

Perfectionism describes someone who has a personality that strives for flawlessness. This is often accomplished through fixating on imperfections, trying to control situations, working hard, and/or being critical of the self or others.

The tendency toward perfectionism commonly appears as an item on rating scales and checklists used by parents and teachers to nominate potentially gifted students. If a child is cognitively advanced for their age, most of what they're expected to learn comes easily.

Gifted learners are not accustomed to struggling. Although seeking perfection can be motivating and gratifying, certain behaviors associated with doing so-**frustration, anger, avoidance, and disruptiveness**-are troublesome.

The following suggestions may help you guide each child to try new things and to accept and learn from less-than-perfect attempts: *(The following list comes from Chapter 10 in Teaching Gifted Children in Today's Preschool and Primary Classrooms.)*

- Teach courage
- Reward trying
- Expect progress, not perfection
- Prioritize tasks
- Applaud persistence
- Break down the task
- Acknowledge learning
- Ask, "What's good about it?"
- Help the child discover meaning
- Honor the time invested
- Focus on processes as well as products
- Make mistakes OK

Articles about Perfectionism

[6 Ways to Help Your Child Overcome the Fear of Failure](#) Written by Ashley Cullins

[Helping Gifted Students Cope with Perfectionism](#) Written by Michael Pyryt.

[Perfectionism](#) from the National Association for Gifted Children website.