

Talented and Gifted

Checklist of Characteristics of Underachievers

When you have an identified TAG student who is underachieving, it's important to recognize the characteristics and find strategies to support the student as a learner.

The most common characteristics and patterns of underachievement include:

- A very high IQ
- Poor work habits
- A seeming inability to concentrate
- Lack of effort in tasks
- An intense interest in one particular area
- Frequently unfinished work
- A low self esteem
- Demonstrations of emotional frustration
- Negative attitudes towards self and peers
- A skill deficit in at least one subject area
- Inattentiveness to task at hand
- Failure to respond to motivation by usual teacher techniques

Because of continual failures in some areas, underachieving gifted students tend to exhibit either of two basic behavior patterns: **aggressive** or **withdrawn**.

Aggressive behavior pattern	Withdrawal behavior pattern
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stubborn refusal to comply with requests • Attention seeking • Disruption of others • Continual rejection of set work • Absence of self-direction in decision making • Continual alienation of peers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of communication • Fantasy world • Working alone • Little in-class work undertaken • Little attempt made to justify behavior

Factors Influencing Underachievement

It is important to determine the causes of underachievement in order to alleviate the problem. Some are listed here:

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical • Physical • Perfectionism • A desire to fit in • Emotional status (grief, separation) • Low self esteem | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pressure to conform • Perceptions of peers towards the individual • Expectations (of self and others) • A feeling of powerlessness • Lack of autonomy |
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Some Useful Strategies

1. **Developing control of learning**
 - ✓ Realistic goal setting
 - ✓ Appropriate classroom environments
2. **Providing an opportunity to perform**
 - ✓ By increased stimulation and complexity
 - ✓ By meta-cognitive training
3. **Encouraging positive relationships**
 - ✓ Faster risk taking
 - ✓ Co-operation and collaboration is encouraged