

CHARACTERISTICS / CAUSES

Social Emotional Characteristics/Behaviors may include:

1. Low self-esteem
2. Unrealistic self concept
3. Withdrawn, non-communicative; avoids risks, feels powerless
4. Passive -- complies only enough to "get by"
5. Aggressive, hostile, defensive, rebellious
6. Rejects authority
7. Blames problems on others or on fate
8. Doesn't function comfortably or constructively in a group
9. Identifies strongly with no one and has no close friends
10. Inflexible, seems "stuck" (low level of creativity)

School Characteristics/Behaviors may include:

1. Negative attitude toward school
2. Says s/he's bored with studies
3. Work incomplete or poorly done
4. Dissatisfied with work (perfectionistic)
5. Easily distracted, short concentration span, lack of persistence
6. Discipline problem -- wanders around room, is late, disrupts class
7. Blames teacher or others for problems
8. Poor test performance and/or low grades
9. Few goals or ambitions
10. Chooses peer group of other dissatisfied students

Home Challenges/ Behaviors may include:

1. Unstable family situation
2. Feels in competition with siblings
3. Few social/educational/enrichment opportunities
4. Overly dependent on mother
5. Father may be rejecting, domineering, restrictive, severe in punishment
6. Parents set unrealistic goals and value child by his accomplishments
7. Parents allow achievement to go unrewarded
8. Parents seldom share of ideas, affection, trust, or approval
9. Parents overindulge or overprotect and don't encourage their child's self responsibility
10. Parents seldom model a positive, orderly, healthy, achieving lifestyle

The Gifted Underachiever

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DEFINITION

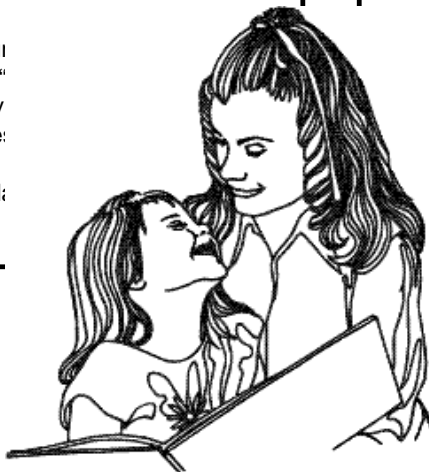
A student who demonstrates high intellectual ability on intelligence and aptitude tests but does not perform at that level in the classroom.



The "YOU-CAN-DO-BETTER"

WHAT CAN PARENTS DO: OUTSIDE OF SCHOOL

1. Adopt a wellness lifestyle with physical, mental, and emotional states in harmony - good nutrition, exercise, stress management, laughter, positive affirmations, and self responsibility.
2. Seek counseling for your child and/or the whole family, if necessary.
3. Find a tutor to help your child with skill or subject deficiencies.
4. Communicate high expectations to children, along with love, praise, admiration, and respect.
5. Hold frequent family meetings to set short-range and long-term goals, set rules, develop contracts.
6. View the family as a mutual support system and problem-solving unit with the parents as the loving but strongly unified authoritative base.
7. Stress hard work as a key to success, with individual effort, inner motivation, commitment, and self-confidence as essential ingredients.
8. Designate 25-35 home-centered learning hours per week (broadly defined to include reading, hobbies, games, sports, individual projects, even day-dreaming), and explore the community (country, world) together for resources to enhance learning.
9. Be interested in your child's activities at school and at home.
10. Don't compare siblings; view each child as having unique qualities and abilities.
11. Help your child learn to manage time and establish priorities.
12. Encourage your child's out-of-school interest or "passion area." Don't take away this activity as a punishment for underachievement.
13. Help find your child a mentor who can model a career or desirable personal qualities.
14. Make it clear that each time a person stui something valuable so that next time he "
15. Limit the amount of TV watching done by
16. Be consistent and calm as you put the re: for achievement on your child.
17. If necessary, obtain information and guid: from professional agencies.



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WHAT CAN PARENTS DO: IN ALLIANCE WITH THE SCHOOL

1. Consult frequently with teachers.
2. Be a school booster and become involved in school activities.
3. Make sure your child's teachers are aware of underachievement issues and will make an effort to redirect underachievers.
4. Make sure your child is getting remedial classes and/or counseling (group, individual) if necessary.
5. Ask if your child's dominant learning style has been determined and if any effort is being made to teach to it.
6. Ask if there is instruction available on study skills.
7. Ask what is being done to make the curriculum challenging, personally meaningful, and rewarding for your child.
8. Ask if there is a balance between skill development and more advanced exploration.
9. Ask if your child can advance at his own pace, and if he/she has any choice of special interest topics to pursue.
10. Ask if higher level thinking skills are being taught and expected of your child.
11. Ask if your child is grouped with achieving peers so that cooperative work may take place.
12. Ask if there is instruction on developing self-confidence and a positive self-concept.
13. Ask if there is instruction on social skills and personal development -- for example, leadership, problem solving, stress management, communication, grooming.
14. Ask if there is career exploration at school.
Find out if a high achieving classmate has similar interests as your child.
Ask the school to help you find an older mentor for your child.
Find out the teacher(s) your child likes and ask if he/she can be placed with this teacher.

**For materials and professional consultation,
you may contact the following agencies:
Florida Association for Gifted / Parents for Able Learner Students
FLAG/PALS - (863) 647-3003
Learning Resource Center
LRC - (863) 688-9477
Sylvan Learning Center - (863) 647-1922**

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