

PRAEDITUS

Latin praeditus adj. 1 cl. meaning gifted

A publication of Allen ISD Gifted and Talented Services

Meeting the Social and Emotional Needs of Gifted Kids

(Adapted from SENG director article 2013).

- Love them for who they are, not what they can do. GT kids receive so much attention for their achievements. We have to help them keep perspective.
- Honor their uniqueness. Each child has the right to be recognized, honored and respected for their own personality.
- Talk about giftedness. Help them understand that they may process ideas and stimuli differently from others, and that there is nothing wrong with their feelings and reactions.
- Model and practice mindfulness. By teaching them how to relax when they feel like they will explode, we help them throughout their lives.
- Embrace their passions and celebrate the little things.
- Let them know that perfection is not necessary, but stick by them if they insist on it.
- See the world from their perspective. They need to be outside, to be social and have friends, and they need help in mastering intensity.
- Keep your door (and heart) open and welcome, while at the same time respecting their right to private thoughts.
- Arrange social and enrichment experiences with other gifted kids so that they can share things that excite them with others who will understand.
- Teach them about other amazing gifted people so they will feel heartened and learn from the lead of role models.



Developing and Nurturing Friendships

Many gifted children find friendships to be challenging. The UCLA Children's Friendship Program has helped over 1,100 elementary school aged children and their parents through their Children's Friendship Training classes. These are some of the most common friendship problems for children.

Problems in social currency Friendships start with common interests such as mutual play activities and conversational interests. Some children with friendship problems only play video games and have very restricted areas of conversation.

Sports is a common social currency If you watch kids interact on a playground, very little time is actually spent playing. Much time is consumed waiting in line to play and negotiating the rules. It is more social than athletic.

Problems in sharing a conversation Some children with friendship problems can't share a conversation – they often dominate the conversation. They may be unable to moderate personal disclosure. Revealing things that are too personal too soon in the relationship and bragging are common social errors.

Problems in resolving conflict Studies show that lack conflict during the first three play dates predicts that children will not go on to be best friends. Best friends are able to quickly resolve conflict, move on to have fun and become more socially competent in the process.

One of the program's most important finding has been that one-on-one play dates are the best way to build close friendships. Research shows that one-on-one play dates are the only time when children can get to know each other intimately without interruption.

Tips For Parents

Is your child an introvert? Here is a checklist of common characteristics of an introvert.

- Has two personas — private and public
- Enjoys doing things by themselves
- Reveals inner most thoughts to only a few
- Refuses to discuss the day's events until later, even days or weeks
- Are thorough thinkers
- Rarely interrupt and hate to be interrupted
- Learn by watching and mentally rehearsing
- Become grouchy if around people too long
- Have a strong sense of personal space
- Seem to enjoy being sent to their rooms to sit alone
- May find it difficult to share what they are feeling
- Are humiliated easily

Tips for Living with Introverts

Honor their need for privacy by giving them a place they can go that is their own and where they will not be intruded upon.

Provide time to process the days events before sharing their feelings and understand that sharing may happen with only one person.

Honor their need for personal space (around their body). It will be larger than for most other people.

Respect their need for time to think, observe, or mentally rehearse before they try something new.

Respect their discomfort with interruptions.

Help them decide in advance what they will say to strangers in new situations and what interests or feelings they feel safe sharing with others.

Help them understand that others may perceive them as rude, stand-offish, arrogant, shy, or even unapproachable.

Remember that introverts can be very sociable with other introverts, family members and close friends.

Help introverts to find ways to refuel — to find what activities works best for them.

Celebrating Differentness

Bette Midler once said, “If only I'd known my differentness would be an asset, then my earlier life would have been much easier.”

Her quote is one that applies to so many of our gifted students. Wouldn't it be great if our kids could understand and accept the fact that being different really is an asset? That's why biographies are so relevant for gifted kids... they are able to see that many exceptional people felt different when they were kids. Bette Midler is only one in a long line of successful people that didn't fit in with the crowd.



One of the best books to help kids see that being unique is okay is *The Sneetches*. Dr. Seuss wrote *Sneetches*, in 1961 to teach children about discrimination. He wrote the book to address how different groups of people didn't like each other during World War II. Seuss came from a German immigrant family and was often targeted with slurs to his heritage.

Gifted children quickly understand the lengths that the characters in the book go to so they can be like everyone else. Interestingly enough, after reading the book, when asked if they would want to change to be like everyone else and fit in, gifted kids almost universally respond that they would rather be themselves. Moments like these are opportunities to celebrate differentness and help our children cherish themselves.

Being a kid is hard and knowing that you are okay just the way you are is one of the most important gifts we can give to our children.

Strengths That May Become Problems

Gifted children often prefer to work independently and consequently, don't want to take advice.

What to do: Start by finding out why your child does not feel that they need help and go from there. Often, children feel that help equates to dependence.

We'd love to hear from you! Share your challenges, questions, and success stories at [Praeditus Feedback](https://tagtconference.org/families/)

Families are invited to attend the Texas Gifted and Talented Association online conference, giftED20 on December 5, 2020 for just \$59, which includes up to 10 hours of family-specific programming in the Family Track and opportunity to visit exhibitors. Access to recordings is available through December 31.

<https://tagtconference.org/families/>