

# SUPPORTING YOUR ARTISTICALLY GIFTED AND TALENTED STUDENT

EDITION 1



Dear Parent,

This edition of our **Parent Resource Page** will focus on helping to better understand the characteristics and behaviors of the artistically gifted or talented student. Identifying these unique characteristics and behaviors will help us to develop strategies to better support their educational, emotional, and social needs.

## Characteristics of the Visually Gifted

Two sets of characteristics are associated with visually talented students: *behavioral traits and characteristics of their artwork*. It is not likely that a child will have all of the characteristics listed below, but a child who possesses special talent in art will probably exhibit many or even most of them.

- 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.

## Artistic Behavioral Traits

### Early Evidence

Children who are gifted or talented in art usually begin young.

### Emergence Through Drawing

Drawing dominates for several reasons: the accessibility of the media, because it can convey detailed information about a subject, and because it is a more difficult task to perform with a paintbrush.

### Rapidity of Development

The gifted or talented child often traverse the stages of visual development at an accelerated pace.

### Extended Concentration

Visually gifted or talented children stay with an art project longer than other children, and they see more possibilities in the task they have selected or been assigned.

### Self-Directedness

Visually gifted or talented children often prefer drawing to other forms of entertainment and have the drive to work on their own.

### Possible Inconsistency with Creative Behavior

Although risk-taking is a characteristic typically associated with creative people, gifted or talented students are often hesitant to experiment in a new area if they have achieved a certain level of mastery in an idiom.

### Fluency of Idea and Expression

From middle elementary age on, visual and conceptual fluency is a particularly significant characteristic because it is closest to the behavior of a trained artist.

### Calculating Capacity

This term, coined by Howard Gardner (2), is a superior ability to utilize past information in new contexts. For instance, a visually gifted or talented child who has achieved a certain level of mastery in figure drawing can use that ability to render figures in other situations.

## RESOURCES

(1) Steve V. Coxon, Ph.D., (2013), *Serving Visual Spatial Learners*, Prufrock Press, Inc., Waco, Texas.

(2) Gilbert Clark and Enid Zimmerman, (2015), *Teaching Talented Art Students, Principles and Practices (No 294)*, National Arts education Association, ISBN 0-8077-4445-X



## Characteristics of the Artwork

- **Verisimilitude**

Children gifted in art develop the desire and the ability to depict people and other subjects from their environment at an earlier age than other children.

- **Compositional Control**

The elements of composition, color, space and movement are handled with greater sensitivity by visually gifted students.

- **Complexity and Elaboration**

Intellectual development is connected to the ability to relate information and observations about objects. Sensitivity to detail and the use of memory are directly related to complexity and elaboration.

- **Memory and Detail**

Even young gifted children are interested in detail and are more inventive in their drawings and sculpture than other children.

- **Sensitivity to Art Media**

The visually gifted child is more likely to explore and experiment with media, and achieve technical control, which results in a more elegant finished product. This is especially noticeable from upper elementary age on.

- **Random Improvisation**

Doodling and improvising with the effects of lines, shapes, and patterns are a favorite activity of the visually gifted child. The gifted child uses her ability to invent, depict, and describe to create meaning.

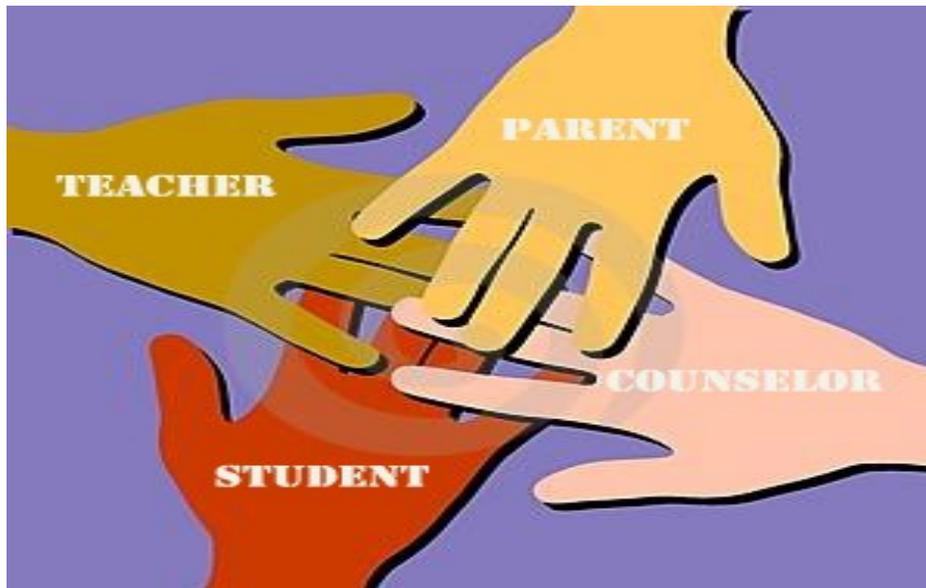
## Artistic Thinking Skills

- **Perceptual Discrimination:** the ability to perceive and differentiate through the senses with acute awareness. Perceptual Discrimination Artistic knowing begins with fine-tuned sensory awareness. Young visual artists view the world with acuity, aware of dimensions of space, color, and textures unseen by those who simply look.

- **Metaperception:** the perceptual/cognitive process of internally manipulating perceptions with expression. This artistic knowing or intelligence, has been referred to as thinking with an aesthetic sense, qualitative responsiveness or qualitative intelligence.

- **Creative Interpretation:** the process of reworking and refining metaperceptive decisions resulting in a unique, personalized statement. As a student works metaperceptively through an art medium, the artistic interpretive process ultimately unfolds. The more the student reworks and refines her work in the arts, the more artistic the interpretation.

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## WHAT PARENTS CAN DO TO HELP:

1. Regard your child's art as a record of his or her personality. Art is very personal.
2. Don't put too much emphasis on the end product; ask questions about the art making process, subject matter, or techniques.
3. Display their work in your home or work place.
4. Provide your child with an appropriate space for work, and suitable materials.
5. Visit Art Museums and local Art Festivals and Exhibitions; teach your student to respect the works of others.

## References:

Haroutounian, Joanne (1995) Talent Identification and Development in the Arts: An Artistic/Educational Dialogue. Roper Review, Dec95, Vol. 18, Issue 2

Hurwitz, Al (1983) The Gifted and Talented in Art: A Guide to Program Planning. Davis Publications, Worcester, MA

Porath, Marion (1993) Gifted Young Artists: Developmental and Individual Differences, Roper Review, Sep93, Vol. 16, Issue 1