

Smart Girls, Smart Boys

Milestones and Danger Zones

Contact Information

- Barbara Kerr, Ph.D.
- Williamson Distinguished Professor of Counseling Psychology
- CLEOS Project, University of Kansas
- 616 JRP, KU, Lawrence, KS 66045
- bkerr@ku.edu
- 785-883-4749

Pre-School Gifted Girls

Reading “too early”
Oblivious to peers
Unusual interests

The gifted-friendly school offers a haven for these little girls whose intellectual interests, desire for adult company, and thirst for reading cannot be met in other pre schools.

Pre School Gifted Boys

- High activity level
- Advanced problem solving
- Strong asynchrony

The gifted-friendly school can provide opportunities for appropriate, differentiated challenge for physical, intellectual, and emotional development for asynchronous boys.

Kindergarten

- Girls
 - Denied early admission because reading is discounted
- Boys
 - Victims of kindergarten red shirting so that he can "mature a little more"

Gifted-friendly schools offer the only rescue for gifted children left behind by state and district policies

Elementary School

- Girls
 - Gifted girls are more like gifted boys than like average girls in interests, aspirations, and play.
 - Vivid, intense fantasy life
 - Need for aloneness and privacy
 - Need for acceleration and challenge

Gifted-friendly schools can provide smaller play groups as well as smaller classes, and most important, can use acceleration as a strategy.

Elementary School

- Boys

May act out when bored

If denied advancement, may bully others.

Bartleby Syndrome may strike!

Gifted-friendly schools can individualize, can accelerate, and most important, can observe Bartleby Syndrome early and nip it in the bud.

Middle School

- Girls

- Pressure to be pretty

- Pressure to be popular

- Pressure to camouflage talents

Gifted-friendly schools can provide single sex education and girls' groups, as well as focusing on achievement norms.

Middle School

- Boys

Pressure to be athletic

Need to hide creativity and sensitivity

Pressure to withdraw from female friends

gifted-friendly schools can provide a safe haven for creativity, the opportunity to NOT be athletic or to have alternatives to team sports, and small mixed sex groups for social growth.

High School

- Girls
 - Continued high grades, but may take less rigorous courses
 - Fear of standardized testing
 - May be multipotential and overcommitted
 - Continued pressure to enter the culture of romance

gifted-friendly schools can provide individualized advising for optimal development; preparation for testing; focused guidance; and sustenance for dreams

High School

- Boys
 - May feel pressure to be a hero and scholar athlete
 - May disengage from extracurricular activities and interests perceived as feminine
 - May avoid career interests now dominated by women and narrow choices too much

Gifted-friendly schools can provide a niche for the nerd, a challenge to pursue creative interests, and discouragement of stereotyped career interests.

The Facts that Most Schools Won't Face

- Gifted children of are as different from average children in their needs as developmentally disabled
- Gifted boys and gifted girls have different needs
- Gifted children do not benefit from being held back, from helping less able children, from "socialization," from co operative learning, and from minimal pull out programs.
- Meta-analyses of follow-up studies show that grouping with intellectual peers, acceleration by domain, and focused mentoring are the treatments of choice for gifted children.

The Facts, continued

- Hispanic, African American, and Native American gifted children have lower test scores as a group, but perform as well as non-minority peers with higher test scores.
- True potential for extraordinary accomplishment is predicted by not only academic achievement, but by focus, autonomy, and personality characteristics unique to each domain of accomplishment.
- Potential for gifted children is a function of talent, achievement, and distance from the center of privilege that has to be traversed.

The Counseling Laboratory for Exploration of Optimal States CLEOS at University of Kansas

- Profiling of patterns of eminence in adolescents in specific domains
- Day long workshops with online and personal follow up
- Assessment with state of the art personality, interest, and values inventories
- Visioning of future life
- Flow identification
- Individual counseling
- Goal-setting
- A Personal Map of the Future

National CLEOS

- A research through service program for creatively gifted students
- All volunteer army of counselors and psychologists!
- Schools may send teams of up to fifteen high school students for one day workshops
- Services are provided for cost of materials only
- Results of research are available for application by schools and families
- All students leave with a individualized Map of the Future
