

The Pressures Gifted Children Feel and How to Prevent and Reverse Underachievement

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ABSTRACT

The environments which foster giftedness also make children vulnerable to feeling extreme pressures. The praise and power which cultivate a positive learning environment may become “too much of a good thing.” Gifted children may internalize highly competitive pressures to be perfect, extraordinarily creative and/or popular. -ese pressures can lead to motivation or may cause defensive underachievement patterns. Families and schools can help gifted children cope with these pressures by providing academic challenges and social-emotional support. Best practices for gifted children at Family Achievement Clinic begin with a parent intake meeting to assess and guide united parenting, referential speaking, gradual and appropriate age-related empowerment and an understanding of early childhood home and school history. A student evaluation follows which includes individual IQ and achievement testing and assessments of possible twice-exceptionalities such as ADHD, depression and/or anxiety. A post assessment meeting with parents and teachers is used to set appropriate academic placement, daily study and behavior habits, weekly goals and reinforcements for effort and achievement. Role models and activities are also recommended for confidence and achievement building. Some actions may seem counterintuitive to adults who have acted oversensitively to anxious students or overpunished/overempowered students. Schools which provide for the social-emotional and academic needs of gifted children will encourage them to thrive on challenges, to develop resilience and make valuable contributions toward our world. Research shows that using Dr. Rimm’s Trifocal Model facilitates success for more than half of underachieving students. Practical strategies for this model are provided in Dr. Rimm’s books.

KEYWORDS:

Pressure on Gifted Children, Coping Strategies, Giftedness