

# PROFILES OF HIGH LEARNING POTENTIAL CHILDREN

## Summary

In 1988, following extensive research in gifted education, Maureen Neihart and George Betts proposed six profiles of children with high learning potential. The profiles have been widely used in supporting high learning potential children and have recently (2010) been revised based on the authors' experiences since they were developed. This advice sheet is aimed at parents and carers wanting to find out more information about high learning potential or looking for ways to support their high learning potential child.

## Introduction

High learning potential children are usually discussed as an undifferentiated group. When they are differentiated, it tends to be on the basis of differences in intellectual abilities, talents, or interests rather than differences in terms of behaviour, feelings, and needs. Maureen Neihart and George Betts' "Profiles of the gifted and talented" provides a framework for a better understanding of these students by looking closely at their feelings, behaviour, and needs.

There are six different profiles of high learning potential children proposed:

### The Successful

Successful high learning potential children have a good academic self-concept, are eager for approval from others and are, therefore, often motivated by others or by aiming for top marks. They achieve good results, conform to social norms and enjoy learning. However, they can either become complacent about their ability or be highly self-critical. They tend to avoid taking risks as they fear failure, so choose safe activities and don't go beyond their comfort zone or what is required.

### The Creative

Creative high learning potential children have high energy levels and often use these for creativity. They are honest and direct, have heightened sensitivity (emotional or senses), and stand up for their convictions. They express themselves creatively and persevere in their areas of interest. They are bored and frustrated when under-challenged or asked to do tasks that do not include a portion of creative problem-solving. They enjoy ambiguity. They are uncertain about social rules, question rules and challenge teachers. They may have poor self-control and may be in conflict with their peers.

### The Dual / Multiple Exceptional (DME)

Dual / multiple exceptional (DME) high learning potential children are good problem-solvers, think conceptually, enjoy novelty and complexity, and make connections easily. However, they are intensely frustrated and may have poor self-control. They are prone to discouragement and may be disruptive in class. They can be disorganised and slow in information processing. They don't see themselves as successful and don't know where to belong. They may seem average or below average as their difficulties mask their ability, and their work is inconsistent.

### The Underground

Underground high learning potential children have a desire to belong socially and move from one peer group to the next. They feel unsure and conflicted. They have a diminished sense of self and are not connected to either the teacher or their peers. They are ambivalent about achievement and may view good results as a betrayal of their social group. They deny their talents, reject challenge, and are unsure of their direction in life. They have a tendency to internalise and personalise societal ambiguities and conflicts.

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## The At-Risk

At-risk high learning potential children create crises and cause disruptions. They are resentful, angry, defensive, reckless and manipulative. They are resistant to authority and critical of themselves and others. They pursue outside interests but often have low academic achievement. They are not motivated by teacher-driven rewards, but will work with guidance from a mentor. They are often creative, thrill-seeking and may be isolate themselves from others.

## The Autonomous

Autonomous high learning potential children work independently, are self-motivated and self-directed, and are resilient. They possess appropriate social skills and show tolerance and respect for others. They follow their strong areas of passion, seek challenge, and are willing to take risks and to learn from failure. They are ambitious, but may not view academic success as one of their highest priorities. They are self-confident, have an understanding of themselves, and are good self-regulators. They learn for depth and understanding.

## Further Information

PA515 Supporting Successful Profile High Learning Potential Children	An advice sheet giving advice about how to support successful profile high learning potential children.
PA516 Supporting Creative Profile High Learning Potential Children	An advice sheet giving advice about how to support creative profile high learning potential children.
PA517 Supporting DME Profile High Learning Potential Children	An advice sheet giving advice about how to support dual or multiple exceptional profile high learning potential children.
PA518 Supporting Underground Profile High Learning Potential Children	An advice sheet giving advice about how to support underground profile high learning potential children.
PA519 Supporting At-Risk Profile High Learning Potential Children	An advice sheet giving advice about how to support at-risk profile high learning potential children.
PA520 Supporting Autonomous High Learning Potential Children	An advice sheet giving advice about how to support autonomous profile high learning potential children.
<a href="http://bvsvd.org/tag/Documents/TEAs/Profiles%20of%20the%20Gifted%20Revised.pdf">http://bvsvd.org/tag/Documents/TEAs/Profiles%20of%20the%20Gifted%20Revised.pdf</a>	PowerPoint by Neihart and Betts presenting the different profiles
<a href="http://ingeniosus.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/PROFILES-BEST-REVISED-MATRIX-2010.pdf">http://ingeniosus.net/wp-content/uploads/2010/11/PROFILES-BEST-REVISED-MATRIX-2010.pdf</a>	A matrix of the profiles together with the needs and supports for each profile.
<i>Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted: 30 Essays on Giftedness, 30 Years of SENG</i> by SENG Authors	To celebrate its 30th anniversary, Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG) offers a collection of 30 essays from leading experts in the gifted community. Some of the topics include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• parenting gifted children</li> <li>• living with the intensity that often accompanies giftedness</li> <li>• counselling and educating gifted individuals</li> <li>• giftedness in diverse communities and special needs populations</li> <li>• the role of teachers and other professionals in the lives of the gifted</li> <li>• first-person essays describing the challenges and joys of giftedness in children and adults.</li> </ul>

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