



Fall 2024

# ELP Newsletter

## Supervisor's Note

The school year has started! And, this year has many changes. Three Magnet locations either moved or opened and the AAMP team is implementing a shift in identification protocols.

Change is well-known as a human struggle. Nevertheless, change is frequently needed, and improvements often manifest once a change is normalized. Which means, even though change is tough, we have so many opportunities to view difficult steps with optimism. This is the ultimate gifted and talented perspective--potential that only needs a little push to become something great.

- Dr. Alex Parsons

## Upcoming Events

### Judges Needed

We are launching middle school academic league competitions! We are currently recruiting judges. If you are interested, please email [Kristina.Richards@slcschools.org](mailto:Kristina.Richards@slcschools.org)  
Competition dates will be in January: more information coming soon.

### Important Program Dates

#### Nov 26

Deadline for Magnet appeal (for placement second semester--parents notified by 12/20)

#### Jan 31, 2025

Deadline to sign up for opt-in testing (form on ELP website)

#### Jan 6-24, 2025

District-wide K and 3rd grade CogAT testing

#### March 1-21, 2025

Opt-in testing for 6-7 graders and out-of-district K & 3rd graders

### Middle School Open Houses

#### Clayton MS

Thurs, Jan 23, 2025  
5:00-6:30pm  
Magnet, Honors, & Gen Ed

#### Glendale MS

TBD  
Honors & Gen Ed

#### Hillside MS

Thurs, Jan 23, 2025  
5:30-7:00pm  
Magnet, Honors, & Gen Ed

#### Northwest MS

Thurs, May 22, 2025  
5:00-7:00pm  
Honors & Gen Ed

#### SLCSE - Bryant MS

Thurs, Jan 9, 2025  
Time TBD  
Honors & Gen Ed

#### West HS

Wed, Jan 15, 2025  
6:00-8:00pm  
Magnet

# Anxiety in Gifted Students

## What gifted characteristics affect anxiety?

No two gifted children are alike, but some of the more common traits of giftedness can amplify anxiety:

**Heightened Sensory Processing** - Sensory processing relates to both how the physical world is *understood* through the senses (touch, sight, taste, smell, sound) and how we *respond* to that sensory information. Research has found that many gifted children have heightened sensitivity to the world around them, which can be both a strength and an obstacle. Their "hyper-awareness" may increase their physical discomfort to loud noises, scratchy fabrics, or pungent smells, creating anxiety around certain physical stimuli. Heightened sensory processing further creates stronger, more vivid impressions of events, linked to increased emotional processing.

**Asynchronous Development** - Asynchrony (the uneven cognitive, physical, social, and emotional development of a child) is thought to be a hallmark of giftedness as, the higher the intellectual capability, the more it will appear out of sync with the rest of the normal childhood development. Gifted children possess the ability to intellectualize beyond their years at an early age, but they may not have the appropriate emotional coping strategies and life experience needed to process life's more challenging topics.

**Overexcitabilities/Intensities** - Kazimierz Dabrowski observed more intensity and/or sensitivity in the gifted in the following five areas: psychomotor, sensory, intellect, imagination, and emotions. Not every child displays overexcitabilities (OEs) in all five, but it is understandable that gifted children who tend to have vivid imaginations, overanalyze, or over-empathize may be more likely to experience anxiety.

**Perfectionism** - Perfectionism is a prevalent condition in gifted children, even those who underachieve. Gifted children who are aware of their capabilities often place high standards on themselves and those around them. Additionally, well-meaning teachers and parents may unintentionally reinforce these high expectations. This can create a cycle of shame when they fail to meet their own standards. Perfectionism, at its core, stems from a lack of self-acceptance and is a risk factor for chronic anxiety.

**Social-Environmental Fit** - It is often the case that gifted students feel isolated from their same-age peers or alienated by their intellectual gifts in the classroom. They are less likely to find a "true peer" who shares their interest. This chronic outlier experience may negatively affect their ability to develop a healthy self-concept and contribute to both generalized and social anxiety.

## How to ameliorate anxiety in gifted children?

**Keep Calm and Co-regulate** - Parental anxiety is a strong predictor for children's anxiety. Do not be a helicopter parent! Our perceptive gifted children tend to pick up on everything going on around them, so stay calm and demonstrate trust in your child's abilities to solve his/her own problems. Also, keep in mind, when someone is anxious, their nervous system is already "on alert," triggering their fight, flight, or freeze response. This is why yelling or adding to the intensity of a situation is never effective.

**Normalize Anxiety** - Recognize that anxiety is a normal part of the human experience. Normalizing anxiety in your household can help children (and parents) from feeling further isolated. Talk about your experiences with anxiety and what you did to overcome them: "I was really anxious leading up to my annual evaluation at work today, but I took a few big breaths and a short walk right before the meeting which helped me reset."

**Connect With Each Other and the Present Moment** - Listen to your child's concerns and let them know their feelings are valid. Expressing fears out loud has research backing its effectiveness at helping reduce negative emotions. If they aren't able to articulate what caused their anxiety, have them name 5 things they can see, 4 things they can hear, 3 things they can smell, 2 things they can feel, and 1 thing they can taste. There are many breathing exercises that can help, too.

**Cover the Basics** - Once an acute anxious episode has passed, parents should make sure that their child is getting plenty of sleep at night, getting exercise or activity each day, and eating nutritiously. Aside from physical needs, attending to the child's sense of belonging lays a positive foundation. Community service, volunteerism, youth groups, and afterschool clubs can help alleviate feeling isolated.

While this article focuses on the aspects of giftedness that may amplify anxiety, it is important to note that there is also research that supports that **resilience** may also be part of the gifted package deal. With the right tools and support at home, our gifted children can thrive!

# ELP Excellence in Action

## Intellectual



JoyLynne Brown's 2nd grade North Star Elementary students earned their detective badges for solving logic elimination grids.



4th grade AAMP students at Backman and Wasatch learned the engineering design process. They had to create a rover for lunar exploration that would meet three criteria.

1. Hold two astronauts. (made of pipe cleaners.)
2. Hold a payload (weighted Easter egg)
3. Travel down a ramp and roll an additional 100 centimeters on the "lunar surface"

All rovers met the first criteria, but the third was a struggle. The activity taught the students the importance of iterating - testing/improving.



Edison's Magnet 3rd graders in Katherine Kelly's class collaborate on a STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) challenge to construct a tall, stable structure using only paper, scissors, and tape.

Mrs. Kelly's students also used block-based coding to program Sphero robots to complete a maze this term.



## Academic



In their first Spanish module, titled "How Do Animals Survive in Their Environment?", Katherine Meza's 3rd graders at Nibley Park had the opportunity to develop their research skills while deepening their understanding of the animal kingdom. Each child selected a specific animal to study and became an expert in various aspects of its life and survival strategies, using Spanish as the medium of their project. They were tasked with answering a range of questions that included where their chosen animal resides, the methods it employs to defend itself from predators, its average lifespan, and interesting facts that highlight its uniqueness. Additionally, students explored the animal's physical characteristics, its habitat, and the specific regions of the world where it can be found. For their final presentations, kids presented these pieces of work during conferences to parents who were very emotional to see how kids are learning Spanish.





Amanda Ladia's 2nd grade Magnet class at Indian Hills learns from The Loveland Living Planet Aquarium scientists.

# Mentorship

# Creativity



Whittier Elementary 4th grade AAMP students created and performed skits on how to survive on the surface of the moon.



Jasmihn Coombs' Magnet 2nd graders at Nibley Park performed a readers' theatre! They learned about inferences, practiced in class, made their own props, and enjoyed the process.



Ms. Katherine Meza accessed student creativity in a phonics lesson by having her Nibley Park 3rd graders perform a skit about "Bossy R."



At Indian Hills, Mrs. Rabinovitch's 4th grade class learns principles of economics and business as they hold a monthly classroom marketplace where students have their own business and sell their goods to each other.



Shannon King's AAMP students at Indian Hills and Rose Park Elementary worked to solve a real world problem: rehabilitation of an area colonized by bats protected in Utah. They researched bats in Utah, designed a product prototype on paper and CAD, built a 3D prototype, and created Power Points showing the process of creation.

Mr. Spofford and Ms. Regier's group of 3rd and 4th grade students at Liberty Elementary are learning all about oral storytelling in preparation for the SLCS D Teller of Tales Festival. They are learning principles of oral storytelling, focusing on body language, voice level, and pitch to convey the important details and communicate a clear and concise beginning, middle, and end of the story. Keep an eye out for these great storytellers at the Festival!

