

## RESEARCH REGARDING THE NEEDS OF YOUNG GIFTED STUDENTS

### Fordham Institute:

This report does not directly mention first grade but does point out that our brightest are not keeping pace with increased performance. “ Many students – about two in five – who were high achieving in early grades had lost that status just four years later.....”their decline is likely to have a substantive impact on their long term education outcomes. Once a student’s capacity for high achievement is established, the school’s objective should be to ensure that the student maintains an upward trajectory.”

### Miraca Gross’s article on highly gifted children: Davidson Institute

One of the arguments against serving young gifted students is that their scores level out. However, even if one accepts that premise, if they come to us from home where they received their learning for the first 5-6 years of their lives then what are schools doing to these students?

*The Development of Giftedness and Talent Across the Life Span* by Frances Horwitz, Rena Subotnik and Dona Matthews published by APA 2009

“The study of infancy and early childhood is critical to the understanding of the origins of giftedness...High ability can be detected early in life, perhaps by the middle of the 2<sup>nd</sup> year (page 40). Given this research finding(which is actually consistent with what we know about cognitive and behavioral disabilities), it is incumbent upon us to provide early intervention as we do with special needs students, in order to prevent stagnation and the loss of human learning potential.

### Riverside Interpretive Guide for Teachers and Counselors

For individuals in the 98-99<sup>th</sup> percentiles on the Cogat

It is very difficult to meet the needs of exceptionally able students in the typical classroom...” “ In schools where the average level of cognitive abilities is 100 or 90 their needs may not be adequately met.”

## Dr. Jane Piirto Paths of Talent Development

“In the meantime, however, the educational needs of young children who are bright have been overlooked. In most certification programs for the early childhood education, the needs of young academically talented children are given short shrift. When these children enter school they are enthusiastic and capable but soon they find themselves forced to conform and to hide the academic talent. By the time they do get into even the minimal programs being provided to academically talented children, which usually begin at third or fourth grade , they are often confirmed underachievers.”

### National Association For Gifted Children Position Paper: Early Childhood

“In addition research indicates that an interactive and responsive environment in early childhood supports both cognitive and affective growth and establishes a pattern of successful learning that can continue throughout children’s lives (Clark, 2002; Smutny, 1998).

Some core elements needed:

- Opportunities to build advanced literacy skills (Gross, 1999, Stainthorp & Hughes, 2004)
- Ample and varied materials including but not limited to technology, print materials and manipulative resources (Barbour & Shaklee, 1998, Bredekamp & Rosegrant; Clark 2002).
- Early exposure to advanced concepts in age-appropriate ways (Clark and Smutny).
- Interaction and collaboration with diverse peer groups of children having like and different interests and abilities (Bredekamp & Rosegrant; Clark).
- Experiences that range from concrete to abstract (Kratz & Chard; Smutny & Von Fremd).
- Opportunities for social interaction with same-age peer as well as individuals with similar cognitive abilities and interests (Bredekamp & Rosegrant; Clark).

Ruf Deborah L. Losing Our Minds: Gifted Children Left Behind

On age grouping and the demise of ability grouping:

Grouping by age is so much a part of schooling that altering an individual child's normal educational path is difficult and can create new problems as one attempts to fix other.

“The children grouped in a first-grade classroom, for example are supposed to ‘look’ about the same as children in other first grade classrooms.....This ‘balanced grouping’ practice leads to the widest possible range of learning abilities with in each classroom. It makes it very difficult for teachers who want to teach to each student’s learning ability.”

“Although Heacox, Reis, Stark, Tomlinson, VanTassel-Baska and Winebrenner have all contributed excellent curricula to the gifted field for differentiated instruction at the classroom level, such adjustments only work best for level I and some level II\* gifted children. This means level III end up having to work alone and independently for the bulk of each day – an arrangement that does not take care of their need for social and intellectual peers.”

Jim Delisle Ph.D & Barbara A. Lewis The Survival Guide for Teachers of Gifted Kids

“Young children are adaptable, many can and do learn in these early grades to adopt average learning expectations and stop trying to reach beyond them. By the time some of these children reach third grade, their high ability can go unnoted and undetected.....”

From Colleen Boyle

Gifted students will tend to mask giftedness in order to fit in with others in class (Robinson, Zigler, & Gallagher, 2000). Even as young as preschool, gifted children have been found to mask advanced language and mimic the less developed language of classmates (Gross, 1999).

Students in the primary grades tend to have a self-evaluation system based on personal competency (Jacobs, Bleeker, & Constantino, 2003). Even as young as kindergarten, students use teacher feedback and grades to determine self-worth

(Pyrty, 2007). Early effortless success can lead to self-oriented perfectionism due to a distorted view of the learning process. If left unchecked, this can potentially lead to an unhealthy fear of failure in later years due to lack of experience with struggling through a challenge (Speirs-Neumeister, 2004, 2007).

## References

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