

Incoming! Raise Shields!

Supporting teachers and administrators as they negotiate the minefield of the intensities of gifted parents.

By Stephanie Newitt
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AAGT Annual Conference

Intense Parents



Parents who don't understand:

1. Giftedness includes asynchrony and social/emotional development
2. Do not understand their own intensities and emotional regulation



Parents who have begun to understand:

1. Giftedness impacts the development of the whole child
2. Asynchrony
3. Overexciteabilities

Raise shields!!



Listen to parents, but don't let them board your vessel!

Why do parents feel angry?

Is it a legitimate concern?



Listen and gather more facts.

Is it learned behavior?



Squeaky wheels just want to be heard.



Why do parents feel angry?



Do they have a history of negative school experiences?

Listen. Do you know of another parent who could offer them support?

Is there a personality conflict?

To avoid the drama, set clear boundaries with parents who demand more than you can provide.

Where do we
want to put
our energy?



“Nothing is sustainable
without boundaries.”

Brené Brown

Dr. Brené Brown on Boundaries



View video at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5U3VcgUzqil>

Boundaries

Definition: "What's okay, what's not okay."



"When we don't have boundaries we become resentful. With boundaries we actually become more loving and generous."

"Nothing is sustainable without boundaries."

To be generous in judgement and thought ...
"To assume the best about people is almost an inherently selfish act because the life you change first is your own."

B.I.G.



*What **BOUNDARIES** need to be in place
for me to stay in my
INTEGRITY and make the most
GENEROUS assumptions about you?*

Identifying the Boundaries

What's okay?

Parent ...
Voice tone:
Word choice:
Body language:

What's NOT okay?

Parent ...
Voice tone:
Word choice:
Body language:

Setting the Boundaries Shields

What's okay?



To set shields, Teacher models:

- The appropriate voice tone
- Constructive word choice

(Letting parents vent within your parameters)

- Positive body language

Integrity

Integrity

Choosing courage over comfort; choosing what is right over what is fun, fast, or easy; and choosing to practice our values rather than simply professing them.

Brené Brown

Be mindful.

What do you value?

How will you practice
these values
in your efforts to work
with parents?

Integrity

Choosing courage over comfort; choosing what is right over what is fun, fast, or easy; and choosing to practice our values rather than simply professing them.

Brené Brown

Generous Assumptions



GT parents ...

- Feel alone in their parenting journey
- Desire to feel understood and validated
- Desire to feel connection

“To assume the best about people is almost an inherently selfish act because the life you change first is your own.”

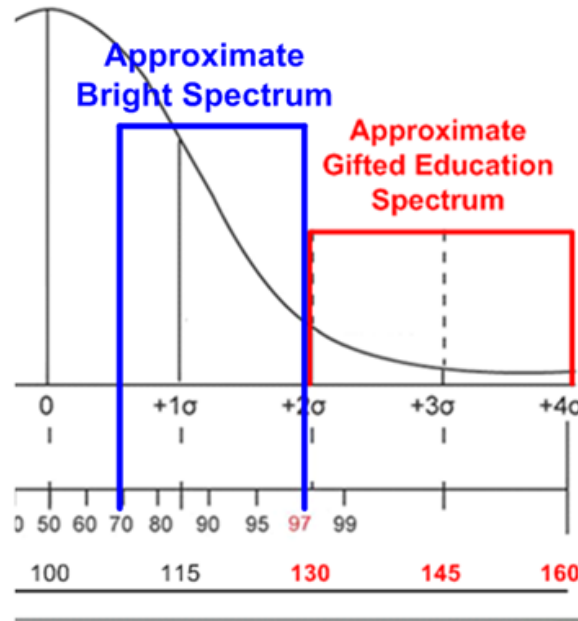
How will this philosophy change you?

The Intensity of Gifted Families

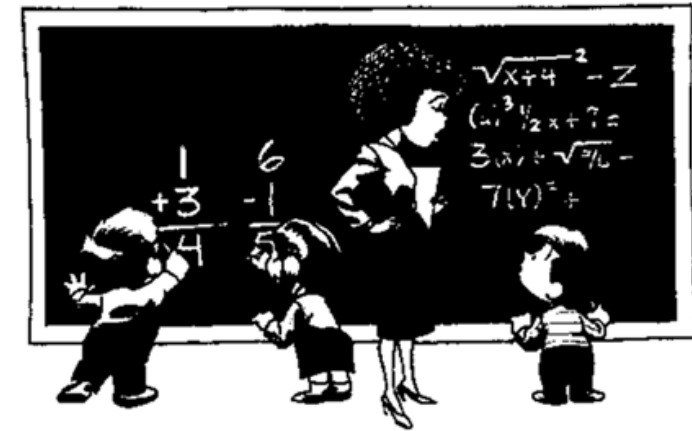


The apple doesn't fall far from the tree!

The Parenting Journey of Parents of GT Kids



<u>IQ Score</u>	<u>Classification</u>	<u>Approximate Incidence in Population</u>
160	Profound	1 in 10,000
150	Profound	9 in 10,000
140	Highly	7 in 1,000
130	Gifted	3 in 100
120	Superior	11 in 100
110	Bright	21 in 100



"I'd like teachers who understand me," highly gifted teen.

**"How many times do I have to tell you...
you're not supposed to read ahead."**

If a GT child has a population incident of 7 in 1,000, what are the odds that his/her parent will find a parent peer?

Connections



Connection

The energy that exists between people when they feel seen, heard, and valued; when they can give and receive without judgment; and when they derive sustenance and strength from the relationship.

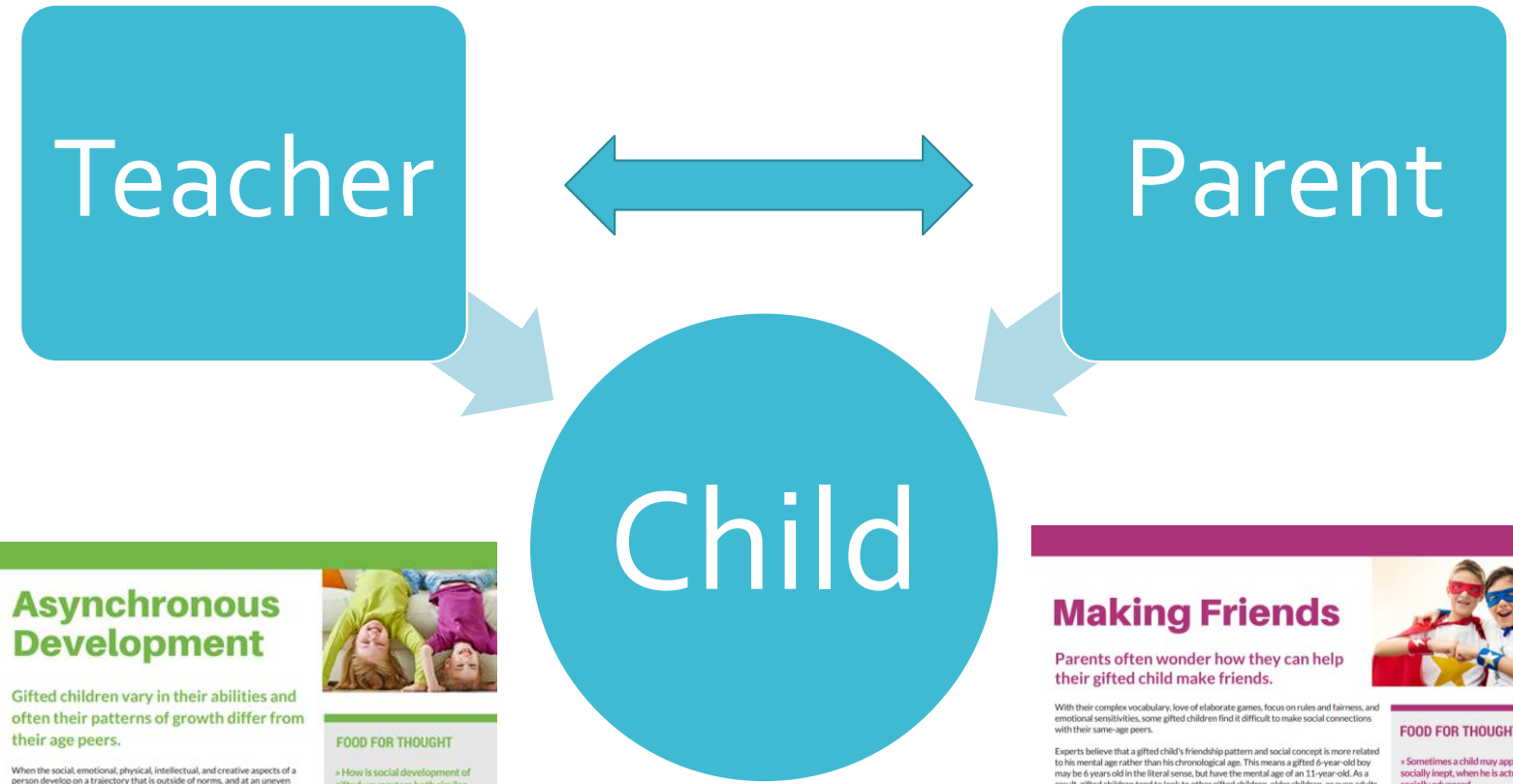
Brené Brown

GT Parent Connections • GT Kid Connections

How can
we help
parents feel
connection?



Parent connections with Teacher and child



Asynchronous Development

Gifted children vary in their abilities and often their patterns of growth differ from their age peers.

When the social, emotional, physical, intellectual, and creative aspects of a person develop on a trajectory that is outside of norms, and at an uneven rate, it is described as **asynchronous development**.

Research shows that some gifted and talented children develop asynchronously. In fact, for one group of psychologists, educators, and parents (Columbus Group), asynchronous development is central to their definition of giftedness. They believe that giftedness is based on the inner experiences of the individual combined with advanced capabilities.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

» How is social development of gifted youngsters both similar and different depending on gender?

Read: www.sengifted.org/archives/articles/developmental-issues-of-social-development

Making Friends

Parents often wonder how they can help their gifted child make friends.

With their complex vocabulary, love of elaborate games, focus on rules and fairness, and emotional sensitivities, some gifted children find it difficult to make social connections with their same-age peers.

Experts believe that a gifted child's friendship pattern and social concept is more related to his mental age rather than his chronological age. This means a gifted 6-year-old boy may be 6 years old in the literal sense, but have the mental age of an 11-year-old. As a result, gifted children tend to look to other gifted children, older children, or even adults to make social connections. Gifted children may have different sets of friends—idea peers and age peers—based on intellectual ability, interests, intensities, and temperament.

Research also suggests there is a strong relationship between children's levels of ability and their views on friendship. Intellectually gifted peers have been found to be further



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

» Sometimes a child may appear socially inept, when he is actually socially advanced.

» Help your gifted child "find her tribe"—children with similar interests and abilities—so that she can experience social

As teachers demonstrate to parents that their child is truly seen without judgment, the parent begins to feel seen without judgment... and is more likely to receive information to increase their understanding of how giftedness impacts the whole child

Parent connections with other parents

Does your district offer SENG Parent Discussion Groups?

Is there a GT parent group in your district that can provide mentorship and support?

Is there a Gifted Education Corner in your class/school newsletter to share:

- Parent resources
- Contact info for the parent mentor at your school

At your parent education informational nights, do you have ice breaker and crowd-sourcing activities?

Do you tell parents about the AAGT Parent Institute?



Helping parents to see and be seen.

Crowd-sourced at AAGT 2020 Annual Conference: Parent connections with other parents

At beginning of the school year we hold Parent Night on The Four Agreements, based on the book by Don Miguel Ruiz. Additional communications and meetings throughout the year always reference back to The Four Agreements

Have a special event for your class in which they all invite their parents to join them for lunch at school so parents can meet each other.

Host an after school program for GT kids/teens.

Host two Meet the Teacher Nights.
1. Whole Class
2. Cluster families

Connect with a parent to host a parent run GT Parent Facebook page for your school. Let parents ask you to supply tips and articles that can be shared on the FB page.

Host an evening guest speaker for parents while providing child care for GT kids. Child care could be provided by a high school student service club.

Just before the school day starts, host for your class Muffins with Mom and Donuts with Dad.

Helping parents to see and be seen.

My story

What is YOUR story?

Why did you decide to work in gifted education?

What negative experiences have you had with GT parents?

What positive experiences have you had with GT parents?

What is the next chapter in your story as you set your BOUNDARIES so that you are able to stay in your INTEGRITY and make GENEROUS assumptions of the parents of your students?

Conclusion:
Teachers with
boundaries are
a sustaining
force



“Immunization”
James T. Webb

Teachers with
boundaries will be
able to connect with
parents and these
parents are more
likely to become
advocates FOR the
teacher.



Thank you for coming

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