

ECHA
EUROPEAN COUNCIL
FOR HIGH ABILITY



Dear families, colleagues, and supporters of high ability children,

Welcome to the Autumn 2025 newsletter from [Empowering Families with High Ability Children](#), a Special Interest Group (SIG) dedicated to the experiences and needs of parents and caregivers within the larger gifted community. Our SIG has had a busy year! Along with delivering our annual lecture for the [European Council for High Ability](#) (ECHA) in March, several members of our SIG were responsible for preparing and delivering presentations at the [2025 ECHA Thematic Conference](#) in Karlstad, Sweden. The theme for this year's conference was sustainability, which has been a topic of conversation both within our SIG and throughout the wider gifted community. What does it mean to grow a sustainable community? How do we leverage the energy of that community to ensure that it is around for years to come? As you read through our Autumn newsletter, we invite you to consider how the theme of sustainability interacts with your own pursuits in gifted education, or in the nurturing of high ability children.

Warmly,
Jessica Potts, PhD
Empowering Families SIG Leader

Events & Happenings

Empowering Families with High Ability Children SIG at the ECHA 2025 Conference in Karlstad, Sweden

The Empowering Families with High Ability Children Special Interest Group was actively represented at the [ECHA 2025](#) Conference in Karlstad, Sweden (16–18 June 2025). The conference focused on sustainability and inclusion in gifted education, aligning perfectly with our SIG's work.

Our SIG contributed an oral presentation, *"The Importance of Sustainable Parent Associations,"* and a poster, *"Top Tips for Sustainable Parent Associations."* During the [oral presentation](#), we highlighted how parent associations can serve as enduring vehicles for advocacy and inclusion, fostering long-term engagement that strengthens gifted communities. The session included an introduction on sustainability and common issues, delivered by Jessica Potts (Davidson Academy Online); the Grandparents Project in the Netherlands, prepared by Leonieke Boogaard (Koepel Hoogbegaafdheid) and presented on her behalf by Jessica; and

the Family Journey model, prepared by Natalie Jensen (Potential Plus UK) and presented on her behalf by Georgia Tsoulfa (CTY Greece). The session was well-attended, and the audience engaged actively through questions and clarifications.

The [poster session](#) also generated interest, allowing participants to exchange ideas with SIG members, explore practical strategies, and reflect on the challenges and successes of parent associations in different contexts. Both in-person and digital versions of the poster reinforced accessibility and sustainability, providing lasting resources for attendees to take back to their own communities. The poster session was supported by Jessica and Georgia.

Our presentations underscored a shared work, connect with international colleagues, and contribute to sustainable practices in gifted education. ECHA conferences are vital for researchers, educators, policymakers, parent advocates, and gifted learners to share practice, evidence, and build networks. The Karlstad program was high-quality and diverse, featuring keynote speakers of international standing, oral presentations, poster sessions, workshops, and panel discussions. Topics included policy and vision, social-emotional issues, inclusion, technology/AI, professional learning, early years, and twice-exceptionality. The excellent organization, opportunities for networking, (including “fika” breaks), and sustainable conference logistics reinforced the conference theme and modeled best practices for participants. We look forward to continuing these conversations and supporting parent associations across Europe in creating inclusive and enduring gifted communities. See you in Dublin, for [ECHA 2026](#)!



Association Highlight: Koepel Hoogbegaafdheid

The Grandparents Project

In April 2024 there was a meeting of the board of the [Koepel Hoogbegaafdheid](#) (Umbrella of Giftedness) and the chairs of the parents associations Pharos, Choochem, and HINT Nederland. One of the topics in that meeting was establishing a program for grandparents, and we wanted to better understand if they have special needs that are not met in other programs. Thus, the Grandparents Project was started.

In September 2024 we had the first meeting of the Grandparents Project with all the parties mentioned above and two other organisations: IHBV and iQ+. We decided to

check the interest of the grandparents before we started. We made a questionnaire that we posted on LinkedIn, Facebook, and Instagram from December 1st, 2024 until March 1st, 2025. In the first week we had already about 50 reactions and in total 183 respondents answered the questionnaire. So it was clear that grandparents had their own questions and needs.

We asked them which subjects they were interested in. The top 5 responses were:

1. Interaction between grandparent and gifted grandchild: 69,92.
2. Knowledge about gifted children in general: 68,9%
3. Giftedness and upbringing: 60,7%
4. Giftedness and education: 58,5
5. Interaction between grandparent and parent of the gifted child: 50,3%

We also asked them how they preferred to receive information:

1. Leaflets: 67,8%
2. Lectures and presentations online: 56,8%
3. Live meetings in discussion and theme groups: 35%
4. Lectures and presentations live: 33,9%

What have we done so far

IHBV and the Koepel Hoogbegaafdheid have written a leaflet for grandparents which is also available in English and German:

- [IHBV Leaflet my grandchild is gifted](#)
- [IHBV Leaflet Mein Enkelkind ist hochbegabt](#)

IHBV and the Koepel have written an article *Aandacht voor grootouders van hoogbegaafde kleinkinderen* for Gifted@248 magazine

- [Gifted@248 WINTER 2024 / 2025 | hoogbegaafde kleinkinderen](#)

We also made a series of podcasts about the top 5 topics the grandparents mentioned and one about gifted seniors.

- [grootouderproject - Koepel Hoogbegaafdheid](#)

We also asked the respondents if they would like to contribute themselves and if they would like to be kept informed:

Do they want to contribute themselves

- Yes: 10,4%
- Maybe: 47%

Do they want to be kept informed?

- Yes 91,3%

We have sent two letters to keep them informed and we invited the people who wanted to (maybe) contribute themselves to a meeting in October to share the results of the questionnaire and to see how they can play a role in this project.

What are our plans for the future?

Pharos will organize webinars on the themes the grandparents have mentioned. The other organizations will also organize lectures, presentations and live meetings. All organizations will mention the activities of the others on their website so grandparents have a choice where to go. We will organize a 'Train the trainer' workshop for grandparents who want to organize live workshops for other grandparents. More information about the Grandparents Project and the organizations that make up the Umbrella of Giftedness can be found at the links below.

- [Home - Koepel Hoogbegaafdheid](#)
- [Oudervereniging Pharos – Landelijke vereniging van ouders van hoogbegaafdekinderen](#)
- [Choochem - Vereniging over hoogbegaafdheid vanuit christelijk perspectief](#)
- [HINT Nederland](#)
- [Welkom bij het IHBV | Instituut Hoogbegaafdheid Volwassenen](#)
- [Je mag er zijn! - Stichting IQ+](#)



Website & Socials

For this newsletter, we would like to draw your attention to the resources on our website that focus on [Education & Schooling](#). Now that the school year has begun, parents are starting the hard work of advocating for their children. These resources will offer parents and caregivers a roadmap for how to successfully partner with teachers, administrators, and school systems. These resources are available in both English and German.

- [Tips for Parents: How to Advocate for your Gifted Student at School](#)
- [Online Schools for Gifted Children](#)

- [Begabung](#)
- [German: Eine steigende Flut hebt alle Schiffe – Entwicklung der Talente und Begabungen aller Schüler \(Original von Joseph Renzulli\)](#)

We invite all interested parties to inform themselves and to look around. We are also interested in adding further valuable links, articles, and overviews to the material. Please send any relevant materials to jpotts@davidsononline.org.



Empowering Families ECHA SIG

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