



Note to Editor

Seeking Help for Young Gifted Children with Emotional or Educational Problems: Who Looks for Counseling? Part I: Between the Telephone Call and the Meeting

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Abstract

Research literature dealing with the issue of “who seeks help for gifted children and adolescents who have emotional psychological, educational and familial problem” is very meager. The main reasons for this situation are:

- a. Seeking help is not considered a “pure” pedagogical or psychological subject, and thus it falls “in-between” many categories and does not seem to fit exactly to any of them;
- b. When a student is referred to a counselor by a school teacher or headmaster the school is not interested in questions such as who else is sent to therapy, or what are the problems of other gifted students who need psychological help;
- c. When a gifted student sees a therapist it is the interest of the student’s family that this intervention remains private while the counselor is obliged to confidentiality. Thus it is very rare that any party will be interested in giving any details regarding the treatment to a third party who might use them as statistical material “for the sake of science”.
- d. There are only few psychologists of the gifted who are also theoreticians of giftedness and do both: treat gifted children and write quantitative studies about the cases they have approached.

This article intends to start filling this gap. It is based on data from the years 2014-2017; in summa – about 400 parents and other family members of the gifted; thus it has statistical validity. It analyzes the characteristics of parents contacting me in order to get help by email or telephone; the main problems motivating parents to seek counseling; the gender problem – namely, the facts that 1. The vast majority of callers are boys’ parents, and 2. when a mother calls she almost never makes an appointment; some legal problem that might be caused, such as calls from parents who are in the middle of custody battle; and calls from people who are not family members, e.g. therapists who feel helpless and grandparents who – in many cases – try to make an appointment without informing the child’s parents about it.

The main conclusion of the study is that in most cases children and adolescents who need immediate, even urgent help do not get it, and while it seems quite easy

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for many parents to find an appropriate expert, about 90% of them prefer not to start treatment and not even to show up for one meeting.

Keywords

counseling the gifted, emotional problems, educational problems, seeking help

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Introduction

This is the first of a series of articles intended to demonstrate the still-existing common perceptions of both parents and therapists about giftedness in general and counseling the gifted in particular. The series was initiated after realizing that the number of people who had approached me about their gifted children, step-children, grandchildren, nephews/nieces, or patients had reached a statistical meaning: 111 in the year 2014; 92 in 2015 and about 100 in the first 11 months of 2016. The parents consisted of a main sub-group whose children were identified as gifted either by the Israeli Ministry of Education while in grade 2, at about age 8 (see, for example, David, 2014a, 2017), as well as of parents who had “suspected” or hoped that their children were gifted but were not identified as such by the education system. Other family-members belonged mostly to one these groups; they initiated the telephone call or wrote me a mail believing the parent was not doing what she or he should have done in order to nurture the gifted child. The therapists who contacted me needed help in order to treat their gifted patients or gifted patients.² In addition, every year I have received 5-10 calls from journalists – from the written press and from a number of radio and television channels asking for information about gifted children and their families. A small minority of the callers were students who were seeking help to write term or seminar papers, or a Masters’ – even a PhD thesis.

This article is based only on the written materials I have received as the telephone calls were not recorded. In addition, while written materials were usually followed either by more correspondence or at least one telephone conversation, the overall data was large enough in order to create a satisfying sample for determining the characteristics of parents and others contacting me in order to help a gifted child or adolescent.

Of the 60 couples and individuals included in this 2014 sample all needed help – sometimes urgently – for their children. Some of the parents had encountered asked me a specific question, e.g. to what school they should send their gifted child; whether or not to refer the adolescent to a psychiatrist; some others asked

² Among the many therapists who had contacted me in the years 2014-2016 only one referred one pair of parents to me for a counseling session.

about continuous intervention, e.g. how can my gifted son make friends; why is my gifted adolescent daughter hiding her friends from me. However, in the majority of these the parents thought they would get free counseling either through written correspondence or one or more telephone conversations. Let us analyze the characteristics of the parents and other callers, the reasons they contacted me and some differences between the callers and set a counseling meeting and those seeking free help through the mail and/or phone-call(s).

Characteristics of parents contacting me in order to get help by email or telephone

Until 2010 the number of Hebrew scientific articles, book chapters, cases studies and other written materials about giftedness was very limited, so I thought that many parents were not aware of the fact that both psychology of giftedness and didactics of the gifted are well-known areas of research, and as a result the idea of paying an expert in these areas was strange to them. Since the year 2010 I have dedicated all my time and expertise to the research of giftedness as well as for counseling gifted families so the 300+ families who have contacted me from January 2014 until December 2016 make a large-enough sample for conclusion-drawing about their characteristics according to several categories.

Here are some of the main conclusions:

- Less than 10% of the families contacting me were interested in a counseling session involved paying. The vast majority were sure that I was giving free counseling. I came to this conclusion after realizing that practically ALL parents called me for making an appointment when the payment was not mentioned in my mail, while since I started mentioning it in my contact details mail more than 90% did not answer that mail.
- Those approaching me for setting an appointment specified the subject in the “subject” line of the mail. For example: “setting an appointment – our gifted disabled son” or “our 8-year old daughter needs extra-curricular activities”. The others wrote something general, such as “Counseling” or “our gifted son”.
- While the word “help” appeared in most of the mails seeking unpaid counseling, it never appeared in the subject line of those intending to set a paid appointment. I assume that those who needed professional counseling and dealt with it in the same way they would have dealt with any other physical or mental problem did not require my “willingness to help”. The parents who did not intend to pay for the professional help felt probably that they should approach my “good heart”, or my “loving the issue of giftedness”. This assumption is tightly connected to the fact that in a substantial part of the mails of those not willing to pay for a meeting, there was a sentence such as: “I know you are interested in gifted children” or “I understand you like gifted children”. Another frequent version of this idea was: “I am sure my case will be very interesting for you”. They were right: I do like my work and enjoy doing it, but it is my work, not my hobby!

- Parents wishing to make an office appointment with me referred to me, in most cases, as “Dr. David” or “Dr. Hanna David”; for those who were seeking free help I was “Hanna”; sometimes it was “just” “Shalom Hanna” or “Dear Hanna”, but in many cases they asked “how are you?” “How do you feel?” and sometimes even added wishes for my long-lasting good health, etc. At the end of their mails appeared sentences such as “I wish you a great day”, “I hope the rest of the day will be very nice for you”, or “I hope you have a wonderful week” [if the mail was sent on Saturday or Sunday].
- Parents intending to make an appointment usually used facts such as: “I got your name from X” or “after failed trials to help my son I decided you might be the right person for him”. Those who wanted to get free counseling tended to complement me. For example: “I follow your publications and think you write interesting articles”; “I wrote your article [which one?] and I felt you were writing about my daughter” or “Your book [which?] was fascinating”. Many times they informed me about my “internet status”: “when I typed ‘gifted’ your name appeared time and again” or “I am sure you can help me because I saw that more than 10,000 read of your article”. The parents who mentioned an article or a book by me, a TV program I appeared in or a lecture of mine ALWAYS mentioned the name of the book, the program, etc.
- When parents contacted me through a recommendation from other parents or professionals they intended to pay me for the counseling session. However, in many cases when they realized that I had my own working method they did not make the appointment or cancelled the one they had already made. The reasons they gave for the cancelations were such as: “I am against meeting you without my son”; “I think that you should promise us to work with the school administration, as the child has problems in the classroom”, or “If you cannot promise us right now that you accept our daughter for treatment there is no point meeting you for counseling”.
- Parents seeking paid help wrote a short, matter of fact mail. Usually they wrote some biographical details with very few – if any – superlatives. For example: “the teacher said that the reading level of my 6-year old son is similar to 9-year olds” or “my 7-year old daughter had already finished the whole Harry Potter series”. These parents apparently did not feel they had to impress me but rather help me understand their child and her or his special needs. They appreciated my professionalism and felt one example was sufficient for this purpose.
- Parents who intended to get free help wrote much more. The average mail was 800 word long; some mails consisted of a variety of attachments: diagnoses, links to videos, scanned drawings etc. Some wrote explicitly: “we are sure you will be interested to know...” or “I am sure you have met many gifted children but my child is indeed special”. It seems that these parents felt I would be thankful to them because they were willing to

share their exceptional experiences with me rather than admitting that they had problems and they needed help in order to solve them.

The main problems motivating parents to seek counseling

Of the 111 mails and telephone calls of gifted children's parents I received between January and December 2014 I summarized the main problems described by them.

Social problems: the child has no friends or according to the parents, or "not enough friends"; the child chooses "the wrong friends" [namely, not intelligent enough in the parents' opinion, children who behave badly "and are bad influence", etc.],

Eating problems: mainly anorexia or bulimia. The moderate version is distorted self-image, striking as early as at age 6 [with girls affected at much younger age than boys – not only at a much higher frequency];

Discipline problems: the child misbehaves at school, at home or in both places;

School refusal: the child refusal to go to school [or to the kindergarten]

Behavioral problems, such as rage attacks, acting out,

Self-harm or self-injury: scratching, biting, cutting, and the like,

Suicidal threats or even suicidal attempts (David, 2016b).

These problems can be divided into 5 main groups regarding the state of treatment.

1. Parents whose children are treated by therapists, but the treatment does not work. The reasons for the child's being in treatment is highly diverse: some have a learning disability of some kind, which often causes emotional and social problems; others suffer from quite severe disorders, such as Oppositional Defiant Disorder (O.D.D.), Tourette Syndrome, a variety of eating disorders, personality borderline disorders, depression and even suicidal tendencies (David, 2015). These parents want me to help the child's therapist, or help them find another therapist.
2. Parents who want me to recommend another treatment or an additional treatment. In many cases they name the treatment they have been recommended to find for their child, such as "communication group for gifted children"; "sports for the gifted" or "a place where my gifted child can find friends because obviously nobody in his class is suitable for him". In most cases I find it very hard to explain that not knowing anything about their child makes it unethical – sometimes even dangerous – to recommend any kind of therapy for him.
3. Parents who wish to tell me about their children but fail to define the problem that intrigued them to contact me. This has been the largest category; this group also sent me the longest mails with a minimum of no less than 500 words; quite frequently the mail consisted of many attachments or links to videos of the gifted child. Reading the mail and watching the videos I usually realized how gifted, creative and talented the child was; however, in most cases the mail did not contain any information about the problem that caused sending it. In many cases the mail had an explicit – sometime only implicit complaint about "the system" that "did not recognize the virtues of our child";

in others – that ‘the system does not bother to advance him’. At the end of such a mail the most frequent statement was a variation of “it is important to me that my son is happy”; “I will do anything it takes so my child materializes her potential”.

4. Parents who had encountered difficulties in helping their child to integrate into the regular or the gifted classroom, but were not explicit about it. Instead, they wrote to me that “In spite of the fact that I explained the teacher [or the kindergarten teacher] that my son is highly gifted, she did not seem to understand”, or “it is obvious to us that in the mainstream education system the child cannot get the high level instruction that he deserves”. After it a series of questions appeared, such as: “will the child materialize his³ gifts in the mediocre education system”? “Are the extra-curricular activities I send him to good enough for him”? “Should my child do third grade math in spite of the fact that he is in grade 2?” and the like.
5. Parents who feel that their child is not academically challenged in school and want me to help him advance him in a variety of subjects. These parents are right regarding their wish to “give the child more” – a wider, broader scope of learning areas, taught by better teachers, a more intellectual environment, learning in a more rapid pace. However, I fail to understand how I can help any child academically without knowing as much as possible about his background, abilities, interests, etc.; this can be done only when I met the parents.

Calls from parents who want to diagnose their children

About a half of the telephone call and mail I receive are from parents who want me to diagnose their children. The range or reasons for their wish is from the feeling that “my child is gifted and in spite of the fact that he had failed the Ministry of education giftedness examinations, I am to prove that he is indeed gifted”, to “once the system sees he is gifted they will treat him accordingly” to “I can’t wait till the child is 8. He must be diagnosed now so he gets what he deserves”, namely, special classes – that do not exist in Israel for younger than grade 3 children, gifted programs – those that accept only gifted children have their own diagnosing systems, etc.].

Some of the parents inform me that they read my article[s] about diagnosing the gifted (David, 2012a, b, 2013a, b; concise English version of David, 2012a, b and 2013a: David, 2014a; expanded English version of David 2013b: David, 2014b; French version: David, 2016a) and that was the main reason they contacted me. However, in ALL these articles I explain, time and again, that in most cases there is no need to diagnose a child, that whether he or she is gifted according to any criterion it does not help the parent get a proper, suitable education, and that in most cases when the kindergarten or the school teacher hears that “she should pay special attention because the child is gifted”, or “she must understand that the child has special intellectual or cognitive needs” she would react by resenting the child in the better case and the child in the more frequent cases.

³ Most examples are of boys as about 90% of families who have contacted me had done so because of their gifted son. Part II of this article series will discuss the gender aspect in seeking help for the gifted.

Parents who what their children to skip a class

A substantial category of the parents who call me is those who wish the child to skip a class.

Most Jewish parents in Israel prefer that their children start school as late as possible. The official age for starting first grade is 6, and the deadline is a changing date – between the first and the last week of December, 5:9 years before September 1, the beginning of the first school year of the child.⁴ In spite of this table 8.5: “Children in pre-primary education and in day care centers, by ownership, child’s age and population group (CBS, 2016) shows that in 2015 while in the Arab sector only 7.8% of 6-year old children were still in kindergarten, this percentage grew by 240% in the Jewish sector, where 18.5% 6-year olds were still in kindergarten. As the educational, social and financial level of Arabs in Israel is much lower than of Jews (see, for example, Swirski et al., 2015), it cannot be assumed that many more Jewish than Arab 6-year olds are not ready for school; the conclusion must thus be that many Jewish parents prefer that their children starts school later if possible.

An extreme example of this situation can be demonstrated by analyzing the age of the children accepted to the grade 3 gifted class at the Hillel school in Raman Gan.⁵ Among the 24 children who started the school year on September 1 there were no students younger than 8, namely, not even one student was born after August 8+ years before, in spite of the fact that children born between September and December could have also been accepted. Among the 24 new students no less than 8 – one third – were already 9 – namely, they belonged to an earlier calendar year. As it is practically impossible that they repeated a school year,⁶ the conclusion must be that their parents made them spend an additional year in pre-school, in contradiction with the world common practice of the tendency of gifted to skip classes (e.g. Colangelo et al., 2004, 2010; Gross, 1992, 2006; Gross & van Vliet, 2005; Vialle et al., 2001).

In summa: There are two opposite groups of parents who wish to diagnose their children in order to decide about their class-grade. 1. Parents who want their children to remain an extra year in kindergarten in order to increase the child’s prospects to be accepted to a gifted class or a gifted program (Segev & Cahan, 2013), and 2. Parents who think about grade-skipping as a reasonable practice to help their gifted child who suffers from boredom at school.

But the largest group of parents wishing their child to be diagnosed is still a riddle for me. As in Israel the whole population is identified for giftedness (David, 2017) and there is practically nothing to do with the knowledge that “my child is gifted”. As I have explained (David, 2012a, b, 2013a, 2014a, 2014b), there are special cases when diagnosing is needed, but in order to determine these cases a deeper investigation is required.

⁴ The deadline is fixed by the Hebrew calendar, namely – the last day of the month of Kislev, the third month of the civil year on the Hebrew calendar. It can occur almost on any date of December.

⁵ I did not specify the year in order to protect the children’s privacy.

⁶ Children identified as gifted are not “good candidates” for repeating a school-year. In addition, in Israel the class repeating rate is very low (OECD, 2013: Figure IV.2.2 How students are grouped in a school system (vertical stratification)).

Repeating calls: Parents who contact me more than once

There have been some parents who call me a few years after their first call. In the vast majority of these cases these parents had not shown up in the first time – they either did not make an appointment or they did but cancelled it [in some cases did not show up without sending a cancelation message]. Among the minority of the parents who did show up for the counseling session some parents had informed me that they preferred starting an intervention with some other professional, explain that "you live too far"; "you are too expensive", or "we have already consulted a psychologist or a psychiatrist". Some of the parents who did not make an appointment explained it as "it is not acceptable that in the counseling meeting you do not get to see the child". However, the most frequent reason for not making an appointment was "I'll get back to you after speaking with my husband/wife". **All cases of women calling me and telling me they must first speak with their husband ended without setting an appointment.** It is quite interesting that when the husband "needs to consult the wife" it usually ends with setting a counseling meeting.

Unfortunately, when I get a call from concerned parents who had already called me – in some cases 3 or even 4 years before – it is usually beyond my ability to help the child. For example: when a mother of an 8-year old calls and says her son is speaking about death (David, 2015), but the parents do not make it to the counseling session, I cannot help the child 3 years later, after I get another call from the mother who is concerned about her self-injuring adolescent. When a 9-year old girl has self-image problems I cannot help her by mail or a telephone conversation when the parents do not make an appointment with me. When she is anorectic at 12 she needs a whole system in order to help her overcome her disorder; then I must tell her parents to make an urgent appointment at the closest mental health clinic and.

Calls from parents who are in the middle of custody battle

Sometimes during a divorce process between parents, or when the parents experience a serious conflict but have not decided upon a divorce yet, one of the parents contacts me asking to meet her or him in order to solve a problem the child encounters, e.g. anxiety, deterioration of the educational and/or the emotional situation, siblings' disputes, etc. Each of these problems requires counseling and almost always immediate intervention as well; however, when the parent is calling while in the middle of legal or pre-legal process with the other parent the best interest of the child is usually not the main concern of the parent. Quite often the parent wishes to prepare the ground for the escalating dispute while presenting her- or himself as the caring parent who seeks help.

Though this category, of parents who try to "recruit" me for their divorce battle, is not the largest, each time I get a call or a mail from such a parent I feel helpless as there is nothing I can do to stop the process of using the child as a tool in the parent's battle. The little I can do is tell the parent I was not going to testify in court, not even write any document that they can use. Usually the parent who had contacted me backs up at this point. In most cases I detect the reason for the parent's call immediately. When I explain that both parents must participate in the

counseling meeting the caller says something such as: "the mother does not care" or "our relationship is far from being good". It is very rare that the caller says: "we have started a divorce process" or even "I consider a divorce". At this point I inform the parent that I cannot be a part of their dispute, and if the parent thinks it is the best interest for the child to have me counseling her or his parents – both of them should attend. In almost all cases the conversation ends at this point without setting an appointment.

However, it has already happened to me a few times that the divorcing parent has managed to make an appointment with me under false pretenses. It was either when the caller made an appointment assuring me that both parents were to attend the counseling session, but when I opened the door I discovered only one of the parents arrived. I did not cancel the meeting, but discovered, quite at its beginning, the true intentions of the parent who had concealed their meeting me from the other parent. In these cases I did my best to persuade the parent that for the child's sake he or she should tell the other parent about the meeting.

In a few cases when I met one of the parents under such false circumstances the other parent called me as well and wanted to set an appointment with me. As I have a good memory and I write down all essential details about the people who call me I managed to find the details of the family during the conversation, so I was able to ask the caller about the other parent. Both callers admitted that they were in the middle of an unfriendly divorce; I told them I could not meet them under these circumstances.

Calls from family-members other than parents

Most of the calls and the mails I receive from family-members other than parents are from grandparents. Many grandparents have already participated in counseling sessions – which in some cases have replaced the intake meeting. In fact, in all cases of a single parent – no matter if the child has been an orphan, a child whose parents have been divorced and the father did not live in Israel, or the child was donor conceived – I have asked the mother to invite one or two grandparents, especially the grandparent more involved in the child's life. In many cases I have initiated the participation of a grandparent in one or more of the parents' meetings. In my opinion, there is a huge importance of grandparents' involvement in grandchildren's life in general and in the lives of gifted grandchildren in particular. While "It takes a village to raise a child" (Clinton, 1996), my *Weltanschauung* is that it takes a whole town, sometimes even a whole country, to raise a gifted child. The most available sources are, in many cases, the love, knowledge, experience and wisdom of grandparents, and if they are willing to contribute in order to help their grandchild they should be encouraged and feel their efforts are appreciated. When the grandparent understands her or his importance in the life of the gifted grandchild they feel, many times, proud for being invited to meet me, and during the meeting they are encouraged to be involved in the educational and emotional life of the young child and her or his siblings (Silverman, 2016).

But is also happens that a grandparent contacts me without the child's parents' knowledge, let alone their consent. The reason usually given by the grandparent is that "the parent is too busy so they neglect the duty to take care of the giftedness

of the child". Parents seek help, in most cases, because of an actual problem, even if they "wrap" it with the "giftedness cover", namely, they use the child's high ability as a reason to the problem (David, 2010). This is not the case when a grandparent is calling: usually the reason given is that "the child does not materialize her or his abilities"; or "the child has a very high potential but the parents would do nothing about it".

In most of these cases I have advised patiently that the grandparent must speak with both parents, and if the parents made an appointment with me they could have invited the grandparent to join them. I have tried to help the grandparent understand that the parent is fully responsible regarding the wellbeing of the child, and this includes all aspects of the child's life, so unless there is evidence of neglect or abuse – grandparents do not make any decisions about their grandchildren.

Calls from children's therapists

Therapists who have contacted me belong to two main groups:

1. Professionals who wished to learn, expand their knowledge, become experts in giftedness or write a paper about giftedness – whether a term paper, a Master's or a PhD. thesis;
2. Therapists who have encountered a problem while treating a gifted child. As in Israel there is a serious lack of therapists with knowledge in psychology of the gifted many professionals – educational and clinical psychologists, social workers, art therapists and school counselors – face substantial problems when a gifted patient does not connect to them and/or they feel helpless trying to help them. During treatment these therapists realize they lack not only the knowledge but also the experience and the tools needed for a successful intervention.

Calls from adults: Students and others

Every year students in their early 20ies as well as adults at a similar age or somewhat older contact me regarding their giftedness. Some had been identified as gifted during childhood – public identification for giftedness started in Israel in 1972 for grade 2 children, so the first group of those identified by the ministry of education were born in 1965, namely, in 2016 they were already 51-year old. The one character common to all of them is that they describe themselves as individuals who "have not found the right place in life, mostly regarding their education, profession, and socio-economic status in general in spite of having very high abilities". These young adults can be divided into two main groups:

1. Young adults who have never taken the "giftedness examinations" and thus have been identified as gifted;
2. Young adults who have been identified as gifted.

The young adults of the first group who have not been examined for giftedness did not know, until quite a late stage of adolescence or even until they reached adulthood that they indeed had special abilities, high intelligence and/or a unique gift. For many years they had a feeling that they "were not like the others" (about the estrangement feeling of the gifted individual see, for example, David, 2014d; Webb, 2014). Only after reading about giftedness they realized that their "problem" had a name, that actually they had never "been in the right place"

regarding the level of studies, its pace, and last but not least – the people they had been spending time with during their entire life.

A sub-group of this group is parents of gifted children, that only after their child was diagnosed as gifted or after realizing that the child had difficulties connected to his giftedness they came to the conclusion that some of the social difficulties the child encounters, or the difficulties integrating among “regular” children in kindergarten or in school, especially because of boredom, stem from the child’s giftedness. Through their child these parents experience kind of a “second childhood” when they reconstruct events, feelings, reactions and ways and how they were dealing with them.

The second sub-group, that includes young adults who had taken the ministry of education giftedness examinations at their time but have not “passed” them and thus were not labeled as gifted (about the giftedness label see Berlin, 2009; Cornell, 1989; David, 2013c, 2014c; Freeman, 2006; Kerr et al., 1988; Manaster et al., 1994; Peters et al., 2014) is divided into 4 main categories:

- *Verbally gifted children.* As the Israeli giftedness examinations favor the math-logical intelligence, in many cases highly gifted children who are strong verbally but not that exceptional mathematically are not accepted to gifted programs (e.g. David, 2014d);
- *Boys* have lower prospects to be accepted to gifted programs than girls. Because of the affirmative action in some cases the prospect of a girl to be accepted to such a program is twice as high as that of a boy living in the same town (David, 2012c, 2017);
- In Israel *being accepted to a gifted program has to do in geography*: in high socio-economic areas it happens that children with IQ over 150 are sometimes not accepted (David, 2012c, d)
- Children who are *gifted in non-cognitive areas*, such as arts, music, sports, etc., or in a cognitive area that is not measured in the ministry of education examinations, such as chess, debating, etc. cannot be accepted to any gifted program in spite of their proven gifts and achievements.

Summary

The urgent need of professionals who could help gifted children and their families is obvious when looking at the large number of people contacting me regarding their gifted children. However, the number of those actually making an appointment is relatively small. In spite of the 43-year old history of providing free or subsidized gifted education in Israel, and the inclusion of all children who learn in schools where there is no objection to the giftedness examination in the free identification process, it seems that parents have not yet assimilated the fact that psychology of giftedness is a branch of psychology and an expert of this particular field is the right counselor for their children.

Unless some courses in psychology of giftedness and didactics for gifted students become a part of the instruction all educational psychologists and school counselors receive, this situation is not going to change. Referring to me after a suicidal trial, after an 8-year old has run from home or when the 12-year

old anorectic daughter needs being hospitalized in order to save her life is not just too late – it is a clear sign that the professionals who have met the child in danger have not been able to identify the problems on time. The need for professionals to have a basic knowledge about gifted children is urgent; the need of them to be able to treat gifted children with problems might not just improve their lives: it might save them.

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