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CONFERENCE

The Role of Parents and Parent Associations

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Who are we?



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Empowering Families with High Ability Children

<https://echafamilies.com/>

Parents and caregivers play a crucial role in fostering the well-being of gifted children. The ECHA SIG “Empowering Families with High Ability Children” aims to create a platform for collaboration, information sharing, and mutual support.

By bringing together parents, caregivers, educators, counselors, and experts from various European countries, Empowering Families with High Ability Children can collectively enhance our understanding and address the unique challenges faced by parents in raising gifted children.



Giftedness Through the Lens of Parenthood



Parents and caregivers are **“the most critical component in the translation of talent, ability and promise into achievement for gifted individuals”** (Olszewski, Kulieke, & Buescher, 1987, p. 6).

The perspectives of parents can fill gaps

Issues Surrounding Identification



Parents often viewed as biased despite deep knowledge

Research supports parent nominations

Importance for early identification and cultural equity

Teacher bias and training gaps

Issues Surrounding Educational Access and Accommodations



- Parents as primary advocates for acceleration and enrichment
- Negative labeling of advocacy behaviors
- Avoidance of the gifted label
- Neglect of social and emotional needs
- Significant barriers for twice-exceptional students



Issues Surrounding Socialization

Difficulty finding intellectual peers

Asynchronous development and peer mismatch

Social stigma linked to gifted labeling

Parental responsibility in identity management



Issues Surrounding Community Support



Social isolation and stigma

Limitations of general parent groups

Turn toward specialized gifted parent associations

Parent as Experts on Their Gifted Children

- Parents possess holistic understanding of development
- Emotional, social, and cognitive insight
- Expertise evolves across developmental stages

Infant and Toddler

- Early genetic and environmental influences
- Limited external support
- “Loving laypeople”

Preschool

- Awareness of developmental differences
- Misinterpretation by untrained educators
- Starting the parent-teacher dialogue

School-aged

- Shift of academic responsibilities to schools
- Formal identification
- Coordination for 2e learners

Role of Parent Associations



Associations as a gathering place

Counseling services and parent education

Communication with schools

Gifted advocacy

Establishing gifted schools and programs

Associations as a Gathering Place

Where parents share experiences and collaborate on interventions

Provide a vital source of information and resources

Bring together like-minded children and adults with similar interests



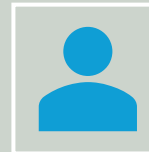
Counselling Services



Experience, empathy and expertise



DGhK (German Society for Highly Gifted Child - free services and groups for parents led by volunteers since 1978



Expertise relating to twice-exceptionality

Communication with Schools

- Move parents from passive involvement to invested engagement
- More experienced parents pass on lived systemic and practical experience to newer association members
- Empower confidence in sharing their expertise on their children



Gifted Advocacy

Support to parents wishing to make a difference politically

Model of gifted advocacy

Long term needs of all gifted children





Thank you!



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