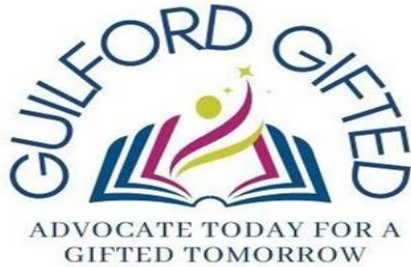


NEWS FROM THE ACADEMICALLY GIFTED DEPARTMENT

The Middle School Edition

Quarter 2

Join Guilford Gifted!



Website: <https://www.guilfordgifted.org/>

Guilford Gifted is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization supporting our community's brightest young minds with strong advocacy for the advancement of gifted education. We provide the tools to engage and empower all those involved with gifted children, thereby building tomorrow's leaders today. **It's FREE to join!**

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News From Our School:

On Monday, December 1st, an additional copy of the Student Eligibility Records (SERs) will be sent home with students who did not return the previous copy. Please sign and return this copy as soon as possible.

All Math and ELA Teachers will participate in "Beyond Proficiency" Professional Development with the AG Department on Wednesday, December 10th.

Kernodle's Spelling Bee will be hosted on Friday, December 12th. Good luck to all participants!

From the AG Department: Scholarships Opportunities and Awards of Interest

The Cooke Young Scholars Program:

The Cooke Young Scholars Program is a selective five-year, pre-college scholarship for exceptionally promising 7th grade students with financial need. It provides comprehensive academic and college advising, as well as financial support for school, Cooke-sponsored summer programs, internships, and other learning enrichment opportunities. **Application opens on February 6, 2026.**

Who can apply:

- Current 7th graders (in US) and will be in the US for high school
- Earned all As and Bs in core subjects (since the beginning of 6th grade)
- Demonstrate financial need (families with income up to \$95,000)

Direct questions to scholarships@jkcf.org

NCAGT Awards and Scholarships:

Each year, the NC Association for the Gifted and Talented recognizes outstanding contributions in the field of gifted education. Annual Awards and Scholarships are presented at the NCAGT Conference.

The deadline for all submissions is December 15, 2025. We strongly encourage students to apply!

See below for highlighted opportunities:

Student Scholarship Awards

Student Scholarship Awards are presented to students in grades 6-12 who are identified as gifted according to local guidelines. Scholarship money is awarded to support the recipient(s) with developing an original project which holds promise for advancement of learning or an instructional opportunity not available within a student's local school district. Parents/caregivers of the winner receive a complimentary parent membership in NCAGT for one year.

Additional award opportunities requiring a nomination:

- *Leadership Through Service Award*
- *Susan Keel Lamar Student Scholarship Award*
- *NCAGT Distinguished Student Award*

For more information on NCAGT scholarships and awards visit:

<https://www.ncagt.org/scholarships-grants-awards>

Why This Matters for Gifted Kids

As AI becomes part of everyday life—through apps, homework helpers, search tools, and more—our children are interacting with it more than ever. That includes gifted kids, who tend to ask deeper questions and explore more independently. Using AI wisely can support learning—but relying too much on it can subtly affect how kids think, feel, and connect with others.

Gifted children often love exploring, pushing boundaries, and solving hard problems. These traits connect deeply with **social-emotional qualities** like:

- **Curiosity** — wanting to go deeper, not just stick with surface answers
- **Resilience** — being willing to struggle, make mistakes, and try again
- **Self-confidence** — believing in their own thinking
- **Empathy & Perspective** — considering how others think or feel



When AI provides instant answers, there's a risk that some of that inner growth—especially the emotional growth—gets shortchanged. Below are some of the key challenges and opportunities.

If a child begins to see AI as “the answer machine,” they might stop seeing themselves as someone who figures things out.

What AI can undermine (if we're not careful)

1. Losing the “Wrestle” — and the Growth from It

When children skip over the messy, confusing parts of thinking (because AI gives them instant answers), they lose an important chance to build mental stamina. For

gifted kids, that “wrestling with an idea” is how they deepen understanding *and* learn confidence in their own mind.

If every question gets solved by AI, children may begin to expect that all problems have instant solutions—and when they don't, they might feel stuck, frustrated, or incapable.

2. Surface Thinking Instead of Deeper Understanding

AI tools often give streamlined, summarized answers. While that's efficient, it can prevent children from building their own mental maps of ideas—how to connect concepts, test hypotheses, or ask “What if ?”

For gifted children, the deeper thought is often joy. If AI shortcuts those processes, kids may disengage over time, feeling less ownership over their ideas.

3. Over-reliance, Fewer Struggles, and Less Identity as a Thinker

If a child begins to see AI as “the answer machine,” they might stop seeing themselves as someone who *figures things out*. Over time, this can shrink their sense of themselves as independent thinkers, which has emotional implications: less confidence, fear of failure, or internalizing “I can't do it without help.”

How Parents Can Support Healthy Thinking

The goal is not to ban AI altogether (that's unrealistic) but to weave it in as a tool—while actively cultivating skills, emotional resilience, and social strength. Here are practices that can help gifted children thrive:

Encourage Independent Thinking First

Before letting your child turn to AI, give them space and time to think. Ask them to:

- Try solving the problem on their own—even if they get it wrong
- Draw or write down ideas before asking for help
- Share one or two possible approaches they could try

This practice helps preserve their sense of ownership over the process and helps build perseverance.

Treat AI as a Helper, Not a Boss

Once your child has given it a try, they can use AI for:

- Suggestions or alternative approaches
- Checking their thinking
- Looking for examples they can explore further

But make it clear: AI is **supportive**, not authoritative. Let your child judge, pick, reject, or adapt what it gives them.

Ask Reflective, Emotion Centered Questions

To help with metacognition (thinking about thinking) — and emotional growth — ask questions like:

- “How did you arrive at that idea?”
- “What part was easy? What was hard?”
- “What surprised you in your process?”
- “If this doesn't work, what could you try next?”

These kinds of questions *validate struggle*, promote self-awareness, and help reinforce growth mindsets (“I can improve”).

Use Logic Games, Puzzles & Open-Ended Challenges

Sometimes the most powerful learning comes from play and puzzles—especially when no AI is involved. Try:

- Logic puzzles or brainteasers
- Open-ended projects (building, modeling, experimenting)
- Creative challenges (invent something new, design a variation)

These let children experience flow, curiosity, and social sharing (if done together)

Co-Learn, Share, and Reflect Together

You don't have to go at it alone. As a parent, you can:

- Explore AI tools alongside your child
- Share what you wonder about or where you used AI
- Talk about times you got stuck and how you navigated difficulty

This models humility, perseverance, and curiosity.



Social + Emotional Perspective

The following perspectives can also help your child to feel supported emotionally as they balance thinking independently with using AI tools.

- **Confidence through challenge** — Each self-generated idea or solution reinforces: “I *can* do hard things.”
- **Growth mindset over perfection mindset** — Struggle becomes natural instead of shameful.
- **Emotional resilience** — When kids face confusion or breakdowns, they learn to regulate frustration, self-soothe, recalibrate, and persevere.
- **Social empathy & communication** — Children who articulate *how* they arrive at ideas can better communicate, collaborate, and understand others' thinking.
- **Ownership of identity** — Instead of being “someone who uses AI,” children can remain “someone who thinks, evaluates, questions, and creates.”

Parent Child Conversation

Child (4th grade): “I used an AI tool to get the summary of this science topic.”

Parent: “Cool. Before we look at it, can you tell me in your own words what you think it's about? What questions do you still have?”

Child: “I think it's about photosynthesis—plants use sunlight and CO₂ to make energy. But I'm not sure how water plays into it.”

Parent: “Good question! Let's both try writing a short explanation, then compare with what the AI suggests. We can each pick one part to dig into more.”

This gives your child space to think, encourages reflection, and helps them see AI as dialogue, not as final judgment.

Sources:

Gerlich, M. (2025). AI Tools in Society: Impacts on Cognitive Offloading and the Future of Critical Thinking. *Societies*, 15(1), 6. <https://doi.org/10.3390/soc15010006>

Royce, C. A., & Bennett, V. (2025, March 10). *To think or not to think: The impact of AI on critical-thinking skills*. NSTA. <https://www.nsta.org/blog/think-or-not-think-impact-ai-critical-thinking-skills>

Staff, I. (2025, September 12). *AI and critical thinking in gifted children: What parents need to know - imacs - making better thinkers for life*. <https://www.imacs.org/ai-and-critical-thinking-in-gifted-children-what-parents-need-to-know/#:~:text=Encourage%20independent%20thinking%20first,%2C%20intellectual%20autonomy%2C%20and%20resilience>