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# PREFACE

Teachers, counselors and parents have been using the book *Underachievement Syndrome: Causes and Cures* for several years. It was written as a “how to” book for preventing and reversing underachievement and is based on the TRIFOVAL Model used at Family Achievement Clinic\*. Underachievement is defined as school performance below some index of children’s abilities.

The guidebook was written to be used in conjunction with the book and provides a more extensive framework for the use of the TRIFOVAL Model including the step-by-step clinic process. It also provides a suggested plan for implementing the TRIFOVAL Model in your school district. The guidebook should assist you in making better use of the contents of the book in your clinic or in your school and reflects new contributions and recent information. It has been written by the Clinic staff who use the TRIFOVAL Model on a daily basis. If the reader is interested in further information they should complete and return the reader registration form at the last page of the guidebook. The guidebook should be used to accompany the book and is not intended to stand on its own. All references to “the book” in the guidebook are to *Underachievement Syndrome: Causes and Cures*.

In Appendices A through E, readers will find forms and information which are used at the Clinic. Appendices F through I include policies, grants and forms developed by school districts. Reprints of articles written by Dr. Rimm or other Clinic staff are included in Appendix J. You are free to duplicate or modify any forms for your own use. You are expected to credit them to the Clinic or school district.

If you adopt the TRIFOVAL Model, please send us comments on its use or the results of any evaluations you conduct. We have organized a register of TRIFOVAL Model programs in operation and will be happy to list your school or clinic if you utilize the TRIFOVAL Model. We appreciate your help in making a difference for underachieving children.

The authors would like to acknowledge the important contributions of other Clinic staff including Barbara Lowe, Lilita Harges, Raymond Lueck, and Thomas Crichton. Our thanks are also extended to Sharon Lind, John Schmitt, Betty Schaeffer and Carol Meland who reviewed an early draft of the guidebook and made

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# 1

## Preassessment

The evaluation component which precedes actual contact with the student is described as the preassessment. It includes the basis for identification and the guidelines for the parent interview.

### Identification

Underachievers' true abilities may be masked by their underachievement. Consistently poor performance can seduce both parents and teachers into believing that the current level of performance is an accurate reflection of children's abilities and skill levels. Parents sometimes think that their children's problems will be outgrown. Teachers may assume that earlier observed abilities were not true abilities. The following strategies are effective in identifying individual underachievement and its extent:

1. Underachievers may exhibit a decline in IQ or achievement test scores over time.
2. A significant difference between IQ scores and achievement test scores may indicate underachievement.
3. Underachievers often exhibit a discrepancy between their performance on individual and group IQ tests. Underachievers, particularly those who are attention dependent, may perform much better in an individual testing situation.
4. When there is a difference between achievement test scores or apparent academic skill levels and school grades, the child is definitely underachieving.