



# How Can We Help Our Gifted Kids Self-Advocate?

With Erica L. Whitfield

LMHC, MACP, BC-TMH

**Therapist for Gifted Kids**



About Your Presenter:  
Erica Whitfield, LMHC,  
MACP, BC-TMH

- Licensed **Therapist**
- 15+ years experience providing therapy to **children and adolescents**
- specialty: anxiety and stress of **gifted & high-performing kids and teens**
- Founder of Positive Development, LLC -**therapy practice** for gifted, creative, and high-performing kids and teens located in Jacksonville, Florida

# The Creatives

Creatives are kids and teens who are skilled in expressing themselves through the arts. They can be self-critical at times and have difficulty verbalizing their thoughts and feelings to others.

- **May be skilled in art, music, dance, or another form of artistic expression.**
- **May seem primarily introverted and enjoys spending time alone or with one or two close friends.**
- **May seem quiet but has profound things to share when speaking.**

# The Creatives

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- **May be labeled by others as shy or often bullied.**
- **May have difficulty speaking up or being assertive.**
- **May internalize thoughts and feelings to the point of reaching emotional distress.**



# The Academically Talented

Academically Talented kids and teens express themselves through their intellect. They exceed academically but can struggle with new challenges and have difficulty asking for help.

- **Displays advanced intellect in academics**
- **Is enrolled in several advanced placement, honors, or gifted classes**
- **Shows higher levels of emotional intelligence than peers**

Positive  
Development  
LLC

Counseling for Children and Adolescents

# The Academically Talented

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- **Gets overwhelmed with high levels of stress-related advanced classes and other activities**
- **Avoids new challenges, gives up easily, or becomes distressed when faced with tasks that cannot be easily mastered**
- **May equate good grades or goal achievement with self-worth and become anxious when failures occur**



# The Change-Makers

Change-Maker kids and teens follow their intuition. They boldly question authority and may sometimes be labeled as rebellious. They may be strong advocates for justice and fairness. Change-Makers can access additional skills to be successful by further developing their natural leadership qualities.

- **Shows high levels of resilience**
- **Feels comfortable trying new things and taking risks**
- **Displays lack of concern with the expectations of others**

# The Change-Makers

Change-Maker kids and teens follow their intuition. They boldly question authority and may sometimes be labeled as rebellious. They may be strong advocates for justice and fairness. Change-Makers can access additional skills to be successful by further developing their natural leadership qualities.

- **Challenges authority or rules often earning them the title of disruptive or disengaged**
- **Seems disinterested in academics or lacks clear direction of future goals**
- **Feels judged by others at times and suffers from lower self-esteem**



# Six Types of Brilliant Students

The gifted are all among us!!!

## Successful

Highly focused on school  
on making the grade

## Autonomous

Independent  
Thinker

## Challenging & Creative

Writing, arts, dance,  
building, coding, creating

Twice Exceptional  
Gifted and Needs  
Extra Support

Drop Out Risk

## Exit Makers

May exit the school system &  
start a business or doing  
something else amazing!

## Underground

Intentionally hides their  
gifts and talents

Full Reference: \*Betts, George & Neihart, Maureen. (1988). Profiles of the Gifted and Talented. Gifted Child Quarterly - GIFTED CHILD QUART. 32. 248-253.  
10.1177/001698628803200202.

So how Can We Help  
Our Gifted Kids  
Self -Advocate?

Let's Teach Our Kids  
Self Advocacy  
Starter Statements.

# Self Advocacy Starter Statements:

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"I'm feeling  
uncomfortable. Can  
you talk to my parent  
about this?"

"Can we talk about  
this when others are  
not listening and  
watching us?"

"I need some time to  
think. Can you give me  
5 minutes to calm  
down?"

"I am getting  
overstimulated. Can  
you find a quiet place  
for me?"

"I don't always know  
when others are upset  
with me, so I need you  
to tell me."

"I need to move  
around to help me  
stay calm. Can you  
give me a movement  
activity?"



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"I'm listening but I'm still not understanding. Can you say that again in a different way?"

"I know I make great grades, but I still need help in some areas."

"This isn't coming to me easily like it usually does. I need help."

"My schedule is busy so I will not be able to do... -but I can do..."

"Can we meet later to go over this again?"

"Is there anything that I can do outside of school to practice this more?"

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"Can I do this  
assignment in a  
different way?"

"Can I share  
something that I have  
been working on?"

" I hear what you are  
saying. I would like to  
respectfully  
offer a different  
idea."

"Am I able to  
work on this  
independently?"

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# Self Advocacy Starter Statements:

"Let me tell  
you what I know about  
that..."

"That looks  
interesting. Can I try  
that too?"

"Tell me more about  
that."

# Help Your Child Establish a Boundary System

Green	Yellow	Red
I feel comfortable when these things happen:	I'm not sure how I feel when these things happen:	I feel uncomfortable when these happen:



# Identify Your Child's Preferred Communication Strategy

Green	Yellow	Red
I feel comfortable speaking up in these ways:	I'm not sure if I feel comfortable speaking up in these ways:	I feel uncomfortable speaking up in these ways:

# Identify Your Child's Social Support Team in School

Green	Yellow	Red
I feel comfortable asking these people for help:	I'm not sure if I feel comfortable asking these people for help:	I feel uncomfortable asking these people for help:

# Pretend and Practice

Think about different situations that take place in school or in other environments.

Take turns acting out how you and your child would self-advocate in those situations.

Email me for a free  
gifted resource manual

[erica@positive-  
development.org](mailto:erica@positive-development.org)

**Erica Whitfield**

