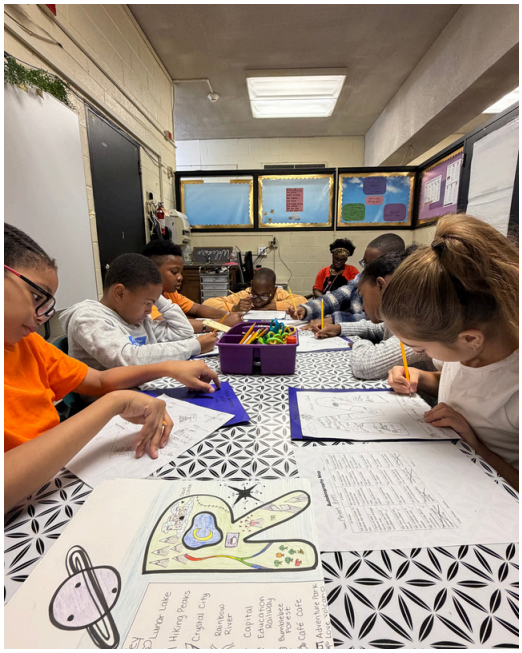
ATLAS

November Newsletter





WHAT WE ARE LEARNING

Students are sharing pieces of themselves with our ATLAS community. We began the year with icebreakers, lots of laughter, and activities that helped students build connections while celebrating what makes each of them unique.

Our scholars are currently working on two special projects focused on identity and self-discovery. In our Identity Island Maps, students transformed the first letter of their first name into a unique island filled with symbols, landmarks, and map features that tell their story. Through creativity and careful design, they are sharing their interests, talents, families, goals, favorite activities, and other important parts of who they are.

Students are also crafting meaningful "I Am From" poems, reflecting on the people, places, traditions, memories, and experiences that have shaped them. These poems have given students the opportunity to express themselves in thoughtful and sometimes surprising ways, helping us learn even more about what makes each scholar special.

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IMPORTANT DATES

November 23, 2026

- Students' Renzulli learning profiles have been sent home in their backpacks. Meet with your child to review what the profile says about their learning styles, gifts, and talents.

January 29, 2027

- Winter progress reports sent home

February 1st-12th, 2027

- Student conference appointments available virtually. Appointments made through email





ATLAS

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WHAT YOU CAN DO AT HOME

□ Have your child read every day and discuss books, articles, and current events.

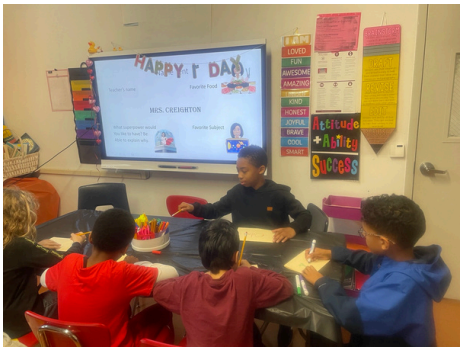
□ Encourage curiosity by welcoming questions and exploring answers together.

□ Provide opportunities for creative expression through art, music, writing, building, or technology.

□ Limit passive screen time and encourage purposeful learning activities.

□ Expose your child to new experiences such as museums, cultural events, nature centers, and performances.

□ Encourage problem-solving rather than immediately providing answers.



Renzulli Learning is now scheduled and linked to all ATLAS students. Students can access Renzulli assignments on their iPads or laptops via Single Sign-On (SSO).

Talking With Your Child About Giftedness (review the Renzulli Profile with your child)



Many parents andcaregivers question how totalk with their high-ability children about giftedness or twice-exceptionality (2e), so it's essential to feel comfortable in ways to broach the topic.

Perhaps your child has just been identified as gifted and talented. Or, your gifted child may notice they're different from their age mates—with unique interests, an advanced vocabulary, social awkwardness, or an ability to complete work quickly and effortlessly, while other students struggle.
In these situations, parents often wonder: *"Do I dare use the word* gifted*?" "Will my child develop an ego?" "Will the gifted label put pressure on them?"*

As a parent or caregiver, you may understand that the differences your child exhibits relate to her giftedness, but your child likely does not. When children notice and feel different from their peers, they seek explanations. Sadly, their peers may be eager to provide them with poor explanations for these differences. Age mates may describe the gifted or 2e child as odd, weird, or strange. Some kids may criticize or humiliate gifted or 2e children for their knowledge or behavior. Even well-meaning adults can unreasonably expect gifted children to know all the answers or to always behave appropriately.

That's why it's important to provide gifted children or 2e with a positive framework for understanding their differences through the lens of giftedness.

THE WORD *GIFTED*

Many parents are uncomfortable with the term *gifted*, as some see negative connotations—even though the term is intended to highlight a strength area, not make a value judgement. *Gifted* is a common term in education literature and legislation; parents are encouraged to become comfortable with this term. If you feel uncomfortable using the term *gifted* or seek other words to describe your child, you can substitute other descriptors such as *accelerated learner*, *quick learner*, *bright*, *precocious*, *high ability*, and *high potential*, to name a few.

Modeling is also important. Adults have strengths and weaknesses, too. When parents acknowledge and show they're comfortable with their own strengths and weaknesses, it helps children become comfortable with their own giftedness and areas of weakness. Using descriptive terms to label our children's strengths helps them become more comfortable with those strengths.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

»Help gifted individuals recognize what gifted is and what it's not.

»Giftedness may mean that students learn differently or more quickly than others.

» Giftedness does not mean children learn effortlessly. To succeed, students need to put forth effort in school and work.

» Giftedness may indicate you are *better at* something, but it doesn't mean you are *better than* anyone.

JUST FOR KIDS

101SuccessSecrets forGifted Kids by Christine Fonseca (2011).

The Survival Guide for Gifted Kids: For Ages 10 & Under by Judy Galbraith (2013).

The Gifted Teen Survival Guide: Smart, Sharp, and Ready for (Almost) Anything by Judy Galbraith & Jim Delisle (2011).

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION FOR Gifted Children
www.nagc.org

Talking About Giftedness



CONVERSATION STARTERS

FRAME THE DISCUSSION

Hereare somethingsyou mightsay as you broach the subject with your child:

- *"Each person learns at a different pace and has different interests."*
- *"Perhaps you are better at math than some students, while they may be better at reading than you."*
- *"Giftedness doesn't mean you will know the answer to every question and that you won't (or shouldn't) struggle."*

SHARE THEIR STORY

To help children understand their giftedness, share stories or observations with them:

- **Reflect on how your child was identified.** Were tests administered? Highlight some results from the assessments to demonstrate your child's strengths—but do not provide specific IQ or subtest scores.
- **Does your child exhibit characteristics common with gifted children?** Discuss traits and behaviors associated with gifted individuals, and how these characteristics may affect interactions with others.
- **What are positive examples of your child's giftedness?** Punctuate your discussion with descriptions from your child's life to highlight the positive aspects of his giftedness. A relaxed conversation full of positive examples will normalize giftedness rather than create anxiety or unrealistic expectations.

LISTEN & UNDERSTAND

- Listen to your children and try to understand their feelings and beliefs about giftedness and 2e.
- Help them learn facts—not buy into the myths—related to gifted students.
- Avoid using gifted strengths to highlight weaknesses. Comments like "*You know everything about the Mesozoic Era, but you don't know how to tie your shoes"* or *"How can you remember every Major Baseball League statistic, but can't remember to turn in your homework?"* may make a child feel inadequate or shamed.
- Leave the door open to further conversations. Ask if they have questions. Encourage them to feel comfortable discussing giftedness with you.
- Provide insight as to how others may perceive their giftedness and abilities.
- Role play various scenarios at school or within the family.

Ultimately, reassure your gifted child of your unconditional love. Talks about giftedness should not put pressure on children, but rather help them understand themselves better. Differences can be explained by giftedness, but giftedness should never be used as an excuse to avoid or explain away negative behaviors.

Frank and honest conversations allow gifted individuals to be comfortable with who they are.

FOR MORE INFO

Fonseca, C. (2015). Emotional intensity in gifted students: helping children cope with explosive feelings. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

Heilbronner, N. N. (2011). *10 things you shouldn't say to your gifted child. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.*

Neihart, M. (2008). Peak Performance for Intelligent Children: Strategies and Tips for Ensuring Academic Success. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

Rivero, L. (2010). A guide for parents of gifted teenagers: Living with intense and creative adolescents. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.

Webb, J. T., Gore, J. L., Amend, E. R., & DeVries, A. R. (2007). A guide for gifted parents. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.

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