



Coping with Asynchronous Development

Gifted and Talented Parent Symposium

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What is Asynchronous Development?

- ◆ Developing in an uneven manner.
- ◆ The state in which one's mental, physical, social, and emotional growth are all developing at different rates. (Tolan, 2005)

Also known as: uneven development and uneven integration (Delisle, J. & Lewis, B., 2003)

Giftedness as Asynchronous Development

- ◆ Giftedness is asynchronous development in which advanced cognitive abilities and heightened intensity combine to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively different from the norm. This asynchrony increases with higher intellectual capacity. The uniqueness of the gifted renders them particularly vulnerable and requires modifications in parenting, teaching and counseling in order for them to develop optimally (The Columbus Group, 1991).

Example of Asynchronous Development

- ◆ A young child who can ride a bike like an 8 yr. old, play chess like a 12 yr. old, do algebra like a 15 yr. old, and have a tantrum like a 2 yr. old when asked to share a cookie
- ◆ Gifted children can seem to be of varying ages all at once (Tolan, 2005).

Problems that can arise for the child

- ◆ Child may feel frustrated because of the extreme difference between their intellect and their ability to express or use that intellect.

-Singer, L. (2000). Uniquely Gifted: Identifying and Meeting the Needs of Twice Exceptional Students.

- ◆ Child finds it hard to “fit in” with children the same age.

Problems for children , cont.

- ◆ Child is expected to act more mature, socially and emotionally because of their academic achievements.
- ◆ Child's intense feelings regarding world/social issues are not taken seriously. Child considered "overly dramatic" (Tolan, 2005).

Problems for children , cont.

- ◆ Child can become stressed and have emotional outbursts because their physical capacities, especially fine motor skills, are far less developed than their intellectual capacities, and may even lag in comparison to other individuals their age (Delisle & Lewis, 2003).

Problems that can arise for parents

- ◆ Placing inappropriate expectations on child.
- ◆ Others assuming you are putting too much pressure on your child to achieve.
- ◆ Dismissing child's legitimate concerns regarding world/social issues, fitting-in, etc.
- ◆ Not knowing how to deal with child because of their asynchronous development.

What a parent can do

Excerpted from Asynchronous or uneven development. Fayette County Public Schools GT Parent Newsletter

- ◆ Be aware of your gifted child's uneven development and the special needs that result.
- ◆ Teach your gifted child to handle frustration by modeling good coping skills and taking mistakes in stride. Identify characteristics that are unique to yourself and show your child how to accept his or hers in the same way you have accepted yours.

What a parent can do, cont.

- ◆ Promote an environment that meets the educational, social, emotional, and intellectual needs of gifted children.
- ◆ Value your children for who they are, not for who (or what, in some cases) they are not. Provide opportunities for a child to spend time with other children of similar interests and abilities to help them feel accepted for who they are.

What parents can do, cont.

- ◆ Remember that all adults involved should have the same goals for your child - positive achievement, continuous academic progress, and appropriate behavior.
 - Develop an alliance with the teacher(s), being supportive rather than adversarial or confrontational so that you can share effective home strategies and educate others about gifted children.
 - Anticipate difficulties, meet with teachers ahead of time, and communicate regularly with the school.

What parents can do, cont.

- ◆ If you think that your child will benefit from some type of academic acceleration in school, talk with his or her regular classroom teacher or the gifted/talented teacher.
 - Discuss education options, both in and out of the regular classroom, that are available to your child.
 - In many cases, teachers are open to ways to meet a child's need because they know all children learn at different paces.
- ◆ Nurturing a child's giftedness is necessary for development.

What a parent can do, cont.

Excerpted from Delisle & Lewis. (2003). The Survival Guide for Teachers of Gifted Kids.

- ◆ Help children accept differing abilities. Point out that all people develop differently and have varying skills, capabilities, and talents. Reassure gifted kids that no one expects them to have exceptional ability in every area.
- ◆ Help children learn needed social skills by role-playing with them.

What parents can do, cont.

- ◆ Encourage students to feel pride in their gifts and talents rather than despair over uneven development. Own way to do this is by assisting gifted students to pursue topics and projects that tap into already developed talents or interests.
- ◆ Seek help from a qualified professional in dealing with an area of need. (ex. tutoring in an area they may need help in; evaluation for special services)