



## Recommendations from the Research

Overexcitability	Characteristics	Recommendations
Psychomotor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- More energy than other children his or her age</li> <li>- Extreme enthusiasm, love of intense activity</li> <li>- Fidgets, always on the move; needs to “do”</li> <li>- Rapid speech, impulsive actions</li> <li>- Needs physical activity during the school day</li> <li>- Some may find overwhelming</li> <li>- Can be misdiagnosed as ADHD</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss positive aspects of psychomotor OE</li> <li>- Movement breaks, especially before/after long stillness</li> <li>- Consider work level; current performance may not reflect needs</li> <li>- Try to maintain awareness of time spent seated</li> <li>- Involve the child in physical tasks or errands</li> <li>- Teach that time to regroup/calm can be choice, not punishment</li> <li>- Provide for/model activities that soothe &amp; calm; teach relaxation techniques</li> <li>- When possible, allow/provide physical activity &amp; reasonable movement during activities, in a variety of settings</li> <li>- Using “fidget” items may or may not help</li> <li>- Provide time for spontaneity, open-ended activities</li> </ul>
Sensory (Sensual)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Increased aesthetic experience</li> <li>- extreme sensitivity, unusual reactions</li> <li>- Overwhelmed by noise, smells, textures (tags, sock seams, waist on pants, etc.)</li> <li>- Sensory sensitivity -&gt; distractible, difficulty working</li> <li>- Loud noises/locations can be stressful</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss positive aspects of sensual OE</li> <li>- Quiet space to regroup</li> <li>- Can try headphones or quiet work space (if child is comfortable)</li> <li>- When possible, allow child to limit offensive stimuli, maximize comforting stimuli</li> <li>- Help teach to effectively cope with offensive stimuli (e.g., politely declining a food or avoiding specific smells)</li> <li>- Consider seating location (away from sensory distractions)</li> <li>- When possible, foster child’s control over own work space/setting</li> <li>- Goal: promote self-efficacy. Encourage child in managing these aspects of their personality/development.</li> </ul>
Intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Exhaustively pursues passions</li> <li>- Many questions</li> <li>- Moral and ethical concerns: fairness (as perceived by child), respect for children</li> <li>- So excited re: ideas -&gt; interrupt</li> <li>- Independent in thought</li> <li>- May seem critical if others cannot sustain their pace</li> <li>- Hidden if child lacks interest</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss positive aspects of intellectual OE</li> <li>- Honor child’s need to seek understanding and truth, regardless of age</li> <li>- Allow child to develop projects on interests</li> <li>- Let child research; help child find answers to his/her own questions</li> <li>- Provide place to write down burning questions</li> <li>- Help child develop own goals, engage in self-reflection on steps toward</li> <li>- Help child reframe communication</li> <li>- Child’s correction/input often not intended as disrespectful</li> <li>- Provide interaction with intellectual peers (not necessarily age peers)</li> </ul>
Imaginational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Daydreams; may be difficult to stay “tuned in” during more structure / less creativity</li> <li>- May seem to dramatize or embellish</li> <li>- May write stories or draw instead of seatwork or discussions</li> <li>- Difficulty with tasks when ideas send on imaginative tangent</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss positive aspects of imaginational OE</li> <li>- Tolerance/understanding for daydreaming</li> <li>- Encourage sharing imagination: “how would this be different if it happened in another country, or time period or world?”</li> <li>- Offer chances to validate &amp; honor imaginational activities</li> <li>- Help to distinguish between imagination and reality; suggest placing “stop sign” in “mental video,” or write/draw facts</li> <li>- If possible, allowing child create to own organizational system may help</li> <li>- Help child to use imagination to function in real world. Instead of expecting to “fit in,” encourage path for learning, productivity</li> </ul>
Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Extremes of complex emotions; acutely aware of feelings</li> <li>- Intense sensitivity to right and wrong, injustice, hypocrisy</li> <li>- Can be timid/shy, or can seem to overreact</li> <li>- Physical: stomachache, blushing</li> <li>- Responses to class, home or playground can impact work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Discuss positives of emotional OE: “care deeply,” “loyal,” “very aware”</li> <li>- Teach emotion regulation techniques (e.g., deep breathing exercises)</li> <li>- Try not to dismiss feelings: “telling an emotionally intense child to ignore teasing or not let the teasing bother him is impossible advice... to follow”</li> <li>- Accept all feelings, regardless of intensity</li> <li>- Tolerance for age-appropriate self-interest, lack of adult perspective; the feelings are real for child</li> <li>- Help learn to anticipate physical/emotional responses; to better cope</li> <li>- Emphasize differences as a positive, not a negative. Help child to understand that being different is okay (especially important at early ages)</li> </ul>



Talking with Teachers	The Big Picture
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Possibility of performance gap: home vs. school</li> <li>- Researchers found parents' perceptions of gifted children's ability levels generally accurate</li> <li>- Teachers may have information needed to solve puzzles</li> <li>- Teachers may have different levels of G/T training</li> <li>- Teachers may have ideas about G/T from past experiences, emotions from past students/parents</li> <li>- Try to stay positive: gifted parents (and teachers) can be overexcitable, too! ☺</li> <li>- Remember that teachers have a hard job! Thank them for efforts, and let them know what is working!</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Hidden depths of sensitivities: lifelong</li> <li>- Can hinder or help students, depending on how students, parents, and teachers accept and channel them</li> <li>- OEs + giftedness = ?                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- altruism: sensitivity can be a strength!</li> <li>- emotional risks, goals: to not feel bad about, avoid scars, to learn to channel appropriately</li> </ul> </li> <li>- Home environment can impact management of OEs</li> <li>- Meeting academic level needs can help manage OEs, as well</li> <li>- Needs: empathy, flexibility, understanding, acceptance, love</li> <li>- Make overexcitabilities a positive force!</li> </ul>

### Further Reading: Books

### Further Reading: Websites

**Sengifted.org**  
Supporting the Emotional Needs of the Gifted (SENG)

**DavidsonGifted.org**  
Davidson Institute for Talent Development

**Byrdseed.com**  
Blog, teaching tips, and videos from a G/T Teacher

**Numien.com (NuMinds)**  
Resources, courses, and enrichment from G/T Teachers

## Sources and Further Reading

Daniels, Susan and Michael M. Piechowski. Living With Intensity: Understanding the Sensitivity, Excitability, and the Emotional Development of Gifted Children, Adolescents, and Adults. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press, Inc., 2009.

Webb, James T., et al. Misdiagnosis and Dual Diagnoses of Gifted Children and Adults. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press, Inc., 2005.

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Rinn, Anne N. "Overexcitabilities and the Gifted Child." *Digest of Gifted Research*, September 24, 2009. Duke Talent Identification Program. Web. Feb. 2015. <http://tip.duke.edu/node/922>

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