



JAGC Presents:

Social Emotional  
Support for Gifted  
Children



## Mission Statement

**Jefferson County Association for Gifted Children (JAGC) is a non-profit advocacy group committed to providing leadership and support to the families and educators of advance learners in Jefferson County, Colorado.**

# What Does JAGC Do?

## What Can JAGC Do For Me?

### Our Focus

- **Ensure consistency** in programming
- **Offer education** and outreach to schools
- **Educate the Board of Education** and district leadership on advanced learners
- **Understand and support** twice exceptional (2e) students
- **Support Jeffco** in the Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) process
- **Communicate opportunities** and resources to families
- **Provide social-emotional** support for families and schools
- **Recognizes GT excellence** with our annual GT Champion Awards

### Our Successes

- **Advocated** for high school credit for some middle school courses
- **Secured** additional GT Center seats across the district
- **Ensured** the district accommodated GT Center 6th graders moving to middle school
- **Worked with** the Colorado Department of Education to implement GT needs in the Every Student Succeeds Act
- **Were instrumental** in establishing Jeffco's (and Colorado's) first GT Center high school program at Wheat Ridge High School
- **Continue to work** with Jeffco to bring uniform programming to all students with ALPs

**Website:**  
[JeffcoGifted.org](http://JeffcoGifted.org)  
**Facebook:** JeffcoGifted  
**Email:**  
[info@jeffcogifted.org](mailto:info@jeffcogifted.org)

# Meet Your Hosts



**Heather Groff**

Secretary, JAGC

- Mom of 2 teenagers, both gifted and twice exceptional
- JAGC involvement for 13 years
- Gifted Education teacher for 18 years
- Masters in Gifted Education
- Currently district level position in gifted education in Douglas County School District



**Jana Betlach**

Board Member, JAGC

- Mom of Gifted Young Adult, in college and elementary student
- Currently homeschooling
- JAGC member for 3 years
- Montessori Educator for 15+ years
- Masters in Leadership In Ed.
- Owner- Life Outside the Lines Consulting



**Amy**

Behind the Scenes Manager

She is keeping us on track and recording for placement on our website.



A scenic landscape featuring a calm lake in the foreground, a lone tree on the left, and a range of mountains in the background under a clear sky. The text is overlaid in the upper center.

What Unique Needs Might  
Gifted Students Have?

# Common Concerns for Gifted Students

- ✗ Difficulty with social relationships
- ✗ Inappropriate criticism of others
- ✗ Lack of awareness of impact on others
- ✗ Depression (often manifested in boredom)
- ✗ High levels of anxiety
- ✗ Difficulty accepting criticism
- ✗ Hiding talents to fit with peers
- ✗ Nonconformity and resistance to authority
- ✗ Excessive competitiveness
- ✗ Isolation from peers (internal and external)
- ✗ Low frustration tolerance
- ✗ Poor study habits

(adapted from Silverman, 1987)



# Understanding the Issues

Social isolation from academic and/or social emotional similar peers

Lack of challenge leading to disengagement

Deep concern for world issues and current events

Academic changes

Lack of control

Executive Functioning

An aerial photograph of a vast, dense forest of green trees. In the distance, a calm lake is visible under a sky with scattered clouds. The sun is low on the horizon, creating a warm, golden glow and lens flare effects across the scene. The text 'Overview of Gifted Social Emotional Issues' is written in a white, cursive script across the middle of the image.

# Overview of Gifted Social Emotional Issues




The background image shows a monarch butterfly's life cycle. A green caterpillar is on the left, a brown and black chrysalis is in the center, and a monarch butterfly wing is on the right. They are all hanging from a dark branch. The title 'Asynchronous Development' is written in white cursive script in the upper right.

# Asynchronous Development

*Giftedness is asynchronous development in which advanced cognitive abilities and heightened intensity combine to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively different from the norm. This asynchrony increases with higher intellectual capacity. The uniqueness of the gifted renders them particularly vulnerable and requires modifications in parenting, teaching, and counseling in order for them to develop optimally.*

*NAGC Asynchronous Development*

- 
- ◆ Chronological Age
  - ◆ Cognitive Ability
  - ◆ Social Interactions
  - ◆ Emotional Capacity

*Asynchrony Can Impact Different Areas of Development*



# Overexcitabilities

## *\*AKA Intensities*

- **Intellectual**

- Curious, seek deep understanding, sustained attention in interest area, social justice, love puzzles/mysteries, intolerant of errors
- **Work refusal, insignificant in comparison, giving up time on personal interest areas**

- **Imaginational**

- Detailed play, mix fact and fiction (fuzzy line), vivid dreams, lost in own world when current isn't as interesting, may be highly intuitive
- **Increase escapism, increase creativity may mean decrease school based tasks**

- **Sensual**

- 5 senses can be overstimulated, intense joy or distraction: clothing, lights, food smells or noises
- **Difficulty adjusting to stimuli, lack of physical contact**



- **Psychomotor**

- High energy, fidgety, fast talking, impulsivity
- **Movement is needed--without a physical outlet they have a difficult time settling down to focus on learning**
- **Increase impulsivity with psychomotor activities**

- **Emotional**

- Empathetic, strong and complicated emotions, deep relationships
- Deep sense of personal and social justice, Existential depression, Compassion and need to act upon perceived wrongs, Sense of responsibility, Feel and internalize others emotions, Relationships are important
- **Depression, anxiety, possible grief and loss, separation anxiety, increased tension at home, lack of control leading to helplessness and hopelessness**

Really means capacity for enhanced variation in experience



# Perfectionism

## Healthy

- High expectations for work
- Motivation to complete tasks
- Self-confidence in ability to reach goals

## Unhealthy

- Stress or anxiety around making errors
- Risk avoidance
- Perceived excessive expectations from others
- Procrastination

Can lead to depression, anxiety disorders, greater levels of violence and substance abuse and eating disorders

- ➔ **Emphasize the effort and process, not the end-result**
- ➔ **Refrain from setting high, non-negotiable standards**
- ➔ **Focus on positive self-talk and growth mindset**



# Executive Functioning

## Signs of Executive Functioning Struggles:

- Difficulty starting and/or completing tasks
  - Quickly forgets information they've been told or have read
  - Difficulty switching tasks or following directions
  - Becoming overly emotional and fixate easily
  - Inability to manage time
  - Unorganized, messy desk or backpack
  - Having trouble planning or keeping track of assignments
  - Panicking when rules or routines change
- **Help students learn to identify their executive function struggles for what they are. Procrastination is not laziness; being disorganized doesn't mean someone's dumb.**
- **Provide appropriate support at incremental levels to build skills**



A photograph of a young child standing on a wide set of stone steps. The child is wearing a cap and overalls, looking down at the steps. The background is a large stone wall. The word 'Motivation' is written in a cursive font inside a white rectangular box at the top center of the image.

# Motivation

- Nurture Interests
- Help children control their outcomes
- Teach effort over smarts
- Help teach connection to future or interests
- Parent attitude about school and work is important

# Anxiety

Anxiety in children (especially young children) often manifests in ways that are not typical. Some possible indicators of anxiety in gifted children include:

- Competitiveness
- Irritability/Anger
- Inability to concentrate
- Worry
- Stomach aches
- Underachievement
- Carelessness



# Strategies to Help Support Students with Anxiety

- Practice deep breathing
- Practice Mindfulness
- Practice Gratitude Journaling
- Take a break and go outside
- Express positive but realistic expectations
- Don't avoid situations that make the child anxious (provide situations that will build small steps toward building coping skills)
- Help children have a plan in advance to deal with anxiety causing situations
- Model healthy ways of dealing with anxiety
- Talk openly about anxiety
- Use cooldown strategies like a glitter jar

# Resources

## General resources

NAGC Position Paper:  
NURTURING SOCIAL AND  
EMOTIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
OF GIFTED CHILDREN

Conversations with CAGT  
Webinars

## Overexcitabilities

Overexcitabilities –  
Discussion Guide

Dabrowski's  
Overexcitabilities in Gifted  
Children

## Perfectionism

Managing Perfectionism: 10 Tips  
for Helping Your Child

Pursuing Excellence Is Excellent...  
Perfectionism is a Pain!

## Executive Functioning

How to Engage Strong Executive  
Skills in Gifted Learners

Why You Should Stop Rescuing  
Your Teen (and what to do  
instead)

## Motivation

Five reasons gifted children  
are not motivated

How to motivate your gifted  
child

## Anxiety

Management of Anxiety  
Begins at Home

49 Phrases to Calm an  
Anxious Child





*thanks!*

**ANY QUESTIONS?**



## *credits*

Special thanks to all the people who made and released these awesome resources for free:

- ✕ Presentation template by [SlidesCarnival](#)
- ✕ Photographs by [Unsplash](#)

