

# GATE Parents Association Announcements

## We have a new Amazon Store!

Books on giftedness, plus other ideas for gifted students.  
A portion of your purchase goes to support GATE, including teacher PD & sessions like these.

Go to: <http://astore.amazon.ca/ga0ef-20>

## Follow! Like! Share!

Be sure to follow us, we share articles & announce events like this one. Like & share posts so that we can reach more people.

Web: <http://www.gatecalgary.ca>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com/GateParentAssociation/>

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# gifted learners: underachievement

GATE Parents Association  
January 24, 2017  
Laurie Alisat, PhD  
Specialist, Giftedness

learning | **as unique** | as every student



Calgary Board  
of Education

# Underachievement

How might we understand underachievement in gifted children?

# Underachievement

- to perform, especially academically, below the potential indicated by tests of one's mental ability or aptitude
- to perform below expectations or achieve less than expected, especially by others

Dictionary.com

# Underachievement

Underachievement is a stress indicator associated with physical problems and emotional discomfort.

Harold Cohen, PhD

# contemplations

- What is underachievement?
- What do we know about gifted individuals?
- What does underachievement look like?
- Why might this occur?
- How might we support our gifted children for them to thrive?

# What do we know?

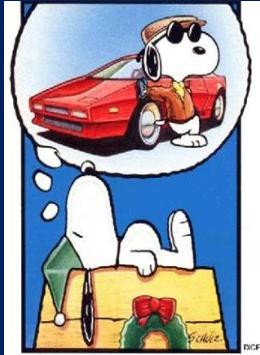
-heightened awareness/sensitivity



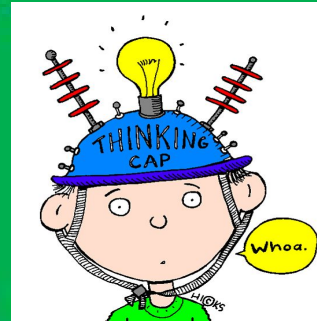
-physical process  
-engage in learning  
-energetic & enthusiastic



-creative  
-divergent thinking



-curious  
-persistent  
-literal  
-deep background knowledge



-empathetic  
-passionate  
-social justice



# observed behaviours



- single focus
- paralysis by analysis
- unsettled, unfocused, agitated
- argumentative, aggressive
- emotional, distraught
- withdrawn
- stomachache, headache
- questioning purpose of life



# observed behaviours

- asynchronous development
- unreasonable expectations
- low self-esteem
- high frustration
- emotional sensitivity
- difficulties with sequential tasks
- distracted
- forgetful
- incomplete tasks
- avoidance



# Underachievement

Those behaviours may arise for many different reasons.

# Underachievement

Let's dig deeper....

why might someone underachieve?

- group of 3-4 discuss

# why???



## engagement

- ability
- relevance
- social pressure, isolation
- family stress
- expectations

# Underachievement

expectations:

- self
- others
  - perfectionism
  - anxiety
  - depression



action...

Based on what we *know* and *understand*,  
what might we *do* at home  
as part of the way we live?

# your family environment...

- work together
- have fun together
- listen to each other
- use calm communication
- set boundaries
- provide predictability - response, routines
- give clear directions & expectations
- provide rationale for understanding



# model...



- wellness activities
- effort & practice for excellence (healthy perfectionism)
- perspective taking
- problem solving in different situations
- handling mistakes
- adapting to change



# accept...

- feelings
- speak to think / think to speak
- different ways of working
- level of development as developing
- mistakes as opportunities for learning & strength building



# essential...

Relationship, relationship, relationship!

- respect
- acknowledgement/validation
- reasonable expectations
- perspective
- modeling
- unconditional love



# Resources

- Autobiographies/Biographies -movies & books
- Mellow out they say by Michael Piechowski
- SENG - Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted  
<http://sengifted.org/>
- The Underachieving Gifted Child by Del Siegle

# questions

