

Army Reserve Child, Youth & School Services

SUPPORTING CHILDREN WITH GIFTS AND TALENTS

The definition and implementation of programming for “Gifted and Talented” is varied across states, school districts, and educational communities. According to the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC), a school district should expect to identify 10%-15% of its student population as gifted. Although how schools assessing children for accelerated academic programs vary, here are some criteria typically used with the first three being the most used:

- **Intellectual ability:** Intelligence scores two deviations above the mean.
- **Academic aptitude:** Performance above the 97th percentile in achievement and aptitude tests in one or more academic subjects.
- **Creative and productive thinking:** The ability to produce new ideas by bringing together elements thought of as dissimilar and the aptitude for developing new meanings that have social value. Such students can be identified by demonstrated creative performance or the Torrance Test of Creative Thinking
- **Leadership ability:** Using group skills and negotiation in problem solving to direct individuals or groups toward a common goal. The Fundamental Interpersonal Relations Orientation Behavior is a psychological assessment tool for this domain.
- **Visual and Performing Arts:** Demonstration of special talents in visual or performing arts or related studies. Creative Product Scales use task descriptions to identify talents in this domain.
- **Psychomotor ability:** Kinesthetic motor abilities such as practical, spatial, mechanical and motor skills. It is seldom used as criterion for gifted programs.

In defining giftedness and supporting children who are gifted, it is important that common myths are dispelled. There is a misconception that gifted children should be able to perform well in all domains, are always self-motivated and will have high performance abilities in all areas. Yet, gifted children, like all children, may have areas in which they are not strong performers or in which they have little motivation or interest. Each child is unique.



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CYSS Mission : To support readiness and quality of life by reducing the conflict between military mission requirements and parental responsibilities



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According to Dr. Tracy Cross, author of On the Social and Emotional Lives of Gifted Kids: Understanding and Guiding their Development, gifted children often display uneven development, where one skill area may be accelerated and another skill may be below the norm. For example, a student may perform above the norm in reading, but lack social/emotional intelligence. It is also not uncommon for a gifted child to have a learning disability, such as dysgraphia or dyslexia. A gifted child with an evident learning discrepancy is known as a “twice exceptional learner”.



TOOLS FOR SUPPORTING GIFTED CHILDREN

It is important to know the services offered in your local area or area under consideration. School districts have differing standards about learning and development, assessment, curriculum and instruction, learning environments, programming, and professional development. There may be charter schools or TAG schools (talented and gifted schools), offered in collaboration with the state’s department of education and local universities, that may have alternative ways to meet your child’s special needs. **NAGC** has a website, <http://www.nagc.org/DataMapbyState.aspx>, listing programs, supports, and services for gifted children by state.

In addition to knowing a child’s potential and the offerings of local education agencies, it is equally important to define the parental expectations of a school program. In 2010, the NAGC released an updated **NAGC Pre-K--Grade 12 Programming Standards: Blue Print for Quality Gifted Education Programs**. This downloadable booklet, [http://www.nagc.org/uploadedFiles/Information and Resources/Gifted Program Standards/K-12%20booklet%20for%20convention%2020\(final\).pdf](http://www.nagc.org/uploadedFiles/Information%20and%20Resources/Gifted%20Program%20Standards/K-12%20booklet%20for%20convention%2020(final).pdf), is a comprehensive guide and glossary to assist parents in evaluating and discussing school programs for gifted and talented children.

Knowing a little about how exceptional children fit into the trajectory of school programming is only the beginning. There are many studies being conducted to help ensure equity of programming for gifted children, particularly in areas such as identifying gifted children in diverse populations, dual exceptionality, and early intervention.

Sources: U.S. Department of Education: (<http://www.ed.gov/>) | National Center for Gifted Children (<http://www.nagc.org>) | Council for Exceptional Children (<http://www.cec.sped.org/>) | Cross, Tracy: On the Social and Emotional Lives of Gifted Kids: Understanding and Guiding their Development; Prufrock Press, 4th ed., 2011.



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