What Parents & Educators (and Administrators, Grandparents, Coaches, Legislators, Truancy Officers, Counselors, Doctors...) Need to Know About Smart Kids

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This talk
- WAETAG Conference 2014 - 2017 (Washington)
- OATAG Conference 2016 (Oregon)
- NAGC 2016, 2017; SENG 2017 (National)
- Parent/community audiences (plus some educators)
  - Wenatchee, Mount Vernon, Bellevue, Bothell, Bainbridge Island, Redmond, Lake Stevens, Edmonds, Kirkland Pediatrician, Issaquah, Everett/Mukilteo, Burien, Woodinville, Lynden, Shoreline, Washougal, Federal Way, Seabury School (Tacoma), WA PTA Convention, Monroe, Newcastle, Kenmore, Burlington, Camas, Seattle
- Professional development for educators
  - Renton SD, Seattle Madison Middle School, Lake Stevens SD, Federal Way SD, Mount Vernon SD, Seabury School, Seattle School Board, Leavenworth, ESD 189 (Anacortes), Capital Region ESD (Tumwater), Burlington-Edison, Camas
  - King Count Juvenile Court - Truancy District Reps
Topics
- A few basics
- Twice Exceptional
- Executive function
- Emotional life
- Social life
- School life
- Equity
- Now What?

Slides: http://www.nwgca.org/resources.html

A Note
- I hate the word “gifted”
  - Poorly understood ("Every child is gifted")
  - Negative connotations
  - Many believe it is elitist
- But, it’s the term used by researchers and most professional organizations
- Synonyms
  - Smart, very bright, high intelligence, highly capable
  - NOT (necessarily) high-achieving
A few basics

WA State Law

- Full compliance expected since Sept 2014
- Must have nomination, assessment, selection of the “most highly capable” students in grades K-12, and provide services relevant to their needs

Chapter 28A.185.020 RCW

(1) The legislature finds that, for highly capable students, access to accelerated learning and enhanced instruction is access to a basic education.

- 2016 - new provisions in ESSA for gifted (federal)
- 2017 – double funding; equity for low income (WA)
"The Bell Curve"

- IQ: 140
  - Mental Age: 14
- IQ: 60
  - Mental Age: 6
- IQ: 100
  - Mental Age: 10

Asynchronous

- Different ability/maturity levels in different areas
- Example: a 5 year old
  - Doing math like an 8 year old
  - Reading like a 10 year old
  - Writing like a 6 year old
  - Emotional maturity of a 4 year old
  - Social maturity of an 8 year old
  - Social skills of a 5 year old
- Most gifted kids develop asynchronously
- Don’t assume a higher level of maturity...
- MYTH: “If she can’t do XX well, then she’s not gifted”
Equally Likely to Be Gifted

- Girls vs. boys
  - But girls are less likely to be referred for testing
- Poor vs. rich
  - But poor rely on public gifted programs more, "the rich have other options"
- English speaking vs. non native speakers

Giftedness cuts across all socioeconomic groups, nations, ethnicities, race, cultures...

IQ runs in families

- Out of 148 sets of siblings
  - over 1/3 were within five IQ points of each other
  - over 3/5 were within 10 points
  - nearly 3/4 were within 13 points
- But second-born less likely to be identified

- Parents and grandparents too... 😊

(Silverman, 2009)
Twice-Exceptional - 2e

- Gifted AND
  - (Stealth) Dyslexia, Dysgraphia, Dyscalculia, Dyspraxia
  - ADHD, Autism, Aspergers Spectrum
  - Sensory Processing Disorder (SPD), Auditory Processing (CAPD)
  - Anxiety, Depression, Mood Disorders, OCD, ...
  - Vision Processing Disorder (1 in 4, underdiagnosed, covd.org)
- Surprisingly high incidence
- Compensation can mask learning disabilities
  - IQ subtest patterns can help diagnose
- Many gifted traits mimic ADHD, Aspergers traits
- Diagnosis is tricky! Insist on an expert

Dyslexia (“Stealth” subtype)

- In the gifted population
  - Dyslexia often manifests as problems with spelling, grammar, conventions
  - Reading may be at or above grade level
  - Trouble with phonics, decoding unfamiliar words
  - Skipping or substituting words when reading
  - Comprehension with short texts (less redundancy)
- Early intervention is important
- May not be diagnosed until middle or high school
Vision Processing Disorders

- How the brain processes what the eyes see
  - Convergence insufficiency, teaming, tracking, 3-D
- Common: 1 in 4 kids has issues
- May mimic dyslexia, ADHD
- Inconsistent scores on standardized tests
  - HiCap program entrance tests
- Only diagnosed by a developmental optometrist
  - COVD.org for listings
- Vision therapy is available
  - Research on outcomes is inconsistent
  - Provider quality matters a lot

Auditory Processing Disorders

- How the brain processes what the ears hear
- One ear “hears” a split second before the other
  - Dislike sudden noises, noisy environments, remembering multi-step directions, poor auditory memory, trouble distinguishing foreground/background conversation
  - Usually very acute hearing overall
- Only diagnosed by a CAPD specialist
  - Liz Zeitlin, NW Audiology (Issaquah)
  - ABLE Kids Foundation (Fort Collins, Colorado)
    - The only clinic in the world that makes an “ear filter”
    - One additional test – isolated words in background noise
SENG Misdiagnosis Initiative

Flavors of Misdiagnosis:
- OVER-diagnosed
- UNDER-diagnosed
- 2e kids not recognized as being gifted

http://sengifted.org/programs/misdiagnosis-initiative/

Executive function
AND A LITTLE NEUROSCIENCE
Executive Function

- “If I’m so smart, why can’t I find my keys?”
  - Or homework, lunchbox, jacket...

- Organizational
  - Multitasking, keep track of more than one thing at once
  - Planning, time management, breaking down tasks
  - Sustaining attention through distraction

- Regulation
  - Impulse control, inhibition, self-control
  - Waiting to speak until it’s your turn
  - Mental flexibility
  - Initiating, getting started

A different developmental timetable

![Graph showing changes in thickness of cortex](image-url)

**Figure 1.2** Changes in the thickness of the brain’s cortex between the ages of 7 and 19 in individuals of superior, high, and average intelligence.

**Source**: Adapted from Shaw et al., 2006.
Empirical evidence agrees…

“Kids who had higher IQs to begin with seemed to have an extended period in adolescence during which they retained the ability to learn at a rapid pace, just like much younger children.”

Angela Brant & John Hewitt, Institute for Behavioral Genetics at the University of Colorado


A different developmental timetable

Figure 1.2  Changes in the thickness of the brain’s cortex between the ages of 7 and 19 in individuals of superior, high, and average intelligence.

Source: Adapted from Shaw et al., 2006.
So there is a downside...

- The later maturation of the cortex may explain why gifted kids tend to lag in executive function skills compared to neurotypical agemates.
- But most do catch up eventually.
  - It might take until their 20s...
- Need MORE scaffolding & support for executive function in middle school.
  - Similar to ADHD support.
  - Executive function coaching, folders (not binders), Creative Problem Solving, Time Timer, fidgets, ReVibe, IEP/504 Plan...

What is Executive Function Again?

- "If I'm so smart, why can't I find my keys?"
  - Or homework, lunchbox, jacket...
- Organizational
  - Multitasking, keep track
  - Planning, time management
  - Sustaining attention through
- Regulation
  - Impulse control, self-control
  - Waiting to speak until it's your turn
  - Mental flexibility
  - Initiating, getting started

Neuroscience
Common Link:
Lack of Inhibition!
Emotional life

Shout out a characteristic of your gifted child

All of these characteristics can have both positive and negative aspects
3 core personality traits

- Perfectionism
- Intensity
- Sensitivity

SENG: Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted (www.sengifted.org)
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Northwest Gifted Child Association (nwgca.org)

Perfectionism

- Erase a hole in the paper
- Impatient with others, aren’t “doing it right”
- Meltdown at the first sign of trouble
- Can’t make a decision
- Reach for impossible goals
- Hate criticism, dwell on mistakes
- Trouble accepting compliments
- Unwilling to start, afraid to try, “I don’t want to”
- “Challenge Cards” in the corner of the classroom may not work...
Sensitivity

- Too loud: fireworks, movies, toilets
- Too scary: movies, even Disney ones!
- Crying when another kid gets hurt
- Concern about the tigers going extinct
- Scratchy tags in clothing, buttons, sock seams...
- Low pain tolerance
- Bathing/swimming: water in my eyes/nose!
- Picky eater, don’t like foods to touch, textures, smells
- Food sensitivities/allergies
- Big reactions to minor setbacks, overreacts to discipline
- Sensory seeking - loves snuggling, soft fabrics...
  - Or, hates to be touched...

Intensity

- Tears of joy at a beautiful sunset
- So focused they don’t “hear” you
- Obsessions about a topic of interest
- Difficulty with transitions
- Big focus on fairness
- Competitive: most, best, fastest, highest
- Intense nightmares, fears
- Sleep issues, hard to settle down, stay asleep
- Major meltdowns
- Mood swings: higher highs, lower lows
- Stubborn, strong-willed, inflexible
Overexcitabilities - OEs

- Dabrowski’s 5 “super-stimulatibilities”
  - Psychomotor
  - Sensual
  - Imaginational
  - Intellectual
  - Emotional
- Hard wired - fMRI shows “Brains on Fire” (Eide, 2004)
  - Experience a more intense reaction
  - For a longer period than normal
  - To a stimulus that may be very small
- Honor it! Coach how to cope with it, not change it

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Sensory OEs to an extreme...
- Sensory Processing Disorder
- Sensory Integration Disorder
- Central Auditory Processing Disorder (CAPD, APD)
- “The Highly Sensitive Person”
- “The Out of Sync Child”
- Occupational Therapy (OT)
  - Wilbarger Skin Brushing

Neuroscience: Lack of Inhibition

More energetic
Imagine deeper
More curious
Hear more
See more
Feel deeper

OEs aren’t an accident; they support higher intelligence.
Other common traits

- Existential angst & depression
  - “Nothing really matters,” fascination with death
- Imposter syndrome
  - Very successful people who deep down believe that they’re fakes, and will be found out

Coaching Intense Emotions

- Anxiety, anger, fear
  - Leads to aggression, tantrums, withdrawal
- Is this a “baby” problem or a “giant” problem?
  - On a scale of 1 to 10, engage logical reasoning
- You might wait forever for them to try something new/scary/difficult/painful on their own
  - Goal setting, sticker charts, natural consequences...
  - Sometimes they need a push
    - Insist on finishing, sit with the tantrum
- Food really matters
  - Protein and fats at every snack: “feed your brain”
Taming the Worry Monster

From Dr. Dan Peters, Summit Center

- Amygdala is the seat of emotion & worry
  - Tries to trick you, exaggerates, lies, “takes over”
- Big brain surrounds the tiny amygdala
- Use your big brain to keep your amygdala from taking over
  - Keep your brain fed and strong – nutrition!
  - “Boss it back!”

Social Life
Introverts vs. Extroverts

- **Introverts**
  - Get energy by being *alone*
  - Stereotype: quiet, shy, reserved, need processing time, think before talking, prefer 1-on-1 over groups, want a few good friends
  - But, some can be very social – with a time limit

- **Extroverts**
  - Get energy by being *with other people*
  - Stereotype: outgoing, enjoy parties, think out loud, want to have lots of friends

Independent vs. Conformist

- **Independent**
  - March to their own drummer
  - Personal desires aren’t swayed by group opinions
  - “To thine own self be true”

- **Conformist**
  - Want to be with the group
  - Will adjust their desires to go with the group
  - Want to blend in, fit in
  - Sensitive to peer pressure
30% of the general population are introverts
60% of gifted children are introverts
75% of highly gifted children are introverts

60% of gifted children are independent

“When gifted children are asked what they most desire, the answer is often ‘a friend’. The children’s experience of school is completely colored by the presence or absence of friends.”

(DR. SILVERMAN, 1993)
Axioms for Social Development

1. You can’t force two kids to be friends
   - Authentic social connection is vital

2. Social development requires practice

3. All humans seek belonging and to be understood

Social mismatch

- More complex vocabulary
- More involved games, stricter rules, fairness
- Interested in niche topics, ask unusual questions
- Kids realize very early
  - They are somehow different
- Gravitate to older kids or adults
- Feel like they have to “fake it” to make a friend
- Lonely, social isolation
  - Even if they have playmates
  - “No one understands me” “They don’t get my jokes”
Social maturity

➤ Stage 1: “Play partner”
➤ Stage 2: “People to chat to”
  ➤ sharing of interests
➤ Stage 3: “Help and encouragement”
  ➤ uni-directional
➤ Stage 4: “Intimacy/empathy”
  ➤ bi-directional
➤ Stage 5: “The sure shelter”
  ➤ PG 6-7 year old vs. neurotypical 11-12+ year old
  ➤ “A friend is a place you go to when you need to take off the masks. You can take off your camouflage with a friend and still feel safe.”

(Miraca Gross, 2002)
study of 700 children
http://www.davidsongifted.org/db/Articles_id_10400.aspx

Asynchronous social development

➤ Desire higher maturity level relationships
➤ BUT, may lack practical social & friendship skills
  ➤ Some kids need explicit instruction
  ➤ Or, lack of practice
  ➤ Or, just average social skills
➤ ALSO, there’s a difference between
  ➤ Knowing what to do (“Smile and say hello”) vs.
  ➤ Actually doing it (“I don’t want to”)
➤ OR, a child may have great social skills
  ➤ Can flex to match interests, play patterns with others
  ➤ But still longs for “someone who really gets me”
How it plays out over time

- Biggest social maturity gap ages 4-9 (Gross, 2002)
  - Gifted kids looking for deeper relationships
  - But, other kids still pretty inclusive
  - So far, the gap is largely invisible
  - No one really understands me, “silent suffering”
- Social mismatch becomes visible in 4th-5th grade
  - Left out of parties, playdates, playground games

Why? What’s so special about 4th-5th grade?

In 4th-5th grade:

- Neurotypical kids just got to Stage 4
  - More focus on shared interests
  - Friends who are “just like me,” cliques begin
  - Fewer birthday parties inviting the whole class
- Gifted kids often get left out socially
  - THROUGH NO FAULT OF THEIR OWN
- Everyone needs their clique. Even gifted kids.
  - It’s an expected stage of social development
Socially sensitive

- An offhand comment from a peer can cause serious turmoil
- Intense response to perceived rejection
  - No one reached out to invite me to play the game
  - He hates me, she thinks I’m weird
  - I’ll never have any friends
- Coaching
  - Is it really true? Engage logical reasoning.
  - “Playful” teasing vs. “hurtful” teasing
  - Waiting for an invitation rarely works...

Consider this scenario...

- A gifted kid enters preschool with age-appropriate social skills
- In school, feels “different” from other kids, desires deep friendship, but doesn’t find it
- After a few years, starts falling behind in social skill development due to lack of practice
- Lack of social skills makes it even harder for them to flex to find common interests with agemates.
- Loses confidence due to perceived rejection.
- Kid is visibly struggling socially, but we strongly believe that kids “need to be able to get along with all kinds of people in this world”

What should we do?
Solving this scenario

- When a kid is struggling, do you:
  - (a) Keep throwing them into the deep end of the pool
  - (b) Put them in the shallow end with a float and a teacher

- Make the environment easier, so that they can get skill development back on track
  - Group together with true peers
  - Coaching & support

- Neurotypical kids don't need to bridge these asynchronies to develop socially
  - This is an unrealistic challenge for a gifted kid who is not also gifted socially

Even better, prevent this scenario by providing true peers from the beginning
Peer relationships

- **Goal:** Find my tribe/clique
- **Who?**
  - Similar age? grade level in school?
  - Similar abilities? maturity level? interests?
- Ideally, all of these
  - School programs with similarly gifted age-mates
- Not always possible to find locally
  - Especially highly gifted or in smaller communities
- By middle school: social & emotional healing needed for many kids

Diagram:

- Tribe/Clique
  - Math Club
  - Science Olympiad
  - STEM Club
  - Summer Camps for the Gifted
  - 4H
  - Girl Scouts
  - Boy Scouts
  - Campfire
- Foundation
  - Older Kids
  - Adults
  - Mentors
  - Classmates
  - Neighbors
  - Sports Teams
  - Neighbors
A portfolio of friends

- 4H/girl scouts/boy scouts/campfire
- Sports teams
- Classmates
- Neighborhood kids
- Older kids, adults, mentors
- First Lego League, Destination Imagination, …
- Math Club, Science Club, Olympiads, …
- Enrichment & summer camps for gifted
  - UW Robinson, CTY, SIG, Davidson, SATORI, Yunasa
  - Full list: http://www.nwgca.org (Resources)

Gifted programs can help socially

- Program models that place gifted children with other similarly asynchronous gifted peers
  - Full-time classrooms
  - Cluster grouping
  - Pull-out programs

- Serving the whole child is more than just appropriate academics
  - Prioritize social & emotional development
School Life

3 Factors in a Good School Fit

- **Level**
  - Appropriate level of challenge
  - Enrichment vs. acceleration

- **Pace**
  - Gifted learners need 1-3 repetitions
  - Neurotypical learners need 6-8+ repetitions

- **Peers**
  - True peers to discuss, challenge each other, collaborate together, etc.
  - Optimal for social development

From Washington Association of Educators of the Talented and Gifted (WAETAG.NET)
When the school doesn’t fit…

- Constantly ask probing or off-topic questions
  - Annoy teacher & other kids
- Trouble socializing with other kids
  - Lack of common interests
  - Advanced vocabulary
- Dumb themselves down to “fit in”
  - Consciously or subconsciously
  - Gifted girls going “underground”
- Become the class clown
  - Or the dreamer, the loner, or the victim…
  - Or the A+ student!

Why not put one gifted kid in each classroom? Doesn’t that help other kids?

- Gifted kids are NOT role models
- When other kids look at the natural abilities of gifted students, they only get discouraged that there’s no way they could possibly “catch up.”
- When gifted learners are removed from the classroom, other bright kids step up and become more meaningful classroom leaders.

(Delisle & Galbraith, 2003; Winebrenner & Devlin, 2001; Shunk 1998)
Gifted programs help kids **socially**

“Gifted children have better social adjustment in classes with children like themselves.

The brighter the child, the lower his or her social self-concept is likely to be in the regular classroom.

Social self-concept improves when children are placed with true peers in special classes.”

(Silverman, 2009)

**Caveat:** As long as you place kids early...

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Gifted programs help kids **emotionally**

It’s not uncommon for a gifted kid to cry in class over a frustration

... in a typical classroom, this can be socially limiting

... in a gifted classroom, this is no big deal

Grouping gifted kids together helps normalize their emotional challenges, OEs, perfectionism

... in a typical classroom, they feel different, misunderstood, teased for being hyper-sensitive, differences can become pathologized

... in a gifted classroom, common experience creates a supportive, accepting environment
Won’t kids get arrogant if they are put in a gifted program?

Actually, when kids are among academic peers they are no longer the smartest kid in the room

- Learn humility
- Get challenged by peers
- Develop true self-confidence, self-reliance

Kids realized they were different in preschool or kindergarten…they already know.

Is it OK for school to be easy?

If a gifted child is allowed to “skate” through regular classrooms where they pick up the new ideas seemingly without trying, they may never learn how to tackle a genuinely hard problem.

Eventually, they find themselves in middle school geometry, or high school physics, and may be faced for the very first time with a topic that is not intuitive for them—and may have no experience, no strategies, no emotional coping skills to tackle it.
Identity Crisis: Smart ≠ Easy

*“Things have always been easy for me, because I am so smart.”*

*“Uh oh, this new thing isn’t easy.”*

*“Maybe I’m not smart anymore…”*

*Some kids dig deep and adjust, but others…*

It can go **really** bad

*High School dropouts…*
*Suicide…*
*School shooters…*
*Prison…*
Underachievement is common

- Has its roots in 1st, 2nd, 3rd grade
  - But often isn’t visible until middle or high school
- Kids may never have to develop:
  - How to handle a real challenge
  - Persistence, perseverance, “grit”
  - Emotional coping skills
  - Study skills, time management skills
- 2e issues may be hidden until the material gets challenging enough
- Underachievement – very difficult to reverse
  [http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/underachievement.htm](http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/underachievement.htm)

“...the natural response for self-preservation is to actually stop caring. They’re like: "I don’t care about school anymore, this is stupid, this is boring." You’d rather be disengaged and do bad, than [TRY](http://www.hoagiesgifted.org/underachievement.htm) and do bad.

Typically, over time we start to see elements of anxiety and depression that kick in.”
- Dr. Dan Peters, Summit Center
Grit is more important than IQ

- Duckworth & Seligman studied success at:
  - West Point Military Academy
  - National Spelling Bee
  - Adolescents: High school juniors, 8th graders

  "It wasn't social intelligence. It wasn't good looks, physical health, and it wasn't IQ. It was grit."

  "Self-discipline predicted academic performance more robustly than did IQ."

  "In our data, grit is usually unrelated or even inversely related to measures of talent."

Duckworth grit scale
http://www.sas.upenn.edu/~duckwort/images/12-item%20Grit%20Scale.05312011.pdf

Mindset, Carol Dweck
"The Perils and Promises of Praise"

- "Effort Effect"
  - Kids who were told they were smart didn't try as hard next time
  - Kids who were praised for effort did better

- Takeaways
  - Don't praise kids for being smart
  - Praise real effort and progress (not results)
    - "Keep on trying..."
    - "Practice really works!"
“The brain is like a muscle. It needs a workout to get stronger.”

Smart kids at a disadvantage

- They are rarely challenged in school, so have little personal experience with effort -> results
- Less likely to develop
  - Grit & perseverance
  - Tolerance for failure
  - Growth mindset
  - Time management
  - Study skills
- It’s hard to truly challenge a gifted kid
  - They are capable of a LOT more than they let on
  - Perfectionism leads them to stay away from challenges that they aren’t sure they can tackle

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Build Up Persistence & Grit

- Provide experiences with **genuine** challenge
  - Advanced school programs
  - Musical instruments, especially private instruction
  - Foreign language
  - Sports teams, individual sports
    - Martial arts, swimming, fencing, tennis…
  - Independent study projects
  - Contests
  - First Lego League, Destination Imagination, etc.
- Let kids struggle and fail (within reason)
- Insist on persevering through challenge
  - Do not let kids give up
  - Not just academics – extracurriculars, sports…

Teach a Growth Mindset

- Teach a growth mindset
  - Your brain is like a muscle. It needs a workout to get stronger. (byrdseed.com)
- Notice and reinforce effort & progress
  - Do not praise kids for being smart
  - Would you praise them for having blue eyes?
- Discuss perfectionism openly
- Let kids struggle and fail (within reason)
- Insist on persevering through challenge
  - Do not let kids give up
  - Not just academics – extracurriculars, sports…
I never recognized myself as gifted, and school came easy to me. I never learned to study until I almost failed my first year of college. Kids who weren't as smart as me, had skills that I had never learned, and understood how to work the system, it was humiliating to figure that out the hard way.

I was never challenged in school until college, and I almost lost an academic scholarship my first semester because I had never learned how to study or work hard!

My whole concept of self was shaken when I finally "failed" at something.
I’m not good at things I’m not good at.

Equity
“Equity” does not mean giving the same education to every kid

- Different kids are in different places
- Every kid should learn something new at school every day
  - Vygostky’s Zone of Proximal Development
  - Not too easy, not too hard
- Not MORE work, DIFFERENT work
  - Not just more classwork on top of the “regular” stuff
  - Make sure the kid doesn’t feel punished for being smart by giving them more work
  - Piles of homework is NOT the goal
  - Not a pressure cooker, just the right level to build grit

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Outdated, biased practices:

- Testing on Saturdays
- Requiring a referral
- Requiring an online application, email address, ...
- Not providing tests in native language (i.e. Spanish)
- Strict score cutoffs without professional judgment
- Screening based on report card grades
- No transportation to programs
- Etc...

Peeling the Onion: Equity in HiCap (nwgca.org)

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Equity of Identification Problems

- Relying on parents, community members and/or teachers to refer students
- Using the words “Nominate” or “Application”
- Testing only in English
- Conducting HiCap testing on Saturdays or after school
- Using only group-administered cognitive & achievement tests
- Waiting until 2nd grade to “really” identify HiCap students
- Having hard cut-off scores, matrixes, or entrance criteria for HiCap programs
- Using high grades as HiCap entrance criteria
- Relying on appeals to catch mistakes in the identification process
- Once-a-year testing process, with no leniency for missing deadlines.
- Not providing practice tests to all students
- “Public notice” style of communication about the Highly Capable program
- Multi-disciplinary selection committees that do not reflect the district population, and do not have HiCap subject matter expertise
- Qualifying HiCap students based on available space
- ...

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Equity of Access Problems

- Being the only student of color, or one of very few girls in a HiCap classroom
- Districts that only provide in-class differentiation as a HiCap model
- Teachers with little or no training about the unique needs of HiCap students
- HiCap curriculum does not reflect the demographics of the student population
- Assuming that all HiCap students have access to technology after school for homework
- Assuming that all HiCap students have access to homework help & executive function support at home

“We cannot close the achievement gap or address the overrepresentation in special education of our subgroups - until we address their underrepresentation in highly capable programs.”

Dr. Donna Ford
Vanderbilt University
Now What?

Who are we?

- NW Gifted Child Association
  - Parent education
  - Professional development
  - Regional events
  - Outreach!
- Donations fund our operating costs
- Tell your representatives that you care about gifted education (http://app.leg.wa.gov/districtfinder/)
  - WA Coalition for Gifted Education
Bottom line…

Mismatch with the environment

Smart is NOT Easy
Emotionally – Socially – Academically
Grit – Executive Function

Why do we serve HiCap kids?

- They are a special needs population
- Without intervention they are at risk
- Nurturing the WHOLE CHILD
- GOAL: Functioning citizens in our community

- NOT:
  - To create eminent leaders (Einstein, Steve Jobs, …)
  - To send more kids to Harvard, Stanford, MIT…
  - To nurture child prodigies
  - To increase our international math ranking
  - To improve the US economy
Program Models: Pros/Cons

1) Full-time highly capable classroom
2) Acceleration: Full grade skip
3) Subject acceleration (“walk to math”)
4) Cluster Grouping with Differentiation
5) Pull-out or enrichment program
6) Afterschool enrichment program
7) Homeschooling

What you might be feeling

► Grief…that your child is not “normal”
► Guilt…that you should have done something differently in the past

► We were talking about our kids
  ► … but we were also likely talking about you and your spouse

► GRATITUDE that you came today and heard this information, so that you can move forward
Remember that these are kids

- They need DOWNTIME
- Don’t overschedule with every stimulating experience you can think of
- Follow the child’s lead, don’t push
- Be selective with therapy, it’s a long term journey
- Not all gifted kids are born to be scientists and mathematicians; they may take a different path than you expected

Do I test my kid?

- Early identification & services are important
  - Social development
  - Emotional development
  - Academic development
- Private IQ testing with a neuropsychologist
  - WPPSI – before age 6
  - WISC – age 6 – 16
- Test ceilings are low before age 6
  - The score may go up substantially with the WISC
- Any chance of 2e?
  - A sibling who doesn’t “look” gifted?
  - Testing is the place to start
So what do I tell my kid?

- Talk to them about being gifted
  - They already sensed they were somehow different in preschool or kindergarten
  - Their brain works differently than for other kids
  - They are more sensitive (they aren’t dreaming it)
  - They learn at a different rate, and sometimes with a different style
  - Talk about the many faces of perfectionism
- DO NOT praise them for being smart
  - Praise & reinforce effort, perseverance, progress

Parents: What can you do?

- Take stock of your parenting techniques
- Advocate for your kids’ needs
  - Positive, cooperative relationship with teacher
- Learn more: books, websites, conferences, …
- Challenges? Get assessment and resources
  - Therapy, enrichment, social skills groups…
Educators: What can you do?

► Early identification & services are important
  ► Social, emotional & academic development
  ► Particularly look for possible 2e kiddos
► Keep looking in secondary school
  ► Learning disabilities often get diagnosed late
► Support full time classrooms for HiCap
  ► And professional development!
► Learn more! (see handout)

Upcoming Dates

Bring your colleagues, friends, neighbors! 😊

SENG Conference, Seattle, May 5
Other dates TBD
Details: http://www.nwgca.org/events.html

Slides: www.nwgca.org/resources.html
(scroll to the bottom)
Thank You 😊

Northwest Gifted Child Association
http://www.nwgca.org

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