

Provider Information Form



Northwest Gifted Child Association
Serving families with gifted children since 1963

Contact Information

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Service(s) Provided

- Medical Professional, please specify:
- Counseling/Therapy
- Educational Testing/Assessment
- Occupational Therapy
- Physical Therapy
- Consulting/Coaching
- Tutoring
- Other, please specify:

Do you have experience working with gifted individuals? Do you typically work with children, teens, adults, and/or families?

I work exclusively with parents, guardians, and other caregivers. I do not work directly with students themselves. Here are some of the things that I might be able to help you with:

- Reviewing any existing test reports (IQ, IEP, Report Cards, School Testing, OT, etc.) and/or student work samples, and helping you identify possible next steps based on the results
- Identifying other professionals you might consider consulting with
- Identifying intervention or therapy programs you might consider for your child, both conventional and alternative approaches
- Identifying schools or other educational programs that you might consider for your child, including private, public, homeschooling, and “off the beaten path” alternatives
- Connecting you with specific homeschooling information and strategies, including co-ops, local classes, and online classes specifically created for gifted and 2e students
- Providing parenting resources

I have the most experience working with families whose kids have these traits:

- High IQ (gifted, exceptionally gifted, and profoundly gifted)
- 2e/Twice Exceptional (high IQ + a disability or other challenge)
- Dyslexia, stealth dyslexia, dysgraphia
- ADHD, ADHD inattentive, executive function challenges
- Vision processing, auditory processing, and other sensory processing disorders
- Medical concerns such as Anxiety, OCD, MCAS, POTS, PANDAS/PANS

I do not have as much experience with Autism Spectrum Disorder, though there is often overlap with the above traits.

Do you have a specialty or preferred area of expertise? Do you have additional certifications or training that may be of interest to families with gifted children?

I am not a medical doctor, counselor, or therapist. I hold no licenses, and can't provide a diagnosis for anything. I am a fellow parent and an avid researcher, and I have an extensive network of professionals locally and nationwide that I work with to get advice from. I participate in numerous local, statewide, and national gifted associations, as well as attend many conferences to keep up with the latest research and learnings. I also work with school districts to provide training to teachers, provide consulting on highly capable program models, and HiCap identification practices. I have particular interest areas in neuroscience, 2e, social-emotional characteristics, and equitable identification. You can see my resume at <https://www.smartisnoteasy.com/Austina%20De%20Bonte%20Resume%202020.pdf>

Have you worked with twice-exceptional children/teens and their families?

The majority of my consulting clients have 2e kids. One of my specialties is helping families unearth the full picture of a 2e student's challenges. I am often able to suggest possibilities that families hadn't considered, and help them figure out how to seek diagnosis, interventions, and/or accommodations that may be helpful, sometimes including more "alternative" or "off the beaten path" options. You can read more in this article I wrote for the National Association for Gifted Children's "Parenting for High Potential" magazine: <http://tinyurl.com/phpdebonte>

Briefly state how your understanding of the needs of gifted/2e individuals and families inform your approach?

As a parent with 2e kids myself, I found it extremely difficult to even get proper diagnosis, nevermind find appropriate interventions for my kids and their unique challenges and strengths. I scoured books for clues as to what was going on with my kids - was it dyslexia? dysgraphia? vision processing issues? ADHD? autism? CAPD? It took me years to even identify all of the possibilities. My kids didn't follow the usual checklists. I have found that this is a real hole in the current offerings for 2e families, and so I'm trying to fill that gap for 2e in particular.

One of my big learnings over the years is that misdiagnosis is so terribly rampant, and that there is often a diagnosis that is so easily missed. The danger is less on over-diagnosing than on missing it entirely, or chasing the wrong thing. And that is a huge shame because once you can identify what's going on, you can often really do something about it, and that can be life changing. I've also gotten a strong appreciation for how medical issues can exacerbate or even cause what appears at first glance to be learning disabilities or attention issues. A food allergy, a chronic infection, hormone issues, nutritional issues, sleep issues - any of these and more can easily cause enough symptoms to trigger a "diagnosis" and yet very little progress is made until the root cause is unearthed and addressed. When I talk with families with very complex kids who have many challenges, I encourage them to also pursue medical testing in parallel with other avenues. It's quite common that this ends up being an important layer of the onion, and I think others may sometimes miss. I also encourage families to be proactive with intervention for the tiniest hint of dyslexia - and to not wait for months, as I did, to get a definitive diagnosis first. Early intervention matters.

I'm a bit of neuroscience junkie, and am delighted to see more and more neuroscience studies getting published about high IQ individuals. It's gratifying to see neuroscience evidence surfacing for things we have long observed in these students, such as overexcitabilities, executive function delays/difficulties, and emotional lability. One thing that modern neuroscience has made really clear is that the high IQ brain is measurably different. We don't fully understand all the implications of those differences yet, but it's no longer a question or a matter of belief about whether IQ or giftedness is a real thing. The science has answered that.

Please list any professional organizations in which you are affiliated.

President, NW Gifted Child Association (NWGCA), www.nwgca.org (2012 – 2020)
President, Northshore HiCap Parents Council, www.nwgca.org (2008 – present)
Advisor, The G Word Film, www.thegwordfilm.com (2017 – present)
Member, WA State OSPI Gifted Education Advisory Committee (2015 – present)
Member, National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC) Parent Editorial Content & Advisory Board, www.nagc.org (2016 – 2019)
Trained Parent Group Facilitator, Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)

About NWGCA

The Northwest Gifted Child Association (NWGCA) is a support and advocacy organization for parents of gifted children. Organized in 1963, NWGCA provides support and information to parents of gifted children. It continues to help parents enhance and hone their parenting skills and gives them tools to speak out for an appropriate gifted education and deal with this learning difference we call giftedness. NWGCA works with individual families, talking with them by phone and through emails, providing appropriate referrals and resources through our website. Thank you for completing this application form and for supporting the gifted and talented families of Washington State. Please email completed form to providers@nwgca.org.