

# SOCIAL EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

## What can teachers do?

### Social emotional needs and academic needs are intertwined.

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Recognize and respect that social emotional needs and academic needs affect each other. Sometimes the root of behavioral challenges for gifted kids is them expressing frustration with not being challenged in school.

### Nurture children's talents

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Talent manifests over time and with opportunity. Be cautious about determining for a child what his or her 'strength' or 'talent' is. Instead allow for flexibility and encourage self-exploration.

### Teach pro-social skill development

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Teaching gifted students a handful of social skills can reduce the number of negative experiences they may encounter while in school. Ex: the phrasing of questions and comments, understanding other's perspectives.

### Teach them to enjoy non-academic activities

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Teach gifted students to recognize that non-academic pursuits are also important in one's life. They are additional areas for growth and can be stress relievers.

### Teach gifted students ways to manage stress

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As students move through school, many experience growing amounts of stress. For gifted students, much of this is self-imposed or because adults misunderstand them.

### Model desired behavior

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Like all children, gifted students learn from the behavior of adults. Whether it's effective coping strategies, communication techniques, or how to relax, teachers and parents are the models that children follow.

## Basic nature is biology

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Do not try to change the basic nature of the student. Shyness, for example, has roots in biology. Sometimes a student's willingness and ability to actively participate in class are related. Respect the nature of the individual gifted child.

## Embrace diversity & inclusiveness

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As a teacher, parent, or counselor, you are in a position to have a significant impact on the minds of gifted children. In many schools, giftedness is still looked at as odd & eccentric. Rarely does giftedness make people's lists of meaningful differences. If a school truly embraces diversity, then gifted students will be accepted.

## Proactive Counseling

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Expose gifted students to counselors who are knowledgeable in the nature and needs of gifted students. Learning about oneself and how to relate to others in school can positively affect the social emotional development of gifted students.

## Early coping mechanisms

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In the early grades, many gifted students may start to engage in behaviors that mask their giftedness in order to 'fit in' with their classmates. Knowing about these patterns can enable teachers to better understand the worries surrounding a gifted student's school experience.

## Provide down time

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All children need time to relax, free from school concerns. Providing gifted students with opportunities to explore or read for pleasure can reduce stress and may have a positive effect on their extracurricular pursuits when they get older.