**Helping Your Student to Reduce Stress**

Dear Parent,

This edition of our Visual Arts Education Parent Resource Guide will focus on helping your student to manage his or her time well, in order to help to reduce stress. Often the gifted and talented will be enrolled in several rigorous courses, involved in after-school extracurricular activities, and have social and family obligations that can easily overwhelm them, and will find many ways to avoid stressors.

Regarding avoidance of stressors, students often cope by throwing themselves into activities that served to refocus their attention, including demanding activities such as sports or “mindless” diversions, such as playing video games, surfing the Internet, and watching television.

Your student is unique and has special needs. In order to meet their needs, better understand and assist your artistically gifted and talented child, some researched-based characteristics and behaviors have been included in this issue for your reference.

**Characteristics**

- Artistically gifted students show fluency of imagination and expression. They can’t get their ideas down fast enough. They don’t need stimulation. One idea leads to another.
- They might have a highly developed sensibility in certain areas. For example, movement, space, rhythm, or color.
- They show integration of thinking, perceiving, and feeling.
- There is a distinctive quality to their imagination. These students have faith in their ideas and don’t find the need to copy.
- There’s a directness of expression. They can be very expressive but only if the experience motivating him or her to create, has been personally meaningful. Such a student rarely responds well to classroom activities where the teacher sets the topic, but will respond well to developing art associated with generalized themes.
- There is a high degree of self-identification with the subject and the medium. Artistically gifted students live their art. They are in their work. It is part of them. Even the medium is often like an extension of the fingers. Their work is intensely personal and shows an inner need for visual expression.
- They are always above average in intelligence. Although studies indicate that all those gifted in art score well in IQ tests, the reverse is not always true. Many with high IQs are below average in art.
- All show extraordinary skill with a medium (pencil, paint, ceramics, etc…).
- There is usually a sensibility for design.
- Each student is highly individual and inventive.
- The artistically gifted student works frequently on a favorite art form or theme. No encouragement is needed.
CONSIDERATIONS | HOW YOU CAN HELP
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1. “Time management” suggestions often appeal to the “left-brained” individual (to-do-lists and schedules). This may not work for artistically gifted or talented students who like to see wholes and think visually. | Help them to focus on one task at a time, and to focus on the outcome. When managing time, it’s the overall goal of quality and personal effectiveness that counts. Creating short-term goals, for specific parts of their art making task, will help them to stay focused on a technique or method they are trying to master.

2. When making art, haste is choice that serves no real purpose. Making quality art takes time and patience. Slow down! | In order to set aside enough time for the art homework that your student will be required to do for most advanced and Visual Arts Magnet courses, it is recommended that 45 minutes to an hour per week-day, and at least two hours per weekend is set aside for this tasks alone. Once students realize that they will have adequate time to meet the required assignment deadlines, they will be able to slow down and enjoy the experience.

3. When given an assignment and a deadline to get it done, don’t procrastinate. Get Started Now!!! | Stress is elevated when your student puts off beginning an assignment immediately. To complete a 7 to 10 day art assignment, should take 7 to 10 days.

PARENT AND TEACHER RESOURCES


Gifted Child Quarterly 54(2) 127-137, (2010), *Strategies Used by Gifted Students to Cope With Stress During their Participation in High School*, National Association for Gifted Children


Florida Association for the Gifted, Parent Corner, Website: [http://www.flagifted.org/parent-corner](http://www.flagifted.org/parent-corner)


You and your child’s teachers are a team. You all want the same thing: the best education for your child. Together you need to create a plan to make that happen.