spectrum Disorder or ADHD at the dropout center.

Feniks alumni are everywhere, from studying at universities to learning on the job. This includes our dropout Freddy, who now takes part in a project that combines work with education.

**Resources**

**Web**

Feniks Talent *(In Dutch but Google Translate may help):*

www.fenikstalent.nl

SENG (Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted)

www.sengifted.org

**Books**


**Endnotes**


**Authors’ Note**

Tijl Koenderink is a textbook case of education gone wrong. Despite a high IQ, he was an underachiever and severely depressed in high school. Now, Tijl focuses on underachieving bright students, many of whom have dropped out of school and society. He is the founder and CEO of dropout center Feniks Talent, the founding board member and principal of the School of Understanding, and the co-founder and head trainer at Take On Talents.

Femke Hovinga knows first-hand what kind of struggles extreme giftedness can cause while finding one’s way through the educational system. Despite her struggles, she graduated with a master’s in management from Nyenrode Business University. She is the executive director of Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG) in Europe, coaches highly and profoundly gifted children, and runs a recruitment agency to help gifted adults find work.
Kenyan parents want their children to have an education that will maximize their child’s full potential, and they are prepared to make tremendous sacrifices to ensure their children get that education. However, the best schools cost far more than most families can afford, and even the most humble local schools require parents to pay for school fees, as well as school uniforms and books. Many a young Kenyan has dropped out of school for lack of funds to cover those costs.

**Learning at Home**

Kenyan children get a solid education—all in their own childhood homes. Even before children go to school, they learn to take responsibility for their siblings’ child care since their parents (mainly their mothers) are either working outside on their farms or looking for basic essentials like water and cooking fuel in the form of firewood.

In many African homes, grandparents still live in the same household as their children and grandchildren. Often, these elders have stories to tell, be they in the form of folk tales or family histories, songs, riddles, or poetry. If children are blessed with having a wise grandparent at home, then evenings are not filled with TV and computer games. They are filled with storytelling that enriches children’s imaginations and equips them with wisdom and knowledge that may have been passed down over generations.

This imaginative play extends beyond storytime with grandparents. In many cases, parents may not have funds to buy
their children toys. But this reality often leads children to create toys of their own. Mothers give their daughters dolls made of old socks and yarn unwound from discarded sweaters. Boys and girls alike build cars, buses, trucks, and even toy bicycles by recycling bottle tops for wheels, tin cans for vehicle bodies, and wires from sundry sources to make the skeletal infrastructure of their vehicles. They use these inventions to host their own competitive races, inspired by the annual Safari Rally races that thousands of Kenyans attend yearly.

But Kenyan youth’s fascination with motor vehicles doesn’t stop with the creation of three-dimensional buses or rally cars. Some of them prefer drawing cars and buses, but they can only do so if one of their parents can afford to give them a pencil or pen. Pens are particularly precious. One of the favorite items Kenyan children love to draw are matatus. These are the public mini-vans that shuttle people around the town for a relatively low cost. In recent times, matatus have begun to look like mobile art galleries since they are covered on all sides with artworks painted by local artists who earn a livelihood by beautifying these popular public vans.

In the past, children who felt inspired to draw took their homemade tutorials from comic strips in the local press. The comics used to be children’s first encounter with something resembling art. But now, children take their paper and pen or pencil outdoors to watch the matatus drive by and try to create images comparable to what they see on the sides of the brightly-colored vehicles.

Education Outside the Home

Kenya straddles the Equator, creating a temperate climate that leads most Kenyan youth to grow up outdoors. Parents often provide their kids with plastic bags that the youth can use to create their own balls to play soccer, which Kenyans call football.

In many Kenyan homes, women are the breadwinners. They frequently can be found doing small-scale businesses, such as selling fruits and vegetables or second-hand clothes in open-air markets. During school holidays, these mothers often bring their children along so they can show them the practical value of mathematics. The children are taught to calculate prices, make change, and carefully hold onto their mothers’ money. It can be a hazardous occupation, but often the children are the most reliable business partners the mothers have.

Outside of the family home, imaginative exploration extends to the local library. This applies mainly to families having educated (literate) parents and who also live in towns having libraries (which are relatively rare). Depending on the size, structure, and library policies, youth are free to explore the book shelves and discover the love of learning and reading in a welcoming space.

If parents are more affluent, one of the best things they can do is find out what sorts of afternoon and weekend classes are available in the community for youth. Perhaps your child hopes to learn a new musical instrument, study a foreign language, practice a sport, or even pick up a new style of dance after school. Allowing children to see that they have options—rather than pushing them into what the parents want them to do—is a good idea. At the same time, as peer pressure mounts and children are influenced by peers to forsake extracurricular activities, parents need to step in and encourage children to take on projects and activities.

Leading by Example

It’s motivating for children to see their parents practicing what they preach. Here are a few activities you can model for your gifted child:
1. **Read a book** you picked up at the library for yourself.

2. **Play a music instrument**, sing in a choir, or join an amateur theatre group.

3. **Continue learning yourself!** Share new things you’ve learned about historical events, literature, science, or another subject your child studies.

**A Responsibility to Learn**

In Kenya, children learn early on how much their parents sacrifice to get them into school, so they tend to feel responsible for working hard, doing well academically, and maximizing their own potential. They understand that education is the key to their future success and the main means for fulfilling their talents. Even as many adults have no choice but to enter the informal economy (known as *jua kali*), gifted children are able to rely on their at-home education to teach them how to devise ingenious ways to earn an income.

Parents are among the primary teachers of the gifted children, whether the child has access to formal schooling or not. There is nothing more enlightening and enriching for talented children than to see one or both of their parents practicing a particular skill, be it in the form of a hobby or a profession. Children pick up on their parents’ practices implicitly, like a sponge.

One important lesson that parents everywhere can learn from Kenyan parents: It’s important that parents also continue striving to fulfill their own talents and interests. By nurturing our own talents and sharing what we’ve learned, we can bring new insights to our children on a daily basis to help them reach their full potential.

**Author’s Note**

Margaretta Swigert-Gacheru is a writer and reporter on the arts, based in East Africa with the Nation Media Group in Nairobi, Kenya. Holding a Ph.D. in sociology and a master’s in teaching, she’s been observing and writing about the creative process, especially among youth, for much of her professional career. Her most recent stories can be found at www.kenyanartsreview.blogspot.com. Her book, *The Transformation of Contemporary Kenyan Art, (1960-2010)*, is available online.
Parenting Gifted Children: Voices from India

By Jyoti Sharma, Shobha Bagai, Pankaj Tyagi, and Bibhu Biswal

Sharv, a 3-year-old child, easily grasped new concepts. His parents observed that he was already a reader, having started at age 2. The child had gained mastery in counting forward and backward from 1 to 20; he could write most of the English alphabet; and he could identify the flags of many countries. With a gifted child like Sharv, there is always a worry that the child will be seen by his parents as a trophy to showcase, but it’s important to educate parents of their responsibility in meeting and cultivating the needs of their gifted children.

This is particularly true in India, where parents play an important role in arranging and facilitating educational opportunities for their kids, starting with the choice of school, arranging after-school classes, and sending them to various non-academic extracurricular classes. Most parents closely follow the academic performance of their children and willingly spend time and money to provide additional learning resources for them. Many schools have parent representatives in the school governance bodies, advising the schools on how to facilitate better coordination between the home and school environment.

Though many parents are highly active in their gifted children’s schooling, many times these same parents put intense pressure on their children, often without meaning to. Furthermore, many parents’ awareness about the scope of educational opportunities is limited to sending their children to a good school, arranging private coaching for them, and pushing them to get into a top-tier higher education institution. Most parents are, at most, partially aware of the concept of a gifted child. However, the concept of giftedness is slowly percolating in mainstream education, and parents are becoming more and more curious.

During our work with gifted children in the Gifted Education Project in India, we have begun to address that growing curiosity by sharing a set of insights into parenting a gifted child. Our central aim was to stress the importance of parents walking an extra mile with their gifted children. This means helping their child...
feel “normal” in various facets of her life, such as meeting behavioral and social milestones, but also respecting the ways in which their gifted child is different in one or more aspects.

**Be Observant**

Parents can play an important role in identifying early development traits, as Sharv’s parents did in the opening example. Note how quickly your child picks up vocabulary and how effectively she uses it in conversation. Look for how accurately your child is able to recall, redefine, or retrieve learned information and experiences. Finally, observe the kind of activities your child enjoys, or the kinds of conversations he engages in. These observations can provide important clues about your child’s developmental trajectory. If possible, start writing an “Observation Diary” to record all behaviors that you feel need attention or are important to share with teachers or gifted educators.

**Create Opportunities for Your Child**

When you engage your child in a variety of activities, even the most obscure traits can become visible. It can be as simple as working with your child in the garden, having him set the dinner table, singing a melodious song together, or playing board games. While exposing your child to multiple environments, don’t expect a high level of engagement in all activities, as she may not respond to all the contexts with the same intensity and interest.

**Provide Unstructured Time**

It is good to be an involved parent, but avoid confining your child to a heavily planned schedule with close supervision and evaluation. Provide him a reasonable amount of unstructured, unplanned time, where he is self-engaged and free to think without adult instruction and monitoring.

The helps your child develop creativity, self-confidence, and self-awareness.

**Incorporate Strategies into Your Everyday Routine**

We’ve put together some strategies that you can easily accommodate into your regular schedule to help your gifted child grow:

- **“Let’s Talk About ______.”**—Set a dedicated time slot in your day when you and your child can engage in a constructive conversation on a topic you’ve prepared in advance. Give more time to your child to talk, ensuring you’re able to focus on shaping the child’s arguments, helping her to analyze, synthesize, and reflect. But be careful: You should not behave like a teacher or turn the conversation into a tutoring session.

- **“Me Time”—**This time slot should be the child’s own time to engage in self-selected activities. Give your child freedom to decide the course of action for this slot, set clear rules of behavior in advance, and

**Gifted Education Project**

GEMS (Gifted Education and Mentoring Support) is a national project commissioned by the Office of Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India and housed at Cluster Innovation Centre, University of Delhi. The project aims to develop methods to identify and nurture gifted children ages 3–15 years old. Started as a pilot, the project has evolved to become a flagship program for identifying and nurturing potentially gifted children who are part of the regular school system in India. Presently, the program focuses on children having significant potential in science and math, but the methods developed under the project can be easily adapted to other subject areas.

http://www.giftededucation.co.in/
don’t comment on the choice of activities he plans for (unless it is harmful or dangerous). After the “Me Time” is over, encourage your child to share the experiences. Be supportive if your child plans to do something new and create an environment of trust and respect.

“Wow” Moment—Help your gifted child become a reflective thinker. At the end of the day, ask her to think about the entire day’s activities and share what excited her the most, gradually encouraging the child to reason out why and how it was so exciting. Follow up by asking how the moment could have been changed or improved.

I Can Invent—Challenge your child to invent something new! It can be a new word, new phrase, new and better way of organizing things, new categorization, new description, or a new method. It should be different from the existing form and yet may not be exclusively new. Our objective is not to judge the child, but only to foster creative thinking. Make sure you’re patient, and don’t offer criticism if your child doesn’t meet your expectations.

Question Pocket—Invite your child to ask one question each day using a “question pocket,” or a decorated envelope you place somewhere in your house. Your child can write the question on a piece of paper and put it in the question pocket. Now, it is your job to search for the answer and report back. This stimulates curiosity.

Correct Me If You Can—Tell the child at the beginning of the day that you will do three incorrect things (while you are in the child’s company). Deliberately use incorrect vocabulary, consciously misstate some facts already discussed with the child at some previous instance, or make a misstep of any other similar nature. Ask the child to correct you, helping him to develop critical observation, memory recall, and presence of mind.

When Sharv, the 3-year-old from our opening example, first visited us at the Gifted Education Center, his parents worried they were ill-equipped to tap the potential of their gifted child. We handed them the strategies discussed here, ensuring Sharv would meet his full potential and feel supported at home. Using strategies like these, all parents can create many opportunities that provide insight into the unsynchronized development pathways of their children. These strategies also ensure you become a discerning caregiver who parents responsibly and sensitively.

**Resources**

- **Web**
  - ATAL Innovative Mission
    - aim.gov.in
  - Innovation in Science Pursuit for Inspired Research (INSPIRE)
    - www.online-inspire.gov.in

**Olympiads**

- olympiads.hbcse.tifr.res.in

**Print**


**Authors’ Note**

Jyoti Sharma, Shobha Bagai, Pankaj Tyagi, and Bibhu Biswal are faculty members and colleagues at Cluster Innovation Centre, University of Delhi. Apart from teaching various science disciplines in undergraduate and post graduate courses in the university, they work together on the Gifted Education Project, commissioned by the Office of Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India. They are responsible for initiating the Mentoring Program for Potentially Gifted Children at the Cluster Innovation Centre.

The authors acknowledge the contribution and support of the Office of Principal Scientific Adviser to the Government of India for funding the flagship project on Identification and Mentoring of Gifted Students in India.
The Importance of Finding Your People

By Deborah Reber

In the same way that it’s critical we help our gifted and twice-exceptional kids find their own tribe of friends who share their passions, depth of intellectual pursuits, and interests, we parents also need connections with people who truly “get” our kids. This can sometimes be challenging when our children’s intelligence or precociousness isn’t always understood.

Raising my own twice-exceptional child in the Netherlands for the past 5 years has shined a spotlight for me on the importance of these human connections. As expats, we’re already outsiders and that sense of otherness is something we feel every day. That our child is highly gifted, and we’re homeschooling him to boot, has exacerbated our outsider status, and thus made the work of finding “our people” both more challenging and critical.

Spending time with people who don’t accept our children is exhausting. And when we’re raising exceptionally bright kids, it’s something for which we don’t really have the time or energy. Our obligation is to the emotional, mental, and physical well-being of ourselves and our awesome children. When we surround ourselves with people who fully support our family, we relax, our kids relax, and we can parent from a place of confidence. It’s time we ditch the doubters, skeptics, and those who’ll never “get it” and instead surround ourselves with supporters.

Here’s how:

Tighten Up the Circle. There have been many unexpected gifts of starting over in the Netherlands, but one of the greatest has been the chance to build new relationships, free of obligatory social situations, context, or knotty history. But you don’t need to move halfway around the world to “declutter” your relationships. Just assess them by answering these questions: Does this relationship bring you joy? Do you feel free to be your authentic self? Is the relationship reciprocal? Does the other person appreciate your child? Does he or she acknowledge your parenting challenges and concerns? Remember that you get to decide on the rules and boundaries for each relationship.

Be Okay with What You Feel. It’s important to recognize unpleasant or uncomfortable emotions about how others relate to us and our children. Feeling like an outsider doesn’t feel good, no matter how old we are. Be kind to the part of yourself that’s feeling hurt or left out. It’s okay and normal to feel this way. The key is to acknowledge the feeling, allow it to express itself, and then move on.

Find Your People. Gifted children can be found in every country and the instant sense of belonging and the recognition of shared experiences that happens when we connect with other families like ours can be extraordinarily powerful. Beyond that, we can also find our people in the form of teachers and camp counselors, tutors and mentors, coaches and school advisers, grandparents and neighbors, families in a homeschool co-op... even baristas at Starbucks. The only requirement for who “our people” are is that they appreciate our kids, full stop.

Find Your Waterholes. Waterholes of like-minded parents exist in every community, virtual and in real life. Our job is to discover where these waterholes are and to figure out which ones feel like they fit (not every community targeting kids like ours will resonate). Good places to start include schools (even within mainstream schools you’ll find small groups of parents raising gifted and 2e children), Facebook, and organizations like NAGC and other groups that have online forums, offer helpful articles, host webinars and Twitter chats, post Facebook live videos, and more.

Enjoy your search for people and places that support you and your family.


Author’s Note
Deborah Reber is a parenting activist, bestselling author, and speaker who launched TiLT Parenting—a website, podcast, and social media community in April 2016, where she is building a community of supportive parents of neurodiverse children.
Center for Talent Development helps gifted students, age 3 – grade 12, reach full potential. Our pathways approach leads students on a journey of intellectual, emotional, and social growth.

- Assessment to identify strengths
- Rigorous, individualized online courses
- Weekend programs
- Residential and commuter summer programs
- Leadership and civic engagement programs