

Gifted Females

Characteristics of Gifted Females

- Complex & more imaginative play as children
- Often identified earlier than gifted males
- Often display greater height, strength, & vitality than girls of average ability
- Share more similarities of interests & life goals with gifted males than with other non-gifted girls
- Higher classroom achievement than males
- Commonly love to read
- Lower standard achievement scores in high school than males
- Lower self efficacy than males
- Higher percent introverted than average population
- More socially motivated in career choices than gifted males
- More perfectionistic & thus tend to avoid demanding classes

Potential Challenges in School

- Worry about their image as a gifted student in relation to other girls their age, can cause them to hide their giftedness
- Decrease in confidence in all areas during their teens can affect later choices, even though it may not be apparent in their grades
- Few seek careers in the physical sciences, engineering, & computer science
- Teacher attitudes can be biased to the male & see them as achieving higher in the areas of critical thinking, math, & problem solving
- Social biases remain intact & influence choices
- May engage in risk behaviors in order to fit in with their peers

Suggested Interventions, If Needed:

- Strong & supportive female mentors to provide encouragement & affirmation
- Open conversations & education related to gender bias & tendencies of the gifted female
- Teacher education in providing gender equity in classroom
- Counseling to deal with balancing career & family goals, work & relationships
- Parental education as to the characteristics & tendencies of gifted females
- Parental education as to the role of perfectionism in gifted females & the importance of a parent's proper support
- Education as to how their interests can contribute to the good of their community
- Teaching awareness of gender roles & stereotypes in society & the non-verbal values set by society

Further Reading:

Reis, Sally. "Social and Emotional Issues Faced by Gifted Girls in Elementary and Secondary School." SENG Newsletter 2(3)2002 1-5. 10 Oct 2007

http://www.sengifted.org/articles_social/Reis_SocialAndEmotionalIssuesFacedByGiftedGirls.shtml

Buescher, Thomas, and Sharon Higman. "Helping Adolescents Adjust to Giftedness." 10 Oct 2007