

Recommended Books for Parents/Guardians of K-12 Gifted Children

Colangelo, Nicholas, Susan G. Assouline, and Miraca U. M. Gross. **A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students.** IA City, IA: Connie Belin & Jacqueline N. Blank International Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development, University of Iowa, 2004. ([FREE DOWNLOAD of Volume 1](#))

Brief Overview: Compilation of information and research on acceleration as an umbrella of services designed to meet the needs of gifted students. Report provides statistics as well as helpful information regarding accelerative options. Volume I is more relevant and useful in its direct application to support gifted students, whereas Volume II contains more of the research compiled.

Colangelo, Nicholas, Susan G. Assouline, Joyce VanTassel-Baska, and Ann Lupkowski-Shoplik. **A Nation Empowered: Evidence Trumps the Excuses Holding Back America's Brightest Students** ([FREE DOWNLOAD of Volume 1](#))

Brief Overview: Provides an update to the initial work compiled within A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students. The purpose of A Nation Empowered is to inform educators, parents, and policy makers of current research on acceleration, suggest how that information has been applied to educational policy throughout the nation, and recommend ways in which educators can use the findings in decision-making for students.

Davis, Joy Lawson and Deb Douglas. **Empowering Underrepresented Gifted Students.** Free Spirit, 2021.

Brief Overview: In gifted education, the systemic underrepresentation of gifted students who have been discriminated against in school-based gifted and advanced learner programs because of their race, ethnicity, gender identity, sexual orientation, socioeconomic status, or other realities continues to be problematic. This book helps educators, students, (and families) to understand these issues and provides helpful practices and strategies for helping and supporting underserved high-potential students in maximizing their abilities.

Delisle, James R., Judy Galbraith, and Pamela Espeland. **When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers: How to Meet Their Social and Emotional Needs.** [Australia]: Accessible Systems, 2010.

Brief Overview: Practical guide in supporting the social and emotional needs of gifted students in grades K-12 through college. Addresses issues which may arise from high achievement, test scores, and reaching potential, including anxiety, perfectionism, alienation, and uncertainty about the future. Relevant for teachers, counselors, other school personnel, and parents/guardians.

Delisle, James R. **Parenting Gifted Kids: Tips for Raising Happy and Successful Children.** Waco, TX: Prufrock, 2006.

Brief Overview: In true Jim Delisle fashion, this guide provides a humorous, positive, and realistic picture of raising gifted children. The 10 key tips provided illustrate Delisle's belief in thoughtful and reflective practice (which is rooted in personal experience) and his emphasis upon the value of meeting the individual social, emotional, and academic needs of each child.

Gladwell, Malcolm. **Blink: The Power of Thinking without Thinking.** New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2005.

Brief Overview: While this best seller does not specifically address gifted learners, topics and research have great relevance to the characteristics of successful decision makers. This book may help parents/guardians have a better understanding of the decisions they and their gifted children may make. (This book is a great one to read and discuss alongside a gifted teen/college student.)

Gladwell, Malcolm. **Outliers: The Story of Success.** New York: Little, Brown and Co., 2008.

Brief Overview: This Gladwell best seller does not explicitly address gifted children, however, its focus upon intelligence and the key components to success in a variety of settings is startling and relevant to the development of a deeper understanding of success. (This thought-provoking book is a great one to read and discuss alongside a gifted teen/college student.)

Gladwell, Malcolm. **The Tipping Point: How Little Things Can Make a Big Difference.** Boston: Little, Brown, and Co., 2000.

Brief Overview: This Gladwell best seller does not explicitly address gifted learners, but rather is relevant to inspiring gifted teens/college students to make a difference. Book provides research reflecting the ingredients needed to inspire widespread change. Gifted teens and college students will likely find statistics and “tipping point phenomenon” examples intriguing, while providing an insightful understanding as to how “little” ideas, trends, etc. can be grown and have a remarkable impact. *(This book is a great one to read and discuss alongside a gifted teen/college student.)*

Halsted, Judith Wynn. **Some of My Best Friends Are Books: Guiding Gifted Readers.** Third Edition. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential, 2009.

Brief Overview: *This reference provides relevant guidance in selection of both fiction and non-fiction books for gifted preschool to high school students. Provides guidance as to how to discuss books with young gifted readers and how books can serve as an emotional support for gifted students. Provides an annotated bibliography of over 300 books and an index of categories by age/grade level that are relevant to gifted learners.*

Jannot, Jeannine. **The Disintegrating Student: Struggling but Smart, Falling Apart, and How to Turn It Around.** Citadel, 2021.

Brief Overview: *While gifted students often can coast through courses and grade levels, it is inevitable that they will each eventually “hit a wall”, which may yield declining grades and related stress, low self-esteem, etc. This book provides effective and research-based strategies to help parents and educators assist students in understanding how to ask for help and how to combat counterproductive behaviors. Jannot provides strategies to support students in addressing skills deficits, while navigating their social and emotional needs. The book addresses relevant topics, including organization, time management, stress, study habits, sleep, mindset, emotional well-being, and screen time.*

Kay, Kiesa. **Uniquely Gifted: Identifying and Meeting the Needs of the Twice-Exceptional Student.** Gilsum, NH: Avocus Pub., 2000.

Brief Overview: This book provides guidance relative to the varying needs of twice-exceptional students (identified as gifted and have other identified exceptionalities). While it is not specific to a single exceptionality, this comprehensive book provides helpful examples and stories reflecting unique solutions and successes.

Kerr, Barbara A., Ph.D. and Sanford J. Cohn, Ph.D. **Smart Boys.** Great Potential Press, Inc., 2001.

Brief Overview: This book discusses topics related to giftedness in males from childhood through adulthood. It addresses challenges related to topics including: underachievement, socio-emotional issues, traditional gender roles, male stereotyping, gifted minority boys, and guidance needs.

Kerr, Barbara A., Ph.D. and Robyn McKay, Ph.D. **Smart Girls in the 21st Century.** Great Potential Press, Inc., 2014.

Brief Overview: This book discusses issues related to giftedness in females from childhood through adulthood. It addresses topics including: varied definitions of intelligence, giftedness over time among females, strategies to meet the socio-emotional/ academic of students, twice-exceptionalities, traditional gender roles, challenges of gifted minority girls, and strategies to inspire gifted girls.

Perry, Theresa, Claude Steele, & Asa Hilliard, III. **Young, Gifted, and Black: Promoting High Achievement Among African-American Students.** Beacon Press, 2003.

Brief Overview: This book provides 3 perspectives on dilemmas African-American students face. It helps to understand the varied forces and challenges at hand and suggests methods to help promote high achievement of African American students at all levels.

Pink, Daniel H. **Drive: The Surprising Truth about What Motivates Us.** New York, NY: Riverhead, 2009.

Brief Overview: While this best-seller does not specifically address gifted learners, its focus upon motivation may greatly assist parents/guardians in understanding the elements of motivation as it relates to gifted students. Techniques and the examination of three basic elements of motivation may help our gifted students to maximize their potential. (This book is a great one to read and discuss alongside a gifted teen/college student.)

Pink, Daniel H. **A Whole New Mind: Why Right-Brainers Will Rule the Future.** New York: Riverhead, 2006.

Brief Overview: While this best-seller does not specifically address gifted learners, its focus upon the value of creativity and innovation is critical to our gifted students. The book reminds us that achievement and high test scores are important as we globally compete against other countries, like China, India, etc., however, our country remains the model for cultivation of innovators and creative-thinkers. (This book is a great one to read and discuss alongside a gifted teen/college student.)

Olszewski-Kubilius, Paula, Lisa Limburg-Weber, and Steven Pfeiffer. **Early Gifts: Recognizing and Nurturing Children's Talents.** Waco, TX: Prufrock, 2003.

Brief Overview: This guide is extremely helpful for parents of pre-school and/or primary grade children who have characteristics of giftedness and/or have been identified as gifted. Book provides suggestions as to how talents may be nurtured at home (via activities, games, and play) and/or through school or outside programs. Seven chapters provide guidance relative to specific areas of talent: music, visual arts, drama, language arts, science, math, and athletics.

Rakow, Susan. **Educating Gifted Students in Middle School: A Practical Guide.** Waco, TX: Prufrock, 2005.

Brief Overview: This book, by Dr. Susan Rakow (Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Gifted Education at Cleveland State University and Cleveland Heights resident) provides parents/guardians with guidance in understanding the needs of gifted middle school students. Information relative to specific populations includes gifted middle school boys and how gifted services can include intervention services. While portions may be more relevant to school professionals, it is a valuable reference for parents/guardians of gifted students.

Renzulli, Joseph S., Sally M. Reis, and Andrea Thompson. **Light up Your Child's Mind: Finding a Unique Pathway to Happiness and Success.** New York: Little, Brown and, 2009.

Brief Overview: This guide assists parents/guardians in fostering a love of learning in gifted children. Book provides tips and strategies related to non-traditional learning styles and/or the precocious learner. Guidance in how to cultivate talents and strengths in all gifted students is provided.

Ripley, Amanda. **The Smartest Kids in the World: And How They Got That Way.** [S.I.]: Simon & Schuster, 2014.

Brief Overview: While this best-seller does not specifically address gifted learners, its focus upon three American high school students during exchange school experiences in Finland, Poland, and South Korea is highly relevant. The book provides student viewpoints as to varying educational systems and the environments which surround them. In an era of global competition which emphasizes a focus upon "the outputs" of test scores and performance rankings, these firsthand student accounts reveal insightful information that suggests deeper "input factors" are critical in improving educational systems. (This is a great book to read alongside a gifted teen/college student.)

Van Gemert, Lisa. **Perfectionism: A Practical Guide to Managing "Never Good Enough."** Independent, 2019.

Brief Overview: This practical guide explains myths about perfectionism and provides a new paradigm with practical steps to help educators and families turn the negative into positive, build resilience, and develop optimism.

Wallace, Jennifer Breheny. **Never Enough: When Achievement Culture Becomes Toxic and What We Can Do About It.** Portfolio, 2023.

Brief Overview: This book investigates the increasingly competitive race for students to secure the best possible future and the related unprecedented pressure students feel to succeed. Breheny describes overfilled student schedules, including all AP classes, curated resume-padding activities, and unhealthy social relationships, in an effort to “get ahead.” Breheny discusses the financial and psychological strain of excessive tutoring, classes, athletic training, etc. She examines the related skyrocketing rates of anxiety, depression, and even self-harm in America’s highest achieving schools. This book is intended for parents, educators, and community leaders and encourages collective reflection upon how we can teach our children to strive towards excellence without crushing them.