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## INTRODUCTION

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During the 1970's and 1980's, increasing attention has been devoted to developing instructional programs to meet the needs of intellectually gifted students. The major thrusts of this attention have been in the areas of identification of gifted students, in the development of appropriate curricular programs, and in the evaluation of those programs. As is typical in most new programs, auxiliary services have developed more slowly, if at all. Guidance services in particular are less readily available, and information has been lacking both in quantity and quality for the individual counselor who works with the intellectually gifted student, his/her parents, and teachers.

One apparent reason for the dearth of material in this area is the widely held myth that the gifted child, by his/her very special nature of being gifted, is able to surmount and rise above barriers and limitations of environment. The prevalent attitude is that the gifted child, because of his/her superior intellectual ability, can succeed in spite of unmet social, emotional, or educational needs. While innumerable examples could be cited to disprove the above attitude, it is perhaps more appropriate to recognize that an effective guidance program is not concerned merely with students who have problems but with the education of all students, whatever their needs may be.

According to R. C. Nelson, "here the principle is accepted that guidance and counseling should be truly accessible to all children. While a variety of consultative and educative processes is vital in elementary school guidance, it is most important that there be a developmental sequential program and accessible adults who take time with children, who listen to them, who treat their ideas and concerns as important, and who demonstrate a caring for them."

This handbook was developed with such a philosophy in mind—that education is concerned with the optional growth of the whole child: his/her physical, social, emotional and intellectual development. Furthermore, it is assumed that guidance and counseling are vehicles through which the gifted child's development can be enhanced.

The book is organized into three sections as follows: the rationale upon which the program was developed, a section on the unique needs of gifted students, and a third section on specific objectives of a guidance program for the gifted including strategies for accomplishing those objectives with techniques for evaluating whether the objectives have been met.

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## UNIQUE NEEDS OF THE GIFTED CHILD

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Gifted children have the same basic needs as all children: security, love, esteem, and the fulfillment of basic physiological requirements. In many respects, however, gifted children have additional needs which arise out of their experience as persons with superior intellectual skills and abilities. This section attempts to delineate some of the more common of these needs. The list is not intended to be an all inclusive one, for such a list would be impossible; rather, it is designed to alert the reader to those needs which have been identified in the literature as ones the gifted child most frequently experiences. Moreover, no implication is intended that a particular child may have any or all of these needs. While it would be rare that a gifted child would have all his/her needs met, it would be equally absurd to suggest that a particular child will experience all these needs. Gifted children are individuals and they require a guidance program that identifies and focuses on those individual differences.

Briefly, then, the needs of gifted children are as follows:

1. The need to recognize and accept one's own abilities, interests, and limitations. The gifted child, particularly at the elementary level, may not be conscious of the extent of his/her talents nor of the particular areas in which his/her talent is greatest. In order to set appropriate goals and to evaluate one's goals realistically, the gifted child needs to understand the extent of his/her potential. Problems of underachievement, of the inability to deal with failure and of a lowered self-concept often result from an incomplete understanding of one's strengths and weaknesses.
2. The need to recognize and accept the abilities, interests, and limitations of others. Closely related to the need to understand one's own strengths and weaknesses is the need to respect the abilities and limitations of others. The gifted child will, in all eventuality, be required to interact with others who may possess less or more intellectual skill than he/she has. The ability to tolerate the condition and to accommodate one's actions to it may largely determine how successful his/her social relationships are. The inability to relate to authority figures, including parents and teachers may stem from a lack of awareness or sensitivity to the capabilities of others. Similarly, the inability to relate to peers may be due in part to this lack of social awareness.
3. The need for adequate social relationships. Perhaps more intensely than others, the gifted child faces the task of relating effectively to

others in social situations. Gifted children often become society's leaders. Their ability to lead depends on the mastery of this need. The inability to find true peers and the behavioral manifestations of withdrawal or acting out behavior result in part from the inability to relate effectively to others. Once the child is labeled as gifted, he/she is immediately set apart from others. This necessarily establishes a barrier which must be overcome if satisfactory relationships are to exist.

4. The need to explore, discover and create. The gifted child needs time to explore his/her interests, clarify values and daydream productively. The expression of this need may be a source of irritation to others. The child who is always asking questions, who is unwilling to accept things on mere say-so, or who deviates from the proscribed method may not be a popular one among teachers or parents. It is important that the guidance program be alert to conditions in the home or educational environment which thwarts this creativity and work to modify such conditions when they exist. By the same token, an effective guidance program should seek to channel this creativity into activities that yield results worthy of the talents of the gifted child. Creative exploration must be balanced with self-disciplined inquiry
5. The need for appropriate problem-solving skills. Superior intellectual ability is not necessarily isomorphic with effective problem-solving skills. Gifted children need to acquire study skills, critical thinking skills, and skills in decision-making if they are to accomplish the goals they often set for themselves. The use of a variety of media; the awareness of community resources, and the effective organization of work tasks, while important for any child, are essential for the gifted child.
6. The need to develop one's abilities without regard to race, sex, or ethnic group. Historically, certain occupations and interests have been considered unsuitable choices for certain groups within society. Gifted children, particularly those female and/or members of minority groups, have limited their occupational choices because of societal stereotypes. While it is acknowledged that this handbook is designed for the elementary counseling program where formal career choices are rarely made, it should also be recognized that the seeds of such choices are often sown at the elementary level in terms of the development of early attitudes and school learning.
7. The need to work independently and to participate in decision-making. The gifted child will often be unresponsive to interests or tasks