

Positive Advocacy

Supporting Our Gifted Children



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What Do You **SEE**?



When her parents see...

- A folksy singer-song writer who wants to change the world
- A lawyer-in-training who strongly values fairness
- A lover of animals who once designed blueprints for an amazing shelter
- A quick-witted, hysterical person who makes me think and laugh every day
- A perfectionistic student and athlete (softball pitcher) who puts an immense amount of pressure on herself
- A team leader who tries to pick up when her teammates when they are down
- A loving daughter who holds my hand and watches old episodes of *Gilmore Girls*.



What her teachers see...

- A sad student hunched over her desk sending signals that she wants to be left alone.
- A student who needs to be more assertive in making friends.
- A student who needs to participate more and not be afraid of wrong answers.
- A sweet, bright student who can be a leader if she wants to.



What she sees...

- Up until recently (braces), a girl with crooked teeth who doesn't look like the popular girls
- A so-so pitcher who should throw in the towel
- A strong student
- A talented song writer
- A girl who worries constantly about making and keeping friends
- A student who is embarrassed to get the answers wrong, especially in front of classmates
- A student and athlete who wishes she could stop putting so much pressure on herself
- A person who cares about the world and wants to make a difference



Hearing and Seeing

- We need to **HEAR** one another and **HONOR** each other's perceptions.
- Perceptions are **VALID** even if we don't agree with them.
 - I need to understand how teachers see my child.
 - Teachers need to understand how I see my child.
 - Both teachers and parents need to understand a child sees him/herself.
- **HEARING** and **SEEING** one another is the first step to a **POSITIVE** collaboration.



Activity

How Do You See Your Child?	How Does Your Child's Teachers See Him/Her?	How Does Your Child See Him/Herself?

Let's Avoid Blame

- Sometimes, unintentionally or intentionally, we place blame on others and ourselves.
- Blame often relieves us of stress.

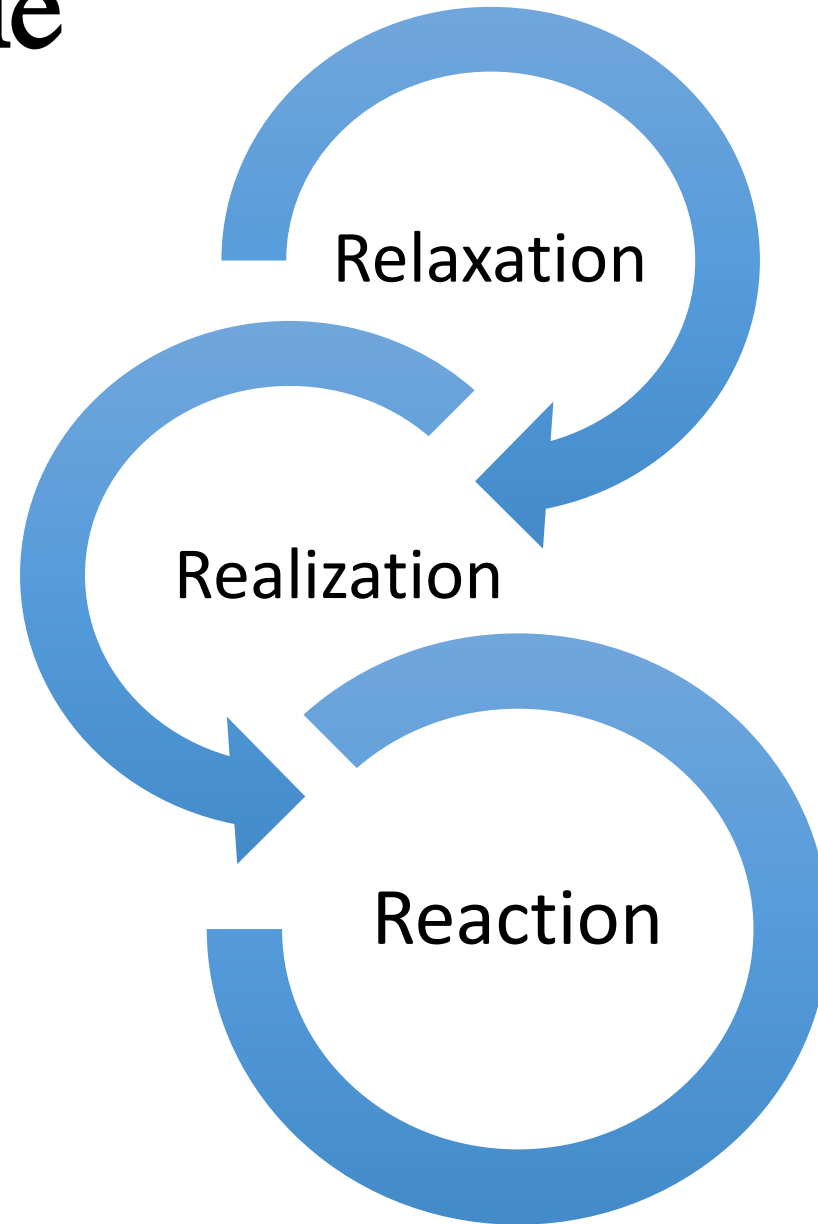
BUT

- *Blame only gets us so far, and it's a dead end.*

Awareness and *Self-Awareness*
are not the same at blame.



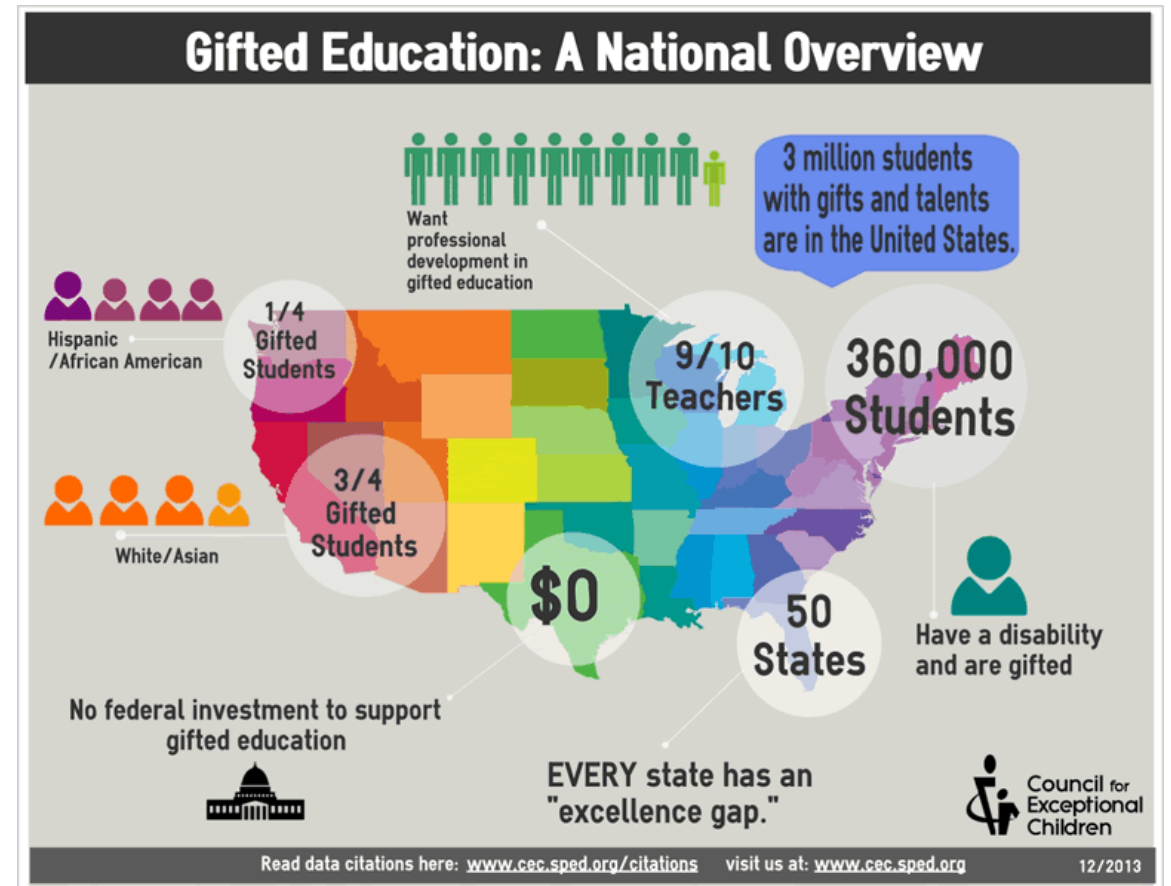
The Band-Aid Cycle



State of the Nation in Gifted Education

Although federal law recognizes the special needs of gifted students, it does not require schools to **IDENTIFY** or **OFFER SERVICES** for these students!

- There are only 4 states that mandate and fully fund g/t education.
- 12 states neither provide a mandate nor fund g/t education.



State of the Nation in Gifted Education (2014~2015)

Teacher Preparation & Training

Training requirements for gifted education teachers continue to vary widely and most general education teachers have no training in working with gifted students before entering the classroom or through ongoing professional development. This reality makes it more difficult to properly identify such students in the general classroom setting.

- 19 of 29 responding states require teachers in gifted programs to hold a specialized credential or endorsement.
- Only 10 of 40 states report requiring school districts to have a dedicated gifted and talented administrator.

Only 1 state (Nevada) statutorily requires all teachers to receive training in gifted and talented education through a separate course before beginning their classroom service.

From a Teacher's Perspective...

Out of a classroom of 25 students

- 10% of students may have a disability (*2-3 Students*)
- 3-5% of students may be identified gifted (*1-2 Students*)
- 20% of students may be economically disadvantaged (*5 Students*)
- 10-12% of students may be English Language Learners (*2-3 Students*)



Ideas for a Successful Collaboration



Ten Basic Steps

1. Prepare for the parent-teacher meeting
2. Initiate the parent-teacher meeting (**Be Proactive!**)
3. Collect information **INDIVIDUALLY/TOGETHER**
4. Isolate the problem/area of need **TOGETHER**
5. Identify the problem/area of need **TOGETHER**
6. Generate solutions **TOGETHER**
7. Form a plan **TOGETHER**
8. Evaluate process and progress **TOGETHER**
9. Follow-up on the situation **INDIVIDUALLY/TOGETHER**
10. Meet again as needed **TOGETHER**

A Word About Engagement...

Types of Engagement	
TYPES OF ENGAGEMENT	EXAMPLES
Behavioral	"I complete homework on time." "I work hard to do well."
Emotional	"I feel happy to be part of my school." "I enjoy the classes I am taking."
Cognitive	"I want to learn as much as I can at school." "School is important for future success."

(Fredricks et al., 2011)

Participation



Affect/Feelings



Learning Investment



WHY?

WHY?

WHY?

WHY?

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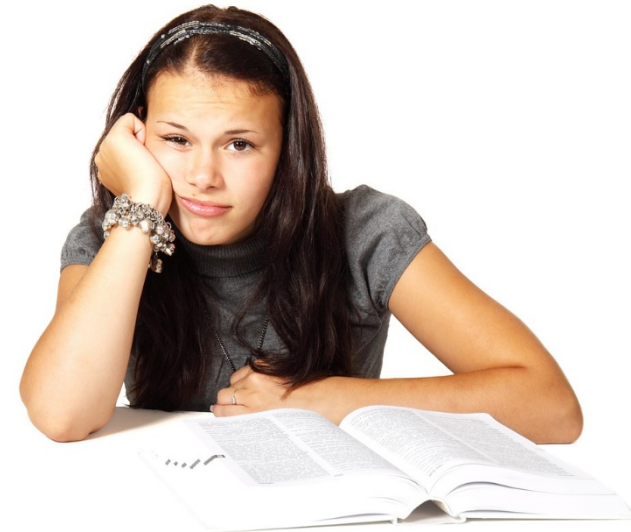
WHY?

WHY?





How This Might Look...

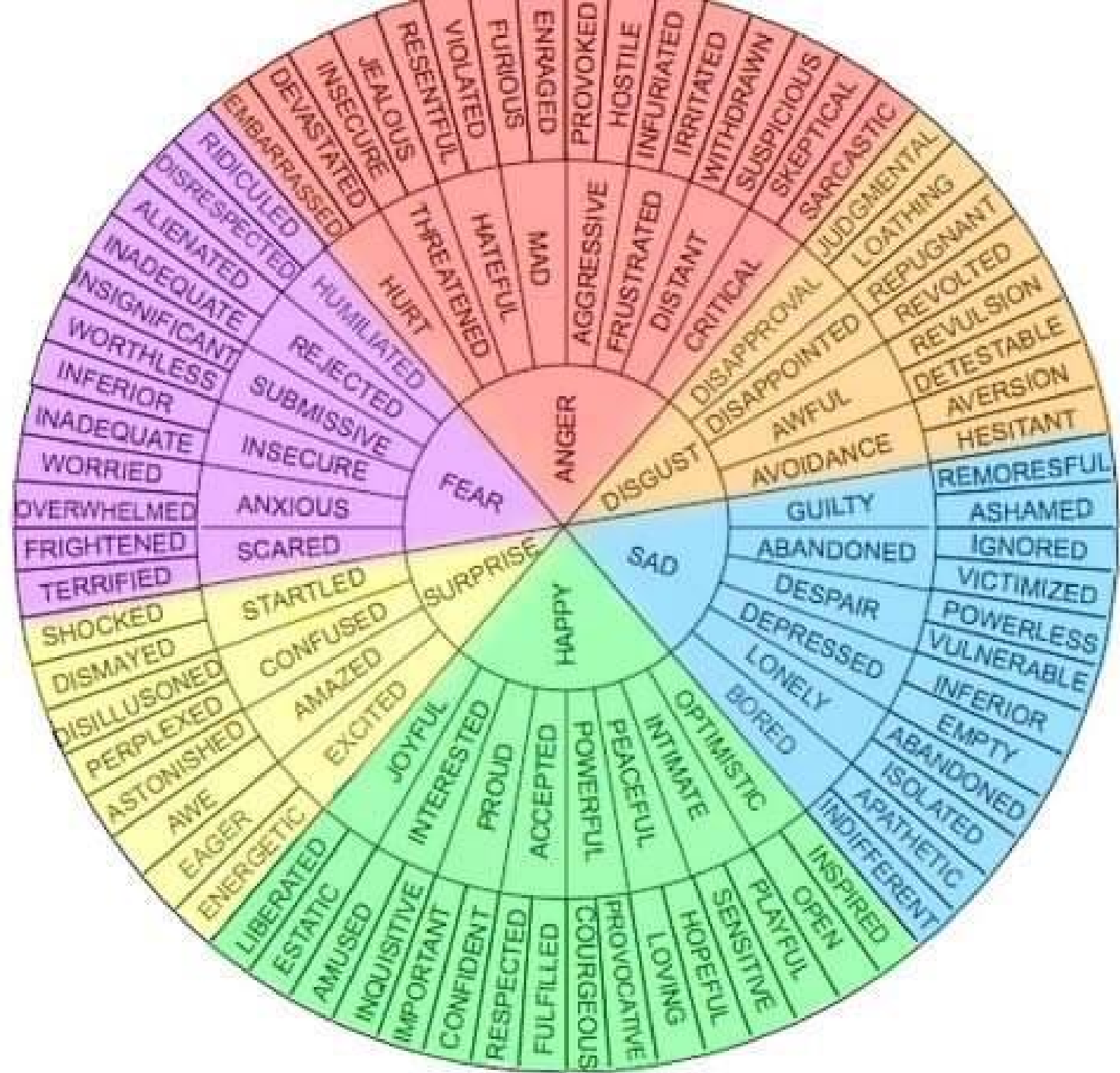
Angie pretends to be sick to get out of anything school related...

- Set up a meeting with your child's teacher(s)
- Start to gather information concerning the underlying cause of your child's behaviors
- Try using emotional literacy techniques at home



1. Prepare for the parent-teacher meeting
2. Initiate the parent-teacher meeting (**Be Proactive!**)
3. Collect information **INDIVIDUALLY/TOGETHER**

In _____ School Subject		I feel...	This means...	Here are some examples:
4		frustrated, annoyed, angry <hr/> <i>(add your own)</i>	What I am learning is too hard. I might not be able to make it. <hr/> <i>(add your own)</i>	
3		challenged, interested, positive <hr/> <i>(add your own)</i>	What I am learning takes extra effort, but I can handle it. <hr/> <i>(add your own)</i>	
2		confident, sure of myself <hr/> <i>(add your own)</i>	What I am learning is just right for me. <hr/> <i>(add your own)</i>	
1		bored, annoyed, distracted <hr/> <i>(add your own)</i>	What I am learning is too easy for me. <hr/> <i>(add your own)</i>	



How This Might Look...

Communicate with One Another

- Avoid BLAME.
- Share the information you've gathered and listen. The teacher(s) might have a DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE!
- Encourage the child to share what he/she is FEELING. This will lead to SELF-ADVOCACY in the future.
- Stay focused and narrow down the ISSUE.



3. Collect information **INDIVIDUALLY/TOGETHER**
4. Isolate the problem/area of need **TOGETHER**

How This Might Look...

Collaborate on a Plan

- Come to consensus on the issue
- Brainstorm possible solutions
- Create a plan!
 - *Meaningful Engagement Plan*

5. Identify the problem/area of need **TOGETHER**
6. Generate solutions **TOGETHER**
7. Form a plan **TOGETHER**

Brainstorm Ideas

Use the Collaboration Guide to brainstorm solutions and create a plan together.

COLLABORATION GUIDE

Identifying the Issue

When I am asked to _____ (fill in task/work/activity), I feel _____.

I feel _____ for these reasons:

Brainstorming Possible Solutions

For **Behavioral** Engagement:

I would want to participate in _____ if:

Write at least one idea that would help with this:

For **Emotional** Engagement:

I would feel more connected to _____ if:

Write at least one idea that would help with this:

For **Cognitive** Engagement:

I would want to give my best effort to _____ if:

Write at least one idea that would help with this:

A Sample Plan

Create a Meaningful Engagement Plan

After brainstorming solutions, help the child complete the Meaningful Engagement Plan, which helps the child understand why he is intrinsically motivated to try this idea.

MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT PLAN

This week I will try this idea:	Reading a book that is harder and more interesting.
I want to try this idea because...	I want to like in-class reading time and become a stronger reader.
This is how I plan to try this idea...	I will talk to my parents and teacher about things that I like, so they can help pick better books for me. I will give the new book a chance and if I still am not happy with in-class reading, I will tell my teacher and parents.
My teacher(s) will support me by...	My teacher will listen to the things I like to read about and use the tests I have taken to come up with books for me.
My parent(s) will support me by...	My parents will also listen and help my teacher pick books for me.
This should happen if I try this idea...	I should be happy during in-class reading time, finish the new book, and do well on the test I take on the book.

Child Signature _____

Parent Signature _____

Teacher Signature _____

Use the Collaboration Guide to brainstorm solutions and create a plan together.

How This Might Look...

- Determine how you will know progress is being made.
- Establish “check-ins” with teachers and your child.
- Meet again and revise as needed.

Monitor Progress
Set checkpoints to ensure the child is on the path to reaching the goal he set and to determine if adjustments need to be made.

PROGRESS MONITORING CHART		
I want to participate in _____ now.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Why:
I feel connected to _____ now.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Why:
I want to give my best effort to _____ now.	<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	Why:

8. Evaluate process and progress **TOGETHER**
9. Follow-up on the situation **INDIVIDUALLY/TOGETHER**
- 10 Meet again as needed **TOGETHER**

We Need to Help Our Children Advocate Too...



Rationale for Self-Advocacy

- Students don't typically know *how to ask*, *don't know what to ask for*, *don't even know that they can ask* (Douglas, 2004).
- Self-advocacy is about encouraging self-confidence, independence, and empowerment



This might be hard to believe...

But as children get older and become more independent, they tend to not want their parents to ask for things for them.

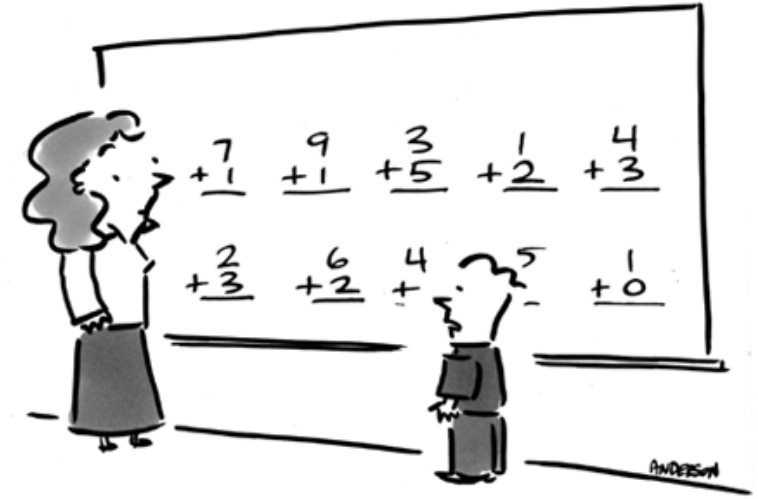


This might be hard to believe...

They may **TRY** to self-advocate in school to **no** avail.

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"All I'm saying is we plug these into Excel, let it do its thing, and then we can all play until lunch!"



THEY CAN TRANSPORT MY **BODY** TO SCHOOL, BUT THEY CAN'T CHAIN MY **SPIRIT**! MY SPIRIT ROAMS FREE! WALLS CAN'T CONFIN IT! LAWS CAN'T RESTRAIN IT! AUTHORITY HAS NO POWER OVER IT!



WATTERSON
1:30



With That Said...

- They still need *OUR HELP*.
- Although self-advocacy has to be the work of the *INDIVIDUAL*, we need to help teach children how to effectively *COMMUNICATE* and to realize and share their interests, *NEEDS*, and rights (Douglas, 2004).



We Want Our Kids To...

- Know Their Rights
- Know Themselves
- Know What Their Options Are
- Know How to Ask for What They Need

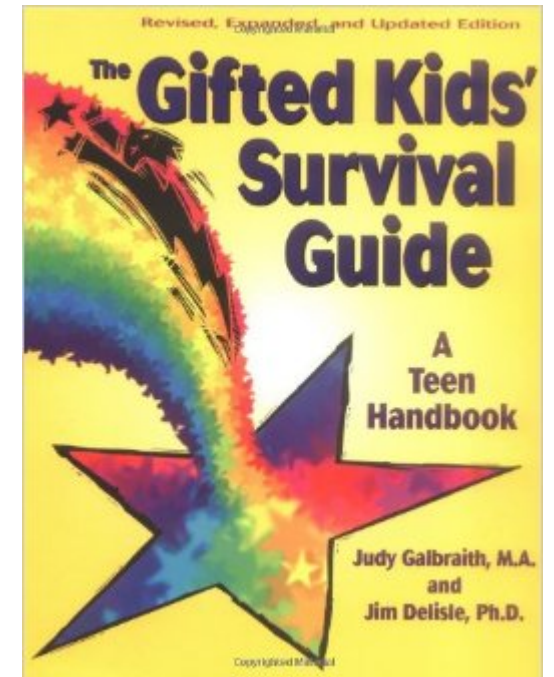
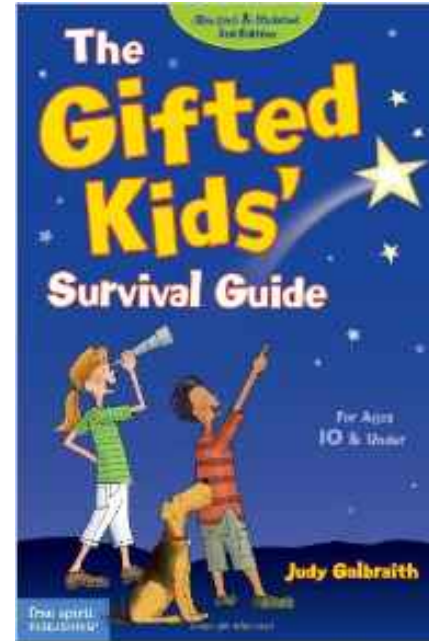


Self-Advocacy:
Know Yourself,
Know What You
Need, Know How
to Get It

Table the past and future. Focus on the present. What can I do today, now?

Help Them Know Their Rights

- **TALK** to your children about self-advocacy. **EXPLAIN** what it is.
- Give them *The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide* by Judy Galbraith (*There is also a teen version*)
 - **Tab pages** that connect to what is currently bothering them.
 - **Talk to them** about what they read.



Help Them Know Their Rights

- Ask the school for copies of your district's mission statement, goals, gifted education plan, and state mandates for gifted education (*you can also find this information on the web!*)
- Share the “Gifted Children’s Bill of Rights.”



Gifted Children's
Bill of Rights

You have a right . . .

- 1 . . . to know about your giftedness.
- 2 . . . to learn something new every day.
- 3 . . . to be passionate about your talent area without apologies.
- 4 . . . to have an identity beyond your talent area.
- 5 . . . to feel good about your accomplishments.
- 6 . . . to make mistakes.
- 7 . . . to seek guidance in the development of your talent.
- 8 . . . to have multiple peer groups and a variety of friends.
- 9 . . . to choose which of your talent areas you wish to pursue.
- 10 . . . not to be gifted at everything.

—Del Siegle
2007–2009 MAGC President

Help Them Know Who They Are

What makes him/her unique?

- Share gifted characteristics charts;
- How he/she got identified gifted;
- What people saw in him/her that began the identification process
 - Encourage them to informally interview people to collect data



Help Them Know Who They Are

What is he/she interested in?

- Your child can simply rank his/her school subjects by interest and describe the best learning experience he/she ever had, list the things that made it so enjoyable;
- Take interest inventories.

Two Tips

- Nonprofit educational organizations are often the most reliable sources for assessments/inventories.
- Do the assessments yourself! This could lead to a great discussion with your child!

Help Them Know Who They Are

What are his/her strengths?

Interview your child...

- What are your strongest academic subjects? Why?
- What parts of your personality do you like the best? Why?
- Would others say this is a realistic view of your strengths? Why or why not?
- Are there strengths that others see that you don't see? Tell me more about this.

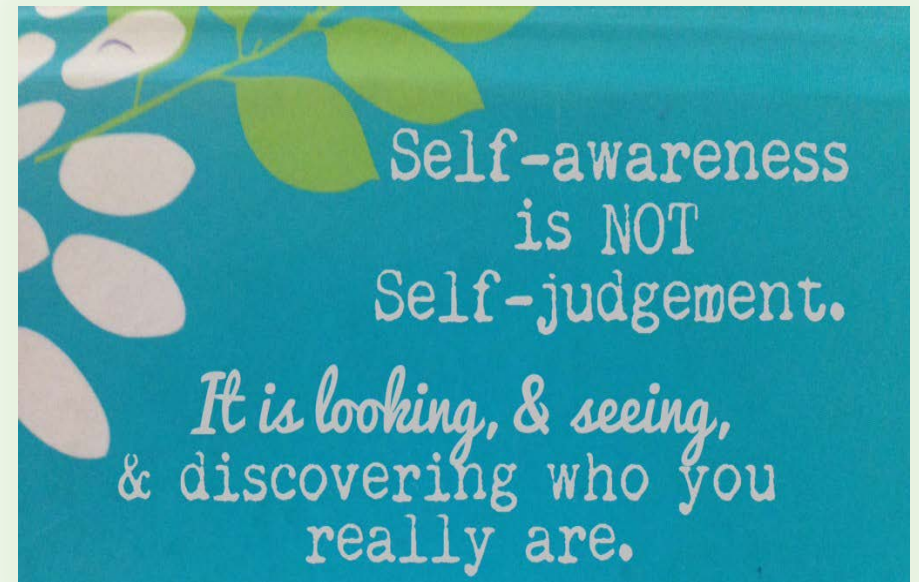


Help Them Know Who They Are

What are his/her areas of need?

Interview your child...

- Which subjects do you struggle most with? Why?
- What parts of your personality would you want to improve? Why?
- Would others say this is a realistic view of your needs? Why or why not?
- Are there other needs you might have that others see that you don't see? Tell me more about this.



Help Them Know Their Options

- Students need to be **AWARE** of the opportunities that exist within the school district and their community.



- Advanced Placement
- IB courses
- Classroom enrichment
- Subject and grade-based acceleration
- Independent study
- Mentorships
- Summer programs
- Service-learning projects
- Concurrent enrollment, ETC.

Help Them Know Their Options

- Brainstorm research-based **STRATEGIES** with them that might be available at their school.
- Work **TOGETHER** to ensure what they want to ask for is reasonable and **FEASIBLE**.



- Curriculum compacting
- Independent investigations
- More challenging readings work
- Enrichment
- Anchor activities
- Bibliotherapy
- Affective discussion groups (maybe during lunch), etc.

Help Them Know *How* to Ask for What They Need

- Read and discuss Galbraith and Delisle's, "*Ten Tips for Talking to Teachers*" with your child.
- At the beginning of the school year, ask your child to write a letter to his/her teacher(s) sharing needs, concerns, strengths.

We Want to **AVOID** this



Help Them Know How to Ask for What They Need

- Role play respectful adult-child interaction
- Keep the other adults in your child's life **INFORMED**. It takes a village to raise a child!!! We all need to work **TOGETHER!**



Self-Advocacy Travels Beyond the Self...

- “Rippling often happens unintentionally... We never fully realize the **POWER** we have to **IMPACT** others’ lives in a positive way.” (Jim Webb)
- We can positively influence the *actions of others* through *our actions*.



Strategies for You

- If needed, give yourself a “time out” when you get frustrated.
- Always remember... *I can't control your actions, but I can control my reaction.*
- Keep in mind that *awareness* is **not** the same as blame. The latter is **not** productive.

Don't forget to put your oxygen mask on first!



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