THE LABEL "GIFTED":

PARENT BELIEFS,

TRANSMISSION OF BELIEFS

AND IMPACT ON THE CHILD.

by

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Abstract

The effect of the mother's use of the term "gifted" was examined. Mothers who used gifted ("Users", n = 27), mothers who avoided using gifted ("Avoiders", n = 21), and their school aged children whom they identified as gifted were compared with mothers ("Comparison", n = 20) and their non-identified children using a structured interview and questionnaires. Mothers of gifted children believed giftedness ran in families and caused social problems. User mothers valued intelligence highly, placed less emphasis on hard work, were less satisfied with their child's school performance, and believed "gifted" described their children. Avoider mothers rated their child's school performance more positively and emphasized academic giftedness. When compared to Comparison children, Avoider children rated themselves as more scholastically competent on the Harter Self-Perception Profile for children while User children rated scholastic competence lower on the Importance Scale of that measure. Findings are discussed in relation to differences in the breadth of the mothers' conceptions of giftedness and use of "gifted", the belief that giftedness causes social problems, and the potential for misunderstanding between User mothers and children.

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THE LABEL "GIFTED": MOTHERS' BELIEFS, TRANSMISSION OF BELIEFS AND IMPACT ON THE CHILD.

While the practice of labelling children has been decried by numerous professionals, not all labels are negative. The label "gifted", for example, would seem to suggest desirable qualities and is therefore in contrast to labels such as "delinquent", "learning disabled" or "retarded". However, not only is there always the risk that any label, positive or negative, will carry with it associated beliefs and expectations that may overwhelm the unique qualities of the individual child, it is also not clear that the label "gifted" is, itself, entirely free of pejorative connotations. Popular books on the subject of "gifted" children such as The Gifted Kids Survival Guide series (Galbraith, 1983, 1985) instruct youngsters on how to cope with the social and emotional pitfalls of being "gifted". Books aimed at parents also identify possible problems for the gifted child. "A gifted child rarely seems like much of a gift to his (*sic*) parents" (Kropp & Hodson, 1995, p. 229). So begins a chapter on giftedness in a recent book for parents on navigating the Canadian school system. The School Solution: Getting Canada's schools to work for your child goes on to mention the gifted child's sense of isolation, ostracism by peers, depression and boredom. Despite the presence of popular books which seem to tell parents and children that it is difficult to be gifted, it is not clear what parents actually believe about giftedness or whether there are differences between the beliefs of those parents who identify their children as gifted and those who do not. Although research has been conducted on possible effects on the child of being labelled "gifted", this area has not been explored in connection with parents' beliefs about what "gifted" means.

Tuttle and Cornell (1993), in their study of the impact of the label "gifted" on sibling relationships when only one child is so labelled, have noted that previous studies have tended to examine the issue of the label "gifted" in isolation from the meaning of the label to parents and children. They concluded that "Parental labeling deserves further study since parental attitudes toward giftedness and their conceptions of giftedness may mediate labeling effects" (p. 409).

Labels, such as "gifted", are part of the larger area of parent beliefs. Parent beliefs are presumed to affect parental behaviour and, thereby, child behaviour. Unfortunately, as Miller (1988) has noted, efforts to describe the relationship between parent beliefs and child outcome have been disappointing and his pessimism has been borne out by research into the impact of parental beliefs about giftedness on child behaviour. There have been conflicting reports about the impact on the child of being labelled "gifted", and the relationship between the parent's beliefs about giftedness and child outcome remains virtually unexamined. This study examined parental beliefs about the label "gifted" and the impact of this label on children. The child's understanding of the label was explored as an intermediate step between parental labelling and child behaviour.

Research from a number of areas is relevant to this topic. These include: the nature of parent beliefs in general, the characteristics of "giftedness" as a belief; what the parents believe about gifted children; the transmission of beliefs from parent to child; and research on the impact of the label "gifted".

The Nature of Parent Beliefs

Connecting parent belief and child outcome is difficult because culture, subculture, social class, and personal qualities moderate the beliefs of each individual making it difficult to connect definitively an abstract belief with a parent behaviour. Some of the difficulties may also stem from the wide variety of attitudes subsumed under the rubric of a "parent belief". Developmental benchmarks, attitudes toward discipline, estimations of academic ability and models of the nature of the child have all been examined under this umbrella term. At one end of the continuum are those beliefs which can be verified or refuted: factual statements, such as "Compared to classmates, my child is short" or predictions, such as "My child will get 80% on that Math test". In contrast to these objective or verifiable opinions are very subjective judgments such as "My child is good" or opinions such as "Children should never be punished".

Intermediate between these two points are a number of judgments which have both subjective and objective elements. These are judgments which refer to specific qualities describing a relatively narrowly defined behaviour which may, in fact, be expressed as a label. However, the exact limits of the application of this label may be unclear, and other qualities may be implied in the label but not directly stated. "My child is gifted" is a meaningful statement about the child's behaviour. However, unlike purely objective statements, the limits of the application of the label may be uncertain, and unspoken attributes may accompany the label.

Research on parental beliefs covers a continuum from research on purely subjective beliefs to research which examines those beliefs of parents that can be compared for accuracy with an external reality. The latter may be more accurately described as predictions rather than beliefs. Studies asking parents to predict their child's IQ or scores on tests would fall into this latter category (e.g., Miller, Manhal & Mee, 1991) while studies asking subjects about the nature of intelligence (Mugny & Carugati, 1989) would fall into the former category of purely subjective beliefs. What makes both varieties of parental beliefs interesting is the assumption that these beliefs will be translated into choices or actions on the part of the believer and that different beliefs will precipitate different actions.

There are a number of complications that affect whether or how the parent acts on a particular belief. There are substantial differences between cultures not only as to what behaviours are desirable in a child but also as to how parents can encourage their attainment (Hess et al, 1986; White & Levine, 1986; Hundeide, 1992). There are also subcultural differences within communities (Goodnow, Cashmore, Cotton, & Knight, 1984). Both gender differences in how closely parents adhere to their stated beliefs (McGillicudy-DiLisi, 1982), and social class differences (Brooks & Rennie, 1962; Turkin & Cohler, 1973) in translating beliefs into actions have been documented. Differing scores on locus of control measures have been associated in middle-class parents with differences in what parents believe they should do to

facilitate their child's development (Gelejs & Pease, 1986). Finally, parents may be either unwittingly or deliberately inconsistent about their beliefs. On one hand, they may have assimilated conflicting beliefs about child-rearing and hold them without concern for the internal logical contradictions of such beliefs (Palencios, Gonzalez and Moreno, 1992). On the other hand, parents may consciously hold alternative explanations to a particular belief and use the competing belief when convenient to explain any inconsistency in translating beliefs into actions (Goodnow and Delaney, 1989). At times, it may even be unclear whether stated beliefs precede and beget, or follow and explain, actions (Bugental, 1992).

Despite the aforementioned problems, parents do hold both general beliefs about how best to raise children and specific beliefs about their children's developmental status, their personalities, and their motivation. These beliefs may be held with greater or lesser intensity. Beliefs held with less intensity are likely tapped by studies which ask parents to predict how well their child will do on a particular test or at a particular skill. These peripheral beliefs likely have little impact on parental behaviour unless they are representative of more central beliefs. The more intensely held central beliefs would likely include both predictive opinions about whether the child is developing appropriately and more subjective assessments such as those relating to the particular child's specialness, the impact of various child-rearing practices and the nature of children in general. Goodnow and Collins (1990) have suggested some features of belief systems that would cause parents to adhere to their beliefs strongly. Strongly held beliefs are likely to be shared by valued others; identify the holder as unique in a positive sense (e.g. religious, ethnic, or social class identities); be defensible, be extreme or have affective intensity; and be central to one's belief system. The belief that one's child is gifted could readily be identified as one which had these features. The importance or intensity of this belief may differ from parent to parent; however, parents spontaneously join associations for gifted children, suggesting that this belief is one which might well be held with some intensity

Whether the parent's belief bodes ill or well for the child may depend on the consequences of that belief. If the result of the parent's belief is perceived by the child as a series of new and burdensome expectations, the effect of being labelled "gifted" will be quite different from the effect if the child perceives the result as a series of interesting and exciting opportunities. Goodnow and Collins (1990) suggest that the child, in order to benefit from or fulfill the parent's beliefs, must understand and accept them. Beliefs are of value to the child to the degree that inaccuracy represents positive bias and that they are flexible in the face of reality.

Giftedness as a belief

The concept of "giftedness" has most of the features that Goodnow and Collins (1990) predict will identify intensely held beliefs. In light of the criteria that they propose, it appears that "giftedness" does fulfill the criterion of being shared with valued others. In particular, giftedness may be seen as "running in the family". Albert (1980a, 1980b, 1994) has suggested that children are identified as gifted when their particular talents, gender, and birth order coincide with family values and aspirations, while Bloom's (1985) study of talent development found that young people tend to succeed in areas in which their family is already involved.

Various studies indicate that parents of gifted children are indeed different from other parents. Studies of the parents of gifted children suggest they are better educated, more intelligent, of higher SES, and more intellectually homogeneous than other families (Albert, 1980a, 1980b; Benbow & Stanley, 1980; Benbow, Stanley, Kirk & Zonderman, 1983; Colangelo & Kerr, 1990). Other studies have suggested personality differences and differences in family values and parenting styles between parents of gifted children and parents of non-gifted children (Gockenbach, 1989; Landau & Weissler, 1993; Cornell & Grossberg, 1987; Karnes & Shwedel, 1987; Weissler & Landau, 1993).

The families themselves have been reported as cohesive, emotionally open, mutually supportive (Cornell & Grossberg, 1987; Gockenbach, 1989), flexible and prone to involving their children in decision-making (Landau and Weissler), encouraging of independence, and verbally rather than physically communicative (Karnes and Shwedel, 1987). Families of gifted children also report more tension, and parents are reported to be more critical and more demanding of correct grammar (Weissler & Landau, 1993). Not surprisingly, family values are alleged to focus on cultural values and books (Cornell & Grossberg, 1987; Landau & Weissler, 1993). The wide variety of findings reported in the research may be a result of the age and the degree of precocity manifested by the children or of the cultural values of the parents in the different samples studied. Karnes and Schwedel (1987), for example, reported on preschoolers in North America, while Weissler and Landau (1993) reported on school children in Israel Bloom (1985) in his retrospective study of the childhood of talented young adults described three stages of apprenticeship the talented children went through, progressing from the child's initial, pleasurable introduction to the field to a final level of intensive study under the tutelage of a demanding master practitioner. While Bloom's respondents were describing different teachers with different teaching styles, it is probable that parents also automatically shift from a "fun" emphasis to a more rigourous and demanding approach as the child matures.

Goodnow and Collins (1990) also suggested that beliefs which are held intensely are those which convey a favoured status on the holder. Cornell (1984) noted that parents who believed their child to be gifted felt greater pride in and closeness to their child than did parents who did not believe their equally able children to be gifted. Some studies of parents who are told by others that their child is gifted suggest that there are parents who may be concerned (Freeman, 1979; Keirouz, 1990); however, parental pride and enthusiasm are more common responses. A "gift", by definition, implies something desirable, and whatever second thoughts parents might have about their child's abilities, it is reasonable to assume that to be "gifted" is a fortunate state

Whether parental beliefs about children's giftedness are defensible might seem somewhat more difficult to argue, but parents are surprisingly accurate in identifying young gifted children (Louis and Lewis, 1992; Robinson, 1987). It would appear, however, that they are more accurate if the identification is spontaneous rather than in response to the bidding of professionals seeking to find gifted children. Certainly the belief that one's child is within the top 2-5% of intellectual ability is an extreme belief, at least statistically speaking.

How intensely such a belief is held is not clear. It is not known how many parents decide their preschool child is gifted but reverse their decision during their child's school years. It is also not clear how persistently parents will maintain their belief in face of conflicting evidence, what qualities of the parent and the child contribute to persistence in holding to the belief that the child is gifted, or what evidence parents believe to be ultimately disconfirming. Whether giftedness can be central to a belief system is also less certain, however, both Albert (1980a, 1980b) and Cornell (1984) would suggest it is important to the family's identity. Popular books (e.g., Smutney, Veenker, & Veenker, 1979; Galbraith, 1983; Delisle & Gabraith, 1987) as well as journal articles (Heller, 1993) about gifted children focus not only on their academic success but also on their special emotional and social needs. This hints at the possibility that "giftness" may be seen by parents and others as a central feature of the child's personality.

Whether this belief will be beneficial to the child, according to Goodnow and Collins' (1990) model, is less clear. Although there is no doubt that the designation "gifted" represents a generally positive bias, there is little information concerning whether parents are flexible if their belief in their child's superiority is not confirmed by others. As Robinson (1987) noted, it is not clear to what degree parents actively embark upon a plan to create a gifted child, nor do we have any idea how many parents are unsuccessful and give up the project, much less how this affects the child.

The meaning of "gifted"

The concept of the "gifted child" is to some degree a creation of the educational system (Borland, 1996); however, it is a concept which has been widely accepted in popular culture, and identifying a child as "gifted" is more than just an arcane intellectual pursuit. Such identification benefits children by singling them out for access to specialized programs and to what has been described as "the pedagogy of privilege" (Margolin, 1996). Access to such programs may be viewed as highly desirable by parents, not only because of the natural pride parents feel when their child is selected as having exceptional abilities, but also because of educational and potential career advantages offered by enrollment in such programs. The lengths to which some parents will go to obtain such advantages for their children are alluded to in Stone's (1992) history of the Hunter College Campus Schools for the Gifted, in which she suggests that some parents who were teachers or psychologists may have primed their children for the entrance tests to ensure their admission. However, despite the readiness of educators and parents to identify children as gifted, there is a lack of precision as to exactly how to discriminate between a gifted child and a non-gifted child.

Depending on their conceptualization of giftedness, educators may identify gifted children solely on the basis of IQ or on a combination of measures including such criteria as creativity, teacher recommendation, or personality traits. Feldhusen and Jarwan (1993), in their discussion of various approaches to defining "giftedness", identify four areas of differentiation amongst them. At a basic level are differences in the terminology, such as whether talent and giftedness are the same thing and issues such as whether creativity is a necessary component of giftedness. A second basic difference is the degree of superiority and implied rarity required of a performance for it to be considered "gifted". Eligibility for programs may extend to the top 15-20% of children or be limited to the top 1%. A third but related difference among theorists is the relationship between giftedness and potential giftedness and the degree to which it is believed that giftedness can be developed or enhanced. A final difference in theories is the

degree of breadth. At one extreme are researchers such as those from the Study of Mathematically Precocious Youth (SMPY) at Johns Hopkins, who focus on a limited domain of exceptional ability and on cognitive and educational issues. While recognizing the unique characteristics of each child, they are more concerned with giftedness as an educational issue rather than as a psychological problem (for example, Benbow, 1986). At the other extreme are those theorists who regard giftedness as a pervasive personal quality which affects all aspects of the child's life. The concept of overexcitability, in particular, emotional, intellectual and imaginative overexcitability has been posited as central to giftedness and as affecting the individual's personality and social realm. "As personal traits, overexcitabilities are often not valued socially, being viewed instead as nervousness, hyperactivity, neurotic temperament, excessive emotionality and emotional intensity that most people find uncomfortable at close range" (Piechowski & Colangelo, 1984, p. 81).

Given the potential range of conceptions of giftedness, it is not surprising that there is no commonly agreed upon means of identifying a child as gifted. Educators may rely on ability or achievement tests alone or on a host of measures including checklists, creativity tests and peer or self nominations. The reliance on IQ tests alone has been questioned not only because of possible cultural bias, but also because children so identified may be neither highly motivated nor academically exceptional (Margolin, 1996). On the other hand, using a variety of measures may complicate rather than simplify identification. An array of measures may function as a series of obstacles to identification rather than a means of identifying promising youngsters, while at the same time a number of children may be identified on one measure only.

Issues surrounding the conception of giftedness are important to educators because the definition of giftedness leads to the identification of certain types of children and ultimately to providing those identified with an appropriate educational environment. Thus, what constitutes an appropriate

educational program for gifted children depends on the prevailing model of giftedness. Programs based on a narrow conception of giftedness may take the form of acceleration or fast-paced academic programs such as the SMPY programs for highly able math students (Stanley & Benbow, 1983). More commonly, a less narrow definition of the target population is used, and children identified as gifted are offered general enrichment programs (Southern, Jones, & Stanley, 1993). Although these programs, which focus on such issues as affective development, creativity and leadership skills, have been criticized by some as intellectually trivial and academically irrelevent (Sawyer, 1988), they remain popular. As Pendarvis and Howley (1996) note "Many gifted education programs are based on the assumption that gifted children are qualitatively different from other children" (p. 220).

In contrast to the interest of professionals in defining giftedness and the interest of parents in having their children identified as "gifted", there has been little research to examine exactly what giftedness means to parents. Mugny and Carugati (1989) used the term "gifted child" to describe the factor that explained the most variance in their factor analytic study of the beliefs of Swiss and Italian parents, teachers, and teachers-in-training about the nature of intelligence in children. The gifted child, who is motivated, mature, intelligent, curious, articulate and possesses a host of other desirable qualities, was seen by adults, in Mugny and Carugati's (1989) analysis, as a product of innate and, in the eyes of parents, unmodifiable biological inequality. They found that parents, especially those who had more than one child, adhered most strongly to the model of the gifted child. They argued that this is because when parents are faced with inexplicable differences between children, they have nothing to fall back upon but an innatist model. The ultimate result, they proposed, is that parents are forced to adopt either a *laissez-faire* attitude to their children's cognitive development or are obliged to turn to experts. Thus parents are ultimately somewhat helpless in the face of what are perceived as natural and immutable inequalities.

Mugny and Carugati's (1989) study, however, does not tell us how parents define a gifted child. It is the researchers who named the derived factor as the "gifted child" and parents themselves may not describe a gifted child as one who has the qualities which lie on that factor. It does seem likely though, that features such as innateness and immutability are seen by parents as features of giftedness. Few would argue that the qualities suggesting cognitive superiority, which also lay on Mugny and Carugati's "gifted" factor, are contrary to the qualities of the child labelled "gifted".

Indeed, central to the term "gifted" is the idea that the child is developmentally in advance of his or her peers, and it is this judgment about their child's ability that parents make when labelling their child "gifted". In general, parents appear to judge their child's success at meeting developmental norms in accordance with culturally defined expectations. When they deem the child ready, parents provide sensitive and contingent responses to the child's behaviour in order to facilitate the acquisition of developmental skills (Kindermann & Skinner, 1988). When children do not develop at the expected rate, parents are often the first to recognize the delay, sometimes in the face of expert opinion to the contrary (Furneaux, 1988). On the other hand, when parents judge their child to be in advance of others they may conclude their child is gifted.

Identifying giftedness in children

Of course, parents do have a positive bias toward their own children. When asked to predict their child's score on a test in comparison with that of a hypothetical average child, parents tend to overestimate their own child's score (Miller, 1988; Miller, Manhal & Mee, 1991). It appears that the parents of brighter children make more accurate ability judgments than the parents of slower children; however, this phenomenon may be a statistical artifact (Miller, Manhal & Mee, 1991; Miller & Davis, 1992). Miller points out that because all parents overestimate their children's abilities, parents of high-scoring children appear more accurate because the parent's estimate and the child's performance are both close to the

ceiling of the test. He believes, however, that there is evidence for greater accuracy on the part of parents of bright children even after these problems are explained.

Besides the readily understandable enthusiasm parents have for their own offspring, other sources of bias may affect parents' judgment of their child's ability and in particular, their child's giftedness. The parental tendency to conclude that their child's better qualities are stable and internal and their less desirable qualities unstable and situational (Dix, 1993; Gretarson & Gelfand, 1988) may lead parents to lend greater importance to their child's achievements and lead them to overestimate their child's ability. Gender biases result in mothers overrating their sons' competence and attributing their abilities to cognitive development while attributing their daughters' competence to learning (Martin and Johnson, 1992). This may result in parents presuming their sons are gifted while their daughters are hard working. The finding that parents who were high achievers are harsher in judging their children's ability than parents who had been more average students (Felson, 1990) might suggest that more successful parents should be less likely to believe their children are gifted. Thus, although parents of gifted children are generally reported to be very bright themselves, they may also judge their child's achievement by harsher standards than less successful parents.

Despite these possible sources of bias, parents are surprisingly accurate at nominating children who are subsequently identified as "gifted" by IQ tests. Louis and Lewis (1992) found that 61% of the three year olds brought to their clinic were correctly identified by their parents as gifted. This group of children had a mean Stanford-Binet IQ of 149. Robinson (1987) found that 47% of the 550 preschoolers examined at her clinic were in the top 2% of the population. These authors also pointed out that those children who were identified by parents as exceptional but who were not ultimately identified by testing as "gifted" were certainly bright or had areas of precocity which were not reflected by their IQ scores. These findings suggest that parents who spontaneously identify their children as exceptional are not blinded by

parental pride, but are responding to their children's genuine talents. Those studies (e.g., Burns, Mathews and Mason, 1990; Hitchfield, 1973) which have found parents to be less successful in identifying gifted children have used questionable measures to confirm giftedness or have actively solicited parental nomination, a practice which may lead to over-referral.

Once parents believe that their child is gifted, they may become actively involved in promoting their child's gifted behaviours. Raymond and Benbow (1989) found that parents of moderately and highly gifted children reported encouraging their child in the child's talent area. Although parents claimed not to discriminate by gender, mothers were more involved when the child was verbally talented and fathers, when the child was mathematically talented. Actual parent behaviours were not defined nor was their involvement compared to that of parents of less gifted children. Bloom's (1985) study of talent reported intense parental commitment to the child's progress and provision of opportunities for the child to succeed. Although in these two studies it is not clear whether the parents' actions were simply in response to the child's behaviour or were motivated by an underlying belief in the child's giftedness, a study by Cornell (1989) found that mothers who used the term "gifted" in front of their child were more likely to enroll their child in special programs for gifted children than were mothers of gifted children who did not use the term. This suggests that it is their acknowledgement that the child is "gifted" that motivates mothers to seek out additional opportunities for the child.

What parents believe about gifted children

Parents of gifted children identify their child's giftedness by reference to the child's superior memory and early language use (Freeman, 1979; Louis & Lewis, 1992), ability to think abstractly (Louis & Lewis, 1992) and early reading ability (Freeman, 1979). Parents may identify different qualities in boys than in girls (Johnson & Lewman, 1990). Girls are more likely to be identified as gifted on the basis of having an unusually large vocabulary, while curiosity, problem solving and ability to think abstractly have

been mentioned as indicators of giftedness in boys. Some parents (Freeman, 1979; Cornell, 1984) have suggested that they were able to recognize the child's superior abilities in early infancy. These identifications seemed based on more subjective criteria such as the infant's "alertness" immediately after birth.

It is interesting to note that Louis and Lewis (1992) found that parents who incorrectly identified their preschoolers as gifted mentioned traits related to rote knowledge as indicators of their child's giftedness. Parents who were correct in their identification were more likely to mention global attributes such as abstract thinking, creativity and imagination.

Freeman (1979) found interesting differences between parents who identified their children as gifted and parents of equally bright children who did not think of them as gifted. She compared three groups of children. The gifted children were those whose parents were members of a British association for gifted children. Like many such associations, membership was based on self-referral and no documentation that the child met some criteria was required. For each gifted child, two children of the same sex were selected from the target child's classroom, one matched for non-verbal IQ and one selected at random. These groups of children formed the two control groups. Because many of her target children attended schools which selected children for ability, Freeman found she had a number of highly intelligent children in all three groups. The mean Stanford Binet IQ score for the target gifted children was 147, the mean IQ score for the matched control children was 134 and the mean IQ score for the random control children was 119. Freeman found that compared to parents of the control children, parents of gifted children described their children as sleeping less, being unusually active, having poor eyesight and coordination, walking early, having unusual play preferences, and being more sensitive, more readily bored, and more emotionally labile. In order to segregate the effect of high intelligence from the effect of being labelled gifted, Freeman regrouped the children into high vs. moderate IQ groups. The high IQ

children (N = 82) had Stanford-Binet IQ scores between 141 and 170 (M = 155), while the moderate IQ children (N = 128) had scores ranging from 97 to 140 (M = 120). Although the target children still comprised over half of the high IQ group, when high and moderate IQ children were compared, the above-mentioned unusual qualities of the "gifted" children disappeared, suggesting that they were not causes by the children's high IQ. Freeman also noted all the high IQ children whose adjustment was rated as "poor" on the Bristol Social Adjustment Guide were originally members of the target group. Freeman concludes that the differences in behaviour and adjustment were therefore not caused by high intelligence but may have been a result, or a cause, of the label "gifted". Some parent identified behaviours did remain which differented between the target and control groups and also between the high and moderate IQ groups of children. High IQ children were more likely to have displayed early verbal precocity and reading ability, were more able to focus on more than one thing at a time, had excellent memories and good grades in school. The only negative differences between high IQ and moderate IQ children, according to parents, seemed to be that high IQ children had poor handwriting, fewer and older friends than other children, and were described by the parent as feeling "different", although the children did not describe themselves in those terms.

Parental beliefs about giftedness: Summary

A number of difficulties impede the study of parent beliefs. These include the broad spectrum of beliefs that fall under the category of parent beliefs, the various parental attributes which may intervene between the parent's stated belief and possible action on that belief, and the differing intensities with which beliefs may be held. Although it is not clear what giftedness means to parents, this belief can be seen as having the qualities which Goodnow and Collins (1990) claim identify strongly held beliefs. Parents are reasonably accurate in identifying gifted children, however, gifted children may be seen to have different qualities from less bright children and from equally bright children who are not identified as gifted.

Transmission of beliefs

Parent beliefs can influence child behaviour in two ways: in the overt transmission of the label and accompanying beliefs about the label or, more indirectly, through parent behaviours. In the latter case, the parent may harbour a belief about a child and act on that belief without directly conveying the belief to the child. This failure to transmit the belief directly may occur for a number of reasons including the transience of the situation in which the parent acts, the limited understanding of the child, or the nebulousness of the belief. It is also possible that the parent may not wish the child to adopt the belief, in particular if the parent feels the information would be harmful to the child. If the parent does not directly communicate a belief to the child, the child may respond to the parent's actions, but not to the belief behind those actions. The child may not construct any belief in that particular area or, on the contrary, may formulate a belief which could be in harmony with or at odds with the parent's belief.

On the other hand, the parent's belief may be transmitted directly to the child, permitting the child to respond not only to the parent's actions, but also to the belief guiding those actions. Parents are likely to transmit actively those beliefs which are important to them, which represent stable qualities in the child, and which they believe are of value for the child to understand. The child, of course, must understand the beliefs which are being communicated and accept them. Labels may enhance transmission.

The term "gifted" is a positive label and parents may be more likely to tell the child specifically that he or she is "gifted" than to tell the child he or she has a less positive attribute. Once the label is in place, it is relatively easy to convey a number of accompanying beliefs about what it means to be "gifted". Thus, transmission of attitudes from parent to child may be more direct, and possibly, less subject to distortion than for beliefs which do not fall as readily into a category. Given the somewhat subjective

quality of the label, however, a variety of associated beliefs about the trait may also be transmitted from parent to child. Although research has not focused on the transmission of the label "gifted", research on children's beliefs about their academic competence suggests that beliefs about competence are transmitted directly from parent to child and that children make use of various sources of information to form their opinions on their own academic competence

As early as kindergarten, children can make judgments about their abilities in academic areas (Anderson & Adams, 1985) There are several possible sources of information that children might use to formulate their opinions. Children could form their judgments on the basis of test results, social comparison, parental modelling of confidence in one's academic prowess, or parental beliefs about the child Phillips' (1987) study of academically competent Grade 3 students provided important evidence that children do develop their sense of competence from their parents' beliefs, although not necessarily by incorporating these beliefs directly The children, who were selected from 15 schools, were all high achieving students who had scored above the 75th percentile on standardized achievement tests and who were ranked in the top third of the class by their teachers. The children were divided into high, average and low competence groups based on their responses to questions about their academic competence. There was no difference in the mean achievement test scores of the three groups. The parents were also asked to estimate their child's ability Children whose mothers rated them as low in competence judged themselves to be either lower or higher in competence than children whose mothers rated them as being of average competence The fathers of children who falsely believed themselves to be of low competence had lower expectations for their children's success than did fathers of children who rated themselves as being of average or high academic competence. A path analysis using only families in which both parents participated throws some light on these findings. It indicated that children's competency beliefs were based on their understanding of how their mother judged them, which was in turn related to how difficult their mother believed school was. Competency beliefs were also based directly on both the child's

understanding of the father's judgment and the father's perception of the child's ability. Phillips found no relationship between the parents' judgment of their own competence and the child's judgment of his or her own competence, suggesting that modelling was not the vehicle for transmission of competency beliefs. Phillips suggested that the apparent inconsistency between maternal judgment and child belief might be moderated by the reluctance of some mothers to brag about their child in public. These mothers might convey quite different beliefs to the child in private.

When the beliefs transmitted by parents are accurate and realistic they can be useful to the child. If, however, they are unrealistic, and if the child has few other sources of information in the area, the child may be misguided. North American children are seldom told by teachers how they "rank" in the class compared with other children and must therefore rely on their parents' estimates of their abilities to construct their scholastic self-concept. MacIver (1987) in his study of 3,204 grade 5 and 6 students suggested that the children's optimistic self-assessment of their math ability was the result of lack of objective information about their performance in comparison with peers. A paucity of competing sources of information may tend to magnify the impact of parental beliefs. The child who is told by parents that he or she is "gifted" and superior to peers may accept this information uncritically if there is no competing information, and may construct an unrealistically positive scholastic self-concept. As a result of being lulled into a false sense of achievement, the child may expend less effort in mastering schoolwork and fail to live up to expectations.

Stevenson, Chen and Lee (1993) compared gifted Asian and American students with average Asian and American students. They found that all parents rated their own children as average or above average, and gifted students in all countries were rated as more intelligent. All American children, gifted and average, rated themselves similarly while average Asian children rated themselves more modestly than gifted Asian peers. Stevenson, Lee, Chen, Lummis, Stiegler, Fan, and Ge (1990) also reported that

American children were far more confident that they were meeting the standards set by their parents and teachers and were more likely than were Asian children to believe they would be among the best students in their math class. In fact, the optimism of the American children that they were meeting their parents' standards was well-justified. When asked to indicate a standard of accomplishment below which they would be unhappy with their child's performance, American parents tended to choose a less stringent criterion than Asian parents

Parental beliefs do appear to affect children's beliefs. Parental judgments of ability and expectation for success are transmitted to children. One might speculate that, as a result of the lack of feedback received by elementary students about their accomplishments relative to their classmates, North American children might be particularly susceptible to forming their judgments of their own ability based on their parents' beliefs. The transmission of these beliefs can be direct and it would seem reasonable to assume that the application of a label such as "gifted" to a child would facilitate the transmission of the parent's beliefs. It would also seem likely that any subsidiary beliefs or behavioural expectations associated with the term "gifted child" would be more likely to be transmitted if the parent told the child directly "You are gifted". There has been some interesting speculation on whether telling a child he or she is "gifted" is wise (Shore, Cornell, Robinson & Ward, 1991); however, research has not provided any clear guidelines.

The Impact of the Label "Gifted" on Children

Labels function in education as a means of delivering specialized services to identified students (Hickey & Toth, 1990) and although some researchers eschew the label "gifted" (e.g., Stanley, 1984), it is widely used in the popular and professional literature in psychology and education to describe advanced academic performance or cognitive development. Shore, Cornell, Robinson and Ward (1991) in their

critique of recommended practices in gifted education listed the suggestion that "Gifted children should not be labeled" as a recommendation with "elements of both support and refutation" (p. 281). Cohen (1996) in her discussion of the domains of knowledge in gifted education also notes that there is conflicting evidence as to whether labelling gifted children is beneficial.

Studies of the impact on children of being labelled "gifted" have suffered from three problems. Most samples have been drawn from groups of children already identified by the schools as gifted. It is sometimes not clear to what degree the children understand or agree with the label or to what degree their parents view the child as a gifted child. A second oversight, which sometimes appears in studies seeking to identify the impact of the label "gifted", is the failure to ask what befalls the child as a result of such an identification. It therefore becomes unclear whether any satisfaction or dissatisfaction which the child feels as a result of such a label is due to the label or to changes in the educational environment; whether it is a result of parent-child interactions; or whether, as a consequence of the child's greater intelligence, it is a function of a greater sensitivity and awareness on the part of the child.

Finally, it is not at all clear what parents understand by the label "gifted" and what they believe the implications of such a label to be. Is there a commonly held belief or do parents differ? Do parents whose children are gifted hold different ideas from parents whose children are not so identified? The degree to which the identified children understand and share their parent's beliefs is also unknown.

It is clear, however, that some parents do not regard "gifted" as a desirable label for their child, and not all parents whose children are identified as gifted use the term in front of the children. Some, in fact, actively avoid it. Cornell (1989) found that 25% of parents of a group of children selected for a summer enrichment program avoided using the term "gifted". He speculated that parents who avoided this term might be very conscientious and concerned with possible damaging effects of labelling their

child or that they might be less emotionally invested in their child's success than those parents who did use the term; however, he did not actively pursue why such differences exist.

Solow (1995) in her study of 10 families with gifted children mentioned that some "resisted, or simply chose not to use the gifted label" (p.142); however, she did not elaborate on their reasons. She was interested in the parents' reasoning about their children's problems and devised a 4-level taxonomy which categorized parental reasoning. At the lowest level, families had no theoretical context for gifted behaviours, while at the the highest level families used explanations which acknowledged certain traits and behaviours as typical of gifted children. Although she found no parents reasoning at the highest level, it is interesting that she presumed that a broader explanation of giftedness was higher, and presumably better, level of reasoning than a narrow, more domain specific one.

Dewey Cornell (1984, 1989, 1990) and his colleagues (Cornell & Grossberg, 1987; Cornell et al., 1990; Cornell, Delcourt, Goldberg & Bland, 1992; Tuttle & Cornell, 1993) are among the few researchers who have concerned themselves with both the label and the source of the label. In a study of children who had been selected for a summer enrichment program, Cornell (1989) noted that 10% of parents did not believe their child to be gifted. A later study (Tuttle and Cornell, 1993) studied 144 pairs of children to examine the impact of the label "gifted" on the unlabelled sibling. The children were first and second-born siblings between the ages of 10 and 16, one of whom had been selected to attend a summer enrichment program. In 12% of the cases, both children in the sibling pair had been selected for the program, while in the remaining 88% of the pairs, only one child had been selected. Both the children's parents and school representatives were asked whether or not they believed each child in the sibling pair to be gifted. Parent and school agreed on the label for about 75% of the 288 children attending the program. However, 17% of the attending children were identified by the school as gifted but were not

considered to be so by their parents, while 8% of the siblings of the children attending the program were identified as gifted by the parents but not by the school.

The impact of the "gifted" label on those children who are identified has been examined by numerous researchers. Differences in the source of the label has led to a dichotomy in studies of families of gifted children and the impact of giftedness on their relationships. On one hand are those studies which ask what happens within a family when a child is selected by the school as a gifted child. These studies focus on areas such as parental adjustment to the label, the impact of the label on relationships between labelled and non-labelled siblings, and possible differences in parent-child relationships between labelled and unlabelled children and their parents (Grenier, 1985; Ballering & Koch, 1984; Keirouz, 1990). On the other hand are those studies which try to determine the degree to which the child is nurtured into giftedness as a result of a fortuitous confluence of the child's natural ability, birth order, and gender with the family's values and aspirations (Robinson, 1987; Albert, 1980a, 1980b; Bloom, 1985; Rimm and Lowe, 1988) In the former case, a parent who may be relatively naive about the child's talents must adjust to the child's identification, as must the entire family system. In the latter case, the formal identification by the school system simply validates the parent's efforts and beliefs. Presumably, different dynamics would be at work in families where the child's precocity was a surprise as opposed to those families in which it was expected.

Whether the label "gifted" emanates from the school or parents it may affect both familial relationships and peer relationships. It may also affect the child's sense of self-worth both directly and through the response of others to the label.

Within the domain of the family, some authors have suggested the potential for friction between the labelled child and non-labelled siblings. Although small sample size and lack of control groups

hamper some of these studies. it appears that, at least initially, children labelled "gifted" are likely to have a closer relationship with parents (Ballering and Koch, 1984) and a poorer relationship with siblings (Grenier, 1985; Ballering & Koch, 1984). Colangelo and Brower (1987) concluded that five years after the initial identification of one child as gifted there was no disadvantage to the non-identified sibling. Although the authors did not investigate the relationship between the siblings, they did conclude that any possible negative effects of labelling on the non-gifted sibling were transitory. Chamrand, Robinson and Janos (1995) also found no difference between gifted and non-gifted siblings in adjustment or problems. Tuttle and Cornell (1993) selected a sample of gifted children and their siblings but focused on maternal labelling of the child rather than school labelling. They found that birth order played a pivotal role in sibling relationships. When the eldest sibling was labelled and the second was not, the sibling relationship was warmer than when the second sibling was labelled and the elder was not.

A second area of interest has been the impact of the label "gifted" on the child's social relationships. Here a question arises as to whether any difficulties the child faces are a result of the child's superior intelligence and resultant inability to share similar interests with peers, the singling out of the child as "gifted" by authorities and subsequent resentment by peers, or the isolation of the child from average peers by placement in a special class. It has been suggested (Hollingworth, 1942) that children who are extremely precocious are so different from their age peers that they become social isolates. Among gifted children of more modest IQ levels, up to 170, there is no relationship between academic achievement and maladjustment (Oram, Cornell, & Rutemiller, 1995).

It has been suggested that gifted children feel different and that this sense of differentness may lead to alientation from peers. Reaction to a sense of differentness might be particularly damaging to teenaged girls who may be exceptionally susceptible to peer pressure to conceal their academic precocity in order to appear average and therefore, socially acceptable (Kramer, 1991; Read, 1991). Read (1991)

noted that gifted teenaged girls regarded intellectually able teenaged boys as "nerds". Cross, Coleman and Stewart (1993) claimed that over half of the 1,465 gifted adolescent girls and boys they surveyed manipulated information in order to downplay their academic success to avoid alienating their peers. However, the tendency to deprecate one's talent may not be unique to gifted students. Juvonen and Murdock (1993) asked students in regular classes to explain success or failure on a test to a hypothetical audience, variously described as a teacher, parent or popular peers. Success as a result of high ability and effort, the hallmark of the archetypical "nerd", was not socially desirable. Success was acceptable to peers if it was a result of high ability in combination with low effort or perceived low ability and hard work. Students recognized, furthermore, that effort and ability were considered desirable to adults. It would appear from this study that it would be acceptable to be gifted, as long as one was not perceived as over-zealous in the pursuit of one's studies. Cole and Cilia (1990) found that while Australian teenagers predicted a videotaped subject labelled "gifted" would do well in academic areas, the behaviour of the subject (either competent or non-competent) had a greater effect on student judgments than did the label. Students believed the competent student would be a better student, friendlier and more of a leader than the less competent student, independent of the gifted label.

Being in a special class for the gifted does not seem to affect the child's popularity either, at least beyond elementary school. Schneider, Clegg, Byrne, Ledingham and Crombie (1989) found that Grade 8 and 10 students who were in segregated classes were equally well regarded by their peers as comparably bright students who were in integrated classes. Only in Grade 5 were integrated gifted students regarded as more socially adept than their segregated peers. While segregated classes for the gifted do not appear to cause average students to reject their gifted peers, Goldring (1990), in a meta-analysis of the effect of various programs on gifted children, concluded that segregated programs resulted in gifted students having a less favourable opinion of average peers. It might be suggested that gifted children are more sensitive to social nuances than are their average classmates and are, therefore, more aware of subtle

forms of rejection. However, children identified as gifted have not been found to display higher levels of interpersonal sensitivity than control children (Ritchie, Bernard & Schertzer, 1982). Thus, it appears that while gifted students feel uneasy about the effect of the gifted label on peers, the peers are more likely, at least by adolescence, to judge the bright student on behavioural competence and by the same standards as other students. Despite these findings, some researchers have suggested that there is, among the public, a general suspicion of gifted children. Sternberg (1996) describes the "constellation of emotions about the gifted, namely Distrust, Envy, Anxiety and Fear" (p.170). If these beliefs are communicated to students, they may develop by adolescence a sense of unease and of "delusions of ungrandeur" (Schneider, 1987, p. 71) in the areas of social competence and peer acceptance.

Schneider (1987) summarized the research on the peer relations of gifted children by concluding that "Every sociometric study of peer relations of the gifted child at the elementary school level indicates they are better accepted than controls" (p. 71). However, it could be argued that studies finding widespread acceptance of gifted children by their peers may be marred by selection bias. Intellectually gifted children who are identified as gifted and assigned to special programs may be selected from well-adjusted children, while those gifted children who are unpopular and non-conforming may be overlooked. Gottfried and his associates (Gottfried, Gottfried, Bathurst and Guerin, 1994) in their longitudinal study of a group of healthy middle-class children, whom they followed from age 1, avoided this problem. Children in their study were assessed on a number of cognitive and affective measures by assessors who were blind to previous outcomes. At age 8, the children (N = 107) were tested on the WISC-R and designated as gifted, having an IQ of 130 or more, (N = 20) or non-gifted, having an IQ of less than 130 (N = 87). They found no difference between the gifted and non-gifted children on earlier measures of temperament, general persistence and motivation, adjustment or peer relations, although they did find consistent differences in test behaviour, in particular motivation and persistence in test situations. There

was however, no difference between groups on such allegedly "gifted" behaviours as complaining of loneliness, preferring to play alone, or preferring older playmates.

Cornell (1990) examined the specific problems of the unpopular gifted child, by examining what characteristics were common to gifted children who were unpopular with other bright students in a summer residential enrichment program. He found that they differed from their peers not in intelligence or personal adjustment (as indicated by measures of anxiety, nervousness, or dependency) but in having a lower socio-economic status, poorer social self-concept and lower teacher judgment of academic self-esteem.

A third area upon which the label gifted could have an impact is the child's self-image. Self-esteem, in particular academic self-esteem and social self-esteem, is the area most frequently examined by researchers. Hoge and Renzulli (1991), in their review of the literature, suggested that gifted children do not suffer deficits in self esteem compared with average children. They cautioned that methodological flaws in some studies and conflicting evidence among them warranted caution in accepting their conclusions wholeheartedly. Gifted and non-gifted students may differ little on global measures of self-esteem; however, the source of their self-worth may differ (Hoge & McSheffrey, 1991; Garzarelli, Everhart, & Lester, 1993). Most evidence suggests that gifted children have higher scores on measures of academic self-esteem (Colangelo & Brower, 1987; Kelly & Jorden, 1990; Li, 1988). An exception is the child in a segregated class for the gifted. Some studies have found that children in these classes tend to have lower scores for academic self-esteem than their intellectual peers in integrated classes although these two groups do not differ in other areas of self-esteem. Academic self-esteem is presumably affected because the segregated students are comparing themselves with other high ability students (Schneider, Clegg, Byrne, Ledingham, & Crombie, 1989; Cornell, Delcourt, Goldberg, & Bland, 1992; Marsh, Chessor, Craven & Roche, 1995). The finding of higher academic self-esteem among non-segregated

gifted students is so commonly accepted that when Gresham, Evans, and Elliott (1988) found no difference in academic self-efficacy between gifted and regular students, they admitted to some perplexity over their results. They speculated that while self-esteem and self-efficacy are related concepts, there are some differences. While gifted children may assess their academic ability most positively than average children, they may not differ from other children in the degree to which they believe they can cope with academic challenges.

Some researchers have found gifted children to score more highly on measures of behavioural self-concept as well as academic self-concept (Li, 1988; Yong & McIntyre, 1991) and, since good classroom behaviour in the form of attending to the teacher, completing assigned work, and trying hard is often a prerequisite to academic success, this relationship is not surprising. In the area of social self-esteem, however, most researchers have found that gifted children do not differ from students not labelled gifted (Kelly & Jorden, 1990; Li, 1988). However, Gresham, Evans and Elliott (1988) found that gifted students scored themselves more poorly on social self-efficacy than did regular students, while Whalen and Csikszentmihalyi (1989) suggested that gifted students are more uncertain of their social competence. Of particular relevance to the question of labelling is Cornell's (1989) finding that gifted students whose mothers labelled them "gifted" saw themselves as less physically attractive and less popular than those gifted students whose mothers avoided the term. Cornell's findings suggest that this sense of being different may affect peer relations. Janos, Fung and Robinson (1985) found that gifted children who believed themselves to be "different" felt they had greater difficulty with peers than similar ability students who did not feel different. Cross, Coleman, and Stewart (1993) found that of the 1465 adolescent students they interviewed at a summer enrichment program, most saw themselves as intellectually different from their less able peers. They felt that they were more serious about learning and that the other students in the summer program were more like themselves than were their regular school peers. Manor-Bullock, Look and Dixon (1995) also found that while 65% of their subjects in a residental school for gifted

students said they felt socially different from students in their previous high schools, a majority said they had had friends. The authors noted that they had a low response rate and that students who choose to leave their home schools and attend a residential school may be different from those who prefer to remain. Freeman (1994) followed up her study of gifted British children by interviewing the children again when they were in their teens. She found that the children with IQ's between 140 and 170 were more likely to claim to feel different. However, these students did not report this difference as affecting their social relationships.

Of course, regarding oneself as socially competent is only important if one values social competence. There is some suggestion that wanting to be popular and socially adept may be unimportant or even deleterious to gifted students. Brody and Benbow (1986) found that while highly gifted students perceived themselves as less popular than less extremely gifted students, they did not suffer from lower self-esteem or run any greater risk of depression. Within the highly gifted group, however, those students who were verbally gifted were more likely to feel unpopular, and the authors suggested that these students, whom they believe to be more like very high IQ students of other studies, might be at greater risk for emotional and social problems than the students who were mathematically gifted. Their subjects, however, were an extremely select group. The comparison group of students was drawn from the top 3% of students while their "gifted" group represented the top .01% of students. Extrapolation from this group to students in general, even gifted students, may be difficult. Tomlinson-Keasy and Little (1990) in a study of 1069 of Terman's (1925) subjects, now in later adulthood, found to their surprise that children who were "popular, enjoyed good health, radiated physical energy and maintained a cheerful and optimistic attitude were less likely to maintain their intellectual skill as adults, whereas less popular children were more likely to evidence intellectual interests as adults" (p. 452).

Overall, conflicting messages about the general social competence and adjustment of gifted children are found throughout the literature. On one hand, much information suggests that, in general, gifted children do not differ from others in their levels of self-esteem or their social competence, and possible difficulties with brothers and sisters appear to be transient. Gifted children may feel different, but it is not clear that this is invariably negative. However, there is also a trend within the literature which suggests that gifted children face unusual difficulties. It is not only Sternberg (1996) who is concerned that gifted children are educationally underserved because they are resented. Other researchers also suggest that gifted children are neglected because their pedagogical needs are different. Roeper (1996) has suggested that they "fit the norm even less than others" (p. 225) and that they may fall behind in basic skills of reading and computation. They "are also often not good skill learners....There is also a current tendency to believe that gifted children are prone to having learning disabilities" (Roeper, 1996, p. 225) Furthermore, she suggests that they are seen by some as being more psychologically complex than other children, a trait which is seen to make life more difficult for them.

One area which has received little attention is the specific impact of the label "gifted" on children's motivation and attributions for success and failure. Although gifted and non-gifted children have been compared on these qualities, the impact of being labeled as "gifted" has seldom been addressed. Dweck (1986) and her associates (Elliott & Dweck, 1988) have suggested that the individual's model of intelligence, whether intelligence is believed to be a product of incremental learning or an innate, stable quality, will affect the individual's decision to pursue learning goals or performance goals. Pursuing the latter is seen as potentially handicapping as it can lead to an avoidance of challenge and, if combined with a belief in stable, internal low ability, can lead to learned helplessness. Hayamizu and Weiner (1991) elaborated on Dweck's proposal. They proposed that performance goals can be subdivided into a set of goals which focus on personal advancement, such as getting into university, and a set of goals which focus on winning the approval of others and suggested that the former type of performance goals was more

conducive to effort than was the latter. They concluded that a belief in low innate ability is inimical to any goals, either learning or performance. They did not emphasize the role of avoidance of challenge in their study.

If giftedness is perceived as innate, will it affect the child's preference for learning or performance goals? It appears that gifted and non-gifted students may attribute their success to different causes. Kurtz and Weinert (1988) found that intellectually gifted German children attributed academic success to ability while their average peers attributed such success to effort. They did not explore the children's preferences for learning or performance goals. Ames and Archer (1988), using a North American sample of academically advanced students, found that when compared with peers who focused on learning goals, academically advanced students who focused on performance goals tended to underrate their ability and were more likely to attribute failure to lack of ability. Laffoon, Jenkins-Friedman and Tollefson (1989), found support for Dweck's model in their study of gifted students. Moderately underachieving gifted students were more likely than were achieving gifted students to avoid challenge and also to attribute their success to ability and their failure to external, uncontrollable causes such as luck.

Roberts and Lovett (1994), although they were not specifically interested in labelling, conducted one of the few studies which has compared labelled gifted students with unlabelled high achieving students and with their average peers. The authors examined the variety of pressures which are said to converge on gifted students and which might make it very important for these children to achieve. They were particularly interested in the impact of failure on gifted students. They found gifted students scored higher than the two control groups on a measure of irrational beliefs and a measure of perfectionism, and had larger negative reactions to failure. In an experimental failure situation, gifted students showed significantly more physiological stress as measured by digit skin temperature and a greater decrease in

positive and increase in negative affect than did the high achievers or the average students. It might be speculated that this increased perfectionism and reactivity to failure could lead these gifted students to avoid situations where they might risk failure. They may, therefore, tend to avoid challenge and prefer performance goals. The suggestion that being "gifted", and the increased expectations surrounding the label, can be highly stressful has found support in other research. Although there has been little research focusing on the impact of the label "gifted" in the area of motivation and attributions, possible differences may occur in attributions for success and failure, preference for learning or performance goals, and willingness to take risks and pursue challenges.

Some researchers have asked children directly whether they liked being labelled gifted or whether the label had precipitated any problems. Hershey and Oliver (1988) found that of the 600 children they spoke with, 39% said they might be happier without the gifted label. Only 30% said they had no problems as a result of being labelled gifted. There is evidence suggesting that children identified as gifted feel that too much is expected of them (Delisle & Galbraith, 1987; Kaplan & Geoffroy, 1993). Robinson (1990) asked 396 American high school students who had been selected to attend a special high school based on both their academic performance and contributions to their schools how they felt about being labeled "gifted". Of these students, 28.6% felt that they were moderately or very uncomfortable with the label "gifted". Comparing extreme groups, those very happy or very unhappy with the label, Robinson found that the students who were very unhappy were less likely to believe that their friends and family agreed they were gifted, less likely to believe that their friends and family treated them differently, and less prone to like feeling different than were the students who were very happy with the label. Robinson (1990) attributed the difference in acceptance of the gifted label to whether the student had been identified by the school or by parents. He suggested that it was more desirable that the child be identified by parents, noting that only 14% of the uncomfortable students versus 22% of the comfortable students learned they were gifted from their parents. A chi-square on the data indicates, however, that the

difference between comfortable and uncomfortable students as a result of whether parents, school personnel, or other, non-reported, sources first told them of their giftedness was not significant, $\chi^2(2, N = 155) = 2.04, p = .62$.

The impact of the label "gifted": Summary

Overt parental labelling of the child as "gifted" may result both in less optimal sibling relationships and lowered social self-efficacy. Within the family, difficulties seem to be minimized if it is the eldest child who is labelled.

While children of high academic ability appear to have a more positive academic and perhaps behavioural self-concept than their less academically adept peers, they may fall short of these peers in the area of social self-concept. Although some gifted children may complain about the insensitivity of peers (American Association for Gifted Children, 1978), it seems that these peers may not be as rejecting of the gifted child as they are perceived to be. Gifted children may feel, however, that they have to manage their image in order not to appear too bright.

Freeman's (1979) study suggested that parents who consider their child to be gifted may identify their child as different from non-gifted children in emotional and behavioural areas as well as in academic areas, perhaps leading the child to be overly sensitive to possible peer rejection. Gifted children who believe themselves to be "different" may have less satisfactory peer relationships. A substantial minority of gifted children may regard the "gifted" label as negative or problematic.

Much of the research on the label "gifted" has focused on socio-emotional consequences of labelling, and little has been done on the impact of the label on attributions, preference for learning or performance goals, and willingness to risk failure.

Some questions about the term "gifted"

It is not clear how parental beliefs about labelling and the information conveyed to the child about the label affect the child's feelings about the label or how this is related to some of the negative outcomes.

The research suggests that parents are reasonably good judges of their children's ability; however, it also suggests that parents are more than impassive observers of their children's development. Bloom (1985) was not the first to have noted the involvement of parents in the development of their children's talents. The beliefs of parents about their children's competency seems to have an effect on the child's beliefs, although not necessarily on the child's behaviour. If the parent believes that the child is gifted, the parent may behave differently toward the child than if the parent believes the child is simply a good or average student. Furthermore, this belief that the child is gifted may be transmitted to the child. Finally, the parent may think more deeply on the meaning of "giftedness" and develop an understanding which differs from that of parents who do not hold such a belief.

Central to any considerations of the effect the label "gifted" might have upon a child is the question, "What does "gifted" mean?" In the Webster's New World Dictionary (3rd ed.), a gift is described initially as "something given or bestowed" and, as an alternate meaning, "a natural ability; talent" (p. 611). A gift comes from outside oneself. It is not earned. To be gifted is to be more than merely intelligent, at least according to the dictionary, which offers "smart" and "bright", but not "gifted"

as synonyms for intelligent. "Gift" is defined as a talent and appears as a synonym for talent. These two words are distinguished from one another by the explanation that a talent, although native to the possessor, can be cultivated; but a gift is "bestowed upon one as by nature and not acquired through effort" (p. 1486). "Genius" also appears as a synonym for talent, although it is defined as indicative of a phenomenal mental prowess. These definitions suggest that giftedness is innate and unearned and, perhaps, that it is a more powerful quality than simple intelligence, which is defined in terms of ability to learn and the possession of knowledge. It is almost tempting to think in terms of mythological Muses or gifts from the gods. When a parent describes a child as gifted, does that parent intimate that the child is in possession of a powerful, innate, unearned quality? Does the child understand these implications? It might also be enquired whether parents of gifted children understand the meaning of giftedness differently from those parents who do not identify their children as gifted, and to what degree parental beliefs about giftedness are transmitted to children. Although many authors have attempted to define giftedness (Gagne, 1985; Tannenbaum, 1986; Jackson & Butterfield, 1986; Renzulli, 1984), a review of the literature suggests that no one has focused specifically on what the term means to parents. Only Gagne and his associates (Gagne, Belanger & Motard, 1993), who have theorized about the relationship between "talent" and "giftedness", have approached the questions of meaning and laypersons' predictions of prevalence. They found that Quebec francophone adults believed that there were almost twice as many people who were talented as people who were gifted. Overall, respondents believed that 17% of the population was gifted. Gagne noted that respondents felt that, in comparison with talent, giftedness was rare, was reserved for intellectual abilities, was an omnibus ability and was hereditary while talent could be developed by effort. He drew his sample from widely disparate groups and found, not surprisingly, large individual differences. His research was done on a francophone population and it is not clear that giftedness has the same connotations in French as in English.

A second central question which arises is the impact on the child of the parents' belief. The self-esteem and self-concept of gifted children has been examined. Even when it has been discussed in terms of the labelling of the child, however, it has not been discussed in terms of the child's understanding of the label.

One group of parents who believe that their child is gifted is those who join associations for gifted children on behalf of their children. These parents share a belief that their child is advanced in comparison with age peers, generally in cognitive areas, but sometimes in artistic areas as well. The parent associations provide valuable advocacy for educational improvement and disseminate information to their membership on schooling and parenting. Unlike associations for high-IQ adults such as Mensa, associations for gifted children seldom require documentation of the child's abilities, and parents may differ from one another in the amount of support they have from friends or professionals in their assessment of the child's cognitive development. By joining an association for gifted children, these parents can be seen to have made a voluntary, public commitment to their belief in their child's advanced cognitive skills

They, therefore, form a unique and interesting group, quite unlike other parents who may come together as a result of a diagnosis that their child's development is aberrant. Within samples of parents whose children have been diagnosed as learning disabled or mentally or physically challenged, individual parents may differ from one another in the degree to which they understand and accept the diagnosis of their child's special needs. These parents, unlike parents of gifted children, are thrown together by a common fate rather than by a shared belief. The difference can be seen by trying to imagine a situation in which parents might join an association for mentally handicapped children on behalf of their child as a result of their own assessment of their child's development and without having a professional document that their child was, indeed, mentally handicapped. In contrast, because of the positive implications of

giftedness. parents may be quite willing to join associations for gifted children without having had their child formally tested. While parents of children in enrichment programs are also be likely to be pleased with the child's selection for these programs, selection is usually in the hands of educators. The voluntary nature of the parent group and the lack of reliance on professional diagnosis for membership means that the parents who join associations for the gifted are an unusual and interesting group and one whose members might be expected to hold strong and well-articulated beliefs on giftedness.

One way to examine the impact of the concept of giftedness on the child would be to study groups of parents that vary in their willingness to use the term "gifted", i.e., to have parents who both believe that their child is gifted and communicate that idea in those words to the child, and parents who believe that their child is gifted but avoid using that term. Cornell's (1989) study indicated that 25% of parents who believed their children to be gifted did, in fact, avoid using that term. Cornell drew his sample of children and their parents from families of children enrolled in camp for gifted children in the eastern United States. It is interesting to ask why some of the parents of these children might actively avoid describing their child as "gifted". A preliminary question is whether his results can be replicated in Canada or whether the reluctance to use this term is unique to the specific historical and cultural context of the United States. Study 1 was undertaken to survey the members of the Gifted Children's Association of the Lower Mainland of British Columbia to examine whether parents do differ in their willingness to use the term "gifted". Active avoidance of this term by parents who have joined the Gifted Children's Association would suggest that this word has connotations with which parents are uneasy. A second purpose of this survey was to establish a source of subjects for further research into this area.

The British Columbia Gifted Children's Association (GCA) provides families of gifted children and other interested individuals with information on giftedness through workshops, meetings, speakers and newsletters, and encourages wider societal recognition of the needs of very able children. There are

no qualifications for membership in the GCA; no particular criteria are set to define giftedness; and no proof is required that the child meets some standard. Parents who have enrolled on behalf of their children have made a public commitment to their belief in their child's giftedness. If some of these parents can be identified as avoiding the use of the term "gifted", it would suggest that this term has connotations with which some parents are uncomfortable. This might suggest possible problems, at least in the eye of parents, with labelling children "gifted".

STUDY 1

Method

Procedure

A survey and a covering letter (Appendix A) was sent to each of 240 members of the GCA living on the Lower Mainland of British Columbia in January of 1993. In order to protect the members' anonymity, envelopes were addressed and surveys mailed by a member of the GCA executive. It is not known whether the envelope was addressed to the mother, the father, or both and respondents were not asked to identify whether they were the father or the mother of the gifted child. However, in almost half the surveys (54 out of 112), an examination of the wording of answers indicated which parent was responding. Of these surveys, 3 (3%) appeared to have been completed by both parents as indicated by differing handwriting or by both the father's and the mother's responses being worded in the first person. The remaining 51 surveys were completed by the mother. In one case, the mother indicated that her husband would have nothing to do with the Gifted Children's Association. It could not be ascertained who completed the remaining 52% of the surveys; however, in no case did the wording of answers suggest that the father alone had completed the survey. That mothers would be more involved with the identification of their child as "gifted" is suggested by Cornell's (1984) study of families of gifted children. He reported that parents in 14 of the families in his study disagreed as to whether or not a child was gifted. In 13 of these families, the mother believed the child was gifted, while the father did not. Cornell suggested that while the mothers defined "giftedness" in terms of learning ability, the fathers felt giftedness was more akin to genius. It appears that the among the parents in Study 1, the task of responding to the survey fell to the mother.

Recipients were asked to complete and return the survey in the enclosed, stamped, addressed envelope and to include their name, address and/or phone number if they would be interested in being contacted to discuss participation in later research. Of these families and individuals, 112 families with

children (47%) replied, all of whom included their name, address and/or telephone number indicating that they might be willing to participate in further research. These 112 families lived in the Vancouver school district or one of nine surrounding suburban or smaller urban school districts. The student populations in these districts ranged from 53,615 in Vancouver, the largest district, to approximately 3,858 in New Westminster, the smallest district.

Results

Total Sample

The responding families were well educated, with 67% of the fathers and 61% of the mothers holding at least one university degree. Only 13 (11.6%) mothers and 13 (11.9%) fathers had a high school degree or less. A total of 25 fathers (22%) and 4 mothers (3.5%) had a Ph.D. or M.D. Parents had occupations commensurate with their education. Only 7 fathers (6.4%) and 3 mothers (2.6%) held jobs that could be classified as semi-skilled or unskilled. Of the 110 mothers responding, only 17 (15%) identified themselves solely as a mother or homemaker.

The 112 families that responded had a total of 227 children. In 3 of these families, the respondent indicated that the father did not live in the home. Family size ranged from 1 to 5 children with the mean family size being 2.3 children (SD =.9). There were 83 girls and 144 boys in the sample, a larger number of boys than would be expected by chance ($z = \pm 4.33$, $p<.01$). It is not clear from the information available whether families of boys are more likely to identify their children as gifted, whether more parents of boys join the GCA or whether parents of boys are more likely to volunteer for research. Children mentioned ranged in age from 1 to 33 years old with a mean age of 10.1 (SD = 4.8). Parents mentioned 8 children who were over 19. Because the questions asked about gifted "children", these 8 individuals, 6 males and 2 females, were eliminated from further analysis. Without them, the mean age of the children was 9.7 years (SD = 3.8).

Parents were asked to identify all children who were gifted or talented (Q1) and respond to a number of questions about them. This questionnaire is appended (Appendix A). When parents were unsure about the identification of one of their children as gifted, it was assumed that if they included the possibly gifted child when answering the remaining questions, they did indeed think of that child as gifted. If the parent mentioned only that another child might be gifted, but did not include that child in answering any other questions, the child was categorized as "non-gifted". A total of 175 of the children, 105 boys and 70 girls, were identified as gifted. A chi-square of sex by giftedness was non-significant, $\chi^2(1, N = 219)=.011$, $p=.91$. In 21% of the families the child identified was an only child, while of the remaining 88 families who had more than one child, fully 62.5% believed all their children to be gifted.

Elementary School Age Children

Because the focus of the interest was parents and their elementary school age children, further discussion will consider only those children who would have been in elementary school, between Kindergarten and Grade 7, when the survey was taken. These are all children born between 1980 and 1987 and their families. One child, born in January of 1988 and attending a private elementary school and those children born between 1980 and 1987 who were home schooled were also included. There was a total of 159 elementary school children from 101 families. Of this total of 159 elementary school children, 136 (50 girls and 86 boys) were identified as gifted.

Why were some children less likely to be identified as gifted? A χ^2 was used to determine whether the sex of the child influenced the likelihood of the child being identified as gifted. This proved to be non-significant, $\chi^2(1, N = 159) = .027$, $p = .87$. A second possibility was the age of the child. There was a difference in the age of the gifted when compared with the non-gifted children, the gifted children

being significantly older. The mean age of the gifted children was 9.8 years (SD = 1.91) and that of the non-gifted, 8.71 years (SD = 2.03), $t(159) = 2.31$, $p < .05$.

There were 20 only children and 65 firstborn children. Of these first-borns, 64 were identified as gifted. Gifted and non-gifted children were compared by birth order, first child v. second child v. third or later child (Table 1)

Table 1

Percentage of first-, second-, and later-born children identified as gifted and non-gifted

Birth position	n	% gifted (n = 118)	% non-gifted (n = 21)
First-born	65	98_a	2.
Second-born	62	76_b	24
Later-born	12	58_b	42.

Note. Percentages with different subscripts differ significantly.

Over all, birth order was significant χ^2 (2, N = 139) = 19.92, p.<.001. First-born children were more likely to be identified as gifted than second-born children χ^2 (1, N = 127) = 14.79, p.<.001; however, second-born children were no more likely to be identified than third- or later-born children χ^2 (1, N = 74) = 1.56, p = .21

Grouping of Families by the Parents' Use of the Term "Gifted"

Parents were asked to check which of 10 terms ("gifted" and nine synonyms) they used to describe their children when the child was not present (Q13), and which of the same 10 terms they used to describe their child when the child was present (Q14).

Families were then divided into three groups based on their use of the term "gifted" (Table 2). The first group, Users, was composed of those families who used the term "gifted" in front of their children. Most of these parents also used the term in front of others; however, there was a small group of parents (4 families with 6 gifted elementary school age children) who only used the term in front of their children. Because the variable of interest is the impact of the term on the child, these families were absorbed into the User category. The second group of parents were the Non-Users, who claimed not to use the term "gifted" at all, either in front of their children or when speaking to other adults about their children. A third group of parents also emerged. These were the Partial Users, who said they did not use the term "gifted" in front of their children, but claimed to use it only in front of other adults to describe their children. Table 2 reports the number of families and children in each group and the mean age of the children.

Table 2

Number of children and families in each group and mean age of children.

	Users	Partial users	Non-Users	Total
Number of families	51	19	31	101
Number of children	68	24	44	136
Age of children				
M	9.8_a	8.9_a	10.3_b	9.7
SD	1.9	1.9	2.1	1.0

Note. Means with different subscripts differ significantly.

The number of boys and girls in each group did not differ significantly among groups. χ^2 (2, N = 136) = 3.41, p = .18; however, an ANOVA indicated that the children did differ significantly in age, $F(1,133) = 4.18$, $p = .017$. A Tukey HSD multiple comparison of means indicated that children of the

partial users were significantly younger than the children of non-users. Parents were asked whether their child had been tested for giftedness (one subject did not respond). Users were more likely than non-users or partial users to reply that their child had been tested either by the school or another professional, χ^2 = (2, N = 135) = 8.86, p = .02. However, whether or not the child was tested was not related to the average age at which the parent claimed the child was initially recognized as gifted. (F = 1,133) = .74, p = .39.

It should be noted that the term "gifted" was not alone in differentiating the three groups. Parents also differed in their willingness to use the terms "talented", "creative" and "intelligent". Non-users were also significantly less likely than either users or partial users to refer to their child as "talented" when speaking to adults $\chi 2$(2, N = 101) = 9.28, p < .02) or in front of their children χ^2(2, N = 101) = 8.01, p < .02. Users were significantly more likely than either of the other groups to tell the child he or she was intelligent, χ^2(2, N = 101) = 7.71, p < .03 and more likely than non-users to tell other adults that their child was creative χ^2(2, N = 101) = 7.60, p < .03. Partial users did not differ significantly from users, χ^2(1, N = 70) = 2.68, p = .10 or non-users, χ^2 (1, N = 50) = .363, p > 50 in their willingness to tell adults that their child was creative.

Parents' Use of the Term "Gifted" to Describe Their Children

Parents were asked to check which of ten adjectives, synonyms of the term "gifted", they used to describe the child to others when the child was not present and which of the ten they used when the child was present (Appendix A: Q13 & Q14). The adjective of interest was the term "gifted", as the literature (Cornell, 1989, Freeman, 1979) suggests that the term itself may have an impact on how children perceive themselves or are perceived by their parents.

Table 3 gives the percentage of people indicating they used each term in front of others when the child was not present and when the child was present. Terms are presented in order of preference for use within each situation. The terms "bright" and "intelligent" were the most frequently used terms both in front of the child and to other people while the terms, "precocious" and "genius" were seldom used. The terms "clever" and "smart" were more frequently used by adults when speaking to their children than when speaking to other adults. "Gifted" was used by 65% of parents when speaking to others about their child but by only 51% of parents in front of their child. Parents were also asked what other terms they preferred. wide variety of adjectives and phrases appeared, but none predominated. The most common, "curious", "sensitive", having a "good brain", were each mentioned about half a dozen times

Table 3

Percentage and number of parents choosing each term for use in front of their children and to adults when child not present.

Term used to adults when child not present	%	n*	Term used in front of child	%	n*
bright	80.2	81	bright	65.3	66
intelligent	67.3	68	intelligent	62.4	63
gifted	65.3	66	smart	58.4	59
creative	55.5	56	creative	56.4	57
smart	51.5	52	gifted	50.5	51
talented	41.6	42	talented	42.6	43
clever	30.7	31	clever	37.6	38
able	27.7	29	able	26.7	27
precocious	7.9	8	genius	3.0	3
genius	5.0	5	precocious	1.0	1

*N = 101.

"Gifted" is the third most favoured term for use in front of adults but only the fifth most favoured for use in front of children. "Smart" was the only other term which showed such a discrepency in rank but, in contrast to "gifted", "smart" was preferred for use in front of children rather than in front of adults. "Bright" was also a term which a substantial number of parents claimed to use more readily to adults than to children. However, "bright" remained the favourite term for both use in front of both children and adults. Because this pattern of responses suggested that parents may be more circumspect in using "gifted", further analysis of the terms was undertaken. The 20 responses for each individual, 10 terms used in front of others and 10 used in front of children, were scored either 1 or 0 depending on whether

that person used the term in a particular context or not. A similarity matrix was created using a Tanimoto's dichotomy coefficient (Gower, 1985). This method of creating a matrix of coefficients uses the proportion of pairs where the values of both variables agree, standardized by all possible patterns of agreement and disagreement. It was chosen, in part, because it was deemed important to include information indicating that the respondent did not use either of a pair of terms (for example, "gifted to child" and "gifted to adult"). The resulting matrix was used to plot the relationship between the terms using monotonic multidimensional scaling in two dimensions using Guttman's Smallest Space Analysis under the multidimensional scaling procedure of Systat (Systat for Windows, Version 5 Edition, 1992).

The Guttman/Lingoes coefficient of alienation of the final configuration, which indicates the degree to which the distances on the scale vary from the original correlation matrix was .122. This indicates a close correspondence between the final configuration and the original data and suggests that the scaling procedure does accurately represent the data.

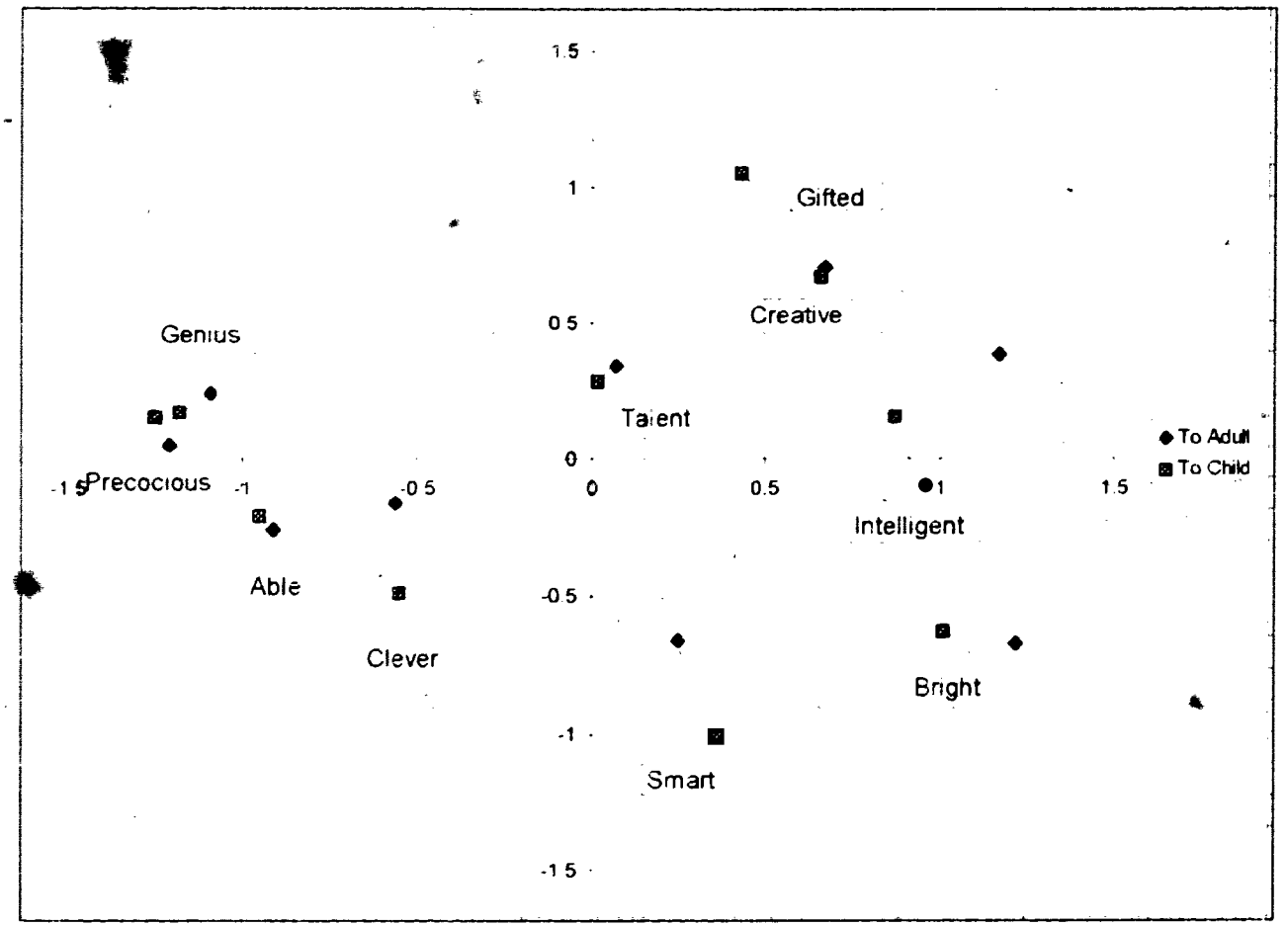

Figure 1: Two dimensional plot of terms used in front of children and adults.

The results (Figure 1) indicate that with the exception of "gifted", all adjectives fall into pairs, indicating that the use of the adjective to adults is not substantially different from the use of the adjective to children. Although both uses of "gifted" fall in the same quadrant, each member of the pair is closer to another adjective and the adjective pair "creative" lies between them. "Gifted", when used to adults, lies near "intelligent"; "creative" lies between the two members of the gifted pair; and "gifted" when used to children lies beyond "creative". Each of the other adjectives is in closest proximity to the other member of the pair with the exception of "genius" and "precocious". These latter two terms form a cluster and individuals using either term are likely to use the other and to use the term to both children and adults. What is interesting about Figure 1 is that none of other pairs of terms is as widely separated as "gifted".

The vertical axis of this figure may be interpreted as a creativity dimension. At one end is the ability to do well in school ("smart", "bright"), at the other, the ability to think or create in a novel and original way ("creative", "talented", "gifted", "genius" and "precocious"). The interpretation of the horizontal dimension of this figure is less clear. It may relate to the willingness of the responding parent to describe their child with a wide number of adjectives and may be a measure of "effusiveness" vs. "restraint" on the part of the parent. Parents who chose only a single term to describe their child tended to pick terms such as "intelligent" or "bright", while parents who used terms such as "able" or "genius" tended to indicate they used a number of other terms to describe their child as well. While the interpretation of the horizontal dimension may be tentative, it appears that "gifted" does not behave like the other adjective pairs. This supports the view that the term "gifted" may have other connotations which lead parents to differentiate between using the term to other adults and using the term in front of their children.

Identification of the Child as Gifted

Parents were asked when they first recognized that their child was gifted (Q3) and who first alerted them (Q4). The mean age of identification was 3.6 years of age (SD 2.27) and the majority of children were first recognized by their parents. Three other categories of individuals besides parents were mentioned as having first identified the child as gifted: teachers, professionals such as psychologists, and friends or relatives. Table 4 reports the number of parents in each group indicating who first identified their child as gifted.

Table 4

Percentage of children in each group first identified by parents, teachers, professionals or friends and relatives as gifted

Child first identified by	Users (n = 68)	Partial Users (n = 24)	Non-Users (n = 43)*
parents	69.1	83.3	69.8
teachers	25	8.3	11.6
professionals	2.9	8.3	4.7
friends/relatives	2.9	0	13.9

*data for one subject incomplete.

There was no difference between groups in the number of children identified by parents and the number identified by non-parents. $\chi^2(2, N=135) = 1.91$, $p > .35$. Furthermore, the three groups did not differ in the average age at which the child was first identified, $F(2, 133) = 1.72$, $p > .15$.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to gather information on families who are members of the British Columbia Gifted Children's Association (GCA) and to determine if, like the American parents studied by Cornell (1989), GCA member parents differed among themselves in their willingness to describe their children as "gifted".

Within this sample, there were more boys than would be expected were the membership representative of the population. Results from studies of gender imbalance in school programs have been equivocal (Read, 1991; Crombie, Bouffard-Bouchard, & Schneider, 1992), suggesting that differences in

enrollment favouring boys may relate to the tendency of girls to drop out of special programs, particularly during high school. Samples drawn from schools may reflect both the nature of the programs offered and the conscious attempts by administrators to avoid gender and ethnic biases. The over-representation of boys in this sample, however, does reflect the findings of researchers such as Stanley and his associates (Benbow & Stanley, 1980; Benbow, Stanley, Kirk, & Zonderman, 1983) who have drawn their samples from high scorers on the SAT, particularly the SAT-M, which is a measure of mathematical proficiency. They have tended to recruit a preponderance of boys and the reason for this imbalance has been debated. The most likely explanation for the number of boys within the GCA may be drawn from the findings of Martin and Johnson (1992), who noted that parents tended to attribute their daughters' success to hard work and their sons' success to ability. This sample had a greater number boys than girls than would be expected, however within the families who belonged to the GCA, daughters were as likely as sons to be labelled gifted. It is not clear from this survey whether boys are more likely to be deemed "gifted" by their parents. Parents of boys and girls may be equally likely to consider their child "gifted", however parents of boys may be more likely to join the GCA, or more likely to respond to the survey.

Within this sample, there was an overwhelming likelihood that the eldest child in the family would be identified as gifted. Indeed, of the 65 families who had more than one elementary school child, in only one family was the eldest child not identified as gifted. It is likely that this has more to do with parental expectations than actual ability. Benbow and Stanley (1980) in their sample of intellectually talented Grade 7 students noted that there was very little correlation between birth order and student ability. Albert (1980a, 1980b, 1994), however, has argued that special family position, such as being the only or eldest child, is important in the development of eminence and, indeed, within this sample, being the eldest seemed to play an important role in being identified as gifted.

Various researchers (Freeman, 1979; Robinson, 1987; Louis & Lewis, 1992) have suggested that parents are able to identify gifted preschoolers, and in this sample, most children were identified by their parents. The average age that parents claimed to recognize their child's ability was 3 1/2. Some parents indicated they had recognized their child as gifted when the child was a young infant. Although parents are apparently not waiting for the school to identify their child as gifted, there is some suggestion that they may wait for confirmation from the school before they tell the child he or she is gifted. Parents who used the term "gifted" were more likely to say their child had been identified by testing.

These Canadian subjects, like Cornell's (1989) American subjects, differed from one another in their willingness to use the term "gifted" in front of their child. Cornell found that 25% of parents in his sample avoided the term. In this sample of 101 Canadian families, a full 31% of respondents claimed to avoid the term entirely, in spite of belonging to the Gifted Children's Association. Another 19% claimed to avoid using the term in front of their children. These partial users had younger children and it is not clear whether they were more circumspect in their use of the term because they believed the child was too young to understand the term, or whether it was because the children, being younger, had less opportunity to have been recognized by school authorities and the parents were, therefore, less sure of their assessment.

The results of the multidimensional scaling suggest that, unlike the other nine terms, which showed little difference between parental use of the term to adults and children, using "gifted" to adults was different from using "gifted" in front of one's child. This suggests that the term "gifted" may have additional meaning that the other terms do not carry.

It is not clear if parents who tell their children that they are gifted hold the same beliefs about giftedness as do those parents who avoid the term, nor is it clear how "gifted" differs from other terms.

"Gifted" might be a more positive term; it might be better to be gifted than to be simply intelligent or bright. Margolin (1993) has argued that the concept of a gifted child is an exclusionary social category and has used the term "goodness personified" to describe the concept of the gifted child. "Gifted" may also be a more powerful term than competing adjectives, with both the beneficial and dangerous qualities that power brings. Comparing "gifted" with synonyms using a semantic differential could clarify whether parents consider connotations of goodness and power when they decide whether or not to describe their child as "gifted". Parents' beliefs about giftedness should also be compared to determine whether those who avoid the term hold beliefs about giftedness which differ from the beliefs of parents who use the term.

Whether parents choose to use the term "gifted" or not may simply be a matter of personal preference; however, it has been suggested (Freeman, 1979; Cornell, 1989) that using the term does affect the child. If the meaning of "gifted" and the beliefs surrounding it can be clarified and the impact of the term on the child assessed, some advice can be given parents and others as to whether or not they should use or avoid the term, or what beliefs about giftedness they may wish to emphasize or counter. In a broader sense, examining the label "gifted" may shed some light on the more general areas of labels, parents' beliefs and their impact on children

STUDY 2

In order to examine more fully the meaning of the term "gifted", beliefs about giftedness, the transmission of beliefs from parent to child, and the impact of these beliefs on the child, a second study was designed involving the members of the Gifted Children's Association and their children. The fact the half of the members of an association for "gifted" children claim to avoid using the term "gifted" in front of their children, in combination with the results of the multidimensional scaling suggested that the term has connotations beyond "intelligent" or "smart". Furthermore, "gifted" is the term commonly used to describe children with certain attributes, including high intelligence and exceptional talents. The term appears in professional literature and in reference to gifted children's associations and programs for gifted children and therefore, its meaning to parents is worth examining. Neither parental understanding of this term nor the degree to which parents transmit their understanding to their children has been examined fully. The relationship between the parent's use of the term and the child's self-concept, motivation and attributions has also received little study.

Study 2 examined beliefs of parents who have belonged to the Gifted Children's Association and therefore were presumed to believe that their child was gifted, and the beliefs of parents who, when asked, did not initially identify their children as gifted. The study focused on how clearly parent beliefs are transmitted to the children, the meaning the term has to parents and children, and the effect of parental use of the term "gifted" on the self-concept, attributions and expectations for school success of the child. The overarching proposition which was examined is that the term "gifted" conveys a number of beliefs from parent to child and that the use of this label enhances transmission of these beliefs from parent to child. Parents of gifted children who do not use gifted will be less likely to convey their beliefs about giftedness to their children and their children may have different attitudes toward their identification as

gifted. It is likely that the label and accompanying beliefs, particularly those related to the innateness of ability and possible problems caused by giftedness, will affect the child's attributions and beliefs about him or herself, and that the beliefs and attributions of those gifted children whose parents do not use the term should differ from those whose parents do.

Specific hypotheses to be explored

More parents who believe their child to be gifted hesitate to use the term in front of their child than avoid using it in front of others. The results of Study 1 suggest that while "bright" is the most popular term for use in front of both adults and children, "gifted" is the third most favoured term for use in front of other adults, ranking only slightly below "intelligent". However, parents prefer not only "bright" and "intelligent" but also "smart", and "creative" to "gifted" for use in front of their children. Terms which are less favoured than "gifted" are less used both in front of parents and children. Parents' use of "gifted" differs from their use of other synonyms. They appear to find it reasonably acceptable for use in front of adults, but use it more cautiously in front of their children. It is unlikely that they avoid "gifted" because it conveys a negative stigma. It may be, however, that parents feel that in comparison with other terms, "gifted" is a more powerful word. Discomfort with the word may be related to its presumed power. Saying that one's child is gifted may have more emotional impact on the listener, and may be more extreme, than synonymous terms such as "intelligent". Admittedly, terms such as "precocious" and "genius" may also be powerful; however, few parents claimed to use these term under any circumstances and, because they are not labels in common use, they are of less interest. It is hypothesized that

1. All parent groups will rate the term "gifted" as significantly more potent on a semantic differential than any of the following synonyms: intelligent, bright, creative, smart and talented. All these terms, with the exception of "talented", were used by more than half the parents.

Although "talented" was used by only slightly more than 40% of parents, it was also included because it is frequently used in conjunction with gifted (e.g., "gifted and talented").

GCA members may believe "gifted" is a more positive attribute than other parents do. GCA members may therefore be more eager to have their children identified as "gifted", perceive "gifted" to be more positive than "intelligent" or "bright", and prefer it to other terms. This positive evaluation of "gifted" may encourage them to have their child labelled "gifted". It is hypothesized that:

2. The term "gifted" will be rated more positively on the evaluative scale of a semantic differential by GCA members than by non-members.

Whatever other attributes it may have, "gifted" doubtless also conveys a positive quality. As has been described by Dix (1993), and Grettarsen and Gelfand (1988), parents tend to see their child's positive attributes as stable and internal and their negative attributes as temporary and situational. Parents should therefore see "giftedness" as a stable, internal quality of the child. As such, it should be seen as a result of natural ability rather than a result of potentially unstable sources such as the child's effort. "Giftedness" is not wholly without pitfalls, however. As Freeman (1979) noted, British parents who identified their children as gifted were more likely to identify their children as having emotional problems than were parents of equally bright children not identified as gifted. The idea that the "gift" is accompanied by a curse is also widespread in folklore and popular culture: insanity and genius; near-immortality and an Achilles heel; blind seers; royal birth and a curse; beauty and foolishness; and the "poor little rich girl". Seldom in mythology or folk lore is a gift given with no payment exacted. Even within the scientific community, the relationship between giftedness and madness has been a source of controversy (Yewchick, 1995).

Parents who are willing to identify their child as "gifted" both publicly and to the child can be presumed to hold that belief strongly and, as Goodnow and Collins (1990) suggest, strongly held beliefs are comparatively extreme. Thus, one might expect that parents who tell their children that they are gifted will believe more firmly that their child's gifts spring from innate, natural ability and will be more likely to believe that their child will have problems as a result of this giftedness. The following hypotheses will be examined in regards to parents' beliefs about the nature of giftedness:

3a. User members will be in greater agreement with belief statements that support the idea that giftedness is innate than will any other parent group.

3b User members will judge "natural ability" as more important as a source of giftedness than will any other parent group

3c. User members will be in greater agreement with belief statements that support the idea that giftedness is problematic than will any other parent group

Goodnow and Collins (1970) suggested that strongly held beliefs will be shared by valued others and that to benefit from the parents' beliefs, the children must understand them. It seems reasonable, therefore, that children whose parents use the term "gifted" in front of them will be more likely to understand the term, to identify themselves as gifted and to understand their parents' beliefs. Because their parents have told the child he or she is "gifted" and have provided the child with a label, the child will be more likely to attend to and recall information about giftedness and more likely to discuss giftedness with parents. It is hypothesized that:

4. Children of user members will be more likely to correctly define the term "gifted" than will children of other member groups and children of non-members.

5. Beliefs of children of user members will be more similar to the beliefs of their parents than will the beliefs of the children in other groups to their respective parents.

6a. User members will be more likely to state that their children believe themselves to be gifted than will other member parents.

6b Children of user members will be more likely to identify themselves as gifted than will children of other member groups.

6c. Children of user members and their parents are more likely to be in agreement that the child believes him or herself to be gifted than will any other member group and their children.

Most studies have found that gifted children rate themselves as academically more competent than non-gifted children. Children whose parents use the label may communicate more clearly to the child the expectation that the child has more natural academic ability, thereby enhancing the child's sense of self-competence in this area.

There has been some controversy surrounding the likelihood that gifted children feel less socially competent than non-gifted children. Terman (1925) and others suggested that gifted children feel and actually are at least as socially competent as other children; however, other researchers have reported that gifted students feel socially alienated, and certainly some of the popular literature for parents of gifted children focuses on these social problems. Freeman (1979) found that while the highly intelligent children in her study had few friends, only labelled children were described as having social and emotional problems. Cornell (1989) suggested that children whose mothers use the term "gifted" feel less socially competent. The differences between researchers may be a result of whether the parent labels the child as "gifted" rather than a result of the child's preternatural abilities. Children who are aware of their parents' beliefs that they are gifted and that this giftedness is innate may feel more pressure to live up to the label.

The label may contribute to the child's sense of being different from his or her peers. It is hypothesized that:

7. Children of user members will give themselves a lower rating on a measure of social competence than will children in any other group.
8. Children of user members will rank scholastic competence as more important than will children of any other group.
9. Children of user members will be more likely to say they feel different from other children than will children of any other member group.

As Goodnow and Collins (1990) have noted, a belief must be defensible to be held strongly. Furthermore, to benefit the child, it must be within the child's ability to live up to the belief. Because children of user members are identified by their parents as having innate academic ability, they will be more likely to feel pressured to demonstrate that ability. However, it is also likely that as a result of the pressure they are under to live up to the label and because of the message they receive from their parents that giftedness is a problem, they will regard giftedness as a less desirable state. It is hypothesized that:

10 Children of user members will believe that their parents set higher standards for them than will children of any other group.
11 Children of user members will believe that it is less desirable to be gifted than will children of other member groups.

Again, because parents believe that giftedness is innate and stable, the children who are labeled gifted will be more likely to attribute their success to innate ability. As a result, according to Dweck and her associates (Dweck, 1986; Elliot & Dweck, 1988), they will be more likely to avoid risk and choose performance goals, and getting good marks, over learning goals. It is hypothesized that:

12a. Children of user members will rate ability more highly as a cause of academic success than will any other groups.

12b. Compared with children of each of the other groups, children of user members will be more likely to choose performance goals rather than learning goals.

12c. Children of user-members will rate "learning new things" less highly as a reason to do well at school than will children of any other group.

Method

Participants

Member Parents

Parents who were members of the Gifted Children's Association were selected from volunteers from Study 1. A total of 80 families having gifted children, aged 7 to 13 (born between 1982 and 1987) had indicated they were willing to participate. These families were divided into three groups according to their use of the term "gifted": those parents who responded that they used the term in front of their children and to describe their children to other adults (Users: 39 families), those parents who responded that they did not use the term "gifted" at all (Non-users: 24 families), and those parents who said they use the term to describe their children to other adults but did not use it in front of their child (Partial users: 17 families).

Because of the small numbers of families in the non-user and partial-user group, parents who had not been members of the association in 1993 when the Study 1 survey was distributed were also recruited from four active Lower Mainland chapters of the association. During the GCA monthly meeting, parents were presented with a brief explanation of the study outlining an appropriately modified version of the same information that was presented to the original volunteers during the phone contact. Interested parents who had not volunteered previously were asked to complete a truncated version of the original survey (Appendix B). The additional 15 eligible families recruited in this fashion were 7 Users, 7 non-Users and 1 Partial User.

The recruitment of the original three GCA groupings and the Comparison group will be described at this point, as well as the composition of the three GCA groups. The original three GCA

groups were reassigned to two groups for Study 2. The criteria for and the composition of the two groups will be discussed in the Procedure section.

Within each of the three groups, subjects were ordered randomly, and contacted by telephone over a 6 week period. The telephone protocol can be found in Appendix C. This continued until a total of 21 subjects were gathered for each of the User and non-User groups and all 18 Partial-User subjects were contacted.

Table 5 gives the number of mother-child pairs contacted from the initial sample and the newly recruited subjects and the number of participating mother-child pairs in each group who could not be contacted or who refused to participate.

Table 5

Number of member participants contacted, accepting and refusing.

	Users	Non-Users	Partial Users
Number of participants attempted contact	25	28	18
Original participants accepted	19/25	16/28	12/18
New subjects accepted	2/2	5/5	1/1
Could not contact	1	2	1
Refused	3	5	4
Total families in study	21	21	13

Of the 12 subjects who refused to participate, 3 gave no reason for refusing and 2 said there had been a death or divorce in the family. Three subjects said that although they were willing to be involved, their child was not interested in participating; 3 subjects said they no longer believed the child was gifted; and the remaining subject gave both of the preceding reasons for refusing.

Table 6 gives the sex distribution for each of the three groups.

Table 6

Number of boys and girls in each of the three member groups

	Users	Non-Users	Partial Users
Boys	15	15	9
Girls	6	6	4

A total of 39 boys (71%) and 16 girls (29%) participated. The mean age of the children was 10.2 years. There was no difference between the boys' and girls' ages.

Comparison group parents

A comparison group of 20 non-member families who had children of elementary school age was selected from a group of parents who had completed a form when their child was born indicating that they might be interested in participating in further research. The mothers had received this form while in the hospital following the birth of the child and these files had been kept by the Department of Psychology as a possible source of subjects. These families were selected in the following fashion: Study 1 was used as a guideline to determine the ratio of boys to girls and the distribution of ages to select. The mean age of the children was 10.4. It was determined that 12 boys and 8 girls should be selected.

The families in the files were drawn from the same urban and suburban communities as the members of the GCA; however, for some birth years certain communities were over-represented in the

files. Comparison group families were selected in the following fashion. Family information cards were divided by sex and birth year of the target child. Each group was then divided by geographical location: urban centre and adjoining suburbs (Vancouver, Burnaby and Richmond), eastern suburbs (Coquitlam, Port Coquitlam, Port Moody and Ridge-Meadows area), southern suburbs (Surrey, Delta and Tsawassan) and northern suburbs (North and West Vancouver, Lions Bay and Deep Cove). A subset of cards was randomly selected from each area to ensure that each area was equally represented in the selection process. This subgroup of cards was randomly ordered. Potential subjects were contacted by phone in that order until the required number of subjects had been obtained.

Because many of these subjects had not been contacted since the birth of their child seven to twelve years ago, some were no longer at the same phone number. Three attempts were made to contact each family. If these attempts were unsuccessful, that family was dropped and the next family on the list was added. This process was continued until the required number of subjects of each age and sex was obtained. A total of 71 families was called. Once families were contacted and the mother indicated she might be interested in participating, she was asked whether she was a member of the GCA, whether her child had been identified as "gifted", and whether her child had been identified by the school has having any special educational needs. If the parent was a GCA member or said that the child had been identified as gifted it was explained that non-gifted children were being sought for this study. If the parent said that the child had special educational needs he or she was asked to describe them. If these needs were severe or the child had a label of learning disabled it was explained that the research required children who had never had any educational label. Children who had attended short-term learning assistance were not considered to have special needs. Table 7 describes the outcome of the phone recruitment of non-member parents.

Table 7

Outcome of phone recruitment of non-member parents

Could not contact	Refused	Not suitable	Deceased	Accepted	Total
42	2	6	1	20	71

The majority of families could not be contacted either because the number was no longer in service, the family was no longer at that number, or there was no answer. Two families who were contacted refused to participate: one parent did not want her child interviewed in private, and the other could not get her husband's agreement to participate. Of the families deemed not suitable, 4 were either members of the GCA or identified their children as gifted and 2 had children with severe learning disabilities. One target child was deceased.

Six of the 20 comparison group mothers (all of whom had initially identified their child as not gifted) reported during the interview that they believed their child was gifted. The responses of this group of parents were compared with the remaining 14 and any relevant differences between them are noted and discussed.

Instruments

The instruments described were used to attain three objectives. The study itself focused on describing the beliefs of the parents, attempting to identify similar beliefs in their children and exploring possible impact on the children. The interview schedules also included questions which provided a fuller description of the parents, their background and their beliefs. This information was included in the study when necessary for explanatory purposes. Additional questions in the parent and child interviews related

to motivation and attributions for success, as this is an area which may also be affected be parental labelling.

Parents:

Parent's Interview (Appendix D):

The parent interview was a 40 minute structured interview schedule. A primary goal of this interview was to provide descriptive data about the parents of gifted children. Questions 1-17 were asked of all parents. These questions determined the respondent's age, gross family income, the number of people the income supports (Q1-Q3) and whether parents believe there is such a thing as a "gifted child" (Q13). A series of questions (Q4-Q12, Q14-Q15) inquired about the amount and nature of the parent's education, the parent's attitude to that education, and whether the parent was ever identified as gifted. Parents were asked to provide information about their children, to identify which, if any, were gifted, and the degree of certainty they felt about the identification, and to describe what had led them to believe their child was gifted or not gifted (Q17-Q18). Questions 19-24 repeat Q17 and Q18 for subsequent children.

Members of the GCA were also administered the 59-question GCA Member Interview Schedule (Appendix E). Parents were asked about the following areas:

1. Identification of the child as gifted, i.e., age identified, by whom, parental response, parental perception of benefits and disadvantages of identification as gifted (Q34 - Q36)
2. Family values, i.e., presence of other gifted family members, value placed on intelligence and academic success (Q34-Q36).
3. Use of the term "gifted" and desirability of the term (Q37-Q39).
4. Judgment of whether or not the child thinks of him or herself as "gifted" (Q40).
5. Child's schooling (Q41-Q45)

6. Parent's judgment of child's ability, expectations for child's success, child's motivation, peer relationships, behaviour, and preference for learning vs. performance goals. (Q46-Q56)
7. Parents attributions for child's achievement and ability. (Q57-Q59)

Non-members were administered the 51-item Non-member Interview Schedule (Appendix F). This schedule asks questions in the following areas:

1. Identification of children as gifted, i.e., age a child can be identified and by whom (Q25-Q26).
2. Family values, i.e., presence of other gifted family members, value placed on intelligence and academic success (Q27-Q29).
3. Use of the term "gifted" and desirability of the term (Q30-Q31).
4. Judgment of whether or not the child thinks of him or herself as "gifted" (Q32).
5. Child's schooling (Q33-Q37).
6. Parent's judgment of child's ability and parent's expectations for child's success, child's motivation, peer relationships, behaviour and preference for learning goals vs. performance goals (Q38-Q48).
7. Parent's attributions for child's achievement and ability (Q49-Q51)

Parents who were not members of the Gifted Children's Association but who indicated during the interviews that they believed their child was gifted were asked appropriate questions from the Member's Interview about their child.

In reporting the results, questions from the GCA Members' Interview will be identified as MQ, while questions from the Comparison Parents' Questionnaire will be identified as CQ.

Beliefs About Giftedness Questionnaire (Appendix G)

A total of 16 statements tapping beliefs about giftedness were presented to parents (Appendix G1) and children (Appendix G2). The statements tapped five areas of beliefs about giftedness: giftedness is innate; giftedness runs in families; giftedness is rare; giftedness must be nurtured; giftedness causes social problems. Subjects rated statements on a 4-point agree-disagree Likert type scale. This scale was modified for children. "Big yes", "little yes", "big no" and "little no" replaced "agree strongly", "agree", "disagree strongly" and "disagree" to ensure that the younger children in the study understood the task. Children were also presented with a visual aid consisting of 4 schematic faces (Appendix G3, Figure 1) Two faces were smiling and two frowning. The word "yes" was written in large letters and followed with an exclamation mark above the face with the bigger smile and it was explained to the child that this meant they "really agreed" with what had been read. Above the second face was a smaller "yes" and it was explained that this meant the child "sort of agreed" with what had been read. The word "no" was similarly printed in smaller and larger lettering above the faces with the moderate and glowering frowns respectively. Children were told they were to select one of these faces if they did not agree or if they thought what had been read was wrong. Again it was explained how to choose depending on the intensity of their disagreement. In order to avoid offending older children who might find the visual aid childish, it was explained to all children that it was being used because it was part of the study in case some children, younger than themselves, might have trouble answering the questions. Although most children gave their responses aloud, a few simply pointed to the appropriate face. In those cases, their response was read back to them to ensure that it was correct.

Adults were given this questionnaire to complete on their own; however, the questions were read to the children. Slight modifications in wording were also made on the children's questionnaire. (Appendix G4) One additional question (Q21) was also included (Appendix G2) This question was

answered using the same scale as the belief questions and was included with them to facilitate administration of the questions to the children. Questions arranged by category are listed in Appendix G4) Modifications to questions and questions which were scored in reverse are noted.

Semantic Differential (Appendix H)

Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (1957) asserted that any concept can be measured along a number of dimensions by measuring the distance of that concept in semantic space from either pole of two opposing adjectives (e.g., hot-cold, bad-good). A number of adjective pairs are utilized and the target concept is measured on a 7-point scale, anchored at either end by an adjective and its opposite, creating a semantic differential. Using factor analysis, Osgood et al (1957) found that the adjectives fell into three main factors, which appeared to be the dimensions along which the target words were being considered. These dimensions were evaluation (e.g., good-bad), potency (e.g., strong-weak) and activity (e.g., fast-slow). Other factors labelled variously as stability, tautness, novelty and aggressiveness contributed the remainder of the variance. The evaluative factor is the primary factor, contributing half to three-quarters of the variance, while potency and activity account for at least half the remaining variance. Osgood et al. (1957) suggested using three scales for each factor selected. Consideration should be given to the loading of the scale on the factor and the relevance of the scale to the concept being judged.

Some caution has been advised with regard to the stability of the factors. Although the evaluation factor is stable, potency and activity may be less so (Emmerson & Neely, 1988) with adjectives loading on one or the other factor depending on the concept being rated. However, Emmerson and Neely proposed the semantic differential to clinicians as a valid and reliable method of data collection. Norman (1969), while questioning its reliability as an individual measure, argued that group means on scales of the semantic differentials are stable over time. Semantic differentials are reported to be less subject to social desirability (Lawson, 1989) or response acquiescence bias (Ofir, Reddy & Bechtel, 1987) than are more direct measures of agreement or disagreement. Ofir, Reddy and Bechtel (1987) argued that the

semantic differential is a more valid and reliable scale than single anchor or Likert scales and produce high trait variance and low method variance.

Semantic differentials are easy and quick to administer and appear to have reasonable test-retest reliability and some evidence for validity. Test-retest reliability varies to some degree depending on the concept being measured. For example, "My Mood Today" will have less reliability than a more neutral word such as "Paper clip". In their initial study which used 100 subjects, Osgood et al (1957) repeated forty items at the end of the measure. These items comprised 40 of the 50 scales used in the study and all twenty concepts being rated. The immediate test-retest correlation coefficient was .85.

Although validity is somewhat harder to ascertain, the responses on the semantic differential were used to predict the actual voting patterns of 14 of 16 American subjects who responded "Don't know" when asked for whom they were going to vote in a presidential election. By comparing their responses on a semantic differential on which the candidates were the concept to be rated with the responses of those of committed voters, accurate predictions could be made (Osgood et al, 1957). This suggests that semantic differentials reflect real differences which can be used to predict behaviour. In sum, the semantic differential appears to be a reasonably reliable and valid measure of the meaning of concepts to individuals.

This study asked parents to rate words related to "giftedness" ("gifted", "bright", "intelligent", "creative", "smart" and "talented") on a semantic differential consisting of 16 scales (Appendix H). These six terms were chosen because they were all used by more than 40% of parents in Study 1. Adjective pairs were selected from those found by Osgood et al (1957) to lie on the factors identified as evaluation and potency. Osgood et al. suggested that an individual can complete 10 to 20 scales per minute. The semantic differential took approximately 6 minutes to complete.

Children:

Children's Interview: (Appendix I)

The basic interview was used for gifted children. Appropriate modifications in wording are indicated for children who are not identified as gifted. This interview took approximately 20 minutes. Children were asked about the following areas:

1. Child's understanding of term "gifted" and identification of self as gifted and attitudes to giftedness (Q1-Q3, Q21)
2. Child's attitude to school (Q4-Q7).
3. Child's expectations for success in school (Q8, Q9).
4. Child's motivation (Q12).
5. Child's sense of parental pressure (Q10-Q11, Q13).
6. Child's peer relationships and social behaviour (Q14, Q15).
7. Child's sense of being "different" (Q16).
8. Child's preference for learning vs. performance goals (Q17).
9. Child's attributions for academic success or failure (Q19-Q20).
10. Child's feelings about being gifted (Appendix G (b); Q21).
11. Belief statements. (Appendix G(b), Q22-Q37).

In reporting the results, questions from the Children's Interview Schedules will be identified as KQ.

Self-Perception Profile for Children (Harter, 1985)

This is a 36-item instrument designed to measure children's beliefs about their competence in five areas and their belief about their overall self-worth. The measure provides scores for Global Self-Worth and subscores in the domains of scholastic competence, social acceptance, physical appearance, athletic competence, and behavioural conduct. Internal consistency reliabilities range from .71 to .85 for

domain subscores and .78 to .84 for the global worth subscores. Factor analysis indicates that the five subscales represent five unique factors for children in Grade 4 or older. Harter (1985) claimed that only four factors emerge in studies of younger children, as the factor for scholastic competence and that for behavioural conduct overlap. Other researchers have suggested that the behavioural subscale is the least stable. Van Dongen-Melman, Koot, & Verhulst,(1993), using a sample of Dutch elementary school students 8 - 12 years of age, found confirmation for Harter's factor structure with the exception of the behavioural scale, which they believe to be suspect. Granleese and Joseph (1993, 1994) in two studies which included over 800 13-year-old Irish adolescents found support for Harter's factor structure.

Gender differences have been found in mean scores. Higher scores on the physical attractiveness and athletic competence scales have been reported for Irish boys than for Irish girls (Granlees and Joseph, 1993, 1994). Similarly, higher scores on scholastic competence as well as physical attractiveness and athletic competence have been reported for Dutch boys than for Dutch girls (van Dongen-Melman, Koot & Verhuist, 1993).

Harter's (1985) finding that physical attractiveness was highly correlated with global self-worth has also been supported (van Dongen-Melman, Koot, & Verhuist, 1993). Because Harter (1985) suggested that self worth is developed in part through an interaction between how competent one believes oneself to be in an area and how important that area is to the individuals, she also provided an Importance Scale which rates how important each area is to the child. Harter's Self-Perception Profile for Children (Harter, 1985) is generally felt to be a reliable and internally valid measure of self-concept.

Harter suggested that the scale not be used for children under Grade 3. However because many of the children in this study were identified as "gifted", because the scale was being administered on a one-to-one basis, and because it was being administered at the end of the school year, it was felt that the Grade

2 children (4 gifted children and 1 comparison child) in the study would be able to answer this questionnaire appropriately.

Procedure

Mothers were contacted by phone as described in the Subjects section. A time and date was arranged for the interview, or a time to call back and arrange an interview was agreed upon. In four cases, three families from the GCA group and one family from the comparison group, the mother requested that both the target child and a sibling be interviewed in order to avoid jealousy. In these cases both children were interviewed and administered the appropriate measures.

Interviews were conducted with mothers and children in the family home over a 10-week period in the Spring of 1995. Each family was visited once. Before commencing the interview, mothers were read the consent protocol and asked to give written consent for themselves and their children to be interviewed. Children were also read a consent protocol and asked for their verbal agreement to be interviewed. The consent protocols are contained in Appendix J. It was explained to mothers that confidentiality would be maintained by assigning each family a family number and identifying the schedule and questionnaire only by that number. At this time mothers were also asked to complete a self-addressed envelope if they wished to receive the results of the study. All mothers were interested in receiving a summary of the results.

Parents and children were interviewed separately in their homes. Parents were asked if their responses and those of their children could be recorded on a tape recorder. If the parent agreed to permit the child's response to be taped, the child was asked for permission. Children's responses were only taped

if both they and their parents agreed. Tapes were erased after data were transcribed. Due to some difficulties with equipment, not all families who agreed were taped. In anticipation of possible mechanical problems, additional emphasis was placed on accurate transcription of the answers. Interviews took from 1 1/4 hours to over 2 1/2 hours, largely depending on the amount of information the parent volunteered.

Children were interviewed first, in a location in the home separate from the parent. It was explained to parents that because I wished to learn more about how well children understood their parents' views, some questions would be administered to both parents and children and it was important that they not overhear one another's answers. Parents were asked to suggest a place where the child could be interviewed where they would not overhear their child's answers. Parents were offered the opportunity to look over the child interview schedule if they were concerned about what questions their child would be asked. Only one parent wished to do so. Parents were then instructed on how to complete the semantic differential and the Parent Belief Questionnaire. While the parent completed these measures in another room, the child was interviewed. In two cases, the child did not want the parent to leave the room during the interview. In one of the two cases, the child was willing to let the mother leave after the first few questions; however, in the second case the mother remained for the entire interview. This latter child also hesitated to be interviewed and had to be coaxed by her mother. For these reasons, and because of additional difficulties with responding to the questions, this family was dropped from the study.

Two mothers, both GCA members, forgot to complete the semantic differential. In both cases, they returned it by mail.

The children's interview took approximately 20-25 minutes. Preliminary piloting of the children's interview schedule suggested that children who were 11 or younger and who were not identified as gifted

might not understand the term even after explanation. In cases in which the child did not seem familiar with the term, questions using "gifted" were rephrased as "gifted or really smart" in the interview.

After the child was read the instructions to the Harter Self-Perception Profile for Children, he or she was asked to read the first few questions aloud. The child's ability to read the question fluently and mark the response appropriately was observed. If the child had difficulty reading the questions or if there was any doubt that he or she could complete the questionnaire adequately the questions were read aloud to the child. If the child read fluently and demonstrated that the instructions were understood, the measure was completed without supervision. The Harter Self-Perception Profile for Children took approximately 20 minutes to complete

After the child's interview was completed, the child was asked to fetch the mother. Mothers were then interviewed while the child was completing the Harter Self-Perception Profile for Children, or in the case of a younger child or a poorer reader, after the child had completed this measure. Children were not present while the mother was being interviewed. The parent interview usually took 40-45 minutes, but a few took substantially longer. In two families, one GCA family and one comparison family, the father was present for a brief part of the interview with the mother and made a few comments on the questions In neither case did the father's presence appear to influence the mother's reply and both parents tended to reflect on the other's comments in a good-natured fashion. The father's comments were recorded but were not included in the results.

On completion of the questionnaires, children and mothers were thanked for their participation and mothers were assured that they would be sent a summary of results when they became available.

Re-grouping of Member Parents

Member parents and their children were originally selected by their response to a question on a written questionnaire as to whether they used the term "gifted" in front of their children and in front of others. When parents were interviewed they were again asked whether they used the term gifted in front of the child (MQ37) or in front of other adults (MQ38), and if they did not, why they did not do so. They were also asked whether they believed, in general, that children should be told they are "gifted" and the term explained to them (MQ39) Because it seemed unreasonable to assume that "non-users" never used the term "gifted" in front of their children, the term was felt to be misleading and was replaced with the term "Avoiders" which more accurately reflected the mother's desire to avoid using the term.

Parents were categorized as "Users" if they indicated that they at least sometimes used the term to their own child (Q37). A total of 27 families met the criterion for a User. Twenty-five of the 27 parents also responded with a categorical "yes" to the question of whether they believed children should be told they are "gifted" (Q39), and the other two gave somewhat ambiguous answers to the question.

Parents were categorized as Avoiders if they:

a) responded with a "no" to Question 37 ("Do you use the term gifted in front of (*child's name*) to describe his/her talents?") OR

b) gave a qualified "no", such as "we try to avoid it" to Question 37 and a categorical negative response to question 39 (" In general, do you believe that children should be told they are "gifted" or that children should not be told they are "gifted?")

A total of 21 parents met the criteria for Avoider.

The parents' initial "Yes" or "No" to Question 37 was considered to be a reflection of their preference to use or avoid the term. Some parents did not answer with a direct "yes" or "no" but gave a qualified response such as "sometimes". A response of "sometimes" was considered to be a "yes". A list of qualified responses appeared in Appendix K. Table 8 gives the pattern of responses (yes, no or qualified response) to the questions "Do you use the term gifted in front of your child?" (MQ37) and "Do you believe children should be told they are gifted using the term "gifted"?" (MQ39).

Table 8

Responses of User and Avoider parents to the question whether they approve of using the term "gifted" in front of their children.

Use gifted:		Users (n=27)	Avoiders (n=21)
To own child	Yes	22	0
	No	0	18
	Qualified response	5	3
In general to children	Yes	25	4
	No	0	14
	Qualified response	2	3

Parents who could not be assigned to a group based on these criteria were classified as "undecided". These parents seemed to equivocate for one of three reasons: they had changed their mind about using the term (N=3), they were new to the "gifted" movement (N=2) or they were concerned with sibling rivalry (N=1). An examination of the demographic variables confirmed that the undecided parents were very similar to those parents in the study on age, income, family size and on parental educational variables. A fuller discussion of these families and the probable reasons they were unable to be categorized can be found in Appendix L.

Category changes from Study 1

Table 9 gives the category changes from the old "user", "non-user", "partial user" categories to the new "user", "avoider", "undecided" categories.

Table 9

Reassignment of participants in old group to new groups.

	New group			
	Users	Avoiders	Undecided	Dropped
Old Group				
Users (N=21)	17	3	1	0
Non-Users (N=21)	6	12	2	1
Partial Users (N=13)	4	6	3	0
Total in each new group	27	21	6	1

Why parents changed their mind.

Partial users were identified as parents who did not use gifted in front of their children but did use it to describe their children to others. Thus, the 6 who were now classified as Avoiders had not actually changed their position on using the term to their children. The three User parents who now said they did not use the term were surprised that they had ever said they did, and all three indicated that they did not believe children should be told they are gifted using that term.

Ten parents who had previously claimed not to have used the term now said they did. Parents were not asked specifically why they had changed their mind although some volunteered the information. Table 10 shows reasons given and events occurring between the initial survey and the interview which prompted the mother's decision to become a user of the term "gifted". Children are divided into those 7 or younger at the time or the initial survey and those 7 or older.

Table 10

Events which prompt mother's decision to change from non- or partial-user to user. Children divided by child's age at time of initial survey.

Reason	7 or younger	7 or older
Formally identified or selected for special programming	4	2
Just tested at time of initial survey	1	1
Old enough to handle term	0	1
Not known	1	1

It appears that the child's formal identification or selection for special programming may prompt mothers to begin to use the term "gifted" in front of the child.

In Study 1, parents who used gifted in front of other adults but not in front of their children were categorized as Partial-users. In Study 2, this group of parents was absorbed into the new User and Avoider groups based on their use of "gifted" to their child. However, parents in Study 2 were also asked "Do you use the term "gifted" to describe (*child's name*) to other people?" Table 11 gives the pattern of responses (yes, no, or qualified response) of Users and Avoiders to the question "Do you use the term "gifted" to describe (*child's name*) to other people?"(MQ38).

Table 11

Responses of User and Avoider parents to the question of whether they describe their child as gifted to other people. (MQ 38)

Use gifted		Users (n=27)	Avoiders (n=21)
To adults	Yes	18	2
	No	5	18
	Qualified response	4	1

Parents were consistent in their preference to avoid or use "gifted". While 66% of User parents used "gifted" in front of their children and to other adults to describe their children, only 10% of Avoider parents claimed to use it to describe their children to other adults.

Demographic characteristics of the User, Avoider and Comparison group parents

General comparison

Table 12 gives the mean age of the mothers, mean family size and mean gross and per person incomes for each the three groups. Also included is the number of families in each group in which the father was not living in the home.

Table 12

Mean age of mothers, size of families, gross and per person family incomes and presence of father for user, avoider and comparison groups.

	Users N=27	Avoiders N=21	Comparison N=20
Mean age of mother in years	40.9	40.5	41.25
Range	(31 - 51)	(30 - 48)	(33 - 49)
Mean annual family income	$79,351	$77,857	$74,250
Range	($35-110,000)	($45-110,000)	($15 -110,000)
Mean number of family members	4.27	4.0_a	4.65_b
Range	(2 - 6)	(3 - 5)	(3 - 7)
Mean per person income	$18,751	$19,524	$16,491
Range	($9-27,500)	($9-31,666)	($3,750-31,666)
Father absent	2	0	1

Note. Means with different subscripts differ significantly.

Mothers did not differ significantly in age amongst the three groups, $F(2, 65) = .13$, $p = .88$, nor did families differ significantly in their gross income level, $F(2, 65) = .30$, $p = .75$, or in their per person income, $F(2, 65) = 1.57$, $p = .22$. It should be noted that there was a ceiling effect on income level since the highest category recorded was "over $100,000"; however a chi-square of number of families with incomes over $100,000 x group was not significant, $\chi^2(2, N = 68) = 1.32$, $p > .05$.

There was, however, a significant difference in family size, $F(2, 65) = 3.35$, $p = .041$. A Tukey comparison of means indicated a significant difference ($p = .033$) between the Avoider group and the Comparison group with the Avoider group having smaller families. The User group was not significantly different from the other two groups.

Parents' education

Mothers were asked how many years of education they had completed (not including preschool or kindergarten) and how many years of education their spouse or partner had completed. They were also asked what was the highest degree they had attained.

Table 13 gives the mean number of years of education attained since Grade 1 and mean level of education completed by mothers and father in each groups.

Table 13

Mean number of years of education attained by mothers and fathers in the three groups.

	Users N = 27	Avoiders N = 21	Comparison N = 20
Mothers' mean years of education	16.13	17.3_a	15.05_b
Range	(12 - 19)	(13 - 27)	(11 - 20)
Fathers' mean years of education	17.40_a	17.95_a	15.32_b
Range	(13 - 21)	(13 - 23)	(12 - 20)

Note. Means with different subscripts differ significantly.

There was a significant difference between the mothers in the different groups in the number of years they attended school, F (2, 65) = 3.99, p = .023. A Tukey comparison of means indicated a significant difference between the Avoider and the Comparison group mothers, in the number of years of education (p =.017). The User group did not differ from either of the other two groups. The median level of education for User and Avoider mothers was a bachelors degree while the median level of education for Comparison mothers was a post-secondary diploma or trade ticket.

The educational level of the fathers in the three groups was also compared. There was a significant difference between the groups in the mean number of years the fathers attended school, F (2,

63) =6.25, p = .003. A Tukey comparison of means indicated the Comparison group had significantly fewer years of education than either the User group, p = .021 or the Avoider group, p = .004. Like the mothers, the median level of education obtained by the fathers in the User and Avoider groups was a bachelor's degree, while the median level for fathers in the Comparison group was a post-secondary diploma or trade ticket.

Mothers were asked if they had obtained all their elementary and secondary education in Canada and whether they had a private or public school education. Mothers were also asked whether they had been identified as gifted or whether they had been offered any sort of special programming, such as being streamed into the top class in their grade, being offered out-of-school enrichment, or being allowed to take special programs during their school years. Table 14 gives the percentages of each group of parents indicating they had received all of their education in Canada, the percentage indicating they had attended private school, public school or both, the percentage identified as gifted and the percentage who were offered special programming during their school years.

Table 14

Percent of each group by country of education, type of education, whether they were identified as gifted and whether the mother was offered any special programming.

	% Users n = 27	% Avoiders n = 21	% Comparison n = 20
Country of education			
Canada	74	52	80
Other	26	48	20
Type of education			
Public	81	72	80
Private	4	14	5
Both	15	14	15
Identified as Gifted	15	5	0
Special programming			
Yes	37	67	35
No.	63	33	65

Five parents said they had been identified as gifted when they were children. All were members of the GCA; however, the differences between the groups was not significant, χ^2 (2, N = 68) = 4.00, p = .14. There was no difference among groups in the number of mothers reporting that they had received special programming during their school years, χ^2 (2, N = 68) = 5.46, p = .065. There was also no difference among the three groups in the likelihood that they had attended private school, public school or both, χ^2 (4, N = 68) = 2.40 p = .66, or in the likelihood that they were educated outside of Canada, χ^2 (2, N = 68) = 4.18, p = .12.

Parents were asked to indicate how they felt about the quality of their own schooling by rating it on a 5-point scale from very poor (1) to very good (5). They were also asked to rate themselves on how well did they did in school academically on a similar 6-point scale from "a poor student" (1) to "an

excellent student" (6). Table 15 gives the mean rating given by each group of their education and the mean rating of themselves as students.

Table 15

Mean ratings by User, Avoider and Comparison groups of their education and of their achievement as students.

	User (N = 27)	Avoider (N = 21)	Comparison (N = 20)
Rating of own education	3.2_a	4.0_b	3.8
Rating of self as student	4.4	5.0_a	4.0_b

Note. Means with different subscripts differ significantly.

There were significant differences in the mean scores among parent groups in how good they felt their own education was, $F(2, 65) = 4.44$, $p = .016$. The Avoider group gave their own education a rating of "good" while the User group rated their education as closer to "average". A Tukey comparison of means indicates that the difference between the Users and the Avoiders is significant, $p = .017$. Although most parents rated themselves as having been good or very good students, there were also significant differences in how positively they rated themselves, $F(2, 65) = 3.25$, $p = .045$. A Tukey comparison of means indicated that the parents in the Avoider group rated themselves as significantly better students than did parents in the Comparison group, $p = .035$. Parents in the User group did not differ significantly from either of the other two groups. There were no significant differences between those parents in the Comparison group who indicated during the interview that they thought their children were gifted and those who did not identify their children as such.

Summary of parents

The families in this study can be characterized as middle-class, well-educated, two parent families. Avoider group familes were slightly smaller than Comparison group families. Most mothers were in their thirties and forties and had been educated in the Canadian public school system.. While most had not been identified as gifted during their school years, almost half indicated that at some point they had been offered some form of programming modifications, such as subject acceleration. Differences between parent groups were primarily in the area of education. Comparison fathers had fewer years of education than had GCA member fathers and Comparison mothers had less education than Avoider mothers. In general, Avoider mothers had the most positive educational experiences, rating themselves as better students than Comparison mothers and rating their schooling more positively than User mothers.

The Children

Table 16 gives the distribution of boys and girls, the mean age of the children, and the percentage of first-born and only children in each group.

Table 16.

Number of boys and girls and mean age of children in each group.

	Users (n=27)	Avoiders (n=21)	Comparison (n=20)
Number of boys	18	16	12
Number of girls	9	5	8
Mean age of children	10.11 (SD .34)	10.29 (SD .39)	10.45 (SD .39)
% of first-born or only children	59%	67%	50%

There was no significant difference among the three groups in terms of sex distribution, χ^2 (2, N = 68) = 1.25, p = .54, and no significant groups difference in mean age, F (2, 65) = .22, p = .81. Boys and girls did not differ significantly in mean age, t (67) = .34, p = .74. There was also no significant difference among the groups in the number of children who were first born or only children versus the number of children who were second or later-born children. χ^2 (2, N = 68) = 1.78, p = .56.

Table 17 gives the percentage of children in each group going to public school, private school and being home schooled.

Table 17

Percentage of children attending each type of schooling by group.

	% Users (N = 27)	% Avoiders (N = 21)	Comparison (N = 20)
Public school	78	81	75
Private school	11	14	25
Home schooling	11	5	0

The difference among the three groups was not significant. χ^2 (4, N = 68) = 3.96, p = .41

Table 18 gives the percentage of public school children in each group receiving regular, French Immersion or special programming.

Table 18

Percentage of public school children in each group attending regular, French Immersion and alternate programme classes.

	% Users (N =21)	% Avoiders (N =17)	Comparison (N = 15)
Regular stream	67	53	47
French Immersion	24	41	53
Alternate Program	9	6	0

There was no significant difference among the three groups in the number of children attending regular versus non-regular programs. χ^2 (2, N = 53) = 1.91 p > .05. Two of the children (one from each GCA group) who were attending alternate programs were enrolled in special segregated programs for the gifted while the remaining child was attending a "non-coercive" school which focused on individual programming and following the child's interests.

Parents were asked how many schools their child had attended since entering Grade 1. The mean number of schools attended by the children was 1.57. (Home schooling was not counted as a school attended). There was no significant difference amongst the three groups. F (2, 65) = .625, p. = .54.

Identification by the school as gifted and provision of special programming

Parents were asked whether the teachers or school authorities at their child's school had indicated in any way that they believed the child to be gifted or exceptionally able and, if yes, how. Responses indicating that school personnel had told parents in words or by actions such as placing the child in a special program, were accepted as indications that the school believed the child was gifted. Children who were homeschooled were eliminated from this analysis.

A total of 92% of the User parents and 100% of the Avoider parents whose children attended schools and 45% of the comparison group indicated that teachers said their child was gifted or exceptionally able or said their child attended a private school specifically for gifted children and was, therefore, recognized as gifted by the school.. Four parents, three Users and one Avoider, claimed that they had told the schools and the schools had, with varying degrees of reluctance, agreed that the child was gifted.

All the GCA members whose children had been identified by the school were receiving or had received some type of special services. Parents were asked what type of services their children had received. Table 19 gives the number of children receiving special services and the percentage receiving each level of services. Since some children were reported as receiving more than one intervention, only the most extreme was reported. The 4 GCA children who were being home schooled have been excluded.

Table 19

Number of children in each group identified by the school as being gifted or exceptionally able and level of special services provided.

	Users	Avoiders	Comparison
Number of children identified by schools	22/24	20/20	9/20
% Special placement (acceleration, special classes)	42	30	11
% Special short-term programs (challenge classes, enrichment)	45	45	33
% In class enrichment (e.g. subject acceleration)	18	25	22
% no services	0	0	33

It is interesting to note that although nine of the Comparison parents said the school had said their child was exceptionally able, all Comparison parents, when recruited for the study, had said the schools had not identified their children as "gifted". When asked in person, all six Comparison parents whose children were receiving services from the school said that they believed their child to be gifted.

Summary: Children

The children in the three groups were similar in age, sex distribution and birth order. Most children (79%) went to public school. A similar number of public school students in each group attended specialized programs such as French Immersion, and 95% percent of GCA children and 30% of Comparison children had been recognized by their school as exceptionally able and were receiving some form of special programming.

Results

The current study is exploratory and a large number of analyses have been conducted. A probability level of .05 will be considered significant. When families of data are being considered a Bonferroni correction will be used. All tests were also performed comparing sex differences. Only when differences between boys and girls are found is the test reported. Differences between Comparison parents who identified their children as gifted and other Comparison parents will be reported when significant.

In addition to the stated hypotheses, other differences, for which there were no hypotheses, were tested. These will be reported under "Further Analyses" immediately following the relevant hypothesis.

Hypothesis 1 and 2: Potency and Evaluative Qualities of the Term "Gifted"

The potency and evaluation scores for "gifted" and five synonyms were measured using a semantic differential. To examine the whether parents rated "gifted" as more potent than other terms, a difference score was computed for each parent by calculating the difference on the potency scale between "gifted" and each of the other terms. The mean difference score for each of the five pairs of terms was tested using a one-directional one-group t-test to determine whether that mean was greater or less than 0.

It was hypothesized that the term "gifted" would be rated as significantly more potent on a semantic differential by all groups than would any of the following synonyms: "intelligent", "bright", "creative" "smart" or "talented".

The mean potency score given by parents to each term and the difference score of that term from "gifted" is presented in Table 20.

Table 20

Mean score and difference score for each term on the potency factor of the semantic differential.

Term	Mean score on potency factor	Difference score
Talented	6.03_a	-6.25
Intelligent	5.94_a	-0.63
Gifted	5.93_a	*0.00*
Smart	5.93_a	0.58
Bright	5.86_a	4.79
Creative	5.28_b	44.25

Note. Means with different subscripts differ significantly.

Because of the number of tests used to compare gifted to the other terms, a Bonferroni correction was utilized. The adjusted alpha level was .004. The term "gifted" was not significantly different from "talented", t (66) = .95, $p > .004$; "smart", t (66) = .08, $p > .004$; "bright", t (66) = .67, $p > .004$; or "intelligent", t (66) = .0001, $p > .004$. It was significantly more potent, however, than "creative", t (66) = 5.56, $p < .004$.

The term "creative" was also compared with the other terms using a difference score. "Creative" was rated by parents as also being significantly less potent than "talented", t (66) = 7.25, $p < .004$; "smart", t (66) = 4.83; $p < .004$; "bright" t (66) = 4.83 $p < .004$; and "intelligent", t (66) = 5.45, $p < .004$; as well as "gifted". No other pairs of terms were tested.

It was also hypothesized that "gifted" would be rated more positively on the evaluative scale of the semantic differential by Gifted Children's Association (GCA) members than by non-members. Table 21 contains the mean evaluation scores given by each group of parents and the combined GCA members to each term. The number in brackets beside the term is the rank order of the term within each group.

Table 21

Mean score for each term on the evaluation factor of the semantic differential as given by member groups and non-member (Comparison) group.

Term	Users (N = 27)	Avoiders (N = 21)	All GCA Members (N = 48)	Comparison (N = 20)
Intelligent	6.21 (2)	5.99 (3)	6.11 (1)	5.90 (5)
Creative	6.22 (1)	5.93 (4)	6.09 (2)	5.98 (3)
Gifted	6.06 (4)	6.12 (1)	6.08 (3)	6.09 (1)
Smart	6.19 (3)	5.91 (5)	6.07 (4)	6.06. (2)
Talented	6.05 (5)	6.01 (2)	6.03 (5)	5.92 (4)
Bright	6.05 (5)	5.84 (6)	5.96 (6)	5.75 (6)

There was no difference in the mean scores between members and non-members in their evaluation of the term "gifted" t (66) = .94, p = .99. A repeated measures analysis of the ratings by all three groups (User, Avoiders and Comparison) on all six terms indicated there was no overall difference among the three groups, F (2, 65) = 1.45, p = .61, among the six terms, F (5, 325) = 1.45, p= .21, or among groups on terms, F (10, 325) = .72, p = .70.

Further Analyses

Why parents used or did not use "gifted"

Parents were asked whether they believed there was such a thing as a "gifted child" (PQ13). All GCA parents (N = 48) and 19 of the 20 Comparison parents said they believed some children were gifted. The lone Comparison parent who questioned whether "giftedness" existed, attributed it to hard work and opportunity. She later described her child as "gifted".

Member parents were asked their reasons for their decision to use or avoid the term "gifted" (MQ37, CQ28). All parents were also asked (MQ 39, CQ 30) whether they believed it was wise or unwise, in general, for parents to explain to a child, using the term "gifted", that he or she was gifted. In addition, they were asked to explain why they felt that way. Several themes prevailed and, not surprisingly, these themes related to the parent's willingness to use the term. Table 22 describes the main

categories of responses of User and Avoider parents as to why they did or did not feel that "gifted" was a desirable term. Since some parents gave more than one reason, total responses exceed the number of respondents.

Table 22

Reasons member parents gave for using or not using the term "gifted" in front of their children.

	Users	Avoiders
Why term is used:		
It's the truth/correct term	15	0
Explains differences to child	12	0
Encourages child to try hard	2	1
Prevents conceit/encourages responsibility	4	0
Why term is avoided:		
Label inaccurate	0	11
Causes conceit/demotivates	2	6
"Gifted" has negative connotations	0	6
Miscellaneous negative	1	8

The term "gifted" was seen by Users to be acceptable not only because it was the truth and described their child accurately but also because it helped the child understand why he or she was different from peers. A few suggested that it encourages responsibility and might motivate the child.

The Avoiders, in contrast, disliked the term because they felt the label did not accurately describe their child. Avoider parents also felt "gifted" had negative connotations which set the child apart and suggested the the child was different from peers, had problems, or was given to what one parent described as "bizarre, off the wall behaviours". Parents from both groups also mentioned several miscellaneous reasons for avoiding the term, such as that it was of little interest to other people, it was unimportant, it set up unrealistic expectations or it required additional tedious explanations ("Every time I say he's gifted, I have to remind him of his responsibilities to his fellows over whom he might have an advantage").

Parents were also asked whether they used the term "gifted" to describe their child to others and if they did not, why they chose to avoid it (MQ38). The reasons parents gave for not using "gifted" to describe their child to other adults appear in Table 23.

Table 23

Reasons member parents gave for not using the term "gifted" in front of others

	Users	Avoiders
Others resent/misunderstand it	11	2
Sounds like bragging, elitist, competitive	0	13

Both User and Avoider parents cautioned against using the term in front of others but for different reasons. User parents felt that the term was misunderstood by others: "You say 'gifted' but other people hear 'better'". Avoider parents believed the term was, in fact, offensive to others because it was pretentious and "sound(ed) like bragging".

Comparison parents were asked whether they believed gifted children should be told they are gifted, using the term "gifted" (CQ30). Six believed they should be told and mentioned that it would explain to the child why he or she was different or would enhance the child's self-esteem. Fourteen parents said children should not be told. They argued that it might make the child conceited, put too much pressure on the child, or impair peer relationships. Five of the six Comparison parents who later said they believed their child might be gifted did not believe children should be told they are gifted.

Comparison parents were also asked what they would do if the school phoned and said the child was gifted (CQ31). They were offered the options of explaining to the child that the school believed he or she was "gifted", informing the child about the call but not using the term "gifted", or saying nothing.

Under this scenario, seven of the 20 comparison parents said they would use the term "gifted", eight said they would tell the child about the call but not use "gifted", and five said they would say nothing. However, the unreliability of asking people to predict their behaviour was illuminated by one telling response from a parent who answered that she would take the second option and tell the child about the call while not using the term "gifted". Later in the interview she mentioned that between the time she was recruited for the study and the actual interview, her son's school had phoned and said he had been nominated for the gifted program at the Junior High he would be attending the following year. When asked what she had actually done, she admitted, wryly, that she had in fact, said nothing to her son.

Parents were also asked whether their child was gifted (PQ17) and how certain they were of their assessment that their child was gifted or not gifted (PQ18). All GCA parents believed their child was gifted (N = 48). One Avoider parent initially said she was not certain her child was gifted, but later changed her mind and said she felt he was at the lower range of giftedness. Six of the 20 Comparison parents said they believed their child was gifted. There was a difference among the three groups as to the degree of certainty they felt about their assessment of their child's abilities, F (2,65) = 4.91, p = .01. A Tukey comparison of means indicated that User parents (M = 3.8) were significantly more certain than Comparison parents (M = 3.1) of their assessment, p = .008. Avoider parents (M = 3.6) were not significantly different from either group.

GCA member parents and those Comparison parents who responded that their child was gifted were asked whether their child had been formally tested (MQ26). Forty-five of the 48 children of GCA members had been formally tested for giftedness. Of the 45 GCA children who had been tested, 42% (N = 19) had been tested by the school and 53% (N = 24) by private psychologists. The remaining two children had been tested by health units or clinics. None of the Comparison parents indicated that their child had been tested.

Hypothesis 3: Differences Between User-Members and Other Parents in Beliefs About Giftedness.

Hypotheses 3a and 3b concerned the degree to which the three parent groups agreed in their beliefs about giftedness. Parents responded to 16 belief statements (Appendix G) which tapped five beliefs about giftedness. These beliefs were: giftedness causes problems; giftedness is innate; giftedness is rare; giftedness runs in families; giftedness needs nurturing. The relationship amongst belief statements was examined using multi-dimensional scaling to confirm that each group of statements indeed reflected the belief that it was designed to tap. The multidimensional scaling of all responses of the three parent groups together is shown in Figure 3. The alienation of this configuration is .202 and it explains 81% of the variance. As can be seen, the questions are clustered according to the belief which they address.

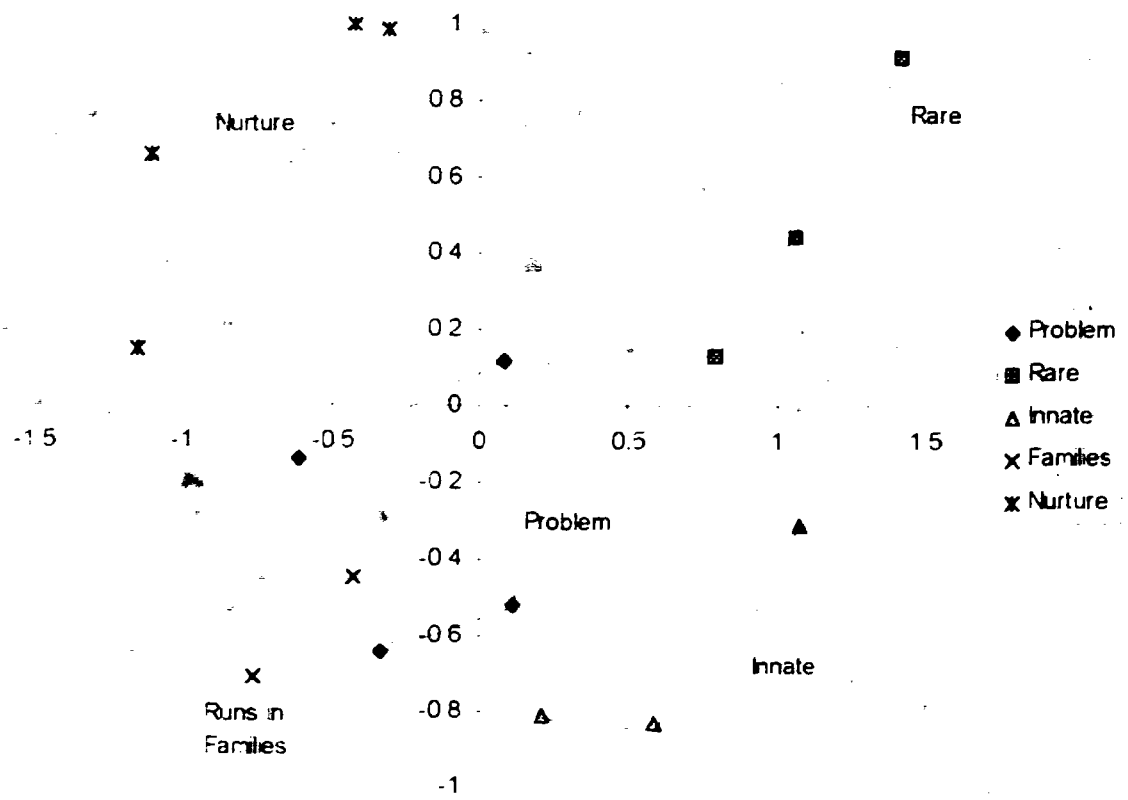

Figure 3: Multidimensional scaling of parents' responses to belief questions

The internal consistency of the five subscales was examined. The Cronbach alpha for the subscales were as follows: problems (.69), innate (.55), rare (.52); runs in families (.72) and nurture (.50). These scores suggest a moderate degree of internal consistency within the subscales.

Table 24 gives the mean score for the statements in each belief category for each parent group. Each statement was rated from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 4 ("strongly agree").

Table 24

Mean scores for each category of beliefs for User, Avoider and Comparison parents.

Giftedness:	Users (N = 27)	Avoiders (N = 21)	Comparison (N = 20)	All Parents (N = 68)
Is innate	3.14	3.18	2.94	3.1
Causes problems	3.30_a	3.16_a	2.65_b	3.0
Is rare	2.06	2.13	2.28	2.1
Runs in families	2.91_a	2.71_a	2.13_b	2.6
Must be nurtured	2.79	2.81	2.53	2.7

Note. Means with different subscripts differ significantly.

It was hypothesized that User members would be in greater agreement with (rate more highly) statements suggesting that giftedness was innate than would any other parent group. Mean scores for User members on the category of statements which suggest that giftedness is innate were compared with the mean score of each of the other parent groups using a Dunnett multiple comparison of means. This hypothesis was not supported. The difference between Users and Avoiders was not significant, t (39) = .65, p = .47. The difference between Users and the Comparison group was also not significant. t (45) = 1.55, p = .12.

It was also hypothesized that User parents would be in greater agreement with those statements supporting the idea that giftedness was problematic than would any other parent group. Mean scores for the User group on the category of statements which suggests that giftedness is problematic were compared with the mean score of each of the other parent groups using a Dunnett multiple comparison of means. There was no significant difference between the User and the Avoider group on this measure, t (39) = 1.06, p = .24. However, Users were significantly more likely to rate giftedness as problematic than were members of the Comparison group, t (45) = 6.46, $p < .001$. The mean scores for the Avoider group and

the Comparison group were also compared using a t-test. The Avoider group was also more likely to rate giftedness as problematic than was the Comparison group, $t(39) = 3.49$, $p = .001$.

The category "Giftedness causes problems" consisted of four statements. Mean scores on each statement for each parent group appear in Table 25.

Table 25

Mean scores for each parent group for four statements in the Problem category of the Parent Belief Statements

Statement	%Users (N = 27)	Avoiders (N = 21)	Comparison (N = 20)
Children who are gifted must make a special effort to understand and get along with children who are not gifted. (Q2)	2.9	3.0	2.6
When a child is gifted, he or she sees the world differently from other children. (Q12)	3.7_a	3.5_a	2.7_b
Being gifted can sometimes bring a lot of problems. (Q1)	3.5_a	3.4	3.0
Children who are gifted find it harder to make friends than children who are not gifted. (Q10)	3.1_a	2.7	2.4_b

Note. Means with different subscripts differ significantly.

A Bonferroni procedure was used to correct for multiple comparisons and the significance level was adjusted to .01. There was no significant difference among parent groups on Question 2, $F(2,65) = 2.13$, $p = .13$. There was a significant difference among the groups of parents in their rating of Question 12, $F(2,65) = 14.88$, $p < .001$. A Tukey comparison of means indicated that Comparison parents agreed with this statement less strongly than did either User parents, $p < .001$ or Avoider parents, $p = .001$. There were also significant differences among parent groups for both Question 1, $F(2, 65) = 4.99$, $p = .01$, and Question 10, $F(2,65) = 5.23$, $p = .008$. A Tukey comparison of means indicated that the User

parents agreed more strongly with both Question 1, $p = .009$, and Question 10, $p = .006$ than did the Comparison group. The Avoider group was not significantly different from either of the other parent groups.

Further exploration of the data compared the three groups of parents on the remaining categories of belief statements ("rare", "runs in families", "must be nurtured"). There was a significant difference among the three parent groups $F(2, 65) = 4.42$, $p = .016$, and a significant group x category interaction, $F(4, 130) = 3.41$, $p = .011$. Further examination of differences in parent groups indicated that there was no difference among the groups in their beliefs about the importance of nurturing giftedness, $F(2, 65) = 2.74$, $p = .07$, or the rarity of giftedness, $F(2, 65) = 1.03$, $p = .36$. There was, however, a significant difference among the three groups in their agreement with the belief that giftedness runs in families, $F(2, 65) = 10.69$, $p < .001$. A Tukey comparison of means indicated that the Comparison group was significantly less likely to believe that giftedness ran in families than either the User group, $p < .001$, or the Avoider group, $p = .006$.

A final belief statement (Parents' Interview MQ59 and CQ51) asked parents to allot a possible total of 10 points amongst three attributes for giftedness in children (natural ability, family environment, and hard work). Because of the problem of covariance in the data, it was decided prior to data collection that the attribute "family environment" would be dropped prior to analysis and only the attributes "natural ability" and "hard work" examined.

It was hypothesized that User members would judge "natural ability" to be a more important source of giftedness than would either of the other parent groups. This hypothesis was supported. Table 26 summarizes the mean number of points allocated by each parent group to "natural ability" and to "hard work" as sources of giftedness.

Table 26

Mean scores awarded by each parent group to each explanation as a source of gifted behaviour

Giftedness is a result of:	Users (N = 27)	Avoiders (N = 21)	Comparison (N = 20)
Natural ability	6.3_a	5.2_b	4.9_b
Hard work	1.3_a	2.3_b	2.4_b

Note. Means with different subscripts differ significantly.

Mean scores for the User group on the attribute "natural ability" were compared with the mean scores of each of the other parent groups using a Dunnett multiple comparison of means. Results of the Dunnett multiple comparison of means indicated that the User group rated ability significantly higher than did the Avoider group, t (46) = 2.15, p = .033, or the Comparison group, t (45) = 2.58, p = .012. The Avoider and Comparison groups' scores were not significantly different.

Further examination indicated there was also a significant difference amongst the three groups on the attribute "hard work", F (2, 65) = 6.91, p = .002. A Tukey comparison of means indicated that the User group rated hard work as significantly less important in producing giftedness than did either the Avoider group, p = .011, or the Comparison group, p = .005. The Avoider and Comparison groups did not differ significantly.

Further Analyses

Parents were also asked several other questions to determine the degree to which they believed their family members were gifted. Mothers were asked if they believed they or their child's father was gifted (MQ34/CQ27). Table 27 gives the percentage of each group of mothers responding that they were gifted and the percentage responding that their husbands were gifted.

Table 27

Percent of mothers in each group identifying self as gifted and child's father as gifted

	%Users (N = 27)	%Avoiders (N = 21)	%Comparison (N = 20)
Percent identifying self as gifted	52_a	38_a	10_b
Percent identifying father as gifted	93_a	67_b	35_c

Note. Percentages with different subscripts differ significantly.

There was a significant difference among the three groups in the number of mothers identifying themselves as gifted. χ^2 (2, 68) = 8.92, p = .012. Although there was no significant difference between the Users and Avoiders. χ^2 (1, 48) = .90, p = .34, there was a significant difference between the Avoiders and the Comparison group. χ^2 (1, 41) = 4.39, p = .036 and between the Users and the Comparison group χ^2 (1, 47) = 17.54, p < .001. The Comparison mothers were less likely to believe themselves to be gifted. Only 2 of the 20 Comparison mothers believed themselves to be gifted and both these mothers also believed their child to be gifted.

There was also a significant difference in the number of mothers identifying the child's father as gifted. χ^2 (2,68) = 17.43, p < .001. User parents were significantly more likely to identify the father as gifted than were Avoider parents. χ^2 (1,48) = 5.21, p = .022, and Avoider parents were significantly more likely to identify the father as gifted than were Comparison parents. χ^2 (1,41) = 4.1, p = .043. Within the Comparison group, 5 of the 6 mothers who believed their children to be gifted also believed the child's father was gifted, whereas only 2 of the other Comparison parents did.

Mothers were also asked how many of the child's grandparents were gifted and how many other relatives they believed were gifted (MQ34/CQ27). The number of gifted family members identified by the mother (excluding the target child and his or her siblings) was calculated. Table 28 gives the mean

number of grandparents identified by each group of mothers and the mean number of family members in total identified by each group of mothers.

Table 28

Mean number of gifted relatives identified by each parent group

	Users (N = 27)	Avoiders (N = 21)	Comparison (N = 20)
Mean number of gifted grandparents	1.8_a	1.7_a	0.7_b
Mean number of gifted relatives	6.0_a	4.2	2.3_b

Note. Means with different subscripts differ significantly.

There was a significant difference among groups in the mean number of grandparents identified as gifted. F (2, 68) = 9.05, $p < .001$. A Tukey comparison of means indicated that the Comparison group identified significantly fewer gifted grandparents than did either the User group, $p = .001$, or the Avoider group, $p = .002$. The difference between the Avoider and User groups was not significant.

There were significant differences among the three groups in the mean total number of gifted individuals per extended family as identified by the mother, F (2, 65) = 7.57, $p = .001$. A Tukey comparison of means indicated that the number of gifted family members identified by the User group was significantly higher than the number identified by the Comparison group, $p = .001$. The Avoider group was not significantly different from either of the other two groups. The Comparison parents who believed their child to be gifted identified more people ($M = 4.3$) than did the Comparison parents who did not believe their child was gifted ($M = 1.4$), t (18) = 3.30, $p = .004$.

Parents were also asked further questions relating to the association of problems with giftedness. Of interest was whether parents of gifted children in this sample, like Freeman's (1975) British parents of gifted children, would be more likely than other parents to report unusual difficulties or problematic behaviour in their children. Parents were asked to rate their child's ability to get along with peers from

1."Almost never gets along with peers" to 4. "Almost always gets along with peers" (MQ54/CQ46). Parents were also asked to rate their children's adjustment and behaviour from 1, "Has had major adjustment or behaviour problems" to 4. "Has had no adjustment or behaviour problems." (MQ55/CQ47). These two questions measured related, but not identical, aspects of the child's social and emotional development and the correlation between them was .363, $p = .003$. Scores on the two questions were summed to create a social-adjustment score. This score measured the parent's concern about the child's social and behavioural adjustment. High scores (maximum = 8) represented the parent's positive assessment of the child's social skills, adjustment and behaviour, while low scores represented parental concern about the child's social skills or adjustment and behaviour. A comparison of the three parent groups on this overall social-adjustment score indicated a significant difference amongst the three groups, $F(2, 64) = 5.06$, $p = .006$. A Tukey comparison of means indicated that the social-adjustment score for the User parents ($M = 4.9$) was significantly lower than the social-adjustment score for the Comparison parents ($M = 6.3$) $p = .006$. The Avoider parents ($M = 5.5$) were not significantly different from either of the other groups. The mean score for each parent groups on each question (MQ54/CQ46 and MQ55/CQ46) individually is given in Table 29.

The children were also asked to rate on a scale of 1 to 4 how well they got along with the children in their class (KQ14) and how well they behaved in school (KQ15). High scores indicated positive responses. Table 29 gives the mean response for each group of children.

Table 29

Mean rating by parents' and children's groups of child's behaviour/adjustment and ability to get along with peers.

	User	Avoider	Comparison
Gets along with peers			
Parent's rating of child	2.6	2.8	3.2
Child's rating of self	3.2	3.3	3.2
Behaviour/adjustment			
Parent's rating of child	2.5	2.6	3.1
Child's rating of self	3.4	3.4	3.4

There was no significant difference among the User, Avoider, and Comparison children for either question. It should be noted that while the parents were asked whether their child had had any behaviour or adjustment problems, the children were only asked to report on the amount of trouble they got into at school. Thus, only current externalizing problems were likely to be reported by children, making the parent and children's questions not strictly comparable. The difference among the means of the three parent groups was not significant for their rating of the child's adjustment/behaviour, $F(2, 64) = 2.92$, $p = .06$ or the child's peer relationships, $F(2, 65) = 2.54$, $p = .086$.

Parents were also asked to rate on a 5-point scale how satisfied they were with their child's school (MQ 45/CQ37). Although User parents were slightly less satisfied ($M = 3.6$) than Avoider parents ($M = 4.1$) or Comparison parents ($M = 4.1$), the difference among the three groups was not significant, $F(2, 65) = 2.00$, $p = .14$.

Hypotheses 4 and 5: Transmission of the Term "Gifted"

Children were asked whether they had ever heard the term "gifted" (KQ1). Those children who had heard the term were asked to explain what gifted means (KQ2). Children who could adequately define the term were considered to understand it. An adequate definition mentioned such qualities as being smarter in general, being more competent in specific areas than other children, or doing better at school.

It was hypothesized that children of Users would be more likely to be able to define adequately the term "gifted" than would children of either of the other groups. This hypothesis was only partially confirmed. There was no difference between the two GCA member groups. Within the User and Avoider groups, there was only one Avoider child who could not define the term. Four of the 20 Comparison group children were unable to define gifted adequately. There was a significant difference between the Comparison group and the User group in their ability to define the term "gifted" χ^2 (1, N = 47) = 5.91, p = .015.

Of the children who could define gifted, 24 of the 27 children of the User group and 15 of the 16 children of the Comparison group defined gifted in terms of general ability, i.e., being smart, clever or creative. Only 55% (11 out of 20) of the Avoider group defined it in general terms of being smarter than others. Six of the avoiders described "giftedness" specifically in terms of school performance while the remaining children emphasized working hard or being eligible for a gifted program. "It means that if you know a lot you can be in a program higher than your grade level."

Parents were not asked to define "gifted"; however, they were asked if they believed there was such a thing as a "gifted child" and to give a reason for their answer. All GCA members agreed there

was such a thing as a "gifted child". The most popular reasons given referred to giftedness as a natural or innate quality (25 responses), and either related it to early, easy , deep learning or general intelligence (17 responses) or insisted that giftedness was more than learning (15 responses). Other responses were mentioned by 6 or fewer mothers. These included references to personality characteristics (6), unspecified differences (6), academic achievement (5), quality of product (2) and creativity (1). All but one Comparison parent said they believed there was such a thing as giftedness. The parent who did not agree attributed giftedness to hard work. However, she later described her child as "gifted". Comparison mothers believed that there were children who were gifted and referred to their early, easy, deep learning or general intelligence (10). Comparison parents also mentioned that giftedness was innate or natural (4), and referred to academic achievement (3), quality of product (2), and personality characteristics (2) as evidence of the existence of gifted children. Unlike GCA parents, 3 Comparison parents described giftedness solely as demonstrated by unusual talent in a specific area and 3 mentioned media reports of gifted children as a source of information about giftedness. No Comparison parent claimed that gifted children were generally "different" or that giftedness was more than intelligence.

Children were administered the Children's Belief Questionnaire. This questionnaire was identical to the Parent's Belief Questionnaire with the exception of slight modifications of wording of some of the questions. Appendix G(4), reports all modifications to the questions which appear on the Children's Belief Questionnaire

No hypotheses were made about the responses of the children to the Children's Belief Questionnaire. The internal consistency of the subscales using Cronbach's alpha was as follows: innate (.74), problems (.56), rare (.56), runs in families (.24) nurtured (.61). This suggests moderate internal consistency for the subscales with the exception of the "runs in families" subscale. As a result, one of the two questions was eliminated from the this subscale. Several children asked for clarification of the statement, "No one really knows why a gifted child will turn up in a family" and it may have been

confusing for them. Elimination of this question did not alter the overall differences and similarities among the three groups of children, and therefore only the statement "Giftedness runs in families", which expresses the gist of the subscale, was utilized.

The mean scores on the statements in each of the belief categories for each of the children's groups are given in Table30.

Table 30

Mean scores for each category of beliefs for User, Avoider and Comparison children

Giftedness:	Users (N = 27)	Avoiders (N = 20)	Comparison (N = 20)
Is innate	2.36	2.05	1.95
Causes problems	2.75	2.67	2.43
Is rare	1.93	1.93	2.00
Runs in families	2.81_a	2.55	2.05_b
Must be nurtured	2.90	2.79	2.81

Note. Means with different subscripts differ significantly.

Because there were differences among groups on the Parent Belief Scale on the "runs in families" and "problem" subscales, these were examined first. There was a significant difference among the groups of children regarding the belief that giftedness ran in families. F (2, 64) = 5.16, p = .008. A Tukey comparison of means indicated that the User group was more likely to believe that giftedness ran in families than was the Comparison group, p = .006. The Avoider group was not significantly different from either of the other two groups. There was no significant difference among the children's groups on the "problem" scale. F (2, 64) = 1.52, p = .23. A repeated measures analysis of variance was done on the remaining three scales. There was a significant difference among the overall ratings given the subscales.

F (2,128) = 26.19, $p < .001$, but there was no significant difference among the groups, $F(2, 64) = 1.57$, $p = .22$ and no significant group x subscale difference, F (4, 128) = .68, $p = .59$.

It was hypothesized that children of Users and their parents would be more likely to agree on their beliefs than would children and parents of either of the other groups. The responses of parents and children were recoded from a four-point scale to a dichotomous yes-no variable depending on whether the respondent agreed or disagreed with the belief statement. Parent and child responses to the statement "No one really knows why a gifted child will turn up in a family" were not included. Each parent-child pair was treated as a single unit and assigned a score based on the number of questions on which they both responded "yes" or "no". Table 31 gives the mean number of questions to which the parent and child agreed (both giving a "yes" or a "no") for each group.

Table 31

Mean number of questions parent-child pairs in each group agreed on

	Users	Avoiders	Comparison
Mean # of questions agreed on	9.2_a	8.8_a	7.3_b

Note. Means with different subscripts differ significantly

There was a significant difference among the three groups on the number of questions on which there was agreement between parent and child $F(2, 64) = 5.52$, $p < .006$ A Tukey comparison of means indicated that parents and children in the User group ($p = .006$) and the Avoider group ($p = .049$) agreed on a significantly larger number of questions than did the parents and children of the Comparison group.

A t-test was used to determine whether the level of agreement between parents and children differed significantly from chance The mean scores of the User group, $t(26) = 4.29$, $p < .001$, and the Avoider group, $t(19) = 2.40$, $p < .05$, were significantly different from chance. The mean score of the Comparison group did not differ significantly from chance, $t(19) = .48$, $p > .05$.

Hypothesis 6: Child's Understanding that He or She Is Labelled "Gifted"

It was hypothesized that User parents would be more likely than the Avoider parents to say that their child believed him or herself to be gifted. This hypothesis was not supported, χ^2 (1, N = 48) = .20, p = .65. A total of 10 of the 48 member parents (21%), five in each group, believed that their children did not think of themselves as gifted. In contrast, 15 of the 20 Comparison parents (75%) said their children did not think of themselves as gifted.

It was hypothesized that children of Users would be more likely than children of Avoiders to identify themselves as "gifted". This hypothesis was supported. Although all but three of the children whose parents were members of the GCA identified themselves as "gifted", the three children who did not respond "yes" to this question were all children of Avoiders, χ^2 (1, N = 48) = 4.11 p = .043. Children of the Avoider groups were, however, significantly more likely to identify themselves as gifted than were the children in the Comparison group, χ^2 (1, N = 41) = 6.03, p = .014. It was, however, interesting that 10 of the 20 Comparison group children identified themselves as gifted, and of the 10 who said they were not gifted, 3 felt they were "not sure".

It was hypothesized that children of User members and their parents would be in greater agreement that the child was gifted than would either of the other parent-child groups. The child's response to whether he or she was gifted was compared with the parent's response to whether they believed their child thought of him or herself as gifted. Responses pairs of "yes" and "not sure", and "no" and "not sure", were counted as "disagrees". The number of parent-child pairs in each group agreeing and disagreeing are found in Table 32.

Table 32

Number of parent-child pairs in each group agreeing and disagreeing that the child believes he or she is gifted.

	Users (N = 27)	Avoiders (N = 21)	Comparison (N = 20)
Number agreeing	22_a	15	9_b
Number disagreeing	5	6	11

Note. Scores with different subscripts differ significantly

The difference between the User and Avoider groups was not significant, χ^2 (1, N = 48) = .815, p > .05. However, the difference between the User and the Comparison group was significant, χ^2 (1, N = 47) = 5.25, p < .025. A non-directional test comparing the Avoider and Comparison groups indicated that the difference was not significant, χ^2 (1, N = 41) = 1.97, p > .10. Among the parent-child dyads who agreed with one another, all of the 22 User parents correctly predicted their children thought they were gifted while one Avoider parent and six of the Comparison parents correctly predicted their child thought he or she was not gifted. Among the parent-child dyads who disagreed, 16 of the parents (five Users, four Avoiders and seven Comparison parents) incorrectly believed that their child did not think of him or herself as gifted. Two Avoider parents thought their children knew they were gifted but the children said they were not. The remaining 4 Comparison parents and children were unsure to some degree.

Further Analyses

When asked if their parents had told them they were gifted, 78% of the User children, 76% of the Avoider children and 35% of the Comparison children answered "yes". The two GCA children's groups were combined. The GCA member children were significantly more likely than the Comparison children to report their parents telling them they were gifted, χ^2 (1, N = 68) = 10.95, p < .001.

Children were asked what it was they did that might make people describe them as "gifted". Responses were organized into four categories. These were "success at school", which included references to getting good marks or doing well at particular subjects; "creativity/good ideas", which included references to having unusual ideas, being a good problem solver, having a good imagination; "artistic/athletic talents", which included dance, singing, drawing, playing an instrument or athletic prowess; and "miscellaneous/don't know". The miscellaneous heading covered comments such as being smart, working hard or attending gifted programs. Three GCA children who identified themselves as gifted said they did not know why people might believe that of them. Table 33 gives the percentage of children in each group who responded in the four major categories. Since some children gave more than one example of an area of giftedness, the number of responses may total to more than 100%. Only the ten comparison group children who responded that they believed they were gifted were included

Table 33

Percentage of children from each group giving each of the four major explanations of why people might think they were gifted

	% User (N = 27)	% Avoider (N = 21)	% Comparison (N = 10)
Success at school	52	75_a	20_b
Creativity, good ideas	22	10	0
Artistic/athletic talents	7	20	100
Miscellaneous/don't know	26	20	0

Note. Percentages with different subscripts differ significantly.

The number of children in each group giving each explanation was compared, χ^2 (6, N = 58) = 31.58, $p < .001$. The number of responses of "success at school" as opposed to other responses was

compared for the three groups. There was a difference amongst the three groups, χ^2 (2, N = 58) = 6.22, p < .05. Avoider children were significantly more likely than Comparison children to believe that their success in school was the reason people identified them as gifted, χ^2 (2, N = 31) = 6.08, p < .05. The difference between the User and Comparison groups was not significant, χ^2 (2, N = 37) = 3.61, p > .05. Visual inspection indicated that the User and Avoider groups did not differ significantly. While all the children in the Comparison group mentioned athletic or artistic gifts as a reason people might think they were gifted, only 6 of the 48 GCA children mentioned having such talents.

Member parents were asked at what age their child was identified as gifted (MQ26) and who identified the child (MQ27). Parents claimed to have identified their child as gifted at a mean age of 3.9 years (SD 2.5 years). Half the parents (24 out of 48) said they had first identified their child as gifted and 33% (16 out of 48) said a teacher had first identified their child.

Parents were asked whether or not their child was gifted or had exceptional abilities in any of the following areas: general academic ability, language arts in particular, math in particular, music, art, athletics, leadership, general creativity or other (MQ52/CQ44). Parents were asked to list the "other" abilities and the number of exceptional abilities identified by parents was summed to create a total number of talents for each child. There was no difference among the groups in the number of talents parents attributed to their child. User parents identified their children as having from 3 to 8 (M = 5.0) areas of talent and Avoider parents identified their children as having from 3 to 9 (M = 4.9) areas of talent. Comparison group parents identified their child as being exceptional in from 1 to 9 (M = 5.0) areas. Within the Comparison group, however, those parents who believed their child to be gifted identified a mean of 7.7 areas of talent while those parents who did not believe their child to be gifted identified a mean of 3.8 areas of talent. This difference was significant, t (18) = 5.81, p < .001.

Table 34 gives the percentage of children identified by parents as "gifted" or "having exceptional ability" in each talent area for each group. Since parents may have identified their child as having exceptional ability in more than one area, columns do not add up to 100.

Table 34

Percentage of children in each group identified as having exceptional ability in the following areas.

	User (N = 27)	Avoider (N = 21)	Comparison (N = 20)
Academic ability	74	85_a	35_b
Athletics	15_a	19	55_b
Language arts	70	67	50
Math	78	76	50
Music	63	33	45
Art	41	43	70
Leadership	44	29	60
Creativity	78	76	85

Note. Percentages with different subscripts differ significantly.

Differences in areas of exceptional ability were examined. A Bonferroni correction was used to set the significance level of .006. There was a significant difference amongst the three groups in the area of general academic ability, χ^2 (2, N = 68) = 11.19, p = .004. The Avoider children were significantly more likely to be identified as having exceptional academic ability than were the Comparison children, χ^2 (1, N = 41) = 8.91, p = .003. The User group was not significantly different from either. All 6 Comparison group parents who believed their children to be gifted identified "general academic ability" as an area of talent, while only one of the remaining Comparison children was so identified. There was also a significant differences amongst the three groups in the likelihood of being identified by parents as having exceptional athletic ability, χ^2 (2, N = 68) = 10.41, p = .005. Comparison children were more likely than the User children to be identified as having exceptional athletic ability, χ^2 (1, N = 47) = 8.54,

$p = .003$. Avoider children did not differ from either group. There were no significant differences between the groups in the any of the other areas.

Hypotheses 7, 8, 9: The Impact of Parental Use of the Label "Gifted" on the Child: Children's Perception of Themselves

The Harter Self-Perception Profile for Children was administered to the children in each group Questions on this measure are scored on a four-point scale with 1 indicating a self perception of low competence and 4 indicating a self perception of high competence. Questionnaires for three children, one from each group, were eliminated from the data as they were not completed correctly or the child refused to answer a number of the questions. Ten of the remaining children (4 user children, 4 avoider children and 2 comparison children) made minor errors in completing the questionnaire or refused to answer a particular question. The average age of the children who had minor difficulties was 10.2 years of age (ranging from 8 to 13 years), suggesting that their difficulties were not a result of their being too young to complete the questionnaire correctly. Rather than eliminate these children from the analysis, the mean score for each subscale rather than the total score for the subscale was used. The mean scores for questions on each subscale for each group are given in Table 35. Each subscale represents an area of perceived competence.

Table 35

Mean scores of each group on each subscale of the Harter Self-Perception Profile for Children

	Users (N = 26)	Avoiders (N = 20)	Comparison (N = 19)
Scholastic	3.2	3.4_a	2.9_b
Social acceptance	2.6	2.6	2.9
Athletic	2.6_a	2.6_a	3.1_b
Appearance	3.2	3.2	2.9
Behaviour	3.0	3.1	3.0
Self-worth	3.5	3.3	3.2

Note. Mean scores with different subscripts differ significantly.

It was hypothesized that the children of User members would give themselves a lower rating on social acceptance than would the the children in the other groups. This hypothesis was not supported. A Dunnett multiple comparison of means was used to compare the scores of children of User members with children of Avoiders and with children in the Comparison group on the Social Acceptance subscale. There was no significant difference between the children of Users and Avoiders, t (44) = .18 $p > .05$ or between children of the Users and Comparison group, t (37) = 1.36, $p > .05$.

A group x mean score repeated measures analysis of the remaining five subscales indicated there was no overall difference between groups of children on the overall mean score for the remaining questions, F (2, 62) = .44, $p = .65$. There were significant differences among the mean scores for different subscales F(4, 248) = 11.76, $p < .001$ and significant differences among the three groups on the mean score for different subscales. F (8, 248) = 3.96, $p < .001$. There was a significant difference among groups in their ranking of scholastic competence. F (2, 62) = 6.07, $p = .004$. A Tukey multiple comparison of means indicated that children in the Comparison group believed themselves to be less scholastically competent than did the children of the Avoider group, $p = .003$. The User group did not differ from

either of the other two groups. There was also a significant difference among the three groups in their rating of their athletic competence. F (2, 62) = 3.49, p = .037. Children in the Comparison group rated themselves as more athletically competent than did the children of the GCA groups, $t(63) = 2.66$, $p = .01$. There were no other significant differences between groups on the subscales.

Children were also compared on the Importance scale of the Harter Self-Perception Profile for Children. Questions on this scale ask the child how important they believe doing well in each of these areas is. Table 36 gives the mean score for each group on each area of the Importance scale. One child in the comparison group did not complete this part of the questionnaire.

Table 36.

Mean importance ratings for each area as given by each group of children

	Users (N = 26)	Avoiders (N = 20)	Comparison (N = 18)
Scholastic	2.7_a	3.1	3.3_b
Social acceptance	2.4	2.8	2.2
Athletic	1.9	2.3	2.4
Appearance	2.0	2.3	1.8
Behaviour	3.2	3.4	3.3

Note. Mean scores with different subscripts differ significantly.

It was hypothesized that scholastic competence would be rated as more important by User children than by any other group. The hypothesis was not confirmed. Although there was a significant difference amongst the three groups, F (2, 62) = 3.41, p = .039, the Comparison group rated scholastic competence as significantly more important than did the User group, p = .03. The Avoider group did not differ significantly from either of the other two groups. A group x mean score repeated measures analysis of the remaining four subscales of the Importance scale indicated that there was no overall difference between groups of children on the overall mean score for the remaining questions, F (2, 61) = 2.62, p = .08. There were significant differences among the mean scores for different subscales $F(3, 183) = 40.87$,

$p < .001$ but no significant differences among the three groups on the mean score for different subscales. $F(6, 183) = 1.45$, $p = .20$.

Children were also asked whether they felt different from other children their age, and if so, what it was about them that was different (KQ16). It was hypothesized that children of Users would be more likely to say they felt different from other children their age than would either of the other groups of children. Low scores on this question indicated feeling different from other children, while high scores indicated feeling similar to other children. A Dunnett comparison of means was used to compare the User group with each of the other two groups. There was no significant difference between the User group ($M = 2.32$) and Avoider group ($M = 2.29$), $t(46) = .18$, $p > .05$. However, the User group did feel significantly less similar to other children than did the Comparison group ($M = 2.85$). $t(45) = 3.05$, $p < .01$ The Avoider group children also rated themselves as less similar to other children than did the Comparison group $t(39) = -2.36$, $p = .023$.

The children's responses to why they felt different were also examined. Of 35 children who said they felt different, 34 were able to give a reason why. The most frequently mentioned differences in all groups were academic (e.g., "I know more and I have a different brain"). Smaller numbers of children mentioned physical differences (e.g., "I have different colour hair" or "I tend to like unusual sports like water polo"), social differences (e.g., "They don't accept me in their kind of group") and a few mentioned miscellaneous differences such as having ADD or having unusual pets. Of the children who gave a reason why they felt different, 62% gave reasons that were wholly positive (e.g., "I'm taller and I'm better in math") or neutral (e.g., "I'm grown-up looking and I have different interests", "I have a different name") The remaining 38% gave mixed positive and negative reasons (e.g., "I can do so many things - people don't accept me") or only negative reasons (e.g., "They're better at sports", "I don't fit in"). Table

37 gives the number of children in each group giving positive, neutral, mixed or negative reasons for feeling different.

Table 37

Number of children giving positive and neutral or mixed and negative reasons for feeling different from other children (N = 34).

	User (N = 13)	Avoider (N = 13)	Comparison (N = 8)
Positive/neutral	7	7	7
Mixed/negative	6	6	1

A comparison of the number of children in each group giving positive or neutral responses with the number giving mixed or negative responses indicated there was no significant difference among the three groups. χ^2 (2, N = 34) = 2.91, $p > .05$.

Hypothesis 10: The Impact of Parental Use of the Label "Gifted" on the Child: Parents' and Children's Expectations for School Success.

Children were asked to imagine a hypothetical achievement test, and to estimate what score they believed they would get (KQ9), what score their parents would expect them to get (KQ10) and what would be the lowest score the parent would accept without becoming concerned (KQ11). Parents were also asked what score they thought their child might achieve (MQ48 /CQ40) and what would be the lowest score that would satisfy them (MQ49/CQ41) Two User parents and 5 children (3 User, 1 Avoider, and 1 Comparison) were eliminated from one or more of the analyses. Two User mothers and their children said they could not answer because the child was not in a traditional school setting. One Avoider child and one Comparison child responded to KQ10 or KQ11 by indicating that their parents simply wanted them to do their best. The remaining User child gave unusable answers. Table 38 gives the mean of the estimated scores for each group of children and parents.

Table 38

Mean of children's and parents' estimations of performance and performance expectations.

	N	Users	Avoiders	Comparison
Child's estimate of:				
parent's expectations	66	89.5	88.5	85.6
lowest score parents would accept	64	66.6_a	66.6_a	49.4_b
own score	68	83.5	79.9	75.4
Parent's estimate:				
Of child's score	67	90.2_a	88.5	82.2_b
Of lowest they would accept	66	78.4_a	71.7	70.3_b

Note. Mean scores with different subscripts differ significantly.

A Bonferroni correction was used to correct for multiple comparisons. A significance level of .012 was used for the questions asked of the children regarding their expectations for their own performance and others' expectations on the imaginary test. It was hypothesized that User children would believe their parents expected higher marks from them. This hypothesis was not supported. There was no difference among the three groups in the children's estimate of what their parents would expect them to get on a hypothetical achievement test. F (2,63) = .65, p = .527. It was also hypothesized that User children would estimate a higher "lowest score parents would accept" than would either of the other groups. The hypothesis was only partially supported. The Avoider and User groups did not differ but a Dunnett comparison of means indicated that the User group chose a significantly higher "lowest acceptable score" than did the Comparison group. t (42) = 2.73, p = .005. Further analysis indicated that the Avoider group children also estimated that their parents would be satisfied with a significantly higher "lowest acceptable score" than the Comparison group. t (38) = 3.45, p = .001.

There were no specific hypothesis made about the scores for any of the three groups for the remaining question. The difference between the groups of children in their estimation of what score they believed they would get was not significant, F (2, 65) = 3.16, p = .049. Within the Comparison group, the difference between the mean scores expected by those children whose parents believed they were gifted

(M = 82.8) and those whose parents did not believe they were gifted (M = 72.2) was not significant significant, t (18) = 2.32, p = .032.

The difference among the three parent groups on the score they estimated their child would get was significant. F (2, 65) = 5.33, p = .007. A Tukey comparison of means indicated that the Comparison group estimated a significantly lower mean score than the User group, p = .007. Avoider parents did not differ from the other two groups. Parent groups also differed in the lowest score they would accept without concern. F (2,63) = 3.59, p = .033. A Tukey comparison of means indicated that parents of the User group would become concerned at a significantly higher "lowest acceptable score" than Comparison parents, p = .044. The Avoider group did not differ significantly from either the User or Comparison group.

Further Analyses

Parents were asked to estimate their child's intelligence on a scale of 1 to 100 if 50 were the average for all children and 100 was as smart as anyone could get (MQ47/CQ39). Parent groups differed significantly in their estimation of their child's intelligence. F (2, 65) = 17.63, p < .001. A Tukey comparison of means indicated that parents in the User group (M = 91.4) gave a significantly higher estimate of their children's intelligence than did Comparison group parents (M=76.9), p<.001. The Avoider group (M = 87.4) also gave a significantly higher estimate than Comparison group parents, p = .001, but did not differ significantly from User parents.

Table 39 gives the mean scores for each group of children for the child's rating on a 7-point scale of his or her own school performance (KQ8), the child's rating on a 4-point scale of his or her motivation (KQ12), and the child's estimation on a 4-point scale of how satisfied the parents are with that performance (KQ13).

Table 39

Child's rating of own performance, motivation and parent's satisfaction: Mean for each group.

	User	Avoider	Comparison
Mean performance in school	5.5	5.8_a	5.0_b
Mean motivation	3.0	3.2	3.3
Mean estimation of parent's satisfaction	3.5	3.7	3.6

Note. Mean scores with different subscripts differ significantly.

Children were asked to rate their own performance in class in comparison with their peers on a scale from "1" ("the worst student in the class") to "7" (" the best student in the class"). The difference between groups on the rating of their own performance was significant, F (2, 64) = 4.97, p = .011. A Tukey comparison of means indicated the Avoider group gave themselves a significantly higher rating than did the Comparison group, p = .009. The User group was not significantly different from either of the other two groups. Children were also asked to rate on 4-point scales how hard they tried in school and how happy their parents were with the child's performance in school. There were no significant differences among any of the groups in their rating of their own motivation, F (2,65) = 1.31, p = .33, or on their rating of how happy their parents were, F (2, 65) = 1.17, p = .32.

Parents were asked to rate their child's performance in school, their child's motivation in school,and their satisfaction with their child's performance. Table 40 gives the mean rating on an 8-point scale for each group of the child's performance in school (MQ50/CQ42), the mean rating on a 5-point scale of the child's motivation (MQ53/CQ45), and the mean rating on a 5-point scale of the parent's own satisfaction with the child's performance (MQ51/CQ43).

Table 40

Mean parental rating of child's school performance and motivation and parent's satisfaction.

	User	Avoider	Comparison
Mean rating of child's performance	6.8	6.9	6.3
Mean rating of child's motivation	3.6	4.1	4.2
Mean satisfaction with child's performance	3.2_a	3.7_b	3.4

Note. Mean scores with different subscripts differ significantly.

Parents were asked to rate their child's performance in comparison with his or her peers on a 8 point scale from "1" ("the worst student in the class") to "8" ("the best student in the class"). There were no significant differences among the groups in their rating of their child's school performance. F (2, 65) = 1.58, p =. 21. Parents were also asked to rate their child's motivation on a 5-point scale. There were, again, no significant differences among groups. F (2, 65) = 2.38, p = .10 However, when parents were asked to rate on 4-point scales, how satisfied they were with their child's school performance, there were significant differences among groups. F (2, 65) = 3.61, p = .033. The User group was significantly less satisfied with their children's performance than was the Avoider group, p = .026. The Comparison group did not differ from either of the other groups.

Parents were asked to rate how highly their family valued intelligence (MQ36/CQ29) and how important they felt good grades in school were (MQ35/CQ28). The importance of each was rated on a scale from "1" (not at all important) to "4" (very important). Table 41 gives the mean ratings for each parent group.

Table 41

Mean rating given by each parent group for the evaluation of intelligence and good grades

	User (N = 27)	Avoider (N = 21)	Comparison (N = 20)
Values intelligence	3.7_a	3.4	3.1_b
Values grades	3.5_a	3.8	3.9_b

Note. Mean scores with different subscripts differ significantly.

There was a significant difference between the groups in how highly they rated intelligence, $F(2,65) = 3.93$, $p = .024$. A Tukey comparison of means indicated that the User group rated intelligence more highly than did the Comparison group, $p = .029$. The Avoider group was not significantly different from either of the other two groups. Those Comparison group parents who believed their children were gifted rated intelligence as more important ($M = 3.8$) than did those who did not believe their children were gifted ($M = 2.8$), $t(18) = 3.40$, $p = .003$.

There was also a significant difference among the groups in how highly they valued good grades, $F(2,65) = 3.48$, $p = .037$. The User group rated grades as less important than did the Comparison group, $p = .036$. The Avoider group was not significantly different from either.

Hypothesis 11: Impact of Parental Use of the Label "Gifted": Children's Satisfaction with Being Identified as Gifted.

User and Avoider children were asked to rate the sentence "I like being gifted"(KQ21) on a 4-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). Those Comparison children who said they were gifted were asked the same question, while those who said they were not gifted were asked to respond to the alternative wording "I would like to be gifted". It was hypothesized that children of User members would believe it is less desirable to be gifted than would the Avoider children. This hypothesis

was not confirmed. There was no significant difference between the Users ($\underline{M}$ = 3.4) and the Avoiders ($\underline{M}$ = 3.2), $\underline{t}$ (44) = .97, $\underline{p}$ = .33. There was no significant difference between the Comparison children ($\underline{M}$ = 3.4) and the other two groups. $\underline{F}$ (2, 64) = .36, $\underline{p}$ = .70. All children said they agreed or strongly agreed that they liked being, or would like to be, gifted, with the exception of two GCA children. One child from the User group and one from the Avoider group said they did not like being gifted.

Further Analyses

Member parents were asked what were the benefits (MQ32) and disadvantages(MQ33) to their child of being gifted. Table 42 gives the number of parents mentioning various benefits and disadvantages of giftedness

Table 42

Number of parents mentioning various benefits and disadvantages that being gifted has for their child

	Users	Avoiders	Total GCA
Benefits			
Makes learning easier	10	8	18
Future potential	11	6	17
Personal satisfaction/recognition	7	9	16
Social benefits	5	6	11
Other	6	2	8
Total benefits	39	31	70
Disadvantages			
Brings social problems/isolation	17	17	34
School problems/boredom	9	4	13
Oversensitivity	7	3	10
Pressure from others	5	1	6
Perfectionism	1	4	5
Causes conceit/laziness	1	3	4
Lack of athletic ability	1	0	2
Total disadvantages	41	32	73

User and Avoider parents agreed on the benefits and disadvantages. "Social benefits" included opportunities to help others, increased empathy toward others, or specific benefits such as advanced skills at games. "Other" benefits included admission to special programs, ability to do a number of things at once, wisdom, and compensation for disabilities. One person felt there were no benefits to being gifted and one felt there were no disadvantages. Both parent groups emphasized the possibility of social problems.

Hypothesis 12: The Impact of Parental Use of the Label "Gifted" on the Child

Children's Attributions and Goals

Children were asked to rate the importance of five attributions for academic success: effort, ability, test difficulty, luck and teacher favouritism (KQ19). Mean scores for each group of children on each of the five attributes are given in Table 43

Table 43

Mean scores given by each group of children to five attributions for success in school tests

Attribution	Users (N = 27)	Avoiders (N = 21)	Comparison (N = 20)
Ability	5.2	4.9	5.3
Effort	5.7	6.0	6.5
Test difficulty	4.3	4.3	4.4
Good luck	2.9	2.2	3.4
Favouritism	2.6	1.9	3.0

It was hypothesized that children of User members would rank "ability" more highly than would either of the other groups of children. A Dunnett comparison of means indicated that there was no significant difference between the User children and the Avoider children $t(46) = .76$, $p > .05$. There was also no difference between the User and Comparison groups. A repeated measures test of group by

attribution indicated that the three groups did not differ on these attributes F (2,65) = 2.41, p = .098. The scores for the attribution did differ significantly from one another. F (3, 195) = 177.6, $p < .001$. There were, however, no significant group x attribution differences F (6,195) = .93, p =.47. All groups of children rated effort as the most important attribute for success.

The three groups of children were also asked to rate the same five attributions for lack of success on school tests (KQ20). The mean scores for each group of children are given in Table 44.

Table 44

Mean scores given by each group of children to various attributions for lack of success in school tests.

Attribution	Users (N = 27)	Avoiders (N = 21)	Comparison (N = 20)
Lack of ability	3.8	3.3	3.8
Lack of effort	4.6	4.4	4.7
Test difficulty	3.4	3.3	3.9
Bad luck	2.3	1.4	2.0
Favouritism	1.9	1.7	2.0

A repeated measures test of group x attribution indicated that there were no overall differences among the three children's groups, although there were significant differences between the attributions in the ratings given to them by the children. F (4, 256) = 43.17, $p < .001$. However, there were no significant group x attribution ratings, F (8, 256) = .48, p = 87. All groups of children rated "lack of effort" as the most important explanation for lack of success on school tests.

Children were presented with a scenario involving two hypothetical children and asked to decide which goals the children should choose (KQ17). Responses were rated from 1 (strongly prefer the performance goal) to 4 (strongly prefer the learning goal). The hypothesis that children of Users would be more likely to prefer performance goals over learning goals was not supported. A Dunnett comparison of means indicated there was no significant difference between the Comparison group (M = 3.35) and the

User group (M = 3.0). t (45) = 1.25, p > .05. The User group and the Avoider group (M = 3.0) did not differ.

Children were asked to rate 5 possible reasons why they might want to do well at school. It was hypothesized that children of the user group would rate "I like to learn new things" as a less important reason for wanting to do well at school than would either of the other groups of children (KQ18). Table 45 gives the mean scores on a 7-point Likert scale for each of five reasons why children might want to do well in school.

Table 45

Mean ratings by each group of children for each explanation of why they might want to do well in school.

Reason	User	Avoider	Comparison
I like to learn new things	5.6	5.4	6.2
I want to get good marks	5.4	5.7	5.9
I want to make my parents proud	5.4	5.4	5.5
I have to.	3.9	3.5	4.5
I want to impress my friends	3.7	3.0	3.7

A Dunnett multiple comparison of means was used to compare mean scores of children of User members to Comparison children. The difference was not significant, t (45) = 1.82, p = .078. There were no other significant differences among the three groups on any of the reasons. A repeated measures analysis was used to compare the remaining four reasons. The difference among the three groups was not significant, F (2,65) = .91, p = .41, although the difference among the four reasons was significant F (3,6) = 42.38, p < .001. The group x reason interaction was not significant, F(6, 195) = .89, p =.49.

Discussion

Why mothers use "gifted"

The results of Study 1 indicated that parents differentiated between using the term "gifted" to describe their children to other adults and using it in front of their children. This was unlike their use of other synonymous terms. One possible explanation was that "gifted" was semantically different from these other terms. It was hypothesized that parents who identified their children as gifted would see the term as more highly evaluative than would other parents. It was also hypothesized that "gifted" was perceived by all parents as more powerful than other synonymous terms. The results, however, indicated that the term "gifted" was not evaluated more positively by GCA member parents, nor was it found to be more powerful in the eyes of parents than were other synonymous terms, with the exception of "creative", which was seen as less powerful than any of the other synonyms. Thus, parental decisions to use or avoid the term "gifted" do not seem to be based on semantic differences in the power or evaluative implications of the word "gifted" itself.

An alternative explanation was that the parent's decision to use or avoid "gifted" was based on their certainty or uncertainty that the child was gifted. If this were so, parents who were less certain that their child was gifted would be less likely to use the term in front of the child. This explanation was also rejected. The mothers' decisions to use or avoid "gifted" were not based on their degree of certainty that their children could be described that way. All GCA parents agreed that their child was gifted; all but three GCA children were reported to have been tested formally to determine giftedness; and both User and Avoider groups rated themselves as equally certain that their children were gifted.

While neither semantics nor certainty explained why parents used or avoided "gifted", when parents were asked why they preferred use or avoidance, their responses suggested a difference in the

interpretation of the term. The responses of the Avoiders were similar to the responses of some of the parents in Cornell's (1984) study of the families of gifted children. In his study of 53 parents who commented on the term "gifted", 62% (33 parents) expressed a negative opinion about the term. These parents were concerned that the term was a "label", that it sounded elitist, or that it was associated with emotional dysfunction. In the present study, the most frequent reason given by Avoiders for not using the term was that "gifted" was an inaccurate "label". This explanation was offered by 52% of Avoider parents (11 parents) who explained that "gifted" was was too broad ("sounds like he's gifted in everything"), too narrow ("a little brain sitting in a chair"), or meaningless ("we are all gifted in different ways").

In contrast to the Avoider parents, who saw "gifted" as limiting, User parents regarded it as the truth, a broader description of their child which explained the child's uniqueness and problems. This justification for its use was offered by 55% of User parents (15 parents). These User parents pointed out "It's the accepted terminology" and said they used it "Because it's being used and she fits" or "Because it's a fact or at least it's a realistic assessment". One parent added, "(It's the) term used in most of the literature, might as well use the correct terminology. Obviously, they're going to read the psychologist's report" and another noted that not telling children they are gifted is "almost like lying to them".

User parents not only perceived "gifted" to be an accurate description of their child, but some also assumed that gifted children were different from their peers. Cornell (1984) noted that some of the parents in his study believed that giftedness implied emotional problems and regarded this implication as undesirable. User parents in this study, however, were more ambiguous about "differentness" and seemed to consider being different to be an intrinsic part of being gifted. In the opinion of the 44% of User parents (12 parents), explaining to their children that they were "gifted" would enable the children to understand why they were different. In the eyes of these parents, the label "gifted" might be seen as a way of avoiding the emotional problems which Cornell's parents mentioned. These User parents suggested it

was important to tell children they were gifted "Because they're going to notice...you're trying to describe someone and the ways they're behaving, the things they're doing..this is part of it". "They know they're different and they see they're different from the other children and if it's not explained to them they think there's something wrong with them". Some felt it would help the child overcome problems. "I think it leads them to understand themselves a lot better. Gifted children often feel they are inferior because they are different". "(He's) aware he's different and the difference frightens him" Their attitude was summarized by the parent who argued "At an early age, I believe they know that they are different, and I believe you have to help them realize why they are different". The one User parent who referred to academic differences and who suggested that using "gifted" ".. clears up a lot of things about why other kids make so many mistakes when they think it's so easy" had just joined the GCA and had only attended one meeting.

For many User parents, giftedness explained not only their child's school performance, but everything from a child's social difficulties to a teen-ager's fashion preferences, and some parents were quite open about using such attributions in front of their children. Solow (1995) suggested that such attributions reflect a higher level of reasoning about the child's behaviour on the part of the parent. She rated parents in 10 families on a 4-point scale based on their level of reasoning about their gifted child's behaviour. She argued that those parents who explained the child's behaviour in terms of "giftedness" were using a higher level of reasoning than were those parents who did not include the child's gifted qualities in their explanations. She assumes that giftedness is a quality which pervades the child's personality rather than a description of superiority in a limited domain, such as academic achievement. While her findings on how parents reason about their gifted children's behaviour are interesting, her rationale for ranking them is suspect. Solow's conclusions about parental reasoning on giftedness were drawn from the very small sample which consisted of families of school-identified children, some of whom did not accept the identification of their child as "gifted". Such familes may seek out less information on giftedness and may give less thought to the nature of giftedness than do families in which

the parents have identified the children. Within the present sample, there is no indication that Avoider parents were using lower levels of reasoning about their children's behaviour than were User parents. Avoider parents also appeared to be aware that some other parents believed that giftedness had a pervasive effect on personality. A few mentioned darkly that "gifted" implied "off the wall behaviour". "It sounds like he might have some problems...people, when kids are a mess, like to have a label." Some specifically mentioned that their child was unlike other gifted children because he or she had no problems. This distaste for the term was not a denial of their child's intelligence or precocity in comparison with peers, but it did reflect a discomfort with the broader implications about the child's personality that accompany the term. Users, in contrast, appear to accept the broader meaning as applicable to their child and saw "giftedness" as an explanation for a wide spectrum of behaviours.

This proclivity to extend "giftedness" beyond the range of academic prowess to areas of personal adjustment is not unique to User parents, but reflects the continuum of belief found within the literature on giftedness. Parents have embraced the concept of the "gifted child" and, with it, the unresolved questions as to the degree to which a child has gifts or abilities in a particular domain versus the degree to which the child is gifted and therefore qualitatively different from other children. Feldhusen and Jarwen (1993) have noted the differences in comprehensiveness of various conceptions of giftedness. "At one extreme are definitions with a single variable or domain such as mathematical aptitude or creativity. At the other extreme are multivariate definitions that include a wide range of traits in addition to cognitive variables" (p. 235). Like professionals, User and Avoider parents are arrayed along a continuum of belief, from those who felt giftedness described why their child was "so much different from an intelligent child" to those who felt it simply meant one was "in the top 2% of an ability". User parents were more likely to hold a multivariate definition of giftedness. "Gifted" is not only an explanation of atypical or precocious cognitive development, but also of differences in social and emotional development which may make the child's life more difficult. One User parent described the non-gifted sibling of the target child saying "He's not gifted. He's happy". User parents referred to general, pervasive "differences" and

mentioned "difficulties", and "sensitivity". "In grade 1, he was different and that (i.e., "gifted") was the term...I had to get off the denial that he was going to cope, because he wasn't". User parents identified differences between gifted and non-gifted children as going beyond academic. Parents' responses to the Belief Statements, which will be later discussed in more detail, also reflected the difference between Avoider and User parents in the degree to which they emphasized the differences between gifted children and non-gifted children. User parents tended to agree more strongly than Comparison parents with items stressing the association of giftedness with problems and the difficulties gifted children have getting along with peers. Of nine parents who clearly stated during the interview, in strong terms, that their child was emotionally or socially different from other children because he or she was gifted, eight were User parents. These parents, who spoke in terms of "psychological differences", "emotional turmoil","never going to fit in", "always going to have difficulty at school", clearly indicated that they believed "giftedness" was as much an affliction as a benefit. One User parent, speaking of why she would tell a child he or she was gifted said " If somebody had cancer would I tell them? I think they need to know where they stand." User parents seemed more likely to describe their children's talents, temperaments and social difficulties in extreme terms, and to connect these to giftedness.

While not totally immune to this, Avoiders were more likely to emphasize that their child had not had problems or that problems had been overcome or minimized; that the child was "normal"; or that giftedness was overemphasized ("to be outstanding in elementary school does not mean you're outstanding in life"). Like Cornell's (1984) parents, Avoider parents in this study seemed less comfortable with the broader implications of gifted and saw it as a label which is perhaps inappropriate, and potentially offensive to others. Those parents who clearly indicated during the interview that their child had no problems relating to giftedness were identified. Of eight parents who held this view, seven were Avoider parents. Any difficulties mentioned by parents were attributed to other causes ("problems are more related to attention problems and allergies"). One parent felt that giftedness had no disadvantages and those parents who believed that giftedness might have disadvantages emphasized that

their children had not had any. One Avoider mother, who had attended GCA meetings in her role as a teacher, acknowledged that gifted children had problems and added "I don't know if my kids *are* gifted. My kids have always been socially adapted". Avoider parents appeared to be aware of the broader definition of giftedness, but unwilling to acknowledge that their child could be described by that broader label. Some said they would only use the term in front of their child if the child was having difficulties, but emphasized that the child was well adjusted. They seemed to prefer to avoid the implication of "differentness" and to focus on intelligence, or more narrowly, school performance, as the defining feature of the child's "gift". It appears that for Avoider parents, "gifted" may express what the child *does* while for User parent it expresses what the child *is*.

Not only can "gifted" be seen as a broad or narrow descriptor but Margolin (1993) suggested that "gifted" is also an exclusionary social category. There is some suggestion among the responses of the parents that they recognized this exclusivity and that it may affect their willingness to use the term in front of others. Sapon-Shevin (1994) also found that while parents of students selected for a gifted program were proud of their child, they also felt uncomfortable with the issues of fairness and equality which such programs raised. She claimed that in the small American community she studied, most parents, teachers and children responded to these issues by avoiding mention of the program. A number of Avoider and User parents in the current study agreed that they did hesitate to describe their child as "gifted" when speaking to other people. However, when explaining why , Avoider and User parents revealed definite differences in their reasons. Avoiders tended to agree with Cornell's (1984) parents who felt "gifted" was "snobby" Avoider parents offered reasons for avoiding the term such as "It's kind of conceited from a parent's point of view, "It implies one kid is better than another. It has the ring of yuppies who want their child to be 'gifted' ", "Often parents who use it are blowing their own horn", "It smacks of pretension", "It's sort of boastful", "presumptuous", or "snobby". The parent who said "It sounds like bragging, like I would be saying he's special" reflected the views of several parents who specifically used "bragging" to describe the tenor of the term.

Those Users who said they avoided using "gifted" in front of others seemed to accept the label as exclusionary, but to hesitate to use it because of possible problems due to the misunderstanding of others. One User mother, explaining why she only used the term to other parents of gifted children, added, "If I'm speaking to non-believers I get "Oh, you believe that?". They're stumped. Non-believers think I'm boastful, snobby. They change the subject. They'll give me advice like 'you realize, they're only children' ". Another parent summarized the problem as "They don't like the idea I would think he was more intellectually capable than their children" .

The answer to the first question of why parents use or avoid the word "gifted" appears to relate not to the semantic qualities of the term or necessarily to parental certainty that the child deserves the term, but to the parent's preference for a narrow or multivariate definition of giftedness. It seems that parents who emphasize their child's differences on a number of qualities are more comfortable with using "gifted" to the child, while those who see giftedness as limited to a particular domain and who wish to emphasize their child's overall similarities to peers, tend to avoid it.

It is not clear why parents lean toward one particular approach or the other. Cornell (1984) suggested that an element of narcissism, resulting from their own frustrated aspirations, was present in parents who used the term. This particular issue was not addressed in this study; however, there is some support for the belief that parents might be, if not frustrated, at least dissatisfied. Although User mothers in the current study attained a level of education similar to that of Avoider mothers, they rated themselves as less satisfied with their own schooling. While this dissatisfaction may not be narcissistic, it may motivate them to ensure that their child's abilities are recognized and needs met. User parents may also be correct in claiming that the term "gifted" describes their child. However, it is not clear to what degree parents seek out and encourage behaviours which conform to their model of "giftedness".

What mothers believe about giftedness

The role of hard work and natural ability

The second question asked was what parents believe about giftedness. The first area in which parents differed was in response to the question of whether giftedness was a quality which was innate or developed. User, Avoider and Comparison parents all agreed that giftedness is an innate quality and all rated "natural ability" as the most important source of gifted behaviour. Despite this general agreement, User parents differed from both Avoider and Comparison parents by placing comparatively more emphasis on "natural ability" as the source of gifted behaviours, and less on "hard work". This emphasis is congruent with the Users' focus on "giftedness" as a central feature of the child's personality. The relative importance of "hard work" to Avoider and Comparison parents would seem to put more responsibility on the child for making an effort to be successful and to place the manifestation of the gift more within the child's control. An emphasis on "hard work" also suggests that there must be a product or achievement which confirms or validates the gift. In order to be recognized as "gifted" one must not only be gifted, one must do something gifted. Furthermore, the parent's sense of efficacy in promoting the child's academic success may be influenced by the parent's adoption of the belief that intelligence can be influenced by hard work (Bandura et al. 1996).

Does giftedness run in families?

Innate qualities may be seen as occurring randomly and, perhaps, inexplicably, or as qualities passed from parent to child. The issue of whether giftedness runs in families is the second area of difference among the three parent groups. Albert (1980a; 1980b) has argued that eminence is developed in families in which prodigious performance is seen as a family trait, and that gifted children are nominated by their families for this role. This would suggest that GCA parents might be more likely to believe that giftedness runs in families. Indeed, this was found. GCA parents were more likely to believe that giftedness ran in families, and in particular, in their family. Furthermore, GCA mothers were more

likely than Comparison mothers to identify themselves and their child's father as gifted, and to identify more of the child's grandparents as gifted. This propensity to see giftedness as running in the family was most marked among User mothers, who were even more likely than Avoider mothers to identify their child's father as gifted. User mothers, but not Avoider mothers, also listed a larger mean number of family members as gifted than did the Comparison mothers. When asked to what degree intelligence was a valued trait in their family, User mothers rated it more highly than Comparison mothers. Avoider mothers did not differ from either group. Both groups of GCA parents tend to regard giftedness as a trait which runs in their families. It is likely, however, that having a gifted child is more important to User mothers, who value intelligence more highly than Comparison parents and are even more likely than Avoiders to identify other family members as gifted.

As Goodnow (1990) has pointed out, positive beliefs shared by valued others are likely to be held firmly. It is not surprising, therefore, to find that GCA parents were more certain of their child's identification as gifted than the Comparison parents were about their identification of their child as either gifted or not gifted.. The belief that intellectual brilliance or giftedness runs in one's family and is manifested in one's child has undeniable appeal for some parents, especially those who value intelligence highly. Cornell (1984) suggested that the transmission from generation to generation of family myths and beliefs about the "giftedness" of the family may be a central feature in families with gifted children and that this belief provides a powerful impetus to ensure that one's children maintain the family's tradition of intellectual or creative superiority. Parental committment to the belief in family giftedness may be quite unshakeable, particularly among User parents. Three mothers, all from the User group, identified siblings of target children as "gifted" but described the school as not aware of the sibling's abilities and assessed the sibling's school performance as "slightly" or "definitely below average". Descriptions offered by parents suggested these "gifted" siblings were having some difficulties, for example: having "problems putting sentences together ..loses his train of thought"; "doesn't talk a lot but when she speaks

it is with a purpose...not motivated by people or things"; "(language) disabilities (which) counter giftedness and cloak giftedness....it's confusing for the teacher."

In contrast, the belief that giftedness runs in families is less attractive to Comparison parents since a non-gifted child implies a non-gifted parent and, in turn, having a non-gifted parent condemns the child to non-giftedness. Some Comparison parents may also be less optimistic than GCA parents about finding giftedness in their family. A striking example of seeing the glass as half-empty rather than half-full was a Comparison mother who, in response to a question about the academic ability of the child's classmates, replied that she felt the other children in her child's class were not very bright. Her reasoning was that her son was one of only three children in his grade to be awarded honour roll status. Rather than see her son as unusually capable, she assumed the other children were unusually slow. Thus, it appears that some Comparison parents may be less likely to look for signs of unusual intelligence. Not only are Comparison parents less likely to acknowledge intelligence as an important family value than are User parents, they are also less certain than GCA parents whether their child is or is not gifted, suggesting that they do not particularly concern themselves with the question.

The belief that giftedness runs in families was also the only belief on which the groups of children differed. User children were more likely than Comparison children to believe that giftedness ran in families. Avoider children did not differ from either group. Although both User and Avoider mothers believed that giftedness ran in families, User mothers differed from Comparison mothers in the number of other family members identified as gifted. It may be that this greater emphasis on familial giftedness is transmitted to the children of Users. In general, the belief that the family is gifted may be readily accepted by children because it is flattering, readily understandable, and central to the concept of giftedness as understood by their families.

Despite differences in emphasis between the GCA parent groups as to whether giftedness ran in families, they agreed on how and when they knew the child was "gifted". GCA parents tended to identify their children at a mean age of 3.9 years (S.D. 2.5 years), although a few parents claimed they realized the child was gifted when he or she was still an infant and one parent claimed to have recognized the child's abilities at birth. Claims of unusually early recognition have also been reported by other researchers (Cornell, 1984; Freeman, 1979) and 8% of the GCA parents said they believed that it was possible to identify gifted children at birth. For the majority of parents in the current study, however, the two behaviours most frequently mentioned as alerting them to their child's abilities were early reading ability and a large vocabulary.

Giftedness as a source of social and emotional problems

The third area of beliefs in which parents differed was the questions of whether giftedness brought problems. There are two stereotypes, probably equally unhelpful, of the "gifted child". On one hand is the "gifted child" as a paragon of virtue, as described by Mugny and Carugati's (1989) subjects. On the other hand is the archetypal association of genius and madness (Yehwehich, 1995). In general, parents in the current study were pleased to have a gifted child, and all but one rated themselves as somewhat or very happy to find out their child was gifted. GCA parents, however, were also more likely to believe that giftedness caused problems than were Comparison parents. Cornell (1984) suggested that this association between "giftedness" and problems was the reason some parents in his sample were reluctant to acknowledge their child as gifted. His Perceivers (parents who agreed their child was gifted) had a more positive view of giftedness than the non-Perceivers (parents who did not agree the child was gifted). The latter were more likely to associate giftedness with social and emotional dysfunction. In Cornell's opinion, this negative view of giftednes was a reflection of societal attitudes in the United States toward academic excellence. He also reported that the gifted children in his study were identified as a result of school problems, and suggested this association of giftedness and school difficulties should be examined further. He did not elaborate on whether the parents agreed that the child was having problems.

Again, Cornell's sample differs from the current sample in being drawn from school-identified rather than parent-identified children. However, while the dynamics of identification and labelling may have been different within his sample, his finding of a connection between giftedness and perceived problems is similar to findings of other researchers. Freeman (1979), using an English parent-identified sample, found a similar relationship between perceived problems and "giftedness". However, in her study, it was parents who labelled their children "gifted" who perceived their children as having more social and emotional difficulties than parents of equally bright children who were not identified as "gifted".

It is peculiar that parents would readily agree with the somewhat negative assertion that giftedness causes problems, particularly when there is much evidence that gifted children are well-adjusted. Although both groups of GCA parents differed from the Comparison parents on the overall score on the Problem subscale, when the responses to each question in the cluster were examined, it appeared that User parents were most strongly in agreement with the assertion of problems. The three parent groups did not differ on the question of whether gifted children had to make an effort to get along with non-gifted children, and both GCA groups agreed more strongly than the Comparison parents that gifted children see the world differently from other children. However, only User parents differed from Comparison parents on the remaining two statements: that gifted children had more difficulty making friends, and that giftedness brought problems. The Avoider parents did not differ from either group. This suggests that the overall difference between the GCA and Comparison parents may conceal a different emphasis between the two GCA member groups.

This concern on the part of User parents about social and emotional problems was also reflected in their responses to questions about their child's current peer relationships and current or past adjustment or behaviour problems as measured by their social-adjustment score. Not only did User parents believe that giftedness was, in theory, problematic but they also rated their child as having more problems either in adjustment and behaviour and/or with peers than did Comparison parents. Again, Avoider parents did

not differ from either group. During the interviews, however, both GCA parent groups indicated sensitivity toward possible social-emotional adjustment problems. When asked about the disadvantages of being gifted, 34 of the 48 GCA parents mentioned social alienation. Parents varied in intensity when volunteering this information from "It can be lonely, sometimes" to "Tremendous (disadvantages).. Lack of peers is greatest and lack of acceptance and understanding from adults. There's a lack of sympathy from anyone". It appears that both Avoider and User parents agree that being gifted may precipitate social and emotional problems. The results of the Problem subscale of the Parent Belief Scale and the response to social-adjustment scale, as well as the interview, however, indicate that User parents may hold this view more intensely than Avoider parents. This may be because they identify these problems in their own children.

In contrast to their parents, the groups of children did not differ from one another either on the question of whether giftedness causes problems or on the measures of social competence and peer relationships. All groups of children felt they got along equally well with their peers. Like subjects in other studies (Kelly & Jorden, 1990; Li, 1988), gifted and non-gifted children also rated themselves as equally competent in social matters on the Harter Self-Perception Profile for Children. In total, only five children (three GCA and two Comparison) admitted to having difficulties with peers and one Comparison child said he was often in trouble at school. It is interesting to note that only two of these children's parents identified their child as having difficulties with peers.

Asking children to rate their own popularity may be less accurate than having them rated by their peers, and it might be speculated that a child's own ratings of how well he or she gets along with peers may be closer to a rating of loneliness than to a rating of social competence. However, self-ratings of popularity give an appropriate measure of social competence for the current study. Although more children are identified as unpopular than identify themselves as lonely (Sanderson & Siegal, 1995). Margalit (1994) has suggested that loneliness and poor peer relationships are closely related. Margalit's

review of studies of children's loneliness reported that between 10% and 22% of school children agreed that they felt lonely. Thus, although peer difficulties may be slightly underreported in the current study, the three groups did not differ from one another in their rating of how well they got along with classmates. Since 93% of the children felt they got along with their classmates, it appears that neither GCA nor Comparison children were alienated from their peers.

This finding confirms the results of others (Oram, Cornell, & Rutemiller, 1995; Chamrand, Robinson & Janos, 1995; Hoge and McScheffrey, 1991; Hoge & Renzulli, 1991) who have reported that at modest levels of giftedness, children's social adjustment is not negatively influenced by their ability. Furthermore, unlike Cornell's (1989) students, in the present sample parental use of the term "gifted" did not result in less positive self-perceptions of attractiveness. It could be suggested that some of these previous studies may have had an unusually well-adjusted selection of gifted children because of selection bias rather than because most gifted children are well-adjusted. This selection bias could have been caused by the possibility that gifted children who were poorly adjusted might not be identified as gifted or selected for those special programs from which the samples were drawn. The children in the present sample were parent-identified rather than school identified, thereby reducing the possibility of such a bias. Despite the fact that 40% of the GCA children were identified by their parents as having social difficulties, GCA children rated themselves similarly socially competent to their non-identified peers. While these results support other researchers who have reported that gifted children are not socially handicapped, it appears that parents of gifted children remain concerned about their children's social and behavioural adjustment.

Any conclusions drawn from these findings must be limited to elementary school subjects. In general, those studies which reported social difficulties or low social self-competence tended to use adolescent subjects. (Kramer, 1991; Reid, 1991; Cross, Coleman & Stewart, 1993). These studies have also tended use interview techniques (Kramer, 1991), and to use either no control groups (Kramer, 1991;

Robinson, 1990) or possibly non-comparable control groups (Gresham, Evans and Elliot, 1988). The lack of appropriate control groups is particularly troublesome as it is not clear to what degree the students' responses are typical of their age group or reflect some peculiarities of the method of grouping children in the school which may contribute to their sense of alienation. For example, Gresham , Evans and Elliot (1988) compared average, special class and gifted students on a self-concept measure. However, while the average and special class students were 60% black and 40% white, the gifted group was 80% white and 20% black. Hollingworth's (1942) classic study in which she reported social difficulties among gifted youth is not comparable to the current study, because her subjects were an extremely select group of high ability students, and it is unlikely that the current sample was similarly exceptional.

Although they did not differ from Comparison children in their assessment of their social competence, GCA children were more likely than Comparison children to say they felt "different" from other children. When asked why they felt this way, they were not significantly more likely to give negative reasons for feeling different. Furthermore, all but two GCA children agreed that they liked being gifted. That "differentness" does not necessarily imply loneliness was also noted by Freeman (1993) who found that while the brightest of her more than 100 adolescent subjects were more likely to say they felt different, only 8 of them reported that giftedness was a barrier to relationships. In the current study, although the GCA children were more likely to feel different, they did not, during elementary school, appear to believe that the difference was negative, believe themselves to be alienated from peers, or resent being identified as gifted.

Obviously, some individual gifted children have social or adjustment problems or are subject to peer rejection. It has been noted that certain subgroups of gifted children, such as gifted girls (Kramer, 1991) or students living in those social milieus in which school achievement is not valued, may face ostracism by peers. Gifted children may also face stultifying classrooms and unsympathetic teachers and it would seem both unjust and foolish to deny academically advanced students an education commensurate

with their abilities. The children in the current study were not likely to be subject to the pressures facing some students from less enriched environments and most parents were satisfied with the child's schooling. It seems somewhat surprising that while the vast majority of children assessed their social situation positively, almost half the GCA member parents identified their children as having past or current difficulties with adjustment, behaviour, or peers. Cornell (1984) also found that some of his subjects associated giftedness with social and emotional dysfunction and Freeman (1979) reported that "gifted" children were more likely than equally bright non-identified children to be reported by parents as having unusual play preferences, needing little sleep, and being exceptionally sensitive. Comparison parents, in contrast, agreed overall with their children's own positive assessment of peer relationships and saw few behavioural difficulties

Why GCA parents would believe their children had peer difficulties when the children did not do so themselves is not clear, but there are several possible explanations. While it seems unlikely that the gifted children were socially obtuse and did not realize they were having difficulty getting along with others, it is possible that they were presenting themselves to the interviewer as more socially competent than they were. This, however, seems a less than satisfactory solution since measurements on the Harter Self-Perception Profile for Children, which did not reveal differences in social self-competence, did reveal differences among groups in self-perceived competence in academic and athletic ability; suggesting that the children were responding in a forthright fashion. A second possibility is that parents of gifted children may be more demanding and perfectionistic in both academic and social areas, and thus, an ordinary social life may be interpreted by the parent as unsatisfactory and the child described as having peer problems. However, the correlation between the parent's satisfaction with the child's school performance and the parent's judgment of the child's peer relationships was a non-significant .26, suggesting that the parents were not simply hypercritical in all areas. A third possibility may relate to the degree of parental investment in the child and an accompanying increased perception of the child's needs which may make the parent more sensitive to possible social problems. Parental sensitivity to the child,

which has been associated with enhanced intellectual development, may also make the parent more aware of the child's social and emotional development. The earlier behavioral and adjustment problems reported by GCA mothers may have further sensitized them to possible social problems. As the child grew older, he or she, being bright and verbal, may have volunteered more information about the social world of school. This may have made the parent more aware of any social difficulties and caused the parent to place undue emphasis on the day-to-day vagaries of elementary school social life and to magnify ordinary difficulties.

If the above scenario is accurate, Comparison parents, who tend to agree with their child's more sanguine approach, may be simply less attuned to their child's development or more willing to accept a less than perfect outcome. They may therefore ignore mild social problems. The Comparison children may also have a broader social network. Although they were as likely as the GCA children to be first-born or only children, their self-reported and parent-reported athletic ability may gain them easier access to social groups and, if they play team sports, an extended range of acquaintances. Their parents may see them, therefore, as more socially competent. Although there is no direct evidence in this study, it might be speculated that Comparison parents may also invest more energy in ensuring that their child has a smoothly functioning social life. They may also be more eager to portray their child in a positive light. Not having the excuse of giftedness to explain their child's difficulties, they may be more motivated to portray the child as well-adjusted and "normal".

A final possibility, and one that has some support, is that the parental concerns of the GCA members may be exacerbated by membership in the GCA and by their association with other parents of gifted children. Parents of bright children who are concerned about their child's development may gravitate to the association which offers to parents a possible remedy by providing an information and support network. Parents of gifted children are the intended recipients of books and articles which focus on the difficulties of these children (e.g., Smutney, Veenker & Veenker, 1979; Galbraith, 1983, 1985;

Kropp and Hodson, 1995). Parent self-help groups are recommended by some as an opportunity for parents to share advice and information about their gifted children (Goldstein & Wagner, 1993). However, such groups may contribute to the parents' perceptions of problems by emphasizing the differences of gifted children from their non-gifted peers and by providing a milieu in which bright children who have problems are over-represented. As one parent noted wryly "You don't join a group unless you have a problem". Some parents mentioned they had dropped out of the GCA because their children did not have social or behavioural problems and therefore they were not like most gifted children. That social difficulties may be seen as evidence of giftedness was hinted at by two mothers who criticized other GCA parents for trying to make their child "as different as possible" and also by the response of one User mother who refused to answer the question of whether her child had had any adjustment or behavioural difficulties. This mother insisted that, although the child had not had any difficulties, it was because the parents had adapted to the child and that the child was, in fact, "one of the few children with a difficult temperament" and was not at all adaptable.

Some of the literature written for parent about gifted children focuses on their social problems, which may suggest an explanation of the contrast between the mothers' views and the children's views of the children's peer relationships. While 40% of the GCA mothers indicated they believed their child had some difficulties with peers, only 6% of the GCA children admitted to having social difficulties. Of these three children, only one was identified by the mother as having social problems, while the other two were identified by their mothers as usually or always getting along with peers. Furthermore, 70% of GCA mothers mentioned alienation from peers as a disadvantage of giftedness. Why this archetype of the gifted child as a social misfit persists so intransigently is not clear. However, the acceptance and perpetuation of the "misunderstood genius" model may be supported by two processes in education. Educators serving gifted students are faced with the need to justify program funding, and the need to defend potentially contentious methods of dividing the gifted from the non-gifted. The parents in this study agree with educators that there is such a thing as a gifted child. The purpose of labelling a child "gifted", however, is

to stream identified children into specialized programs. The assumption that the selected children are essentially different from non-identified peers is common to many programs (Pendarvis and Howley, 1996) and the existence of this difference may be used to justify continued funding when such programs are in jeopardy. Large scale surveys of American taxpayers have found that while there is general support for programs for gifted children, there is less support for increasing funding to such programs. While 45% of the general public is willing to increase funding to programs for children with learning difficulties, only 16% favours increasing funding for gifted and talented programs (Larsen, Griffen, & Larsen, 1994). Parents of gifted children, however, are committed to specialized programs. Purcell (1993) interviewed parents of identified children and their teachers about the effects on the children of the cancellation of a school Gifted and Talented Program and found that 84% reported negative behaviours, such as frustration, boredom and underachievement, on the part of the children. Half the parents said they were now considering leaving the public school system. Given the parents' committment to these programs and the general public's lukewarm support for funding them, it may be important to supporters to demonstrate that programs for the gifted are a necessary service to children in need rather than the "pedagogy of privilege" (Margolin, 1996) for an elite minority. Thus, there may be a tendency to overemphasize possible social and adjustment difficulties of children who are denied these opportunities.

A second reason for the persistence of the belief in the "misunderstood genius" may relate to the problem of identifying gifted children. Identification is plagued by the problem of who is gifted, how they should be selected and how this process can be justified. Because most school programs for gifted children are limited in size, some assessment will be done and some children will be excluded. On one hand, educators bridle at the idea of selecting children exclusively on achievement tests results. The use of the mildly pejorative term "schoolhouse gifted" (Renzulli, 1986) to refer to those children who do extremely well in school but who do not have other "gifted" qualities hints at the difficulties some feel are inherent in selecting only top academic students while ignoring other students who seem unusually bright

but who are less academically inclined. However, if non-academic measures are used, children will be included who may be indistinguishable in many ways from non-identified peers. Parents in the present study alluded to the difficulty of identification. While some straightforwardly said they recognized gifted children by their "natural ability" and because they were "superior academically" or "able to produce high quality work", others referred to the gifted child as one who has "natural gifts that are opposed to a smart kid who works hard" and suggested they are "different from high achievers", "so much different than an intelligent child" As one parent put it "You'd have to write a book to describe the difference between her way of thinking and the average child's way of thinking", while another parent added giftedness was "often mixed up with a lot of other problems, attention deficit or a learning problem". One parent succinctly described her child as standing out "like a sunflower in a field of violets" and later added, "He's not ever going to fit in nicely and neatly". Thus, the suggestion that giftedness is more than academic achievement, and that it may even be a handicap, may make it easier to justify the label "gifted" when a child's performance does not stand out from that of non-identified peers. It may also allay any envy or sense of injustice on the part of those who are excluded. The necessity of setting arbitrary boundries to discriminate between gifted and non-gifted, in addition to attempting to justify the allocation of limited resources among, for example, children who do very well at school, children who have specific exceptional talents, and children who have high IQs but who are desultory students, tries the wisdom of both professional and parent alike. If gifted students are perceived as having difficulty in the regular school system or as misunderstood by less able peers, then they can be seen as having a need which must be met, and the allocation of services can be more readily justified. Schneider (1987) alluded to this agenda when he acknowledged that his book on the peer relations of gifted children might be disappointing to those who wished he would "provide more ammunition to those who promote special programs for the gifted" by portraying gifted children as under the "incessant attacks of hostile childhood peers" (p. 107)

The prevailing ethos, driven in part by limits on funding of special programs, may, therefore, support or encourage parents in their suspicions that their child has social difficulties, in spite of the fact that their children are satisfied with their social standing. Schneider (1987) had suggested that gifted children may incorrectly assume that they are less well accepted than they actually are, a phenomenon he describes as social "delusions of ungrandeur" (p. 71). It is possible that parental expectations of social difficulties may result during adolescence in hypersensitivity to social slights, expectations that peers will not like them, and a perception of peer rejection.

The transmission of beliefs about giftedness

Obviously, if children are to come to believe their peers may reject them, they must understand that they are gifted and that this quality may lead to rejection. This leads to the third question of whether parental use of the label "gifted" enhances transmission of the parent's beliefs to the child. Indeed, GCA children did understand what "gifted" meant and identified themselves as gifted. GCA children were more likely to identify themselves as gifted than were Comparison children, probably because more GCA mothers than Comparison mothers told their children they were gifted. Slightly over 75% of GCA children in both groups said their parents told them they were gifted. This is somewhat surprising, because one might expect the User children to be more likely than Avoider children to say their parents told them they were gifted. The children were not asked how often their parents used the term or the context in which the term was used. The parent's self-admitted willingness of use the term may indicate a greater acceptance of the term and its attendant implications as descriptive of their child. GCA children appear to have understood their parents' beliefs about giftedness and were more likely to agree with these beliefs about giftedness than were Comparison children, whose agreement with their parents was at a chance level. Thus, it is likely that parental beliefs about the potential problems of giftedness, the relative value of intelligence and good grades or the role of hard work in gifted performance are, to some degree, being conveyed to children. Using "gifted" may have also enabled mothers to better understand whether

their child believed he or she was gifted. User mothers were more aware than Comparison mothers of whether their children would identify themselves as gifted. Avoider mothers did not differ from either group.

One unexpected result was that 50% of the Comparison children also identified themselves as gifted when asked. Furthermore, during the interview, six of the Comparison parents (30%) identified their child as gifted. Because the parents were reponding to an interview, they were probably more like those parents who respond to calls to identify gifted children (Hitchfield,1973; Burns, Mathews, & Mason, 1990) than like the parents who spontaneously seek confirmation of their child's abilities (Robinson, 1987; Louis & Lewis, 1992). However, these parents were not necessarily incorrect in their assessment, as the interviews revealed that some of the Comparison children were similar in their achievements to the GCA children, attending academic private schools, achieving honour roll status, being selected for enrichment programs or recommended for acceleration and may well have been equally deserving of the label "gifted". It would seem, however, that the parent's identification was an *ad hoc* response rather than a firmly held belief. Among these six Comparison mother-child pairs, the beliefs of the parent and the child about whether the child was gifted and whether the child knew it indicated little understanding between parent and child about each other's beliefs. Parent-child agreement about the belief statements was at a chance level. The children's self-identification reflects their confidence that they have special talents, and this confidence may be well-placed. However, it may also reflect the findings of researchers (MacIver, 1987; Stevenson, Chen & Lee, 1993; Stevenson et al, 1996) who have suggested that North American children may have few guidelines to estimate their own ability and may therefore may overestimate their own competence. Sixteen of the 20 Comparison children were able to define "gifted" but it is not clear if this level of understanding of the term is reflective of most non-identified children. That some of the Comparison children may have been told the meaning of the word by parents immediately prior to the interview is suggested by the remark of one child who said, "I know what it means. I've just never heard anyone use it."

Despite assertions by parents during the interview that there were many types of giftedness, in the eyes of many parents, scholastic achievement was the benchmark of giftedness. Avoider parents and children paid particular interest to scholastic achievement. Avoider children were more likely to be identified by their parents as having exceptional academic ability than were Comparison children, and Avoider children, when asked what they did that made them gifted, identified themselves as doing well at school. Avoider children were also more likely to rate themselves as scholastically competent than were Comparison children on the Harter Self- Perception Profile for Children (1985). User children were intermediate. The focus of Avoider parents and children on academic achievement is consistent with the parent's view of giftedness as being within limited academic domains as opposed to being a pervasive quality which affects many aspects of the child's personality.

The finding of elevated scholastic self-esteem among Avoider students corresponds to the findings of most other research (Kelly & Jorden, 1990 ; Hoge & Renzulli, 1991; Colangelo & Brower, 1987); however, User children were not significantly different from either Avoiders or Comparison children. While they might be expected to be similar to Avoider children, it would be expected, based on the research, that User children would have higher scholastic self-esteem than Comparison children. This anomaly may, in part, reflect the high level of achievement of Comparison children, some of whom attended enrichment programs in their own school and may also have unusually high scholastic self-esteem. Had a less accomplished Comparison group been used, the Users and the Comparison group might have differed significantly.

Indeed, were this sample drawn from school-identified children rather than parent identified children, it is likely that some of the Comparison children would be in the "gifted" group. Of the seven Comparison children who were identified as by parents as having exceptional academic ability, six were also identified by parents during the interview as "gifted", suggesting that Comparison parents also view

academic accomplishments as a badge of giftedness. However, the 50% of Comparison children who identified themselves as gifted were more likely to say they were gifted at sports or artistic pursuits. Comparison children's responses on the Harter Self-Perception Profile for Children (1985) further confirmed that they rated themselves as significantly more competent in athletics than User children. Comparison parents were also more likely than User parents to identify their child as having exceptional athletic ability; however, this did not lead them to identify their child as gifted. Karnes and Swedel (1987) noted that fathers of non-gifted preschoolers were more likely to have made sure that children had playground equipment than were fathers of gifted preschoolers, suggesting that active physical pursuits may be more important to the Comparison parents.. It is interesting to speculate on the emphasis on "doing" gifted things versus "being" gifted with respect to both parents' and children's claims of superiority. Avoider children and parents both asserted the child's academic superiority, while Comparison parents and children identified the child's athletic abilities. User and Avoider parents appear to communicate their specific beliefs about giftedness effectively. However, not only Avoider, but also Comparison parents were able to communicate to their children the area of the child's accomplishments.

Mothers' and children's expectations for academic success

Since giftedness was perceived by parents to be manifested by academic ability, one would expect those who believed their children to be gifted to predict that their children would do better on ability and achievement tests. Indeed, both GCA groups gave a higher estimate of their child's intelligence than did the Comparison group. However, it is not clear to what degree their responses were influenced by their knowledge of their child's actual IQ score. A few GCA parents indicated their estimate was the child's actual percentile rank from an IQ test, information which the Comparison parents would not have. That parents tend to overestimate their children's scores on achievement tests has been reported by other researchers (Miller, 1988; Miller, Manhal & Mee, 1991). In the area of academic achievement, User parents did appear to have higher expectations than Comparison parents User parents tended to estimate

higher scores than Comparison parents, both when asked how well their child would do on an achievement test, and when asked what would be the lowest score they would accept without concern. Avoider parents were intermediate. While this suggests that User parents were putting more pressure on their children than were Comparison parents, it is not clear that User children felt this pressure. Hershey and Oliver (1988) found that almost half of their grade 4-12 subjects complained that a disadvantage of being gifted was that parents and teachers put unreasonable performance demands on them. However, she had no comparison groups. In this study, children were not asked how much pressure they felt, but it would be useful to determine in future studies if User children, like Hershey and Oliver's students, felt they were unreasonably pressured.

The children's groups did not differ from one another in their estimation of how high a score their parents were expecting, and although when asked what they thought they actually would get, User children gave the highest mark and Comparison children, the lowest, these differences were not significant. Although GCA and Comparison children all felt their parents were expecting scores in the mid to high 80s, Comparison children estimated a substantially lower mark than either of the GCA children's groups when asked to estimate the lowest score their parents would tolerate. This difference in the "lowest acceptable score" parents will tolerate may reflect the pressure that gifted children sometimes complain they are under. It may not be that the parent's expectations are too high, but that the children believe their parents are less tolerant of an average performance.

User parents appear to have the highest expectations for their child's success and Comparison parents the lowest. Avoider parents are intermediate, having expectations similar to those of the Users, but being willing to accept a lowest score more similar to the Comparison group. The children's expectations for success were similar to their parents' prediction. All groups of children were similar to one another in estimating that they would do more poorly than their parents expected, but would exceed the minimum score the parents would accept.

When parents and children were asked to turn from estimating how well the child was expected to do and rate the child's current performance in school and the parent's satisfaction, a different picture emerged. The Avoider children rated themselves more positively than the Comparison children, both when asked directly how good a student they were in comparison with classmates and when asked to rate their scholastic competence on the Harter Self-Perception Profile for Children (1985). User children did not differ from either group. Because children were drawn from elementary schools in several different school districts and because there was no consistent way to measure actual academic achievement, achievement was assessed by asking each mother and her child to rate the child's achievement in comparison with classroom peers. It was assumed that mothers would be familiar with the grading practices of their child's teacher. Since the interviews for this research were conducted at the end of the school year, it was also expected that mothers would have had opportunities over the school year to speak with the teacher about their child's performance and to derive an accurate estimation of their child's performance relative to classmates. Somewhat surprisingly, there was no difference among the three parent groups when they were asked how well their child did in school in comparison to classmates. Most parents believed their children to be "good" to "very good" students. However, when parents were asked how satisfied they were with this performance, User parents rated themselves as significantly less satisfied than Avoider parents with their child's performance. Comparison parents did not differ from either group. These unexpected results suggest that User parents do have high expectations and that their children may not be living up to these expectations. It has been suggested that individuals holding an entity theory of intelligence place more emphasis on performance goals and performance evaluation (Stipek & Gralinski, 1996), which may explain the parents' discomfiture. User parents place more emphasis on natural ability as a source of giftedness and may be more likely to hold an entity theory of intelligence. This would suggest that they may be more concerned about performance goals and evaluation and thus be prone to dissatisfaction with their child's grades. However, User parents seemed to value intelligence more highly than grades. Avoider parents in contrast, place more emphasis on hard

work as a partial source of giftedness than do User parents. They may be expected to hold an incremental theory of intelligence and place less emphasis on evaluation. It is not clear whether the Avoider parents do emphasize evaluation less. When asked to estimate how well their children would do on a hypothetical test, and what was the lowest mark they would be happy with, the Avoider parents' responses were not significantly different from either User or Comparison parents. They are also not significantly different from Comparison and Avoider parents on their rating of the importance in their family of good grades. However, they are satisfied with their child's actual performance at school.

Since there was no difference among the three groups of children in the rating of how satisfied they think their parents were, it seems that the children may be unaware of these differences. It is not clear from the present study if the positive view the Avoider children have of their scholastic competence is a reflection of reality (the parent's satisfaction is caused by the child's good performance) or whether the parents have more attainable expectations (the child's assessment of his performance is a reflection of the parent's satisfaction).

The relative importance of intelligence and good grades

Because no data on the children's actual achievement were collected, it is not clear whether some children were underachieving or what their levels of achievement were relative to their classmates or to each other. Perhaps some User children were underachieving and this is reflected in their parents' dissatisfaction with their children's performance. This seems difficult to reconcile with the finding that, of the three parent groups, the User parents rated grades as least important. Children of the User group, however, also rated scholastic competence as less important on the Importance Scale of the Harter Self-Perception Profile for Children (1985) than did children of the Comparison group. If User children did not rate scholastic competence as important to themselves, it may be that some were underachieving and this may explain their parents' dissatisfaction. It was Comparison children who gave the highest rating to

the importance of scholastic competence , while the Avoider group was intermediate. Given the high expectations of User parents and children for academic success, it seems strange, at first glance, that the children would regard academic success as less important than did the Comparison children, whose aspirations were more modest. The results are less surprising when one considers the parental response to questions about the importance to the family of intelligence and good marks. While User parents gave the highest rating to the importance of intelligence, they gave the lowest rating to the importance of good grades in school. Comparison parents rated good marks as important to their family and intelligence as less important. In reality, each group has effectively communicated its evaluation of the importance of good grades to their children.

There is, however, an area of possible parent-child conflict. On one hand User parents appear to place less importance on good marks, yet on the other they are also least satisfied with their children's school performance and expect the highest marks. Felson (1990) found that parents who were academic high achievers had higher standards for their children than parents who had achieved less. However, User mothers are not better educated than mothers in the other parents groups, and they did not rate their own school achievement more highly than did either of the other parent groups so this does not seem to explain why they have set such high standards. Their dismissal of good grades is not linked to any hostility toward their child's school. All parent groups rated their children's schools equally favourably. Part of their dismissal of good grades may be linked, however, to their own schooling. User parents rated themselves as less satisfied with their own schooling than were Avoider parents, and perhaps they have a lingering sense of having been cheated during their own school years.

Another possible explanation of this seeming contradiction of high expectations for good grades combined with a dismissal of good grades as important may lie in the conception of "gifted" as defining what the child *is* rather than simply what the child *does*. If User parents believe that giftedness explains why their child is different from other children, then giftedness, although it is related to intelligence, is

much more than good marks at school. Parental remarks that giftedness was more than good grades, and comments about "sensitivity", "awareness" and "psychological differences" as defining a gifted child, suggest that their emphasis is on a more pervasive quality than the ability to get good grades in elementary school. Despite this, intelligence is highly valued by User parents, presumably because it is a defining feature of giftedness and good grades are generally seen as a by-product of intelligence. As has been noted, User parents emphasize "natural ability" as a source of giftedness, and the adoption of entity models of intelligence focus attention on performance goals. Furthermore, they are least likely of the parent groups to acknowledge "hard work" as a source of gifted behaviours. Thus, User parents are caught in a conundrum While expecting their children to get good grades because they are gifted, they also place less importance on good grades because they are seen as a mere by-product of giftedness and not a defining feature. Furthermore, they are less likely than other parent groups to believe giftedness can be created by hard work, and more likely to believe that it is simply a natural quality. The children, who know they are identified as gifted, presumably recognize that good grades are not important to their identification as gifted and therefore consider them relatively unimportant. The parents are, however, dissatisfied with the child's school performance because gifted children should get good grades. It is possible that this misunderstanding of expectations will lead to further difficulties when the child is older, and it would be useful to examine such conflict in belief with relation to underachievement or dissatisfaction in later school years, the child's sense of differentness, and the parent's concern about the child's adjustment. The difficulties Cornell (1989) noticed in children whose mothers used "gifted" in front of them may not stem simply from the use of the term, but from such conflicting messages surrounding achievement and what it means to be gifted. Cornell's students were somewhat older that the current sample, with a mean age of 12.1 years. Thus they may have become, as Schneider (1987) suggested, more prone to feeling disliked by their peers.

The relative satisfaction of Avoider parents and their children may be in part explained by the Avoider mothers' own satisfaction with the quality of their own schooling and with their personal

achievement during their school years. It is possible that their own experience has made them more tolerant of a less-than-exemplary performance on the part of their own children. Furthermore, they are more likely than User parents to allow "hard work" a role in creating giftedness. This may both encourage them to demand a degree of effort from their child and permit them to excuse their child's failings more readily. Should the child falter, it can be more readily ascribed to a lack of effort rather than a diminishing of the "gift". Their view of giftedness as limited to academic achievement rather than as a defining feature of their child and their somewhat reduced identification of giftedness as a family trait may dampen the intensity of their concern about their child's performance. It is also possible that children identified by parents who hold a more limited view of what giftedness is may be children who are doing very well in school and who will continue to do very well.

Differences in attributions for success and failure and preference for learning or performance goals.

Despite differences in parental expectations and satisfaction, 90% of the children believed they "always" or "usually" tried to do their best in school and 97% of children said that their parents were "usually" or "almost always" happy with their schoolwork. Differences in attribution for success or failure found by other researchers (Kurtz & Weinert, 1989; Laffoon, Jenkins-Friedman, & Tollefson, 1989) were not found in the current study. However, the children were grouped not by their own behaviour or attitudes but by their parents' behaviour and beliefs. As Miller (1988) noted, the path from parent belief to child outcome is tenuous, thus the parents' decision to use or avoid gifted may be too distant from the child's attitudes toward school success or attributions. The children's groups did not differ in their attributions for success or failure, generally favouring hard work and ability as the reasons for success on tests at school and lack of effort as the reason for failure. "Learning new things" and "getting good marks" were the main reasons children chose for wanting to do well in school. When children were given a hypothetical situation and asked to choose between a performance goal and a learning goals, all groups of children preferred the learning goal. In contrast, all parent groups believed their children would prefer

performance goals. Why this difference between parents and children occurred is not clear; however, a number of parents indicated their child would want to do what was "easiest", while children were equally convinced that it was better to learn something new than to get good marks. The most obvious possibility is that children were responding with what they felt was the "correct" answer while parents were responding from a cynicism born of experience. Perhaps more generally, children are not highly motivated by marks. Thus, to the children, risking good marks for an interesting project is a small sacrifice. This lack of interest in marks may be demonstrated to the parents by what is seen by them as "laziness" in schoolwork. Thus they may interpret the question as one of whether the child would be willing to learn something new and perhaps more difficult or do something they would find easy.

Conclusion

An underlying question of this study was whether parents should tell their children they are gifted. The answer appears to be more than a simple yes or no. Parents who use the term gifted appear to place a different emphasis on the attributes of giftedness than those who avoid the term. Ultimately, the decision to use gifted does not rest on the semantics of the word, but on the belief that the word describes what the child is. Feldhusen and Jarwen (1993) have described professionals as adopting a univariate or multivariate model of giftedness and the beliefs of the mothers in the current sample can be seen as arranged along this continuum. Mothers who adopt the univariate model tend to avoid "gifted" and may actively reject the implication that giftedness implies personal or social difficulties. Mothers who adopt the multivariate model agree that their child different from other children both cognitively and emotionally and are more willing to describe these differences as part of being "gifted". The belief that gifted children are subject to rejection by peers is supported in part by professionals and experts writing for these parents.

The Users' conflict between the parental desire for exceptional academic achievement on the part of the child and the shared parent-child de-emphasizing of the importance of good grades might also be explored, particularly with reference to underachievement. However, beyond this as a potential source of parent-child misunderstanding, and the greater understanding of parent beliefs by children of Users, there appeared to be little impact of using "gifted "in front of the child on the child's attributions for success or failure or attitudes toward learning. The results of this study also confirm those of other studies which found that gifted children did not see themselves as socially less competent than other children (Schneider, 1987; Kelly & Jordan, 1990; Hickey & Toth, 1990), but that they do report feeling "different" (Freeman, 1979). The lack of substantial impact on other areas the children's functioning may be attributed to the variety of moderating influences which accompany any parent belief.

Many questions arise which were not addressed in this study. It would be useful to know whether User children are indeed underachieving or whether this is simply their parents' perception. It appears that some Avoider parents may be aware of the multivariate conception of giftedness and actively reject it, and it would be useful to know the degree to which parents have accumulated their beliefs about giftedness from books and professionals and the degree to which they represent "folk wisdom". Further study might also address the issue of whether User children do begin to feel less accepted by peers during their adolescence. Adolescence is a time of increasing social awareness and abstract reasoning abilities. Children who have been told by their parents that they are different from peers and may be misunderstood by them, may become more sensitive to peer relationships and they may, correctly or incorrectly, attribute peer difficulties to "giftedness". Furthermore, they may begin to question the personal meaning that their identification "gifted" has for them. This may be an important issue in the development of those children whose parents have been intensely involved in identifying their child as "gifted".

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Appendix A

Initial survey and covering letter

SURVEY OF GIFTED CHILDREN'S ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

Family Name:

Mailing Address:

Phone Number:

Father's Name: Occupation:

Mother's Name: Occupation:

Number of children in family: _____

Child's Name	Birth Date	Gender (M/F)
a)		
b)		
c)		

(Please attach additional sheets if necessary)

Important: To avoid awkwardness, the following questions ask about "your child" in the singular. We are aware, however, that some families will have more than one child who is gifted or talented. If a question can apply to more than one of your children, please answer separately for each child and please identify the child to whom you are referring.

1. For which of the above children hav you sought out the Gifted Children's Association?

2. In which area(s) is your child gifted? For example: general academic, specific academic, such as maths, arts/music, athletics, creative, etc. Please be specific. Please respond for each child you consider gifted.

Child's Name	Area(s) of giftedness

NOTE: Please do not forget to answer questions on the other side of this sheet.

PLEASE TURN OVER.

3. At what age did you first recognize your child was gifted? What age was your child when you joined the GCA? Please respond for each child you consider gifted.

Child's name	Age when recognized	Age when joining GCA

4. Who first alerted you to your child's abilities? (e.g. self, psychologist, teacher). Please respond for each child you consider gifted.

Child's name	Recognized by

5. Have you had your child tested because of their exceptional abilities? If yes, please describe (e.g. IQ test by school psychologist). Please respond for each child you consider gifted.

Child's name	Tested? (Yes or no)	Describe the testing

6. Is your child's school making any special provisions for your child because of his or her special talents? If so, please describe. Please respond for each child you consider gifted.

Child's Name	Provisions being made

7. In your opinion, how good are these provisions? (circle one)

excellent good fair poor.

NOTE: The next question is question 8. Have you answered both sides of the first sheet?

8. What features are adequate and which could use some improvement? Please respond for each child you consider gifted.

9. What is the highest level of schooling attained by you, the parents?

Mother Father

10 Please describe any training you have had in education or child development (e.g. parenting courses, teacher training, other professional training, undergraduate courses, etc.)

Mother

Father

11 Looking back at your own education, and considering your talents, do you believe your own education was (circle one):

excellent, good, fair, or poor?

12 Does anything stand out about your education that you believe has influenced how you have raised and educated your gifted child?

NOTE: Please do not forget to answer questions on the other side of this sheet

PLEASE TURN OVER

What terms do you use to describe your child's (or children's) abilities to other people when your child is not present (please check as many as apply). If you have more than one child whom you believe to be gifted. please indicate if there are some terms you use to describe one child that you do not use to describe the other.

____	gifted	____	smart
____	able	____	clever
____	bright	____	talented
____	creative	____	precocious
____	genius	____	intelligent
____	other (please specify):_____		

7. What terms do you use in front of your child (or children) to describe or explain their abilities (please check as many as apply). If you have more than one child whom you believe to be gifted. please indicate if there are some terms you use to describe one child that you do not use to describe the other.

____	gifted	____	smart
____	able	____	clever
____	bright	____	talented
____	creative	____	precocious
____	genius	____	intelligent
____	other (please specify):_____		

Thank you for completing the survey. Please feel free to add additional sheets to comment on ny issues regarding your experience in identifying and fostering your child's abilities. We would appreciate any comments you might have which you think may be of value to researchers or which you feel may have been overlooked in the preceding questions.

Appendix B

Second survey

SURVEY OF GIFTED CHILDREN'S ASSOCIATION MEMBERS

This survey is an abridged version of one sent to members of the GCA in 1993. If you completed that survey, please do not fill out this one. The purpose of this survey is to recruit possible subjects for a further research project. If you provide your name, address and phone number, you may be contacted at which time the research project will be described and you will be asked if you would like to participate. If you do not wish to participate, your name will be dropped from the list and you will not be contacted again. All information in this survey will be held in confidence. Please complete both sides of this sheet.

Family Name:

Mother's Name: Father's Name:

Mailing Address:

Phone Number:

Number of children in family: _____

Child's Name	Birth Date	Gender (M/F)
a)		
b)		
c)		

(To avoid awkwardness, the following questions ask about "your child". However, if more than one of your children is gifted, please respond for each child.)

1. In which area(s) is your child gifted (e.g. general academic, math, creativity, music, etc.)?

Child's Name	Area(s) of giftedness

2. At what age did you recognize your child was gifted? Who first identified your child as gifted (parent, teacher, professional or friend/relative)? Has your child been formally tested (e.g. IQ est)?

Child's Name	Age recognized	Recognized by	Tested(Y/N)

3. Is the school making any special provisions for your child? Please describe these provisions.

Child's Name Provisions being made.

4. In your opinion, how good are these provisions? (circle one)

excellent good fair poor.

5. Looking back at your own education, and considering your talents, do you believe your own education was (circle one):

excellent, good, fair, or poor?

6. What terms do you use to describe your child's (or children's) abilities to other people when your child is not present (please check as many as apply). If you have more than one child whom you believe to be gifted, please indicate if there are some terms you use to describe one child that you do not use to describe the other.

____	gifted	____	smart
____	able	____	clever
____	bright	____	talented
____	creative	____	precocious
____	genius	____	intelligent
____	other (please specify): _____		

7. What terms do you use in front of your child (or children) to describe or explain their abilities (please check as many as apply). If you have more than one child whom you believe to be gifted, please indicate if there are some terms you use to describe one child that you do not use to describe the other

____	gifted	____	smart
____	able	____	clever
____	bright	____	talented
____	creative	____	precocious
____	genius	____	intelligent
____	other (please specify): _____		

Thank you for your help. Please return survey as directed. Please feel free to add any additional comments you feel would useful which we have overlooked.

Appendix C

Telephone protocols

Phone Protocol for Members

Hello. (May I speak to...)

Mrs. _____. I'm calling from Simon Fraser University. My name is Heather Wingert and I'm a doctoral student in Developmental Psychology. Two years ago, you filled out a survey about gifted children that was sent to members of the Gifted Children's Association. On that survey, I asked parents to fill in their name and phone number if they might be interested in participating in further research. I have your name here and as it happens, I currently need parents of gifted children who are members of the GCA, who have a boy/girl _____'s age. I'd like to ask you and ____ to participate in my research. Do you have a couple of minutes now and I can tell you about it?

If No: When would it be convenient to call you back? *(Note time on card)*

If Yes: OK. I'll go over the information and if you have any questions, feel free to interrupt.

First, I'd like to assure you that this research has the approval of the University and I'm working in cooperation with Dr. Elinor Ames who is a professor in the Psychology Department in the area of Child Development.

The research I am doing will take about an hour to an hour and a half altogether. I would visit your house once - when it is convenient for you - and interview you and ____ and have you both fill out questionnaires. First I'll have you fill out a questionnaire about giftedness in children while I'm interviewing ____. Then I'll interview you, mainly about your schooling and _____'s schooling while ____ fills out a questionnaire.

The questions I ask the children are about schooling and success in school. I would like to interview ____ by him/her self where he/she feels comfortable that his/her answers won't be overheard. however, you are welcome to read over the questions I'll be asking him/her beforehand.

(If asked about interviewing child alone): None of the questions is really personal, however some children may answer more honestly if they are sure their parents or brothers or sisters can't overhear. For example, (this isn't an actual question but it is a good example), if I asked a child "How often do you fool

around in class when you should be listening to the teacher?", some children might answer "Absolutely never" if they thought their mom was listening but give a somewhat more truthful answer if they thought no one could hear.

Naturally, you and ____ will remain absolutely anonymous.

I hope you are able to participate. Finding gifted children and their parents is somewhat difficult, so every parent and every child is important.

If yes: Great. Can we set up a time now for the interview -some time when you and ___ will both be home and have an hour and a half that would be relatively uninterrupted?

Put name and time on calendar.

Are you still at _____ (*Check address. If not correct, put new address on card. If any question on how to find that address, ask and record on card.*) Could you give me some directions how to get there?

So I'll see you on _____ at _____. I'll give you a call (*the day before*) to confirm this with you.

Thank you very much. I'm looking forward to talking to you and ____. If you have any other questions or wish to get in contact with me you can call me at 469-6671. There is an answering machine on this number so if I'm not here, you can leave a message. Thanks again, good-bye.

(If subject wants to know the purpose of the study): I am interested in parents' beliefs about giftedness and whether these beliefs affect children's beliefs and attitudes toward school. I want to compare parents whose children are gifted with parents whose children are not identified as gifted and see what ideas the parents share and where they differ.

If subject refuses: OK that's fine. I'd like to ask you one more question. I'm anxious to get subjects, so naturally I'd be very interested to know if there is anything about what I said, or what I didn't say) that discouraged you from participating? *(Note any recurring reasons and modify presentation if necessary. Correct any misconceptions subject may have.)* Thank you very much for your time. Good bye.

Phone Protocol for Non-Members

Hello. (May I speak to...)

Mrs. _____. I'm calling from Simon Fraser University. My name is Heather Wingert and I'm a doctoral student in Developmental Psychology. When ____ was born, you completed a form saying you would be willing to participate in research. That was quite a long time ago, but your name is still on file and I am looking for parents and children to participate in a research project. I've called you because you and ____ seem to match what I am looking for. I'd like to ask you and ____ to participate in my research. Do you have a couple of minutes now and I can tell you about it?

If No: When would it be convenient to call you back? *(Note time on card)*

If not interested: Would you like me to take your name of the list, so you won't be called again?

If yes: OK. I'll go over the information and if you have any questions, feel free to interrupt.

First, I'd like to assure you that this research has the approval of the University and I'm working in cooperation with Dr. Elinor Ames who is a professor in the Psychology Department in the area of Child Development.

I'm interested in parents' beliefs about "gifted" children. I have select a number of parents who belong to an association for gifted children and I am trying to match them with parents and children who do not belong to such an association.

Before I take up too much of your time, I'd like to ask you a few questions.

1. Has ___ ever been identified as "gifted"? Y N

2. Do you belong to the Gifted Children's Association? Y N

If child gifted and mother not member, explain: Actually, I'm looking for children who are not gifted, so ___ wouldn't qualify for the study. Thank you for your time though. Sorry to have bothered you.

(If child gifted and mother a member, ask if she had received a survey two years ago. If not ask if she would fill one out. Consider for member pool.)

3. Has ____ ever been identified by the school as have special educational needs?

If Yes: Could you tell me what those needs were? *(If mild remedial help, continue. If not clear, ask*: Has ___ ever been labelled by the school as learning disabled? Y N

If child has special needs, tell parent: Actually, one of the things I'm looking at is "labelling". The gifted children are the "labelled" children in my study and what I'm looking for now is children who have never been given an educational label. Thank you for your time though. Sorry to have bothered you.

The research I am doing will take about an hour to an hour and a half altogether. I would visit your house once - when it is convenient for you - and interview you and ____ and have you both fill out questionnaires. First I'll have you fill out a questionnaire about giftedness in children while I'm interviewing ____. Then I'll interview you, mainly about your schooling and _____'s schooling while ____ fills out a questionnaire.

The questions I ask the children are about schooling and success in school. I would like to interview ____ by him/her self where he/she feels comfortable that his/her answers won't be overheard. however, you are welcome to read over the questions I'll be asking him/her beforehand.

If asked about interviewing child alone: None of the questions is really personal, however some children may answer more honestly if they are sure their parents or brothers or sisters can't overhear. For example, (this isn't an actual question but it is a good example), if I asked a child "How often do you fool around in class when you should be listening to the teacher?", some children might answer "Absolutely never" if they thought their mom was listening but give a somewhat more truthful answer if they thought no one could hear.

Naturally, you and ____ will remain absolutely anonymous.

Do you think you might be interested in participating?

If Yes: Great. Can we set up a time now for the interview - some time when you and ___ will both be home and have an hour and a half that would be relatively uninterrupted?

Put name and time on calendar.

Are you still at _____(*Check address. If not correct, put new address on card. If any question on how to find that address, ask and record on card:*) Could you give me some directions how to get there?

So I'll see you on _____ at _____. I'll give you a call (*the day before*) to confirm this with you.

Thank you very much. I'm looking forward to talking to you and ____. If you have any other questions or wish to get in contact with me you can call me at 469-6671. There is an answering machine on this number so if I'm not here, you can leave a message. Thanks again, good-bye.

If subject wants to know the purpose of the study: I am interested in parents' beliefs about giftedness and whether these beliefs affect children's beliefs and attitudes toward school. I want to compare parents whose children are gifted with parents whose children are not identified as gifted and see what ideas the parents share and where they differ.

If subject refuses: OK, that's fine. I'd like to ask you one more question. I'm anxious to get subjects, so naturally I'd be very interested to know if there is anything about what I said, or what I didn't say that discouraged you from participating? *(Note any recurring reasons and modify presentation if necessary. Correct any misconceptions subject may have.)* Thank you very much for your time. Good bye.

Appendix D

Parent Interview

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: PARENTS

FAMILY NUMBER_____

Mother Father

I am interested in exactly what people believe by the term "gifted", such as when people speak about a "gifted child". I am also interested in knowing how different experiences in your own schooling and with your children's schooling might affect your beliefs.

I'd like to start by asking you some questions about yourself and about your own education.

1. How old are you? _____

2. Can you please estimate your annual gross family income. Is it:

____	below $20,000	____	$60,000-$70,000
____	$20,000-$30,000	____	$70,000-$80,000
____	$30,000-$40,000	____	$80,000-$90,000
____	$40,000-$50,000	____	$90,000-$100,000
____	$50,000-$60,000	____	more than $100,000

3. How many people does this income support? _____ people.

4. How many years of education have you completed? When counting the number of years, please include elementary, secondary, and post-secondary schooling as well as any college, university, technical school, and apprenticeship training you have acquired.

_____

5. What is the most advanced degree or accreditation you have achieved?

_____

6. How many years of education has your spouse or partner completed? Again, please include elementary, secondary, and post-secondary schooling, as well as any college, university, technical school and apprenticeship training he/she has undertaken.

_____

7. What is the most advanced degree or accreditation your spouse or partner has achieved?

_____

8. Did you acquire all of your elementary and secondary education in Canada?

Yes No

If No: In which country or countries did you get your schooling?

_____

If more than one country named: When you look back on your education, is there one of those places which stands out in your mind as more important than the others in shaping your thoughts about schooling?

_____

9. Did you attend:

____ public school,

____ private school,

____ or both?

If private school: What sort of a private school was this?

_____

_____

If more than one type of school mentioned: When you think back on them, which one stands out in your mind as having had a greater influence on how you think about schools and schooling?

____ public

____ private

____ both equally.

10. Is there anything about your own education that you feel has affected your attitudes toward your child's education?

_____

_____

_____

_____

11. Overall, looking back at your own formal education, do you think it would best be described as:

____ very good,

____ good,

____ average,

____ not very good, or

____ poor?

12. Overall, looking back at yourself in your school years, would you describe yourself as having been:

____ an excellent student,

____ a very good student,

____ a good student,

____ an average student,

____ a not very good student, or

____ a poor student?

(If respondent answers either of the two previous questions with an equivocal answer, record the information and then repeat, "But OVERALL, which of these five categories would best describe your schooling/you during your school years?" and repeat the categories.)

13. Sometimes the term "gifted" is used to describe children of high intellectual ability or achievement. Do you believe there actually is such a thing as a "gifted child"?

Yes No

Why? _____

_____

_____

(If respondent does not believe there is such a thing, explain: This questionnaire has been designed partly to try to understand what people mean when they say a child is "gifted". Some people, like yourself, do not think that the term "gifted" has any real meaning. I would like you try to answer the questions, however, even though some of them will use the term "gifted". Substitute, for yourself, any term you feel is suitable, but which refers to children who are unusually advanced in their thinking, their specific abilities, their opinions or their understanding when compared with other children of the same age. Feel free to elaborate and clarify your answers at any point. *If respondent offers an objection which can be explained or clarified, note both the objection and the verbatim clarification.*

14. At any time during your school years, were you identified by the school as "gifted"?

Yes No

15. Whether or not your school formally gave you a label, were you ever given any special programming, enrichment, or subject or grade acceleration?

Yes No

If Yes: Please describe it?

_____

_____

_____

16. I'd like to turn now to your children. First, would you tell me the names and ages and grade levels of all the children living in your household?

Name	Age	Grade
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

If more than one child named:
Are any of the children you have named NOT long-term permanent residents of your household, for example, short term foster children or step-children who only visit occasionally?

Yes No

If Yes and if information not volunteered:

Which children are these?

_____

How long has this child/these children lived with your family?

_____

What proportion of the time does the child live here rather than at his/her other home?

_____

(If more than one child) I'd like to ask you now about each child separately. Let's start with _____ *(target child).*
(If only one child) Now I'd like to ask you about ____.

TARGET CHILD

17. Would you describe ____ as intellectually gifted?

Yes No

18. I would like you to rank how certain you are that ____ is/is not gifted. Would you say you are:

____ very certain,

____ somewhat certain,

____ somewhat uncertain, or

____ very uncertain?

If somewhat or very uncertain:
I'd like to know why you are uncertain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What would have to happen to make you decide for sure that *(child's name)* is or is not gifted?

_____

_____

_____

Continue with children in descending order of age.

SECOND CHILD

19. Would you describe ____ as intellectually gifted?

Yes No

20. I would like you to rank how certain you are that ____ is/is not gifted. Would you say you are:

____ very certain,

____ somewhat certain,

____ somewhat uncertain, or

____ very uncertain?

If somewhat or very uncertain:
I'd like to know why you are uncertain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What would have to happen to make you decide for sure that *(child's name)* is or is not gifted?

_____

_____

THIRD CHILD

21. Would you describe ____ as intellectually gifted?

Yes No

22. I would like you to rank how certain you are that ____ is/is not gifted. Would you say you are:

____ very certain,

____ somewhat certain,

____ somewhat uncertain, or

____ very uncertain?

If somewhat or very uncertain:
I'd like to know why you are uncertain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What would have to happen to make you decide for sure that *(child's name)* is or is not gifted?

_____

_____

_____

FOURTH CHILD

23. Would you describe ____ as intellectually gifted?

Yes No

24. I would like you to rank how certain you are that ____ is/is not gifted. Would you say you are:

____ very certain,

____ somewhat certain,

____ somewhat uncertain, or

____ very uncertain?

If somewhat or very uncertain:
I'd like to know why you are uncertain.

_____

_____

_____

_____

What would have to happen to make you decide for sure that *(child's name)* is or is not gifted?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Appendix E

Interview schedule for member parents (GCA)

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR MEMBER PARENTS

FAMILY NUMBER: _____

If more than one child identified as gifted:

25. Which one of your children was identified as gifted first?

_____

If more than two children identified as gifted:

And after _____, who was the next to be identified as gifted?

If more than one child: I'd like to ask you about (*target child*) first. Then I'll go back and ask you some of the questions again about _____ and _____,

26. How old was (*target child*) when you first realized he/she was gifted?

Has ____ undergone any formal testing for giftedness?

Yes No

If Yes: Could you describe it?

_____

_____

27. Who first identified *(child)* as gifted?

_____

_____

If self or spouse mentioned: What was it about _____ that tipped you off?

_____

_____

_____

If self or spouse not mentioned: Did you have any idea before _____ mentioned it that *(child)* was gifted?

Yes No

_____

_____

Do you think that generally it is parents who first recognize that their child is gifted?

Yes No

_____

_____

29 In your opinion, what is the earliest age a child can be identified as gifted?

_____

30. When you realized that _____ was gifted, would you describe yourself as:

____ very surprised,

____ somewhat surprised,

____ not very surprised, or

____ not at all surprised to have a gifted child?

31. How happy were you with this news about *(child)*? Would you describe yourself as:

____ very happy,

____ somewhat happy,

____ somewhat unhappy, or

____ very unhappy to find out that your child was gifted?

32. What benefits do you think being gifted has for your child?

_____

_____

_____

33. What disadvantages do you think being gifted has for your child?

_____

_____

_____

34. Are there any people in your family or your husband's family who are gifted, either people who have been formally identified as gifted or people who you think would be considered gifted if they had attended school today?

Yes No

If Yes: Which of the following people in the family do you think is probably gifted?

____ yourself, *(child's mother)*

____ (*child's*) father,

____ (*child's*) grandparents, (*If Yes*: How many of ___'s grandparents?) _____

____ or other relatives?

35. Overall, would you describe your family as one in which doing well in school is:

____ very important,

____ somewhat important,

____ somewhat unimportant, or

____ not at all important?

If asked for the meaning of "family" reply, "Your immediate nuclear family".

36. Overall, would you describe your family as one in which being intelligent is a trait which is:

____ highly valued,

____ somewhat valued,

____ not valued more or less than any other positive qualities, or

____ not valued at all?

Now I would like to ask you about the term "gifted".

37. Do you use the term "gifted" in front of *(child)* to describe his/her talents?

Yes No

If No: Why don't you use "gifted" in front of him/her?

_____

_____

_____

Can you foresee any circumstances under which you would change your mind and begin to use the term in front of *(child)*?

_____

_____

_____

You are a member of the GCA. How do you explain your membership in this association to your child?

_____

_____

_____

Some chapters of the GCA offer children's programs. Does ____ ever attend these?

Yes No

38. Do you use the term "gifted" to describe *(child)* to other people?

Yes No

If No and not obvious from previous explanation: Why?

_____

_____

_____

39. Some parents believe that it is not a good idea to tell a child he or she is "gifted", while other parents believe the child should be told and the term "gifted" explained to them. In general, do you believe that

____ children should be told that they are "gifted", or that

____ children should not be told that they are gifted?

(If not obvious from previous explanations) Why do you feel this way?

_____

_____

_____

40. Do you think *(child)* thinks of him/herself as "gifted"?

Yes No

If No: Do you think he/she thinks of him/herself as more able than his/her classmates?

Yes No

Now I'd like to ask you a few questions about *(child's)* school.

41. How many different schools has *(child)* attended since entering first grade?

_____

If more than 1, for each change: Why did he/she change schools *(add as appropriate)* for the first time/second time/...?

_____

_____

42. Does *(child)* presently attend

____ public school or

____ private school?

If public school: Which of the following public school programs does he/she attend

____ the regular program,

____ French immersion,

____ Montessori,

____ some other program?

If "some other" and information not volunteered: Could you describe the program he/she attends?

_____

_____

If private school: What school does *(child)* attend? *(Ask for clarification if the nature of the school is not clear, e.g. Catholic, conservative Christian, prep school)*

_____

What is the primary reason for sending him/her to this private school?
Use list below to categorize the respondent's reason. If "specialty school" or "other", describe.

____ *higher academic standards*

____ *discipline*

____ *religious*

____ *school for gifted*

____ *specialty school (describe)*_____

____ *close to home*

____ *other (describe)*_____

If more than one reason is mentioned, ask: "You said you sent *(child)* to private school because *(list reasons given)*. Which of these is the most important reason?

_____

_____

43. Have the teachers or school authorities at the school *(child)* currently attends indicated in any way that they believe he/she is gifted or exceptionally able?

Yes No

If Yes: How? _____

_____

_____

44. Have the teachers or school authorities offered (child) any special educational opportunities?

Yes No

If Yes: What have they offered?
Use list below to indicate the category into which the respondent's reason falls.

____ *enrichment*

____ *subject acceleration*

____ *individualized education program (IEP)*

____ *grade acceleration*

____ *other (describe)* _____

If Yes: Does *(child)* participate?

Yes No

If No: Why? _____

_____

_____

45. Would you say the school your child is attending now is responding to your child's academic abilities and talents

____ very well,

____ fairly well,

____ not very well,

____ poorly, or

____ very poorly?

If the child has attended more than one school: Thinking back over all the schools *(child)* has attended, would you say, in general, that they have responded to your child's academic abilities and talents

____ very well,

____ fairly well,

____ not very well,

____ poorly, or

____ very poorly?

46. Compared to the general population of children in B.C., would you describe the academic ability of the other children in your child's class as:

____ much above average,

____ above average,

____ average,

____ below average, or

____ much below average?

47. Let's say that *(child)* were given a test of intelligence for children his/her age with a maximum of 100 points. The average score is 50. What score do you think he/she would get?

_____

48. Now let's say that *(child)* took a test at the end of the year on what the class had learned in school that year. The test was out of 100 and the average score is 70. What score do you think he/she would get?

_____

49. If the average on the test is 70 and the test is out of 100, what is the lowest score *(child)* could get that you would be satisfied with?

_____

50. Compared with classmates, would you describe your child's performance at school as

____ truly excellent,

____ very good,

____ good,

____ slightly above average,

____ average,

____ slightly below average,

____ definitely below average, or

____ very poor?

51. How satisfied are you with *(child's)* performance in school? Would you describe yourself as:

____ very satisfied,

____ somewhat satisfied,

____ somewhat dissatisfied, or

____ very dissatisfied?

52. Do you believe your child demonstrates exceptional ability in any of the following areas:

____ overall academic ability,

____ language arts, in particular,

____ math, in particular,

____ music,

____ art,

____ athletics,

____ leadership skills.

____ creativity, or

____ some other area?

If "other": Could you describe what other areas your child excels in?

53. Would you describe your child as

____ almost always motivated to do well,

____ usually motivated to do well,

____ sometimes motivated to do well,

____ occasionally motivated to do well, or

____ seldom motivated to do well?

54. How well would you say *(child)* gets along with other children? Would you say he/she

____ always gets along well with his/her peers,

____ usually gets along well with his/her peers,

____ has some difficulty getting along with his/her peers, or

____ has many difficulties getting along with his/her peers?

55. How adaptable and easy to deal with is *(child)*? Would you describe him/her as one who

____ has never had any adjustment or behaviour problems,

____ has had only minor adjustment or behaviour problems,

____ has had moderate adjustment or behaviour problems, or

____ has had major adjustment or behaviour problems?

56. Imagine your child were required to choose a project to do which would be displayed at a School Open House or other public area. Both the project and the grade on the project would be made public. There are two equally interesting topics. He/she knows a great deal about one topic and will learn little that is new, but will be guaranteed to get a top mark. He/she knows very little about the other topic but will learn a great deal. However, he/she is not likely to get a top mark on the project. Do you think *(child)* would

_____ definitely prefer the familiar topic,

____ probably prefer the familiar topic,

____ probably prefer the new topic, or

____ definitely prefer the new topic?

Now I'm going to give you a sheet with two statements on it about success or failure in school. Each statement has several reasons underneath. I want you to rate each statement on the scale by circling a number from 1 to 7 depending on how important you think that reason is for doing well or poorly on a test. "1" means you think the reason is very unimportant, while "7" means you think it is very important. *(Give parent sheet and have them complete and return. Attach to interview)*

Now I'm going to give you a sheet that has a statement on it about what makes a child gifted. *(Give parent sheet.)* There are three possible reasons. I want you to distribute 10 points amongst these three reasons depending on how important you think each reason is. You may award them in any fashion you wish. You can have any whole number from 0 to 10 in a space as long as the total of the numbers in the spaces adds up to 10. Decide how many points you wish to award to each reason and I'll write it on my sheet.

59. Giftedness in a child is a result of:

____	+	____	+	_____ = 10
The child's natural ability		The child's effort		The family environment

57. **When a child gets a good mark in school, it is because:**

a) the child has natural ability in that subject

not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	very important

b) the child has worked hard at learning that subject

not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	very important

c) the teacher has explained the subject well

not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	very important

d) the questions on the test were easy

not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	very important

e) the child was lucky

not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	very important

58. **When a child gets a poor mark on a test a school, it is because:**

a) the child does not have natural ability in that subject

not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	very important

b) the child has not worked hard at learning that subject

not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	very important

c) the teacher has not explained the subject well

not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	very important

d) the questions on the test were hard

not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	very important

e) the child was lucky

not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	very important

59. Giftedness in a child is a result of:

_____	+	_____	+	_____ = 10
The child's natural ability.		The child's effort.		The family environment.

AppendixF

Comparison group interview

NTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR NON-MEMBER PARENTS

FAMILY NUMBER: _____

If more than one child: I'll be asking you about *(target child)* first. Then, I'll ask you about your other children.

25. Do you think generally that parents can recognize whether or not their child is gifted?

Yes No

_____

_____

26 In your opinion, what is the earliest age a child can be identified as gifted?

_____

27. Are there any people in your family or your husband's family who are gifted, either people who have been formally identified as gifted or people who you think would be considered gifted if they had attended school today.

Yes No

If Yes: Which of the following people in the family do you think is probably gifted?

____ yourself, *(child's mother)*

____ (*child's*) father,

____ (*child's*) grandparents, (*If Yes*: How many of ___'s grandparents?) _____

____ or other relatives?

28. Overall, would you describe your family as one in which doing well in school is:

____ very important,

____ somewhat important,

____ somewhat unimportant,

____ not at all important?

If asked for the meaning of "family" reply, "Your immediate nuclear family".

29. Overall, would you describe your family as one in which being intelligent is a trait which is:

____ highly valued,

____ somewhat valued,

____ not valued more or less than any other positive qualities,

____ not valued at all?

Now I would like to ask you about the term "gifted".

30. Some parents believe that it is not a good idea to tell a child he or she is "gifted", while other parents believe the child should be told and the term "gifted" explained to them. In general, do you believe that

____ children should be told that they are "gifted", or that

____ children should not be told that they are gifted?

Why do you feel this way?

_____

_____

_____

31. If someone from your child's school called and told you the school believed your child was gifted, do you would

____ tell your child why the school called and explain to term "gifted"

____ tell your child why the school called but avoid using the term "gifted", or,

____ say nothing to your child abou the call?

If not obvious from Q30: Why do you feel this way?

_____

_____

_____

32. Do you think *(child)* thinks of him/herself as "gifted"?

Yes No

If No: Do you think he/she thinks of him/herself as more able than his/her classmates?

Yes No

Now I'd like to ask you a few questions about *(child's)* school.

33. How many different schools has *(child)* attended since entering first grade?

_____

If more than 1, for each change: Why did he/she change schools *(add as appropriate)* for the first time/second time/...?

_____

_____

_____

34. Does *(child)* presently attend

____ public school or

____ private school?

If public school: Which of the following public school programs does he/she attend

____ the regular program,

____ French immersion,

____ Montessori,

____ some other program?

If "some other" and information not volunteered: Could you describe the program he/she attends?

_____

_____

If private school: What school does *(child)* attend? *(Ask for clarification if the nature of the school is not clear, e.g. Catholic, conservative Christian, prep school)*

_____

What is the primary reason for sending him/her to this private school?
Use list below to categorize the respondent's reason. If "specialty school" or "other", describe.

____ *higher academic standards*

____ *discipline*

____ *religious*

____ *school for gifted*

____ *specialty school (describe)*_____

____ *close to home*

____ *other (describe)*_____

If more than one reason is mentioned, ask: "You said you sent *(child)* to private school because *(list reasons given)*. Which of these is the most important reason?

_____

_____

35. Have the teachers or school authorities at the school *(child)* currently attends indicated in any way that they believe he/she is gifted or exceptionally able?

Yes No

If Yes: How? _____

_____

_____

36. Have the teachers or school authorities offered (child) any special educational opportunities?

Yes No

If Yes: What have they offered?
Use list below to indicate the category into which the respondent's reason falls.

____ *enrichment*

____ *subject acceleration*

____ *individualized education program (IEP)*

____ *grade acceleration*

____ *other (describe)* _____

If Yes: Does *(child)* participate?

Yes No

If No: Why? _____

_____

37. Would you say the school your child is attending now is responding to your child's academic abilities and talents

____ very well,

____ fairly well,

____ not very well,

____ poorly, or

____ very poorly?

If the child has attended more than one school: Thinking back over all the schools *(child)* has attended, would you say, in general, that they have responded to your child's academic abilities and talents

____ very well,

____ fairly well,

____ not very well,

____ poorly, or

____ very poorly?

38. Compared to the general population of children in B.C., would you describe the academic ability of the other children in your child's class as:

____ much above average,

____ above average,

____ average,

____ below average, or

____ much below average?

39. Let's say that *(child)* were given a test of intelligence for children his/her age with a maximum of 100 points. The average score is 50. What score do you think he/she would get?

_____

40. Now let's say that *(child)* took a test at the end of the year on what the class had learned in school that year. The test was out of 100 and the average score is 70. What score do you think he/she would get?

_____

41. If the average on the test is 70 and the test is out of 100, what is the lowest score *(child)* could get that you would be satisfied with?

_____

42. Compared with classmates, would you describe your child's performance at school as

____ truly excellent,

____ very good,

____ good,

____ slightly above average,

____ average,

____ slightly below average,

____ definitely below average, or

____ very poor?

51. How satisfied are you with *(child's)* performance in school? Would you describe yourself as:

____ very satisfied,

____ somewhat satisfied,

____ somewhat dissatisfied, or

____ very dissatisfied?

52. Do you believe your child demonstrates exceptional ability in any of the following areas:

____ overall academic ability,

____ language arts, in particular,

____ math, in particular,

____ music,

____ art,

____ athletics,

____ leadership skills.

____ creativity, or

____ some other area?

If "other": Could you describe what other areas your child excels in?

53. Would you describe your child as

____ almost always motivated to do well,

____ usually motivated to do well,

____ sometimes motivated to do well,

____ occasionally motivated to do well, or

____ seldom motivated to do well.

54. How well would you say *(child)* gets along with other children? Would you say he/she

____ always gets along well with his/her peers,

____ usually gets along well with his/her peers,

____ has some difficulty getting along with his/her peers, or

____ has many difficulties getting along with his/her peers?

55. How adaptable and easy to deal with is *(child)*? Would you describe him/her as one who

____ has never had any adjustment or behaviour problems,

____ has had only minor adjustment or behaviour problems,

____ has had moderate adjustment or behaviour problems, or

____ has had major adjustment or behaviour problems?

56. Imagine your child were required to choose a project to do which would be displayed at a School Open House or other public area. Both the project and the grade on the project would be made public. There are two equally interesting topics. He/she knows a great deal about one topic and will learn little that is new, but will be guaranteed to get a top mark. He/she knows very little about the other topic but will learn a great deal. However, he/she is not likely to get a top mark on the project. Do you think *(child)* would

_____ definitely prefer the familiar topic,

____ probably prefer the familiar topic,

____ probably prefer the new topic, or

____ definitely prefer the new topic?

Now I'm going to give you a sheet with two statements on it about success or failure in school. Each statement has several reasons underneath. I want you to rate each statement on the scale by circling a number from 1 to 7 depending on how important you think that reason is for doing well or poorly on a test. "1" means you think the reason is very unimportant, while "7" means you think it is very important. *(Give parent sheet and have them complete and return. Attach to interview)*

Now I'm going to give you a sheet that has a statement on it about what makes a child gifted *(Give parent sheet)* . There are three possible reasons. I want you to distribute 10 points amongst these three reasons depending on how important you think each reason is. You may award them in any fashion you wish. You can have any whole number from 0 to 10 in a space as long as the total of the numbers in the spaces adds up to 10. Decide how many points you wish to award to each reason and I'll write it on my sheet.

59. Giftedness in a child is a result of:

____	+	____	+	_____	= 10
The child's natural ability		The child's effort		The family environment	

57. **When a child gets a good mark in school, it is because:**

a) the child has natural ability in that subject

not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	very important

b) the child has worked hard at learning that subject

not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	very important

c) the teacher has explained the subject well

not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	very important

d) the questions on the test were easy

not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	very important

e) the child was lucky

not at all important	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	very important

58. **When a child gets a <u>poor</u> mark on a test a school, it is because:**

a) the child does not have natural ability in that subject

not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very important

b) the child has not worked hard at learning that subject

not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very important

c) the teacher has not explained the subject well

not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very important

d) the questions on the test were hard

not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very important

e) the child was lucky

not at all important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 very important

59. Giftedness in a child is a result of:

_____ +_____ +____ =10

The child's natural ability. The child's effort. The family environment.

AppendixG

Beliefs about giftedness

APPENDIX G1: BELIEFS ABOUT GIFTEDNESS QUESTIONNAIRE

Here are sixteen statements about intellectual "giftedness" in children. Please read each sentence and decide whether or not you agree with it and then circle "agree strongly", "agree", "disagree" or "disagree strongly". Please answer every question and only circle one answer per question.

1. Being gifted can sometimes bring a lot of problems. Do you

   ____ agree strongly,

   ____ agree,

   ____ disagree, or

   ____ disagree strongly?

2. Children who are gifted must make a special effort to understand and get along with children who are not gifted. Do you

   ____ agree strongly,

   ____ agree,

   ____ disagree, or

   ____ disagree strongly?

3. There are more children who are gifted than most people think. Do you

   ____ agree strongly,

   ____ agree,

   ____ disagree, or

   ____ disagree strongly?

4. Being gifted is more result of hard work than of natural ability. Do you

   ____ agree strongly,

   ____ agree,

   ____ disagree, or

   ____ disagree strongly?

5. You can make any ordinary child gifted if you provide the right environment. Do you

____ agree strongly,

____ agree,

____ disagree, or

____ disagree strongly?

6. There are many gifted children who are never picked as gifted. Do you

____ agree strongly,

____ agree,

____ disagree, or

____ disagree strongly?

7. The main thing that makes gifted children different from other children is that they have more natural ability. Do you

____ agree strongly,

____ agree,

____ disagree, or

____ disagree strongly?

8. No one really knows why a gifted child will turn up in a family. Do you

____ agree strongly,

____ agree,

____ disagree, or

____ disagree strongly?

9. Very few children are really gifted. Do you

____ agree strongly,

____ agree,

____ disagree, or

____ disagree strongly?

10. Children who are gifted find it harder to make friends than children who are not gifted. Do you

____ agree strongly,

____ agree,

____ disagree, or

____ disagree strongly?

11. Gifted children can succeed without much work. Do you

____ agree strongly,

____ agree,

____ disagree, or

____ disagree strongly?

12. When a child is gifted, he or she sees the world differently from other children. Do you

____ agree strongly,

____ agree,

____ disagree, or

____ disagree strongly?

13. Giftedness usually runs in families. Do you

____ agree strongly,

____ agree,

____ disagree, or

____ disagree strongly?

14. Giftedness can be lost if it is not nurtured. Do you

____ agree strongly,

____ agree,

____ disagree, or

____ disagree strongly?

15. You have to work hard to develop your gifts. Do you

____ agree strongly,

____ agree,

____ disagree, or

____ disagree strongly?

16. The reason gifted children do well at school is because their parents teach them at home. Do you

____ agree strongly,

____ agree,

____ disagree, or

____ disagree strongly?

APPENDIX G2: BELIEFS ABOUT GIFTEDNESS QUESTIONNAIRE

Now I'm going to read you some things about being "gifted" or "really smart". I want you to tell me whether you agree with what I said. There are no right or wrong answers. I want to know what you think. *(Show child visual aid)*. After I read the question, decide whether its a "yes" question that you agree with or a "no" question, that you don't agree with. Then decide if it's a "big yes" *(point to visual aid)* - you really think it's true - or a little yes - you think its kind of true. If you don't agree with the sentence and think it is a "no", you decide if it's a "big no" - you really don't agree - or a "little no", you think it's kind of wrong. *(Mark child's response on answer sheet).*

21. I like being gifted/I would like to be gifted. *(Use appropriate question depending on whether child has been identified as gifted.)* Is that

    ____ a big yes,

    ____ a little yes,

    ____ a little no, or

    ____ a big no?

22. Being gifted can sometimes bring a lot of problems. Is that

    ____ a big yes,

    ____ a little yes,

    ____ a little no, or

    ____ a big no?

23. Children who are gifted must make a special effort to understand and get along with children who are not gifted. Is that

    ____ a big yes,

    ____ a little yes,

    ____ a little no, or

    ____ a big no?

24. There are more children who are gifted than most people think. Is that

____ a big yes,

____ a little yes,

____ a little no, or

____ a big no?

25. Being gifted is more result of hard work than of just being born smart. Do you

____ a big yes,

____ a little yes,

____ a little no, or

____ a big no?

26. You can make any ordinary child gifted if you provide the right toys, books and chances to learn things. Is that a

____ a big yes,

____ a little yes,

____ a little no, or

____ a big no?

27. There are many gifted children who are never picked as gifted. Is that a

____ a big yes,

____ a little yes,

____ a little no, or

____ a big no?

28. The main thing that makes gifted children different from other children is that they were born smarter. Is that a

____ a big yes,

____ a little yes,

____ a little no, or

____ a big no?

29. No one really knows why a gifted child will turn up in a family. Is that a

____ a big yes,

____ a little yes,

____ a little no, or

____ a big no?

30. Very few children are really gifted. Is that a

____ a big yes,

____ a little yes,

____ a little no, or

____ a big no?

31. Children who are gifted find it harder to make friends than children who are not gifted. Is that a

____ a big yes,

____ a little yes,

____ a little no, or

____ a big no?

32. Gifted children can succeed without much work. Is that a

____ a big yes,

____ a little yes,

____ a little no, or

____ a big no?

33. When a child is gifted, he or she sees the world differently from other children. Is that a

____ a big yes,

____ a little yes,

____ a little no, or

____ a big no?

34. Giftedness usually runs in families. Is that a

____ a big yes,

____ a little yes,

____ a little no, or

____ a big no?

35. Giftedness can be lost if it is ignored. Is that a

____ a big yes,

____ a little yes,

____ a little no, or

____ a big no?

36. You have to work hard to develop your gifts. Is that

____ a big yes,

____ a little yes,

____ a little no,

____ a big no?

37. The reason gifted children do well at school is because their parents teach them at home. Is that

____ a big yes,

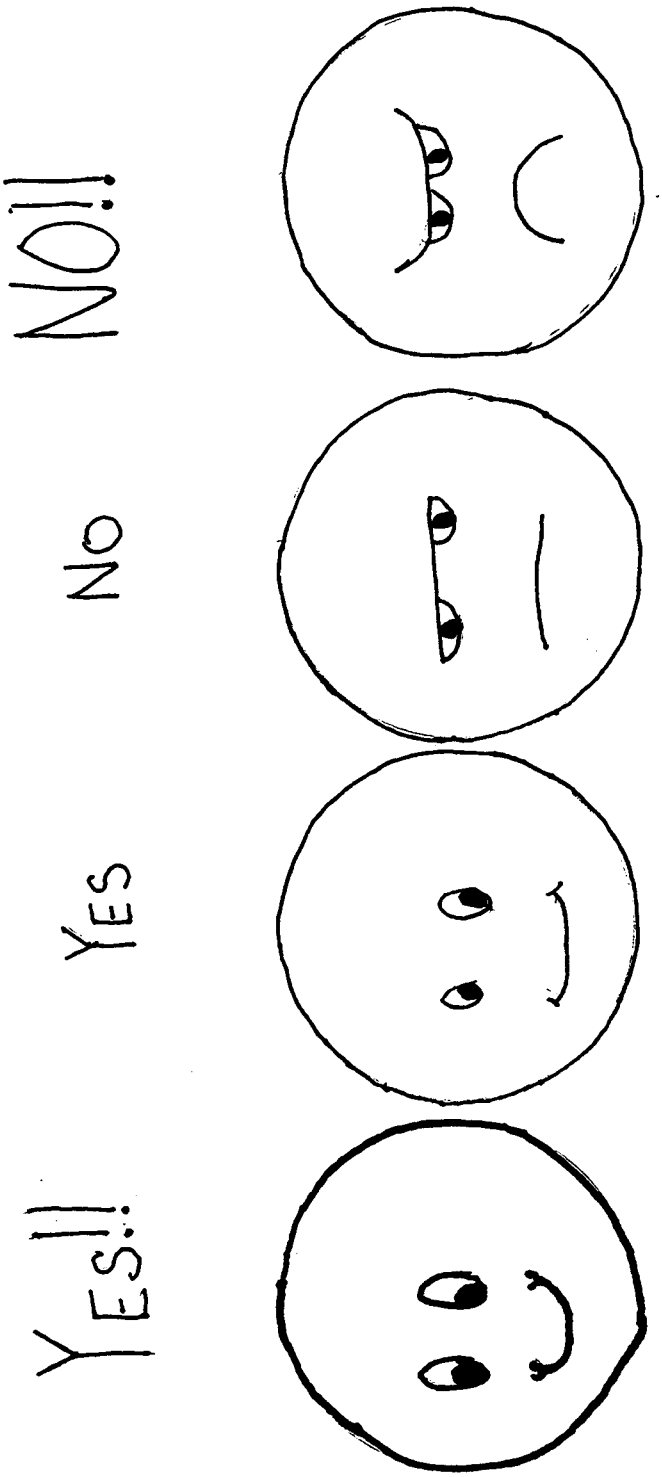
____ a little yes,

____ a little no,

____ a big no?

APPENDIX G3

Figure 1: Visual aid for Children's Belief Questionnaire



APPENDIX G4: BELIEFS ABOUT GIFTEDNESS BY CATEGORY

(alternate wording for children's questionnaire in brackets)
Asterixed items scored in reverse.

GIFTEDNESS CAUSES PROBLEMS

1. Being gifted can sometimes bring a lot of problems.

2. Children who are gifted must make a special effort to understand and get along with children who are not gifted.

10. Children who are gifted find it harder to make friends than children who are not gifted.

12. When a child is gifted, he or she sees the world differently from other children.

GIFTEDNESS IS RARE

3.* There are more children who are gifted than most people think.

6.* There are many gifted children who are never picked as gifted.

9. Very few children are really gifted.

GIFTEDNESS IS INNATE

4.* Being gifted is more result of hard work than of natural ability *(than of just being born smart)*.

5.* You can make any ordinary child gifted if you provide the right environment *(right toys, books and chances to learn things)*.

7. The main thing that makes gifted children different from other children is that they have more natural ability *(are born smarter)*.

GIFTEDNESS RUNS IN FAMILIES

8.* No one really knows why a gifted child will turn up in a family.

13. Giftedness usually runs in families.

GIFTEDNESS MUST BE NURTURED

11.* Gifted children can succeed without much work.

14. Giftedness can be lost if it is not nurtured *(it is ignored)*.

15. You have to work hard to develop your gifts.

16. The reason gifted children do well at school is because their parents teach them at home.

Appendix H

Semantic differential

Evaluation:

good ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ bad

wise ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ foolish

good-looking___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ugly

kind ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ cruel

optimistic ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ pessimistic

clean ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ dirty

healthy ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ sick

happy ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ sad

Potency:

hard ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ soft

strong___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ weak

severe___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ lenient

tenacious___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___yielding

masculine___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___feminine

poweful___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ helpless

brave ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___scared

capable___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ ___ fumbling

On the next six pages is a list of paired adjectives that can be used to describe people, animals or ideas. At the top of each of the following six pages is phrase. I would like you to rate how much one adjective of the other describes the phrase at the top of the page by putting an "X" on the appropriate line.

For example, imagine the term is "cat" and you like cats. If you think cats are very clean and somewhat kind, you might mark:

clean	X									dirty
kind			X							cruel.

Of course, if you do not like cats at all, you might agree that cats are moderately clean but very cruel. Therefore you might mark the adjectives as follows.

clean			X							dirty
kind									X	cruel.

On the next six pages, you will be asked to rate six phrases. Think briefly about what that phrase conjures up in your mind and mark you response according to your feelings about the term you are rating. There are no right or wrong answers.

"A GIFTED CHILD"

bad	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	good
helpless	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	powerful
optimistic	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	__	___	pessimistic
hard	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	soft
sick	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	healthy
brave	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	scared
masculine	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	feminine
tenacious	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	yielding
kind	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	cruel
ugly	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	good-looking
dirty	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	clean
sad	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	happy
lenient	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	severe
fumbling	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	capable
strong	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	weak
foolish	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	wise

"A TALENTED CHILD"

bad	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	good
helpless	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	powerful
optimistic	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	__	pessimistic
hard	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	soft
sick	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	healthy
brave	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	scared
masculine	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	feminine
tenacious	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	yielding
kind	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	cruel
ugly	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	good-looking
dirty	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	clean
sad	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	happy
lenient	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	severe
fumbling	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	capable
strong	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	weak
foolish	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	wise

"A SMART CHILD"

bad	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	good
helpless	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	powerful
optimistic	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	pessimistic
hard	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	soft
sick	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	healthy
brave	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	scared
masculine	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	feminine
tenacious	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	yielding
kind	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	cruel
ugly	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	good-looking
dirty	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	clean
sad	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	happy
lenient	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	severe
fumbling	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	capable
strong	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	weak
foolish	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	wise

"A CREATIVE CHILD"

bad	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	good
helpless	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	powerful
optimistic	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	pessimistic
hard	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	soft
sick	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	healthy
brave	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	scared
masculine	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	feminine
tenacious	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	yielding
kind	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	cruel
ugly	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	good-looking
dirty	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	clean
sad	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	happy
lenient	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	severe
fumbling	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	capable
strong	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	weak
foolish	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	wise

"A BRIGHT CHILD"

bad	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	good
helpless	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	powerful
optimistic	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	__	pessimistic
hard	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	soft
sick	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	healthy
brave	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	scared
masculine	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	feminine
tenacious	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	yielding
kind	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	cruel
ugly	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	good-looking
dirty	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	clean
sad	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	happy
lenient	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	severe
fumbling	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	capable
strong	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	weak
foolish	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	wise

"AN INTELLIGENT CHILD"

bad	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	good
helpless	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	powerful
optimistic	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	pessimistic
hard	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	soft
sick	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	healthy
brave	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	scared
masculine	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	feminine
tenacious	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	yielding
kind	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	cruel
ugly	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	good-looking
dirty	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	clean
sad	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	happy
lenient	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	severe
fumbling	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	capable
strong	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	weak
foolish	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	___	wise

Appendix I

Children's interview

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR CHILDREN

FAMILY NUMBER_____ CHILD'S NAME_____

I am interested in what parents and kids think it means when they hear a boy or girls described as a "gifted child". Teachers and sometimes parents use the word "gifted" and I want to know if kids have heard the word and what they think it means.

1. Have you every heard people describe a kid as "gifted"?

Yes No

If YES: What do you think they mean by that term?

_____

_____

_____

If NO: Can you guess what it means?

_____

_____

_____

(If child does not know what "gifted" means, explain: "Sometimes when kids are really good at their schoolwork or music or art or are just really smart, people say they are "gifted". Some schools have special classes called "enrichment classes" or "challenge classes" and sometimes, some of the kids who go to these classes are "gifted". So can you explain what "gifted" means now?)

_____

_____

_____

(Record answer. If child still seems unclear, use "really smart" in place of "gifted".)

2. Do you know anyone who you think is gifted? *(If child does not reply or understand, ask "Is there anyone in your class who does much better in school than everyone else or know a lot more?)*

Yes No

If Yes: What do they do that makes you pick them as being gifted?

_____

_____

3. Do you think you are gifted?

Yes No Not sure

If "not sure": If you had to make a bet and you would win a prize if you were right, would you bet you were gifted or would you bet you weren't gifted?

Gifted (YES) Not gifted (NO)

If Yes:

____ Have your parents ever told you that you were gifted?

____ Have your teachers ever told you that you were gifted?

____ Has anyone else ever told you that you were gifted?

____ Do you go to a school for gifted children?

What do you think it is that you do that makes people describe you as "gifted"?

_____

_____

_____

4. What school do you go to?

_____

5. What grade are you in?

_____

6. How well do you like school? Would you say you:

____ almost always like school,

____ usually like school,

____ usually don't like school,

____ don't like school at all?

7. Compared to other kids, how smart do you think the kids in your class are? Do you think they are:

____ a lot smarter than most kids,

____ a bit smarter than most kids,

____ just the same as most kids,

____ not quite as smart as most kids,

____ a lot less smart than most kids?

8. Compared with the other kids in your class, how well do you do in school. Are you

____ the very best student in the class,

____ one of the very best students in the class,

____ better than most of the students in the class,

____ about average,

____ not as good as most of the students in the class,

____ one of the poorest students in the class, or

____ the worst student in the class?

9. Let's say at the end of the year there is a test of everything you learned in school that year. The test is out of 100 points. Most kids in the class get around 70. What do you think you would get?

_____

10. What score do you think your parents would want you to get?

_____

11. What score is the lowest score you could get without having your parents be disappointed or upset with you?

_____

12. How hard do you try in school? Do you think you

____ always try to do your best,

____ usually try to do your best,

____ sometimes try to do your best,

____ almost never try to do your best?

13. How happy are your parents with your schoolwork?

____ almost always happy,

____ usually happy,

____ usually unhappy,

____ almost always unhappy?

14. How well do you get along with most of the children in your class? Do you

____ usually get along well with them,

____ usually don't get along well with them,

____ almost never get along well with them?

____ almost always get along well with them,

15. How well do you usually behave in class? Are you

____ almost never in trouble,

____ usually not in trouble,

____ usually in trouble,

____ almost always in trouble?

16. When you compare yourself with other kids your age, do you

____ always feel you are just like most other kids,

____ usually feel you are like most other kids,

____ sometimes feel you are different from other kids,

____ always feel you are different from other kids?

If "sometimes" or "always" different: What do you think is different about you compared to most other kids your age?

_____

_____

_____

Let's imagine two kids, Kris and Jamie. They are in the same class, they are good friends and they almost always get the same mark in everything. The teacher told them they have to work together to do a project for the school Open House. This project is going to be marked and all the parents and all the other kids will be able to see the project and the mark.

The teacher has told them they can do a project on dinosaurs or a project on space. They both know a lot about dinosaurs but not much about space. Both of them watch Star Trek on TV and they think the project on space would be really interesting but both of them know they will get a better mark on a project on dinosaurs. They can't make up their mind which one to do.

Kris says, "We should do the project on dinosaurs because we'd be sure to do a good job and get a good mark on this project. After all, everyone is going to see it at the Open House and they'd see what a great job we did.

Jamie says, "We should do the project on space because we'd learn lots of neat stuff. I'd rather learn something new and interesting even if we don't get such a good mark. It doesn't matter that much what our mark is if we learn something new.

17. What would you tell them to do?

_____ They should do the project on dinosaurs and get a good mark.

_____ They should do the project on space because they'd learn interesting new stuff.

Would you tell them:

_____ that you were absolutely sure that they should *(state choice)* or

_____ that you aren't sure, but you think they should *(state choice)*.

I am going to ask you some questions about school. On this first sheet are reasons why someone might want to do well at school and I want you to tell me how important each reason is. Here's the first sentence. *(Show subject sheet.)* I'd like you to read it to me. *(If subject cannot read sentence, read it to him/her.)* If you think that is a really important reason why someone would want to do well in school, you give it a big number "7". If you think it is not important at all, you give it a little number "1". If you think it is somewhat in between, you should pick one of the numbers between "1" and "7". Remember, the bigger the number is, the more important the reason is. The smaller the number is, the less important the reason is.

Now I'd like you to read each sentence out loud to me and then tell me what number you want to give it. *(If child cannot read well enough, read sentence to him/her. Mark subject response on response sheet.)*

18. I would like to do well in school because:

I like to learn new things,

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I want to get good marks,

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I want my parents to be proud of me,

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I want my friends to think I'm smart,

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I have to.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Now here is a sentence about why someone might do well in school. I want you to decide how important each reason is.

19 When I get a good mark on a test in school, it is because:

I am naturally good at that subject,

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I have worked hard to learn what the teacher taught,

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The teacher likes me,

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The questions on the test are easy,

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I was lucky.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Now here's a question about why someone might do poorly on a test at school.

20. When I get a poor mark on a test in school, it is because:

I'm just not any good at that subject,

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I haven't tried hard enough to learn what the teacher taught,

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The teacher doesn't like me,

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

The questions were too hard,

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

I wasn't lucky.

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Now here are the same reasons why someone might want to do well on a test in school. This time, I'd like you to number them from 1 to 7 in order of how you think they are. Number 1 is the most important and number 7 is the least important.

22. When I get a good mark on a test in school, it is because:

____ I am naturally good at that subject,

____ I have worked hard to learn what the teacher taught,

____ The teacher likes me,

____ The questions on the test are easy,

____ I was lucky.

Now here are the same reasons again about why someone might do poorly on a test at school. This time, I'd like you to number them from 1 to 7 in order of how important you think they are. Number 1 is the most important and number 7 is the least important.

23. When I get a poor mark on a test in school, it is because:

____ I'm just not any good at that subject,

____ I haven't tried hard enough to learn what the teacher taught,

____ The teacher doesn't like me,

____ The questions were too hard,

____ I wasn't lucky.

Appendix J

Consent forms

CONSENT FORM FOR PARENTS
INFORMED CONSENT BY SUBJECTS TO PARTICIPATE IN A RESEARCH PROJECT.

The university and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of subjects. This form and the information it contains are given to you for your own protection and full understanding of the procedures, risks and benefits of this research. Your signature on this form will signify that you have received a document which describes the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research project, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the document and that you voluntarily agree to participate in this project.

Having been asked by Heather Wingert of the Psychology Department of Simon Fraser University to participate in a research project, I have read the procedures specified in the document.

I understand the procedures used involved and I understand that I may withdraw my participation at any time.

I also understand that I may register any complaint I might have about the experiment with the chief researcher named above or with Dr. Chris Webster, Chair of the Department of Psychology, Simon Fraser University at 291-3358.

I may obtain copies of the results of this study upon its completion, by contacting Heather Wingert, Department of Psychology, Simon Fraser University.

I have been informed that the research material will be held confidential by the principal investigator.

I agree to complete the two questionnaires and to be interviewed by the researcher as described on _____ at my home .

NAME (please print)_____

ADDRESS: _____

_____

SIGNATURE:_____ WITNESS_____

DATE:

A copy of this consent form and a subject feedback form should be provided to you.

INFORMATION SHEET

Participation in this research will consist of agreeing to be interviewed about your views on "giftedness", your schooling and your child's schooling. It will also require that you complete two opinion questionnaires on giftedness. This will take approximately one to one and a half hours of your time. Participation in this project involves no foreseeable risks or benefits.

You are free to withdraw at any time or to refuse to answer any questions.

Your anonymity will be maintained in the following fashion:

A master list has been compiled which includes your name, address and subject number. Only your subject number appears on the questionnaires and interview form. After the interview has been completed and the data entered, your subject number will be removed from the master list. Should you wish to be informed of the results of the study, please fill out your name and address on the envelope provided. This envelope does not have your subject number on it and it will be kept separate from your interviews. Completed interviews will be kept in a locked cabinet at my residence.

The interview with you will be taped, should you agree. Tapes will be transcribed promptly, any identifying information deleted or altered, and the tape will be erased.

No identifying information contained within interviews will be made public. Should subjects be quoted, pseudonyms will be used or places or institutions described in general terms rather than identified (e.g. "a suburb of Vancouver" or "a non-sectarian private school").

Can I tape your answers on a tape recorder?

YES NO

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

INFORMED CONSENT FOR MINORS BY PARENTS OR GUARDIAN TO PARTICIPATE IN RESEARCH.

The university and those conducting this project subscribe to the ethical conduct of research and to the protection at all times of the interests, comfort, and safety of subjects. This form and the information it contains are given to you for your own protection and full understanding of the procedures, risks and benefits of this research. Your signature on this form will signify that you have received a document which describes the procedures, possible risks, and benefits of this research project, that you have received an adequate opportunity to consider the information in the document and that you voluntarily agree to have your child participate in this project.

As parent of _____, I consent to the above named engaging in the procedures specified in the document titled "Information for Parents" to be carried out at my home at the following time _____ in a research project supervised by Heather Wingert of the Psychology Department of Simon Fraser University.

I certify that I understand the procedures to be used and have fully explained them to _____. I have been present while the researcher has explained the document "Information for Children" to my child.

In particular, my child knows that he/she has the right to withdraw from the project at any time. Any complaint about the research may be brought to the chief researcher named above or to Dr. Chris Webster, Chair, Psychology Department, Simon Fraser University at 291-3358.

NAME (please print)_____

ADDRESS_____

_____

SIGNATURE: _____ WITNESS _____

DATE: _____

Once signed, a copy of this consent form and a subject feedback form should be provided to you.

INFORMATION FOR PARENTS

Participation in this research will consist of agreeing that your child be interviewed about his/her views on "giftedness" and school achievement and expectations. It will also require that he/she complete one questionnaire about his/her feelings of competence in academic and social areas. The interview and questionnaire will take approximately 45 minutes of his /her time. Participation in this project involves no foreseeable risks or benefits. Children will be interviewed in private and should both the parent and child agree, the interviews will be taped to ensure that the child's answers are recorded accurately.

Either you or your child are free to withdraw at any time or to refuse to answer any questions.

Your child's anonymity will be maintained in the following fashion:

A master list has been compiled which includes your name, address and subject number. Only your subject number appears on the forms. After the interview has been completed and the data entered, your subject number will be removed from the master list. Completed interviews will be kept in a locked cabinet at my residence.

Should the interview with you be taped, it will be transcribed promptly and any identifying information deleted or altered. The tape will then be erased.

No information which would identify your child or your family will be made public. Should subjects be quoted, pseudonyms will be used or places or institutions described in general terms rather than identified (e.g. "a suburb of Vancouver" or "a non-sectarian private school").

Can I tape your child's answers on a tape recorder?

YES NO

INFORMATION FOR CHILDREN

Thank you for taking time to help me with my research project. Your mom says she thinks you might like to be part of this research project, but first I would like to explain to you what exactly I want you to do so you can decide for yourself if you do want to be part of it or not.

This is what will happen. I am going to ask you some questions about school and how you feel about school work. I also want you to fill in a questionnaire. This whole thing is going to take about 45 minutes.

There are no right or wrong answers to these questions. I just want to know what children like yourself think. No one will know how you have answered. Your name isn't on any of the question sheets, just a number. If you mention anything like the name of your school or your teacher, I'll change the name when I write up my research so no one will know.

If you agree to be part of this research project but after a while you decide there are some questions that you don't want to answer, you don't have to. Just tell me that you don't want to answer them and that will be OK. We'll skip that question or questions. If you change your mind about being in this research project and you don't want to answer any more questions, you can tell me and we can stop at any time.

I'd like to tape your answers to make sure I write them down correctly, if that's OK with you. If I do, I will erase the tape as soon as I have written out your answers.

Can I tape your answers on a tape recorder?

YES NO

Do you have any questions?

Do you want to be part of this research?

YES NO

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SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY
UNIVERSITY RESEARCH ETHICS REVIEW COMMITTEE

SUBJECT FEEDBACK FORM

Completion of this form is OPTIONAL, and not a requirement of participation in this project. However, if you have served as a subject in a project and would care to comment on the procedures, you may complete the following form and send it to the Chair, University Research Ethics Review Committee. All information received will be treated in a strictly confidential manner.

Name of Principal Investigator: Heather Wingert

Title of Project: The Label "Gifted": Parent beliefs, transmission of beliefs and impact on the child.

Dept./School/Faculty: Psychology

Did you sign an Informed Consent Form before participating in the project?_____

Were there significant deviations from the originally stated procedures? _____

I wish to comment on my involvement in the above project which took place:

_____
(Date) (Place) (Time)

Comments_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Completion of this section is optional

Your name: _____

Address: _____

Telephone: (w)_____ (h)_____

This form should be sent to the Chair, University Ethics Review Committee, c/o Vice-President, Research, Simon Fraser University, Burnaby, BC, V5A 1S6.

Appendix K

Unclassified parents

Unclassified Parents

Six parents could not be classified as "users" or "avoiders" either because they had changed their position on the use of the term, they were new to the gifted movement, or they were concerned about sibling rivalry.

Three parents (1-12, 3-3, and 3-6) were changing their position on the use of "gifted". Two parents (3-3 and 3-6) indicated that they had previously avoided the term "gifted" even though both had had their sons formally tested several years earlier and were aware that their children were intellectually able. One child, currently in Grade 6, had been identified by the school district as gifted during the previous six months, while the other child had recently been accelerated from Grade 6 to Grade 7. Both parents felt their sons were now old enough to be exposed to the term "gifted", however both had some doubts about the wisdom of using the word in general. The other parent (1-12) had previously used the term with reference to her son who had been selected for an enrichment program, however now she felt she should not have used the term. This mother felt the identification as gifted put too much pressure on the child and that it was resented by some teachers. Her son was currently underachieving and the mother felt the school was trying to "lower her expectations" and renege on the identification. In contrast to the other two parents, she felt children should be told they are gifted, although she said she no longer used the term to her son.

Two parents (2-21 and 2-10) were drawn from the group of parents who had not completed the original survey but were recruited from the GCA monthly meetings. One parent (2-21) said that she had only recently joined the GCA and that her 8-year old boy had not been formally tested or formally identified by the school as gifted. The other parent (2-10) did not indicate when she joined the GCA, however, her 10 year old boy had been identified by the school within the previous several months. Both parents felt children should be bold they are gifted but both were unclear as to whether they told their sons

they were gifted. One (2-10) responded "More no than yes"; the other (2-21) related that when her son asked "Auntie M. says I'm gifted, what does that mean?", she replied, "It doesn't mean a heck of a lot". It is likely that these mothers have not yet clarified in their own minds what or whether they should tell their children about being "gifted".

The remaining parent (3-9) had two daughters who had been tested privately in early elementary school and had received what she described as "similar" tests scores. Unfortunately, the school district had recently tested both children and had identified only the elder as eligible for their gifted program. The mother was sensitive to the possibility that the younger child might feel left out and asked that both children be interviewed for the study. The younger, non-identified child, when asked if she thought she was "gifted" replied, "There's this program at school - it had these tests to find out if they were gifted. Then I wasn't". This mother did not use the term "gifted' in front of her children, however, she responded equivocally to the question on whether the term should be used in general. It is likely that her responses were based on her sensitivity to her children's feelings.

Appendix L

Qualified responses

Qualified Responses

Qualifiers used to respond to Q37, Q38 and Q39 by each group of parents (family number given in brackets)

Used gifted to child	Users	More now (3-13) Sometimes (3-7) Not very often (1-15) Sometimes, more or less (2-8)
	Avoiders	Rarely (3-5) Try to avoid it (3-12) Not really (3-10)
Used gifted to adults	Users	Gifted is loaded word...sometimes (1-18) Only to parents of gifted children (2-11) Not to describe him. When..friends..ask about the kids (2-17) Rarely - unless it has to do with..summer school. (1-1)
	Avoiders	Mentioned it once to grandparents..Very very close friends, one friend who had a gifted child. (2-16) Only to establish services. Actively avoid it (3-5)
Should you use gifted	Users	Loaded term - a lot of soul-searching to use it (1-19) Doesn't matter as long as you have a term (1-18) If it comes up (2-8)
	Avoiders	They should be told, but use sparingly (2-16) Depends on..age, school..in a gifted program (2-13) I wouldn't say "You are gifted". (2-20) Should be told but you don't need to throw (it) around (2-4)