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a note from the editor

Ice hockey legend Wayne Gretzky once said, "You miss 100% of the shots you don't take." In this issue, each author took a shot at being published by pitching their article idea to *PHP* directly. Some attended the NAGC21 session *THP* editor Jeff Danielian and I led about how to get published at NAGC. Others inquired via email or reached out to a member of the Parent Editorial Content & Advisory Board.

Regardless, it took courage for these authors to step outside their comfort zones, test their ideas, write their articles, and open themselves to critique. I congratulate these authors for taking a risk and reaping the reward of having their work published.

Similarly, as parents and caregivers of gifted and talented children, we need to step out of our comfort zones each day to advocate for our children's needs in home and at school. And we continually need new advocates and new voices to join our community to continue our important work.

So, starting today, what can you do to take the shot you've been considering, but hesitant to do so? Whether it's pitching an idea to *PHP*, advocating for your child in the classroom, speaking out at a school board meeting, asking other parents to join a support group, or contacting your legislators, you won't succeed unless you try. Take the shot…it'll be worth it.

Kathleen Nilles
Editor-in-Chief



Using Bibliotherapy to Support the Learning and Social-Emotional Needs of Diverse Gifted Children

By Stephen T. Schroth, Ph.D., and Ocie Watson-Thompson, Ed.D.

Gifted children often have cognitive and social and emotional needs that are different from those of their age-peers. Gifted children from diverse backgrounds—children of color, English language learners (ELLs), and students from low-SES homes—have cognitive and social and emotional needs that are different still. Fortunately, parents, families, and others interested in supporting the diverse gifted learner's cognitive and social and emotional development may use children's literature focusing on diverse characters as a means of helping their children adjust, cope, and thrive in the world in which they live. Below we detail some ways to help diverse gifted children better understand their giftedness, with children's literature recommendations (see page 20) to help them explore further.

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Diverse Gifted Learners

Diverse gifted learners exhibit some or all of the characteristics and needs that all gifted children share:[1]

- Rapid learning rates
- Understanding complex and abstract concepts
- Surpassing agemates in basic skills
- Advanced verbal abilities
- Using advanced thinking, processing, and problem-solving skills
- Intense interest in certain areas of academic work
- A well-developed memory
- High degree of motivation
- Insight and flexibility in thought processes
- Viewing the world with insight, inquiry, and reasoning
- An ability to deal with advanced symbol systems

Meeting Needs at Home and in the Classroom

These characteristics result in educational needs that age-peers might not have, but which can be met in the classroom using numerous strategies, including:[2]

- Exposure to new and challenging information
- Pacing based on their learning rates
- The prospect of designing and using conceptual frameworks in information gathering and problem-solving
- Access to challenging curriculum and peers who operate at their intellectual level
- Opportunities to share ideas verbally and in depth
- Exposure to ideas at an individual rate
- An introduction to varied subjects and concerns
- The chance to pursue individual ideas as far as their interest takes them
- Exposure to new and challenging information about the environment and culture, including aesthetic, economic, social, and political aspects
- Extended timeframes that allow them to pursue inquiries beyond typically allotted time
- Permission to solve problems in diverse and unique ways
- Activities that build skills in problem-solving and productive thinking
- Exposure to alternatives, abstractions, consequences of choices, and opportunities to draw generalizations and to test them
- Exposure to meaningful problems where they have an opportunity to contribute to real solutions

In addition, diverse gifted children can exhibit some of the following characteristics: unusual communication skills; lack of familiarity with the conceptual, procedural, and tacit demands of a rigid curriculum; collaborative, rather than competitive learning preferences; tradition, heritage, and beliefs that cause

(Continues on p. 18)



STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT DIVERSE GIFTED LEARNERS' NEEDS

1. **Family outreach, mentorships, and inclusion of individuals with backgrounds similar to those of the students.**
2. **Explicit instruction regarding concepts, procedures, and expectations of curriculum.**
3. **Opportunity to work with peers in groups; assignments that allow all to succeed rather than compete.**
4. **Hands-on learning experiences and a chance to express their finished products in a manner that reflects their backgrounds.**
5. **Family outreach and modifications necessary to enable students to adjust to a new style of teaching; opportunities to see their own culture reflected in the curriculum and through individuals and mentors who present material at the school.**
6. **Opportunities to engage in additional skill training and support to make up for deficiencies in prior knowledge.**

Using Mindfulness Strategies to Reduce Perfectionism

By Pamela M. Peters

It is common to hear parents of gifted children talk about their child's "obsession" with doing things perfectly, or their child's dissatisfaction with their performance at school, at home, or when engaged with a project of their own choosing. Parents want to support their children, but often have no clear strategy for helping them get past these feelings. Researchers recently conducted a six-week mindfulness intervention with gifted middle school students who had these perfectionistic tendencies.[1] They found increases in mindfulness and decreases in perfectionism after the intervention was complete and again five weeks later. This aligns with past research that supports building mindfulness as a strategy to decrease perfectionism.

While we cannot replicate the intervention done with these middle school students exactly, we can encourage mindfulness in our children. Mindfulness is intentionally paying attention to the present while being nonjudgmental and curious. The intervention used in this study included lessons on acknowledging your thoughts, identifying and experiencing your emotions, being kind to yourself, and more. As parents, we can model ourselves being mindful and encourage our children to do the same. We can talk about our feelings, acknowledge our own experiences, and ask them about theirs. We can be explicit when we are being kind to ourselves, showing them that it is okay to do something less than perfectly. If we normalize these mindfulness strategies, our children will start to use them.

Pamela M. Peters is a doctoral student at the University of Connecticut pursuing a degree in Educational Psychology in Gifted Education, Creativity, & Talent Development and Research Methods, Measurement, & Evaluation.

Endnotes

[1] Olton-Weber, S., Hess, R., & Ritchotte, J. A. (2020). Reducing levels of perfectionism in gifted and talented youth through a mindfulness intervention. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 6,* 319–330.



Resources for Practicing Mindfulness at Home and In School

By Michele Kane, Ed.D.

Research indicates that mindfulness helps individuals develop necessary tools to respond to stressful and anxiety-causing situations. Plus, mindfulness practices enhance executive functions like planning, organization, and self-regulation.

Delve into these robust resources for strategies, tools, and activities on mindfulness—and give some of these suggestions a try at home and in school. Many of the tools are easily accessed and can be implemented quickly.

Print

Books For Parents

Breathe through This: Mindfulness for Parents of Teenagers by Eline Snell (2014)

Mindful Parenting: Simple and Powerful Solutions for Raising Creative, Engaged, Happy Kids in Today's Hectic World by Kristin Race (2013)

10 Mindful Minutes: Giving Our Children—and Ourselves—the Social and Emotional Skills to Reduce Stress and Anxiety for Healthier, Happier Lives by Goldie Hawn (2011)

Books For Educators

Educating Mindfully: Stories of School Transformation Through Mindfulness by Tracy Heilers, Tim Iverson, and Barbara Larrivee (Eds.) (2020)

Mindful Classrooms: Daily 5-Minute Practices to Support Social-Emotional Learning by James Butler (2019)

The Way of Mindful Education: Cultivating Well-Being in Teachers and Students by Daniel Rechtschaffen (2015)



Books For Children

Info & Tools

Alphabreaths: The ABCs of Mindful Breathing by Christopher Willard & Daniel Rechtschaffen (2019)

Mindfulness for Young Adults: Tools to Thrive in School and Life by Linda Yaron Weston (2021)

The Mindful Teen: Powerful Skills to Help You Handle Stress One Moment at a Time by Dzung X. Vo (2015)

Hands-On Activities

Sitting Still Like a Frog Activity Book: 75 Mindfulness Games for Kids by Eline Snell (2019)

The Gifted Kids Workbook: Mindfulness Skills to Help Children Reduce Stress, Balance Emotions & Build Confidence by Heather Boorman (2018)

The Mindfulness Journal for Kids: Guided Writing Prompts to Help You Stay Calm, Positive, and Present by Hannah Sherman (2020)

Peer-Reviewed Articles

Kowalske, K., & Bloom, L. (2018). Mindfulness in the middle school classroom: Strategies to target social and emotional well-being of gifted students. *Gifted Education International, 34* (2), 181–192.

Olton-Weber, S., Hess, R., & Richotte, J. (2020). Reducing levels of perfectionism in gifted and talented youth through a mindfulness intervention. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 64*(4). 319–330.

Sharp, J., Niemiec, R., & Lawrence, C. (2017). Using mindfulness-based strengths practices with gifted populations. *Gifted Education International, 33*(2), 131–144.

Sisk, D. (2021). Managing the emotional intensities of gifted students with mindfulness practices. *Education Sciences, 11,* 731.

Digital

Apps

Center for Healthy Minds, https://hminnovations.org/meditation-app

Finding Focus (teens), https://www.findingfocus.app/

Jabu Mind (teachers), https://jabumind.com/

Stop, Breath & Think Kids (ages 5-10), https://kidsapp.stopbreathethink.com/parent

Audio Books

Kids Sleep Meditations: Mindfulness Meditations for Children to Fall Asleep. (n.d.). Mindfulness Habits Team.

Mindful Parent, Mindful Child: Simple Mindfulness Practices for Busy Parents. Susan Kaiser Greenland (2019)

Podcasts

Search "Mindfulness Podcasts for Children" or "Podcasts on Mindfulness"—many to choose from!

Videos (Search for these titles)

Balloon (Peace Out: Guided Meditation for Kids) Cosmic Kids

Mindfulness in Education to Lower Stress and Violence | Adam Avin | TEDxYouth@KC

Peace of Mind, https://teachpeaceofmind.org/video-library/

Stressed Teens (mindful moments videos led by a teen), https://www.stressedteens.com/mindful-moments-video-series

Virtual Learning Lab, https://educationaladvancement.org/blog-virtual-learning-lab-mindfulness-exploration/

Websites

Coalition of Schools Educating Mindfully, https://www.educatingmindfully.org

Mindfulness Without Borders, https://mindfulnesswithoutborders.org/

Peace of Mind-Curriculum, https://teachpeaceofmind.org/

Still Quiet Place (see work on mindfulness for athletes), https://stillquietplace.com/

Michele Kane, Ed.D., is currently working with Dorothy Sisk, Ph.D., on a new book, Mindfulness: The Great Enabler for Parents & Teachers—Ways to Promote a New Way of Being *(2022, Royal Fireworks Press).*

Connecting with Your Teenage Gifted Child

By Christine Cheesman, Ed.D.

I had a conference with my son's pre-kindergarten teacher who had some concerns. My son was singing the alphabet out of order and in Spanish. He said it was because he could. In kindergarten, he was eligible for grade acceleration, but was declined because he had messy handwriting. In third grade, he failed an assignment for responding in writing to a question with, *"This is redundant. Look at page 6."* In middle school he applied to and was accepted to a magnet school. He declined, stating he'd rather be with his friends. Fast forward to high school where he joined Model United Nations, the wrestling team, cross country, took advanced classes, and had an amazing friend network. Imagine the surprise when finding a note he wrote about not wanting to live. We sought help, he seemed ok. Then, during the height of the pandemic, he had to be hospitalized for depression and suicidal ideation.



Now? He's thriving. A senior, accepted to college. Still great friends. A supportive girlfriend. A mentor on the wrestling mat. Holds two jobs and is still in advanced classes.

I am haunted often with the questions: What did we miss as parents? How did our precocious son go from "redundant" to ready to end his life? Here's what: we didn't miss anything. Mental wellness is not an at-fault situation.

While research indicates that gifted adolescents are no more likely to commit suicide than other teens,[1] researchers have found that gifted students feel emotions more intensely than neurotypical peers.[2] That means they may feel more intensely and for longer periods of time than their classmates. Given these intensities, what can you do you do as a parent?

1. **Be present for your gifted child.** Maybe it's in the car on the way to school or practice. You can talk to them, they may not say much, but they are listening! Join a group such as Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG) for parent support. Your state gifted association or a local psychologist might also host parent support events. Your child's school counselor, psychologist, or social worker might be willing to work with you to start one in your school.

2. **Talk to your child's teachers, coaches, scout leaders, or others who spend time with your child.** Do they see a change in your child? Is there a favorite teacher or other adult that can connect with your child? We often included coaches and teachers to help us as parents.

3. **Be friends with your child's friends.** They may be the first to know if anything is amiss. I came home several times to a room full of teens hanging out with mine because he had cut off his social media accounts.



FEELINGS OF ISOLATION CONTRIBUTE TO ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION

Throughout the pandemic, gifted students report elevated levels of disconnect to school, lack of motivation and difficulty engaging in online learning.[1] These feelings of isolation can become contributing factors to increased anxiety and depression.[2] Additionally, teens report being more aware of political and global issues while feeling external pressure and no clear way to solve perceived problems, again adding to feelings of anxiety and depression.[3]

Endnotes

[1] Sibley, M., Ortiz, M., Gaias, L., Reyes, R., Joshi, M., Alexander, D., & Graziano, P. (2021, April). Top problems of adolescents and young adults with ADHD during the COVID-19 pandemic. *Journal of Psychiatric Research,* 136, 190–197.

[2] Sibley, et al. (2021, April).

[3] Kerr, B., Birdnow, M., Wright, J. D., & Fiene, S. (2021). They saw it coming: Rising trends in depression, anxiety, and suicidality in creative students and potential impact of the COVID-19 crisis. **https://www.frontiersin.org/ articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.611838/full**

4 **Listen.** When your child comes to you, ask them: *Is this something where you want advice, or is it just a listening problem?* This has worked for us so much! Sometimes teens want an ear, sometimes they want advice. Starting the conversation with this question helps give them the door they need.

5 **Respect them.** They are learning to navigate feelings on their terms. Be a support, do not invade privacy—unless you are truly worried about their safety. Again, hear them. They are feeling so much and trying to grow in emotional and social ways. As parents we often feel we know best, but we need to allow our children space to grow and learn.[3]

6 **Be together.** Walk the dog, watch a show, take out the trash, cook. Do something with your teen. My teen can quote stats and lay out player names and positions for football. I only follow one team. We spend playoff weekends camped out on the sofa yelling at the television for whatever team we are rooting for.

7 **Give them permission not to talk.** Validate what they are feeling by saying something such as, *"I can see you are not feeling like yourself. You can tell me when you are ready."*

8 **Take time for yourself.** Give yourself space and time, too. This is really hard. Find something, scream, cry, sing to a song. A good shower? Bubble bath? Run? Walk? Meditate? Just be. And, of course, seek professional help for yourself and your family when you feel that you need outside advice or a sounding board.

9 **Know you are doing the best you can,** and that you are a loving parent.

10 **Seek help as needed.** Listen to the trusted adults (the coaches, leaders, teachers mentioned before). Trust them. This is the hard step but can be what is most needed.

My story has a happy ending. And, when my son goes off to college next year, I hope he still texts me daily and checks in. I hope he still talks to his friends.

Practicing respect and concern for all teens is important. Knowing that feelings can deeply affect our gifted youth, it is important for us as parents to be a support system for our teens, and not feel overwhelmed.

Resources

Davidson Institute: Social and Emotional Resources, www.davidsongifted.org

GT Discover: Social and Emotional Information for Families, www.gtdiscover.org/families/social--emotional-information



National Association for Gifted Children, www.nagc.org

National Suicide Prevention Hotline, 800-273-8255

Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted, www.sengifted.org

Author's Note

Christine Cheesman, Ed.D., is an elementary assistant principal in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, and an adjunct faculty member at Austin Peay State University. She earned a bachelor's degree in Psychology from St. Mary's College of Maryland, a master's in School Improvement Leadership from Goucher College and a Doctor of Education from Johns Hopkins University. She is a member of the Maryland Coalition for Gifted and Talented Education and serves as co-chair on its Legislative and Advocacy Committee. Her research focus is gifted education, specifically to enhance teacher understanding of gifted children, supporting the educational, social, and emotional needs of gifted learners, and promoting equity in gifted identification.

Endnotes

[1] Cross, J. R., & Cross T. L., (2015). Clinical and mental health issues in counseling the gifted individual. *Journal of Counseling and Development, 93*(2), 163–172.

[2] Kerr, B., Birdnow, M., Wright, J. D., & Fiene, S. (2021). They saw it coming: Rising trends in depression, anxiety, and suicidality in creative students and potential impact of the COVID-19 crisis. **https://www.frontiersin.org/articles/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.611838/full**

Striley, K. (2014). The stigma of excellence and the dialectic of (perceived) superiority and inferiority: Exploring intellectually gifted adolescents' experiences of stigma. *Communication Studies, 65*(2), 139–153.

[3] Pilarinos, V., & Solomon, C. R. (2017). Parenting styles and adjustment in gifted children. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 61*, 87–98.

Raising A Red Panda

by Jenn Stricklin

It's human nature to classify and organize things. Heck, Japanese organizing consultant Marie Kondo became a phenomenon because of it. We find comfort in knowing where things go and how they fit. For many years people debated the taxonomic classification of pandas. Are they raccoons? Are they bears? For the giant panda we even went so far as to DNA test them to find they are related to bears from 19 million years ago. That seems like a far way to go to find a similarity.

Red pandas, however, do not share that 19-million-year-old ancestor. So, to make them fit somewhere, scientists developed the family Ailuridae. Not a bear, not a weasel or raccoon. The red panda eludes definition and so does my child. My son is a red panda.

When most people think of gifted kids, they think of Hermione from the Harry Potter series. You may find someone who associates "gifted" with someone needing professional help to overcome a tragic backstory and reach their potential as in the movie *Good Will Hunting*. My gifted child is none of the above. He is a square peg in a world of round holes.

From the day he was born, when our son lifted his head and stared at his new doctor, we suspected he might be gifted. My doubts disappeared when a different doctor presented me a printout on the psychological damage of pushing a child faster than they were ready for. It wasn't a pamphlet she had in the office. She purposefully searched for and printed the document just for me. I wasn't sure if I should be angry, honored she put that much effort in, or just laugh.

Under the illusion that we could fend off boredom in school if we resisted actively teaching our son anything, we always let his natural curiosity guide his pace. Then school started. We enrolled him into the preschool of a prestigious charter school in our area. Preschool there was a lukewarm adventure. Suddenly, the child who fit in with *us* was "weird" and didn't fit in. Junior kindergarten was a nightmare.

Every day I would pick up my son and his teacher would roll her eyes and tell me he'd spent time in the "yellow chair," a disciplinary timeout tool I was not aware they used until my son's rear end frequented it daily. The final straw was when she put him into the chair for being over-enthusiastic about a lesson. They were studying the solar system and my *Magic School Bus* addict was so excited to share what he knew. Instead of encouraging my then four-year-old, or trying to redirect his energy, this woman yelled at my son and dragged him to the chair of shame. I was skeptical of his account until her assistant confirmed my son's story. I contacted the school and told them I would be immediately withdrawing my son.

> "If you've met one gifted child, you've met one gifted child."

His next couple of teachers were incredible but he struggled to fit into a normal classroom setting. We considered homeschool where he could just be himself, but he is very social, and we felt he would benefit from daily social interactions with his peers. World changers are rarely those that conform but we told him if he were going to stay in school with other kids he had to conform at least a little. His lack of executive function and complete disregard for linear time made even a small amount of conformity difficult.

Our son had scores that were accepted as gifted on the cognitive test the district used for gifted identification. However, the test was administered in a group setting despite us asking if he could be tested alone and his scores were lower than we expected. The gifted facilitator (GF) and the school determined he was gifted in math only. He ended up having daily sessions with the school's behavior



coach—not because he was violent or mean, but because he was impulsive, emotional, and disruptive to the rest of the class. The school scheduled daily pull-outs to learn how to regulate his passion, but only 30 minutes a week for accelerated math that didn't replace the repetitive math he did in the classroom.

Multiple people surreptitiously tried to suggest we "have him checked." The implication being for ADHD and autism. His wonderful teacher, who thought 30-minute pull-outs were insufficient, thought he needed more and suggested he might qualify for the district-provided immersive gifted program.

I put together a body of evidence to submit with our application to the district's program. Imagine my surprise when another staff member informed me the GF was not going to recommend my son because he "was not gifted enough." We immediately had him IQ tested through an outside psychologist, which we were fortunate to be able to pay for out of pocket. While I was told the results could take up to a week, the test administrator was so excited she ran the numbers before we even left her office. My son tested in the >99.9%.

The problem was that the GF and others at that school expected a *Young Sheldon,* a genetic anomaly they would gently guide to a college commencement speech at 14 where the Sheldon thanked them for assisting him, and his country-bumpkin parents, in navigating the world of giftedness. They were not expecting a visual-spatial child whose brain never stops. A child who absorbs everything like a sponge and puts connections together faster than anyone I have ever met. A child who will spend four hours making me Google information on siphonophores. The one who wakes me up at 3:30 a.m. to ask me if other planets' gravity can slingshot gamma rays to protect our planet like Jupiter's gravity flings asteroids. (I responded, *"Um, I don't know, let's look it up tomorrow... WAIT will it help you sleep better if I say yes?"*) The GF insisted my red panda be a bear or a raccoon. They were not willing to see something different. They didn't see him.

Unfortunately, there are no universally accepted definitions of gifted, highly gifted, profoundly gifted, or "OMGHOWARETHEY THATSMART gifted," so finding a challenging, yet nurturing environment must be won the hard way. My son has sensory issues; however, he doesn't currently have a diagnosis that qualifies for accommodations in our state. While I am under no illusions about how much more difficult it would be if he did have a disability, I admit there are times I almost wish he did so I could get more support for managing his quirks. In the end, all I can do is continue to advocate, volunteer to advocate for others, and love and accept my amazing Ailuridae for who he is. Not a bear. Not a raccoon. Someone who defies classification.

Author's Note

Jenn Stricklin is the mom of two amazing, creative, and definitely not boring children. Jenn is the former editor of the Saint Louis Area Mensa newsletter and the Denver Mensa Area newsletter as well as having written for numerous other publications. She currently volunteers as an advocate for gifted children.



Advocating for Your Gifted Teen's College Readiness

By Kim Stephenson, Ed.S.

As the parent of four academically advanced teens and young adults, I found advocating for my children's high school involvement made a difference in their college readiness. It is true that as an educator I may have been more attuned to their academic opportunities in high school; however, it should not be that way. All parents should feel empowered to advocate for and help guide their children through college readiness in partnership with their school.

One of my daughters is a nurse, another is finishing college as a finance major. My oldest son is midway through his college engineering program, and the youngest is finishing high school as a senior with multiple college offerings and scholarships on the table. I have found in talking with fellow parents the need for more understanding of how college readiness works and where to start. After all, grades are not all that makes a difference in preparing students for college success.

Based on my experience, here are five tips for helping to advocate for your gifted teen's college readiness:

Establish A Relationship with the High School Counselor

Your child's high school counselor holds valuable information and establishing a relationship with them can be an important way to navigate the college readiness process. When I was in high school, I did not know who my counselor was, what scholarships were, the impact of a GPA, or even what the ACT was. I was flying solo, and with working parents who did not earn bachelor's degrees, I had to figure out academia independently. Our high school counselors were disciplinarians.

As a parent, building a relationship with the high school counselor can help your child find out about programming

opportunities, how to study for standardized tests, get recommendation letters for college applications, connect with college recruiters, gain college funding opportunities, and more. A helpful counselor is worth their weight in gold. If they usually are only tasked with dealing with discipline issues, they may welcome your interest in college preparation as an alternative way to help students.

Seek Out Specialized Programming Opportunities

Specialized programming opportunities abound but are not always accessed. High schools have specialized programming such as Advanced Placement, dual enrollment, honors classes, specialized academies such as health or engineering academies, clubs, honor societies, Model UN, robotics, or speech and debate. Students can even earn early college credit through summer programs at universities or online options. Sometimes announcements of the opportunities are missed through a lack of effective recruiting or school-to-home communication. At other times, students may have heard of the possibilities to participate, but they are not familiar with them and may not ask questions to find out more.

As parents, preparing our children includes teaching them how to ask questions and advocate for themselves. Unsure students often will not step out to ask questions because they do not want to seem unintelligent. However, modeling the questioning process with their counselors or school helps them make a difference in their paths. Find out about all the opportunities your child's school offers and sit down with them to discuss where your child's talents and interests could be pursued further.

Investigate Leadership and Community Programs

Be aware of leadership and community programs outside the school in which your child can participate. Most high schools have internal leadership opportunities to fill an essential portion of their resume for college acceptance. Student government associations, honor societies, ROTC, and clubs like Civitan (service), or Mu Alpha Theta (math), can be excellent experiences to help others, gain leadership skills, and participate in governance.

Also, look out for local leadership programs outside of the school. County or state youth leadership programs are created to build the future leaders of tomorrow. Leadership institutes are also available in academics, character training, and even sports. Each of these programs will help your child explore their love of leadership or grow invaluable life skills they will need in navigating the college and career market.



Encourage Resiliency with Standardized Testing

Unfortunately, standardized testing is a beast that must be reckoned with for many college entrances and scholarships. Whether your child is looking at the SAT or the ACT for college entrance scores or scholarship applications, the importance of resiliency and reflection will help them navigate this often-necessary process. Your help in preparing and encouraging your child while helping to alleviate their stress can be a game-changer.

As a high school student, I was not aware of what the ACT was or that my performance on it could (not only) get me into a college but also get a lot of scholarship money from it. I just took it because I heard my friends saying they were taking it, and I knew what the minimum score needed for my college was. Once I got back that score, which was above the college's entrance need, I did nothing further.

When students take the ACT or SAT for the first time, they are only getting used to the format, the timing, and the testing environment. They may do fine, but the results do not necessarily reflect what they are capable of doing. Parents can help their children focus on procedural elements of the test, such as whether leaving a question blank does not count against them or if it is better to make an educated guess, get used to being timed through practice tests, or diving deep into improving test content sections through tutoring or test prep classes. Taking the ACT or SAT multiple times can give them the practice they need to feel comfortable taking the test and improve where they need to.

Helping your child look at their strengths and weaknesses in their past testing can also allow them to see where

(Continues on p. 14)

SUCCESS STRATEGIES FOR GIFTED COLLEGE STUDENTS WITH ASD

By Pamela M. Peters

Recent research[1] examined the academic and extracurricular experiences of gifted students with autism spectrum disorder (ASD). They interviewed 40 of these students who were enrolled in or had recently graduated from competitive colleges in the United States and found three major themes. First, these students talked about the importance of advanced content and enriched learning to their success. They also talked about their successes in advanced academics, particularly around topics of interest, as empowering. Most (90%) also reported participating in interest-based, extracurricular activities including sports and clubs. In fact, some students reported founding clubs or taking on leadership roles in clubs that were particularly interesting to them.

These students also discussed the ways they would navigate difficult situations using their intellect and their support systems. The study authors stated, "Many gave credit to their caring and emerging support systems over time, including their parents, teachers, and friends from their past and present, for their academic success." Finally, these students talked about the relationship between their academic talents and ASD. They felt that their understanding of their own patterns of strengths and challenges increased through high school and college and helped them navigate their college years.

Parents of twice-exceptional students are faced with many decisions and conflicting messages. Do we focus on strengths or challenges? Will academic rigor increase stress? What does my child need? For these 40 students, family/adult/peer support, academic challenge, and developing understanding of their own abilities were important factors in their success. As parents, we can consider this as we make decisions for our children. This article is open access, which means it is available for anyone to read using this link: **https://rdcu.be/cGiux.**

Endnote

[1] Reis, S. M., Gelbar, N. W., & Madaus, J. W. (2021). Understanding the academic success of academically talented college students with autism spectrum disorders. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 1–14. Advance online publication. **https://rdcu.be/cGiux**



(Continued from p. 12)

they need to emphasize their time in preparation. This reflection can help your child see content areas they are talented in and reflect on areas of different possible college majors. Finding focus areas will assist in filling out college applications, helping your child gain valuable confidence in their abilities, and knowing where and what type of scholarships to pursue.

Build their Independence and Capacity for Self-Regulation and Executive Functioning

Having a college-ready child means independence and self-regulation will be critical to their success once they have left home. When my children were 10, I taught them all how to do their laundry. I made sure they knew how to cook basic meals as they got into their teen years—getting them ready for college includes those types of things, of course, and how to be independent in other ways.

Executive functioning includes decision-making skills and behavioral regulation skills.[1] Self-regulation includes learning how children manage their emotions, handle situations, make choices, and move toward their goals. This starts early with affecting the ability to maintain the little things, like laundry and homework, but grows to include meeting deadlines, handling full schedules, and keeping their grades in check. Soon, it will include supporting their own families and developing their careers. This independence will require learning how to understand their feelings and process their emotions. Getting help in understanding themselves can be vital to their success once they are on their own in college.

Parenting is a daunting task, and we all hope that we have successfully helped our children grow into well-adjusted, kind, and independent individuals. Allowing our children to develop independence is a challenging but necessary product of our efforts as parents. We need our children to grow into adults that know how to problem-solve, regulate themselves to meet their responsibilities, and seek out help when needed. Being an advocate for our high school children's college readiness can go a long way toward helping them start on a successful footing in their next growth phase.

Resources

Scholarships

Jack Kent Cooke Foundation Scholarships, www.jkcf.org

Scholarships 360, https://scholarships360.org

Scholarships for Gifted Students, www.top10onlinecolleges.org/scholarships-for/gifted-students

National Merit Scholarship, www.nationalmerit.org/s/1758/start.aspx?gid=2&pgid=61

National Achievement Scholarship, www.nationalmerit.org/s/1758/interior.aspx?sid=1758&gid=2&pgid=433

Advanced Academics

College Summer Programs for Gifted Students, www.bestcollegereviews.org/features/best-college-programs-gifted-high-school-students

Johns Hopkins Center for Talented Youth, https://cty.jhu.edu/programs

National Association for Gifted Children Planning for Summer, bit.ly/NAGC_summer

Gifted and Talented Resources Directory, bit.ly/NAGCgtresources

Northwestern Center for Talent Development, https://www.ctd.northwestern.edu/programs-grade-9-grade-12

Vanderbilt Programs for Talented Youth, https://pty.vanderbilt.edu

Social Emotional and 2E

Delisle, J. (2018) *Understanding your gifted child from the inside out.* Routledge.

Gifted Today Social-Emotional Blog, https://blogs.tip.duke.edu/giftedtoday/category/socialandemotional

Grugan, M. C., Hill, A. P., & Madigan, D. J. (2021). Perfectionism in academically gifted students: A systematic review. *Educational Psychology Review, 33*(4), 1631–1673.

National Association for Gifted Children. *Supporting twice-exceptional students.* www.nagc.org/supporting-twice-exceptional-students

National Association for Gifted Children *Traits of giftedness* from: Clark, B. (2008). *Growing up gifted* (7th ed.). Pearson Prentice Hall.

Advocacy

National Association for Gifted Children, *Advocate for your child.* bit.ly/3okgC7O

Smutny, J. F., Georgiades, S., & Nilles, K. (2016). *Classroom advocacy.* bit.ly/3FY1brV

Smutny, J. F. (2002). *Communicating effectively with your gifted child's school.* bit.ly/3IyznMh

Author's Note

Kim Stephenson, Ed.S., is an academic director and gifted program director at a K3-12th grade independent school. She specializes in teacher professional development, accreditation, curriculum, and new academic initiatives. She advocated for, and started, the elementary and middle school gifted programs at her school for which she won the NAGC Professional Learning Award in 2019. She is also a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Alabama in Special Education Multiple Abilities where her research focuses on teachers' fostering of creativity in the classroom.

Endnotes

[1] Kircher-Morris, E. (2021). *Teaching twice-exceptional learners in today's classroom.* Free Spirit.

Treat Pushback as an Obstacle to Your Happiness



By Kashvi Ramani

In this issue, *PHP* interviews Kashvi Ramani, a 16-year-old author, actress, and high school sophomore from Loudoun County, Virginia. In 2021, Kashvi wrote and published the *Kofi Chronicles: She's Bubbly, Big-Hearted and Brave*, a novel for students aged 6–12 that celebrates her Indian American heritage and desire to pursue her dream of acting instead of a career in STEM.

PHP: What inspired you to write the *Kofi Chronicles?*

Kashvi: My sister primarily inspired me. Being 10 years old, she has often had a difficult time juggling her interests and figuring herself out. As she voiced her struggles, especially the difference between what she felt she was expected to do and what she wanted to, I was immediately struck by our similarities. Just a few years before, I had had the same worries and felt conflicted in what in my life I should focus on. I realized that to best support her and other young, multi-talented individuals, I had to translate my similar story to the form I knew best: writing! The transition between a desire to help my sister feel supported and drafting the novel felt quick, but, in reality, it took months.

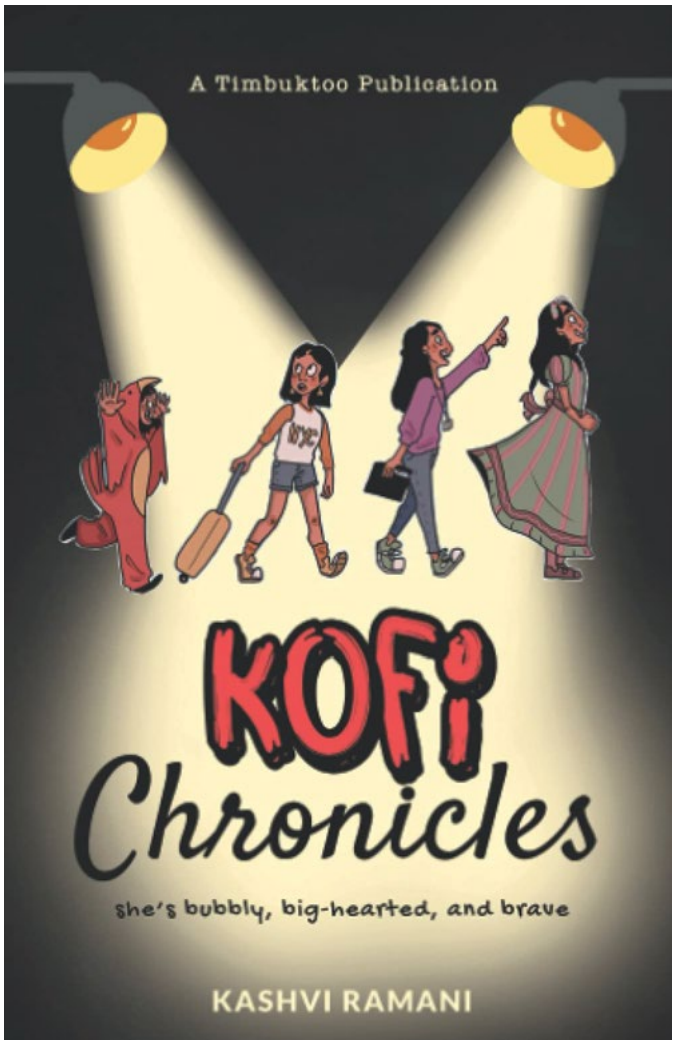
PHP: Tell us a bit about the publishing process: How long did it take you to write the book, how did you come to collaborate with your illustrator Serena Parrish, and how did you print it? Was it tough to stay the course and see the project to fruition (available on Amazon)?

Kashvi: Writing the book was a bit of a wayward process. It began in a journal entry, entirely biographical format, documenting my experiences in a blunt and solemn way. Something was missing in these beginning stages but at 13, I couldn't determine what. Two years later I came back to this original work, realizing that showcasing my creativity by writing a semi-fictional novel was a method I was more comfortable with and one that could better reach my target audience of young students. I churned draft after draft until four months later, I had a piece I was ready to publish.

I first met my wonderful illustrator, Serena, when we were both in a production of *A Christmas Carol* at Ford's Theatre in Washington, DC. She was my carpool buddy and during the long rides to DC I was mesmerized by her art style. I reached out to her when I decided to publish my novel and was relieved when she agreed to assist. Today I can't imagine *Kofi Chronicles* being illustrated by another artist! Afterward, we reached out to the publishing company Timbuktoo as I felt an organization based in

Photo courtesy of Loudoun Now, www.loudounnow.com





India would help the Indian culture roots of this novel feel best represented. Aparna Raman helped the book come to fruition, though even in her capable hands each stage brought worry along with it. What if something falls through? What if my writing isn't good enough? Thankfully, everything came together in the end.

PHP: Within the book, you weave in tidbits about Indian American culture, such as food and customs, while telling the story of Kofi who dreams of becoming an actress in New York. Why is this important?

Kashvi: I think the foundations of Indian culture represented in this novel are some of its most important qualities. Growing up in America, Indian Americans like myself are quick to adapt to the environment here. Many, unfortunately, have had little chance to experience Indian culture at all. Gratefully, I grew up immersed in the traditions of my home country, reading Indian novels, eating Indian food, attending Indian functions, and more. Despite its richness, so many are unaware of who we are as a population and of our history. This was a great reason I wanted to represent my Indian background in the novel; I hoped that it would educate individuals who know less about who we are and what I grew up in. The other reason it is important is because it is a part of who Kofi is. While her dreams are related to the arts and much of the story doesn't revolve Indian culture, that side of her will always be a part of her life. Everything recorded in the novel that includes Indian culture are events, meals, and customs that are a part of my everyday life. And just like Kofi, I wouldn't have it any other way.

PHP: One interesting theme in the book is the fact that Kofi is conflicted between pursuing her passion for creative arts instead of STEM, which might be considered more typical for someone of her background and academic talents. What advice would you give parents of gifted students who want to explore interests and/or careers outside their family's traditional path or expectation?

Kashvi: This idea of career "stability" over true passion is one of the core reasons for writing this novel. Being Indian American, both parental and societal expectations are prevalent, especially when it comes to career choices. My family has always been supportive of my dreams and encouraged me to act on my greatest talents, but many others have not been as lucky. My advice is to treat pushback from family, teachers, or others like an obstacle on your way to happiness. If you want to follow a certain path desperately, then you will do so. This version of your future, where you can amount to everything you want to, is clear and very possible. But the only person who can make that a reality is you. Be passionate, driven, and persistent. Don't let anything get in your way and it won't. Remember, I'll be here cheering you on!

PHP: Research on gifted and talented students indicates that enrichment opportunities outside of school, real-life experiences, and mentorships—explored in a variety of interest areas—are important ways for high-ability children to find their passions in life. How did your experience in acting camp change your life's path and trajectory?

Kashvi: Being in acting camp completely altered my life in a 180-degree sort of way. Prior to the experience, I wasn't sure what life had in store for me but I knew I had to pursue something "academic." Or so I thought. When I was younger, I frequently cycled between career choices because I hadn't yet found what kindled my passion. After the camp, it became clear that my passion was performing. Whether I'm acting, singing and songwriting, performing poetry, or exercising it in another form, performance makes me come alive.

PHP: In the book, Kofi says, *"Even if you have no experience, as long as you work hard and act on your talent, you can accomplish*



anything." How does this advice relate to your own life and how you might advise your fellow students on pursuing their dreams?

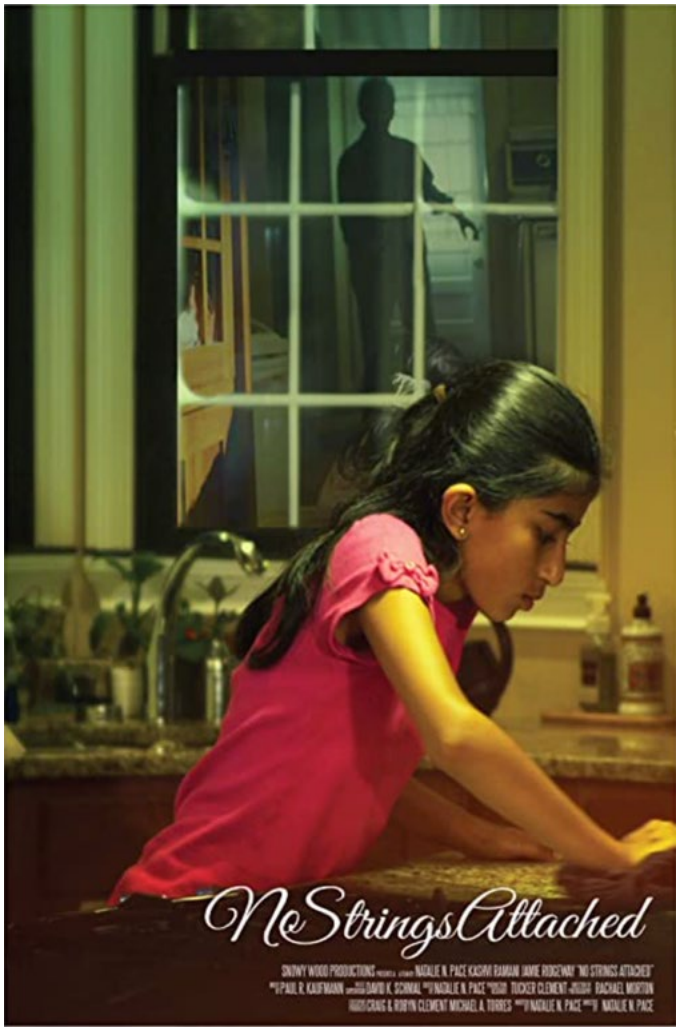
Kashvi: I began acting later in the game, only beginning professionally at 11, while many of my peers had been performing since they were 3 or 4. With no experience or knowledge of the craft, I came into the industry full force and my enthusiasm and skills were enough to raise me to the level of my talented peers. This advice of "working hard and acting on your talents" was the sole reason I am speaking to you all today. This same advice can be applied to each one of you. If you see every experience as an opportunity and recognize your talents backed by diligence, you can truly succeed at anything you wish to.

PHP: You also wrote lesson plans for teachers to use as a companion with the *Kofi Chronicles*. Tell us about lessons, themes, how teachers can access them, and how these plans can be used for social-emotional learning in the classroom.

Kashvi: Yes, I more recently accompanied the novel with a lesson plan, involving 10 questions that apply the book to young students' own lives. These range from personal experiences, interests, culture/traditions, coping mechanisms, and learning from Kofi's mistakes. I hope these questions will help children to not only enjoy the novel but to apply what they have read and carry it with them as they take on future endeavors. Contact me for a copy of the lesson plan at Kashvi777@gmail.com or DM me on Instagram, where my handle is @KashviRamani.

PHP: What's next for you? What are your current interests and activities? Do you have any other projects in the works?

Kashvi: Since the publication of *Kofi Chronicles,* I have stayed busy! I continue to write, act, and perform, most recently becoming a national finalist for Theater in YoungArts and a Gold Key recipient for the Scholastic Art and Writing Awards.



In addition, I am currently working on a poetry event to bring more creativity and love for writing to Loudoun County. A sequel to *Kofi Chronicles* is in its planning stages, but until then, be sure to check out my other work on my YouTube channel @KashviRamani.

Author's Note

Kashvi Ramani is a high school sophomore at Rock Ridge High School in Ashburn, Virginia. She started acting at age 10 in a local enrichment camp and has had roles in television such as *Alex Inc.* and in *A Christmas Carol* at Ford's Theatre. Her dream is to be a multi-faceted entertainer and writer and, as a person of color and woman, a voice for others with similar backgrounds who have not yet received the opportunity to find themselves represented. She hopes to continue writing about and taking on roles concerning important yet unseen issues faced by so many.

(Continued from p. 3)

different forms of expression; an expectation of blunt orders from authority figures rather than discussions; cultural backgrounds that are not represented in many textbooks, materials, and curricular practices; and language acquisition or academic skill needs.[3]

The social and emotional needs of diverse gifted children are also crucial to the development of the whole child. These may include feelings of isolation, often influenced by concepts known as intensity and asynchronous development. *Intensity* involves the gifted child's interactions with the world around them, episodes that are often more absorbing, commanding, complex, encompassing, penetrating, and vivid than those of their age peers. *Asynchronous development* refers to the mismatch between cognitive, affective, and psychomotor development of gifted individuals, which can be advanced in one or two areas, but the same as their age-peers in others.

The gifted child often feels a lack of like-minded age peers who share their interests, a condition that is often exacerbated for diverse gifted children, members of whose subgroups are historically underrepresented in gifted education programs. Diverse gifted children may also face increased anxiety due to feeling that no one understands them. This can sometimes lead to hiding their abilities in an effort to better fit in with age peers. These feelings often concern parents, who seek ways to alleviate the burdens facing their children and to find ways for them to feel better about their social options and opportunities.



Bibliotherapy

Bibliotherapy is an approach where children's literature is used to help gifted children talk about and address issues and problems they may be facing that they are otherwise reluctant to discuss.[4] Bibliotherapy can be used to help gifted children understand perspectives other than their own, to make sense of a difficult past or upsetting situations, or to explore various feelings, including those of contentment, empathy, and hope. Gifted children are often more ready to discuss situations and scenarios facing characters in a book than those that they are dealing with themselves. Reading also improves self-awareness and feelings of self-efficacy and self-esteem. For this to happen effectively, it is important that the books diverse gifted children read contain

Questions to Ask Gifted Children Using Bibliotherapy

- What problems or challenges faced the character?
- How did he or she address or fix these problems or challenges?
- How did the main character feel in this story? Could you connect with those feelings? When did you first begin to make that connection?
- Has anything similar to the events in this story ever happened to you? To a friend of yours?
- Have you ever experienced _____ (anger, guilt, happiness, jealousy, loneliness, regret, sadness, or other emotion) like the character in the book? What was that experience like? How did you respond?
- Do you think the character in the book dealt with the situation in a good way? If so, how? If not, what could have changed the outcome? Specifically, what action or emotional response might the character have taken or had that would have been more effective?
- How would you have handled this situation? Why? What do you think the outcome might have been had you chosen to do that?

If other questions seem appropriate, be sure to ask them, too!

characters, settings, and events with which they can identify and connect.

Depending upon the age of the child, the book can be read to, with, or on their own. It is necessary that the parent or family member also read the book and be familiar with the characters and plot so that these can be discussed in depth. After the diverse gifted child has read the book, the parent or other family member can aid him or her in negotiating various issues by asking a series of questions as listed in the sidebar on page 18.

Diverse gifted children face a variety of learning and social and emotional issues in their lives. Bibliotherapy is an outstanding way to begin discussions related to these issues and to help the diverse gifted child to think through the conflicts facing them and to come up with possible resolutions to these situations. Feel free to address these issues with your child's teachers or school counselors, and use the resources on the following pages at home and in school. As parents and teachers, we are concerned about the learning and social and emotional needs of all children. The suggested books on pages 20-23 are specifically for diverse gifted learners, but certainly can be used with other populations as well.

Resources

American Library Association,
www.ala.org/tools/atoz/bibliotherapy

Davidson Institute,
www.davidsongifted.org/gifted-blog/supporting-emotional-wellness-at-home-for-gifted-and-2e-students/

Authors' Note

Stephen T. Schroth, Ph.D., is a professor of Early Childhood Education/Gifted & Creative Education at Towson University. A classroom teacher for a decade in the Los Angeles Unified School District, he has worked with diverse gifted children for more than 30 years. The author of five books and hundreds of other publications, Dr. Schroth works to expand the options for diverse gifted learners, especially as related to environmental education and the arts.

Ocie Watson-Thompson, Ed.D., is a professor of Early Childhood Education at Towson University. For more than 30 years, Dr. Watson-Thompson has researched and taught effective curriculum and instruction, early childhood education, elementary education, and culture and literacy. She continues to teach, supervise, and mentor undergraduate and graduate students as they deliver effective instruction and learning experiences in diverse and culturally inclusive environments.

Endnotes

[1] Briggs, C. J., Reis, S. M., & Sullivan, E. E. (2008). A national view of promising programs and practices for culturally, linguistically, and ethnically diverse gifted and talented students. *Gifted Child Quarterly, 52*, 131–145.

Clark, B. (2013). *Growing up gifted: Developing the potential of children at school and at home* (8th ed.). Pearson Education.

Schroth, S. T., & Helfer, J. A. (2018). *Developing teacher diversity in early childhood and elementary education: The REACH program approach.* Palgrave Macmillan.

[2] Briggs, Reis, & Sullivan (2008); Clark (2013); and Schroth & Helfer (2018).

[3] Briggs, Reis, & Sullivan (2008); Clark (2013); and Schroth & Helfer (2018).

[4] Hébert, T. P., & Kent, R. (2000). Nurturing social and emotional development in gifted teenagers through young adult literature. *Roeper Review, 22*(3), 167–171.

Hébert, T. P., & Pagnani, A. R. (2010). Engaging gifted boys in new literacies. *Gifted Child Today, 33*(3), 36–45.

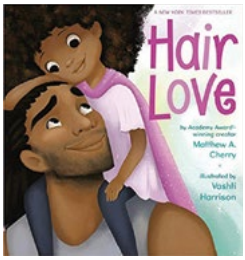


Children's Literature Especially Appropriate for Diverse Gifted Children

Curated by Stephen Schroth, Ph.D., Ocie Watson-Thompson, Ed.D., and Joy Lawson Davis, Ed.D.

Whether at home or in school, gifted children can benefit from using bibliotherapy as a strategy for exploring their feelings and making sense of issues they face. Parents and educators are encouraged to incorporate these books into the menu of literature choices for gifted children of diverse backgrounds.

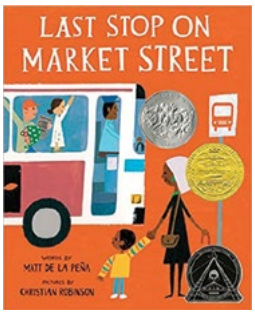
PreK–Grade 2



Hair Love

by Matthew A. Cherry

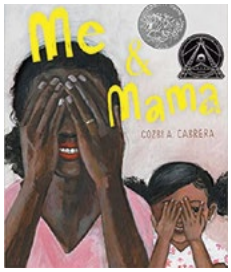
Zuri has African American textured hair and uses it to express herself, wearing it in braids with beads, in two puffs, and even funky puff buns. In each style, Zuri feels proud and beautiful. Showcasing the love between a father and daughter, the book shows how even styling hair can be an expression of love. While Zuri wears a cape at the end, daddy is the superhero of this story, as his pride and love for his daughter is evident on every page. A wonderful book about beauty, self-confidence, self-expression, and the special bond between fathers and daughters.



Last Stop on Market Street ■ ●

by Matt de la Peña

CJ unhappily begins a bus trip with his grandmother, resentful that his family does not have a car like many of his friends' families do. Through care and insight, his Nana helps CJ to see the beauty in all situations and settings.



Me & Mama ■ ●

by Cozbi A. Cabrera

An elegy to the love shared by a mother and daughter as they share a rainy day together. Beginning with the endpapers of the book, which show mother/daughter pairings of kitchen utensils, bicycles, clothing items, and the like, the book celebrates familial connections and unconditional love.



Saturday

by Oge Mora

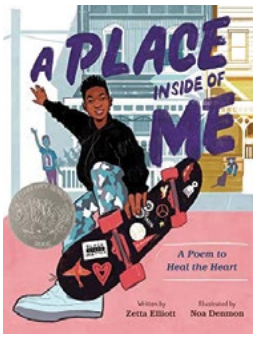
An examination of how the worst days, when everything has gone wrong, can still be perfect if you are spending them with someone you love. Ava's mother works six days a week, but not on Saturday. Saturdays are Ava and her mother's special day because they get to spend it together. They have a big day planned, heading to the library for story time, the salon for a new do, the park for a picnic, and then to a one-night-only puppet show. But suddenly, disaster strikes. Story time is canceled, their new hairdos are ruined, the park is too noisy, and they forget their tickets to the puppet show. Ava's mother is distraught, thinking she has ruined her daughter's day. But Ava reassures her that their day was special, splendid, and wonderful, because they got to spend it together. This fabulous book emphasizes the value of perseverance and a positive outlook.

■ Randolph Caldecott Medal/Honor Winner
● Coretta Scott King Award Winner
◆ John Newbery Medal Winner



Grades 3–5

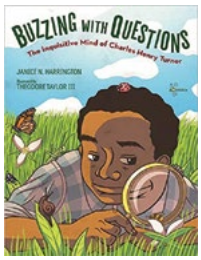
A Place Inside of Me: A Poem to Heal the Heart ■



by Zeta Elliott

A young African American boy deals with his feelings, frustrations, and fears after the death of a girl in his community at the hands of the police. As a result of the incident, the boy experiences mixed emotions, including fear, anger, pride in his heritage, and peace as he meditates with classmates. These feelings resolve themselves in compassion and hope.

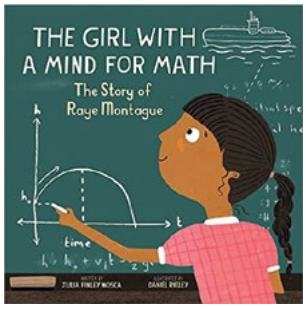
Buzzing with Questions: The Inquisitive Mind of Charles Henry Turner



By Janice Harrington

This story will appeal to curious, questioning minds of young, gifted children as it tells the story of an entomologist who made history at a very difficult time for Black scientists.

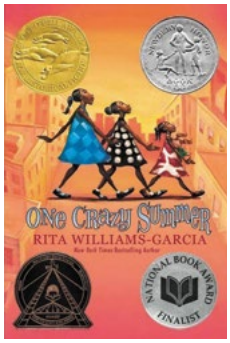
The Girl with a Mind for Math: The Story of Raye Montague



By Julia F. Mosca

This biography tells the story of a young girl who was very bright and interested in mathematics. Her interests and gifts led her to making important contributions to Naval history.

One Crazy Summer ● ◆

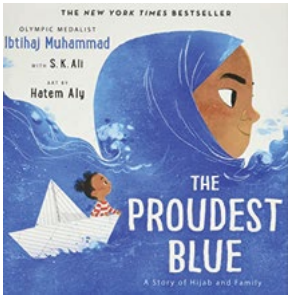


By Rita Williams-Garcia

Tells the story of a family traveling across the country to visit relatives. The oldest sibling takes on the role of caretaker as she and her sisters experience life in a totally different community. The girls find themselves in a camp that immerses them in the social justice movement of the day and life is never the same.

■ Randolph Caldecott Medal/Honor Winner
● Coretta Scott King Award Winner
◆ John Newbery Medal Winner

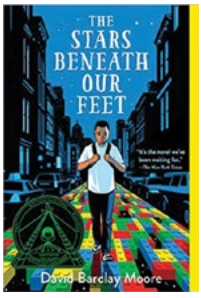
The Proudest Blue: A Story of Hijab and Family



by Ibtihaj Muhammad and S. K. Ali

Faizah and her big sister Asiya get ready for the first day of school, and Asiya is going to wear her new hijab for the first time. Her hijab is blue, like the vast ocean, an unending skyline, a sign of strength and beauty. Faizah could not be prouder to walk with her sister to school, feeling like she is in the presence of royalty. She imagines her first hijab and knows that it will be blue as well. When they arrive at school, other students do not have the same reaction. They wonder what is on Asiya's head, and some even point and laugh. Faizah is disheartened, but she remembers her mama's words, *"Don't carry around the hurtful words that others say. Drop them. They are not yours to keep. They belong only to those who said them."* With her mother's words ringing in her ear, and her sister beside her, Faizah cannot wait to wear her own blue hijab. A powerful story about faith, identity, and the bond between sisters.

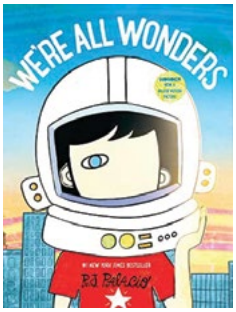
The Stars Beneath Our Feet ●



By David Barclay Moore

In this story, a young boy is challenged by a world that appears to work against him as he grows and develops his great interests and gifts in science.

We're All Wonders



by R. J. Palacio

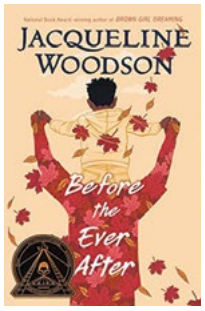
Auggie gets teased and laughed at by other kids for being different. Auggie has one eye and looks different on the outside but explains in the story that he wishes everyone could see how special he is. The author uses Auggie's character to emphasize that although people are different, it is important to treat them with respect and kindness. The story teaches empathy and shows readers that treating people poorly based on their differences could be hurtful to an individual and their self-esteem. A great story to show that rather than ostracizing others for their differences it is important to celebrate what makes us unique. A terrific proponent for self-love, the book also a terrific way to begin a class conversation about certain topics such as disabilities, whether physical or intellectual.

Middle & Secondary School

Before the Ever After ●

by Jacqueline Woodson

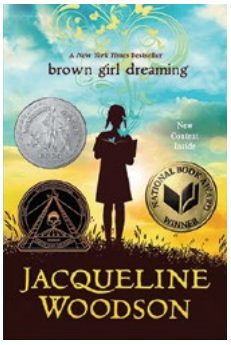
ZJ's father, a former professional football player, is experiencing memory and anger management issues caused by recurrent head injuries. ZJ is forced to examine the meaning of the past if it cannot be remembered and the value of family and community.



Brown Girl Dreaming ● ◆

By Jacqueline Woodson

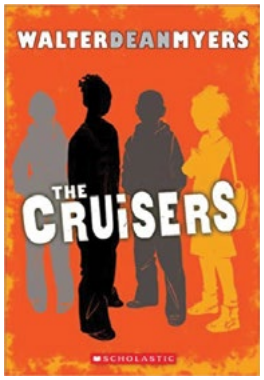
Poetic verse from the heart and soul of the author, encourages and invites young Black authors to share their thoughts and life experiences. Woodson writes poetry that recalls experiences living in the rural south and northern urban areas during a time of awakening and change for our nation.



The Cruisers (3-part series)

By Walter Dean Myers

The Cruisers series follows a group of Black gifted teens as they interact with other gifted students at a fictitious school for the gifted. The unique traits of the group/clique members makes these stories true-to-life for Black gifted students and their peers from other cultures.



Merci Suárez Changes Gears ◆

by Meg Medina

Smart, sensitive, and thoughtful 6th grader Merci Suárez feels unlike the other children enrolled at her private school. A scholarship student, she lacks the money of many of her peers. Circumstances force her to constantly adjust and to deal with change.



The Gilded Ones

By Namina Forna

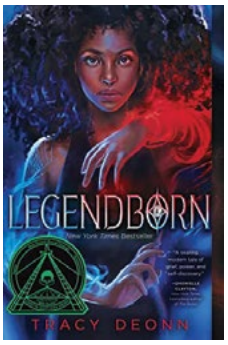
This fantasy describes the experiences of a highly gifted female. She finds herself at a place of making a decision that can change the outcomes, not only for herself, but other girls like her. This award winning self-empowering fantasy is at once prophetic and imaginary.



Legendborn ●

by Tracy Deonn

A young adult science fiction/fantasy that blends the King Arthur legend with Southern folk traditions and "Black girl magic." Sixteen-year-old Bree is dealing with her mother's death in an accident and, as a result, eschews family memories. Her first night at a residential school for gifted children however, Bree witnesses a flying demon feeding on human energies, resulting in her joining Legendborn, a secret society that seeks to hunt the demons down.



Mexican WhiteBoy ◆

by Matt de la Peña

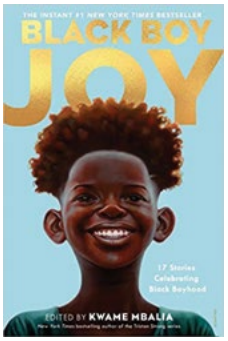
Danny, the son of an Anglo mother and a Mexican father, feels prejudged and rejected by both groups. Although he possesses a 95 mph fastball, Danny struggles with control on the mound, which precludes him from a spot on his school's team. A summer spent with his Mexican relatives forces Danny to confront both obstacles in his way and talents that may be developed to ensure his future success and happiness.



Black Boy Joy

Edited by Kwame Mbalia

A powerful collection of stories written by a range of authors. Each depicts the dynamic life of being a Black boy who has potential to be excellent in a world that sometimes fears and overlooks him.



Plus, Two More!

Piecing Me Together by Renee Watson and *Skin of the Sea* by Natasha Bowen

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR
Gifted Children
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Washington, DC 20005

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DON'T MISS THESE IMPORTANT RESOURCES FOR PARENTS FROM NAGC!

Gifted & Talented Resources Directory

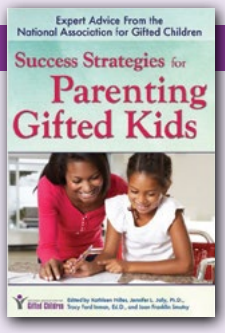
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NAGC engage

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