

## **The Importance of Play for Gifted Children**

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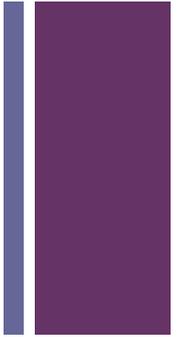
# + Presentation

## Overview

- Why do gifted children need balance, free time, and time for play?
- How is balance and free time helpful / beneficial?
- Action Plan



# + Free Time and Play



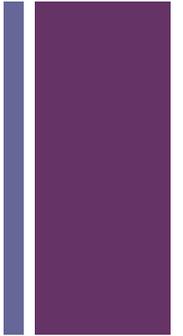
What is the current “status” of you / your child's free time?

- What are some “barriers” or roadblocks to free time?
- What does your child do for play?
- About how much time each week does your child get free time and unstructured play time?





# Defining Free Time and It's Challenges for Gifted Children



- Free Time: Unstructured, child interest /desire led, leisure (hard to come by)
- This may be an even bigger challenge due to gifted children: passions, intensity, expectations of others.
- “Because [gifted children] are so greatly stimulated...gifted children are often misunderstood. Their excitement is viewed as excessive...their imagination as not paying attention, their passion as being disruptive...their creativity and self-directedness as oppositional.” (Daniels & Piechowski, 2009).

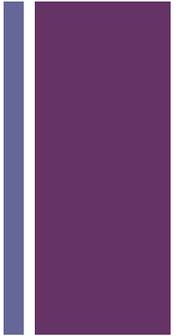
# + Free Time's Bad Rap

- Why is “free” time given a bad rap? Especially in GT.
- Are our lives too organized and regimented these days? How can we give our kids more of the gift of free time?
  - Our lives, and our kids' lives, are more scheduled today than ever. School, after-school activities, organized sports, even daycare hours are regimented into subjects, with little time for play.
- “Readiness” Activities



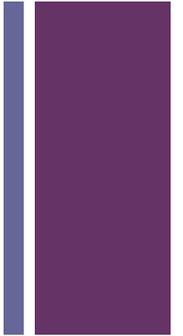


# Why Free Time?



- Gifted children need the same unstructured play as other children. Arguably, even more so. Here's why:
  - 1. Gifted children thrive when they can be **creative, inventive,** and **use their minds productively**. Play can incite their love for learning and discovery, without the pressure of performance, achievement standards, or conforming to others' rules.
  - 2. Gifted children benefit from learning to **cooperate with peers**. They grow from learning to adapt with friends who are not gifted, and by meeting the challenge when with gifted peers. They learn important lessons about **social skills, managing anxiety, coping with competitive feelings**, and what types of social interactions feel comfortable for them.

# + Learning As Discovery



- Extrinsic Rewards=less willing to take risks.
- Allow for active learning.
- Elicit their curiosity.
- Welcome mistakes.
- Jill Adelson & Hope Wilson (1999). *Letting Go of Perfect*. Prufrock Press.
- Alfie Kohn (1999). *Punished By Rewards*. Houghton Mifflin.

# + Motivation

- Dan Pink examines the puzzle of motivation, starting with a fact that social scientists know but most managers don't: *Traditional rewards aren't always as effective as we think.*
- *We are motivated by: **autonomy, mastery, and purpose***
  - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rrkrvAUbU9Y>



# + Most "Fun" Aspects of School

- Activities that consistently meet requirements for **arousal** and **control** are perceived as "fun" and become an individual's interests. **Gifted children in particular seem to require a relatively high level of arousal and a high degree of personal control to perceive educational activities as fun.**
- Middleton, 1992. *Gifted Students' Conceptions of Academic Fun: An Examination of a Critical Construct for Gifted Education*. The Gifted Child Quarterly, 36(1).

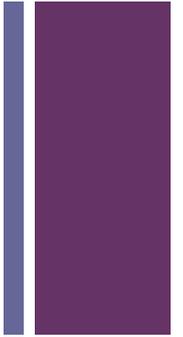
**Table 1**

**Frequencies of students reporting that each aspect was one of the "most fun" aspects of school across grade and gender.\***

Aspect	Grade											
	3rd		4th		5th		6th		7th		Total	
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M
Recess .....	5	6	6	9	7	12	5	6	1	2	24	35
Phys. Ed .....	3	7	7	7	8	12	1	3	3	5	22	34
Art .....	5	4	9	7	9	6	5	4	2	2	30	23
Mathematics .....	4	4	6	8	7	9	3	2	0	0	20	23
Music .....	2	4	7	5	7	5	3	2	2	1	21	17
Lunch .....	1	4	5	6	3	8	3	3	0	3	12	24
Reading .....	1	4	6	4	6	6	2	2	2	1	17	17
Socializing with Friends .....	2	4	0	2	5	5	2	2	4	5	13	18
Science .....	1	2	3	3	6	7	2	2	0	3	12	17
Spelling .....	1	3	6	3	5	2	2	3	0	0	14	11
Gifted Program .....	4	5	3	2	6	3	2	0	0	0	15	10
High Technology/Computers .....	2	6	2	1	2	7	1	1	0	3	7	18
N: .....	5	9	11	10	15	14	6	6	4	5	41	44

\*Note: Only the 12 most frequently reported aspects of school are listed.

# + Family Strategies That Work

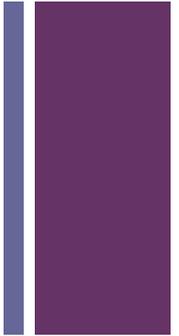


- Schedule in free time daily.
- Track balance of days.
- Make a family mission including balance, fun, etc and review it weekly for adherence
- Move away from competition and comparisons. Move toward individual passions, new learnings (perhaps especially in areas we are not good at), and anything deemed "fun".
- What is moves your child into "flow"? (Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi)

# + Free Time Tools

	<b>Urgent</b>	<b>Not Urgent</b>
<b>Important</b>	<b>I</b>  (MANAGE) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crisis</li> <li>• Medical emergencies</li> <li>• Pressing problems</li> <li>• Deadline-driven projects</li> <li>• Last-minute preparations for scheduled activities</li> </ul>	<b>II</b>  (FOCUS) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Preparation/planning</li> <li>• Prevention</li> <li>• Values clarification</li> <li>• Exercise</li> <li>• Relationship-building</li> <li>• True recreation/relaxation</li> </ul>
	<b>Quadrant of Necessity</b>	<b>Quadrant of Quality &amp; Personal Leadership</b>
<b>Not Important</b>	<b>III</b>  (AVOID) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interruptions, some calls</li> <li>• Some mail &amp; reports</li> <li>• Some meetings</li> <li>• Many "pressing" matters</li> <li>• Many popular activities</li> </ul>	<b>IV</b>  (AVOID) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trivia, busywork</li> <li>• Junk mail</li> <li>• Some phone messages/email</li> <li>• Time wasters</li> <li>• Escape activities</li> <li>• Viewing mindless TV shows</li> </ul>
	<b>Quadrant of Deception</b>	<b>Quadrant of Waste</b>

# + Balance Tools



## ■ Health Log Name

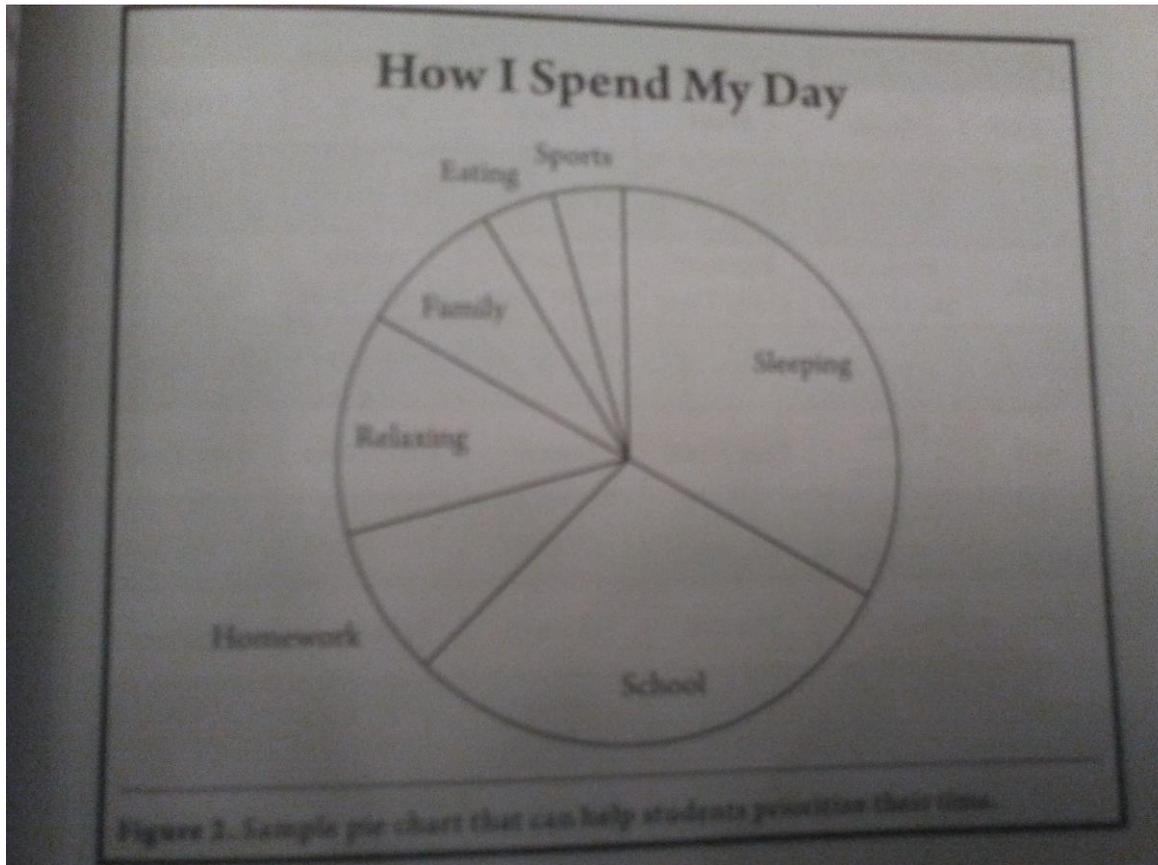
■ Date: Sleep Food Moods/Feelings Passions/Free Time Work Family Thankful For

■ 10/6 8 3 meals/2000 excited, anxious ride bike, fav TV 8 hrs dinner/walk family, art

■ 10/7 7 2 meals/2500 cals lonely, sad read book 10 hrs 5 min hello home, rest

■ 10/8 8.5 3 meals/snack 2200 cal happy, joy volunteer, draw 8.5 hours dinner, tv work, church

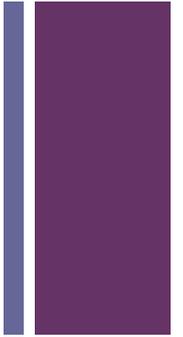
# + Helping to Support Free Time





# School Strategies That Work- as

observed in gifted schools and classrooms



**Fun Fridays-** elective one time and multi-week clubs and classes in the afternoons. Free Centers options.

**Sustained Silent Work Times-** time for crafts, reading, art, or any other quiet activities. The teacher floats / checks in on students.

**ALP Study Halls-** social and academic lessons, dedicated time each week to work on student selected passions (work with teachers to connect to area of identified strength)

**Continued Work** Areas / Tags

**Photo or Word prompts** to creative, independent writings



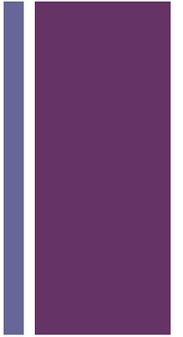
## Academy for Advanced and Creative Learners:

**Daily fitness and fun time, 30 mins.**

**Power hour projects** - weekly time to work on a project of choice; applied to ALPs for those.

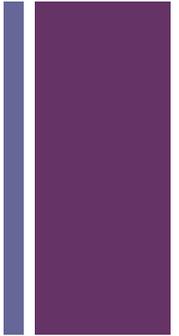
**Screenplay to Film.**

**STEAM Projects** A half day steam in fall, full day in spring. Rotating sessions all day- physics of jump roping. Hexaflexagons.

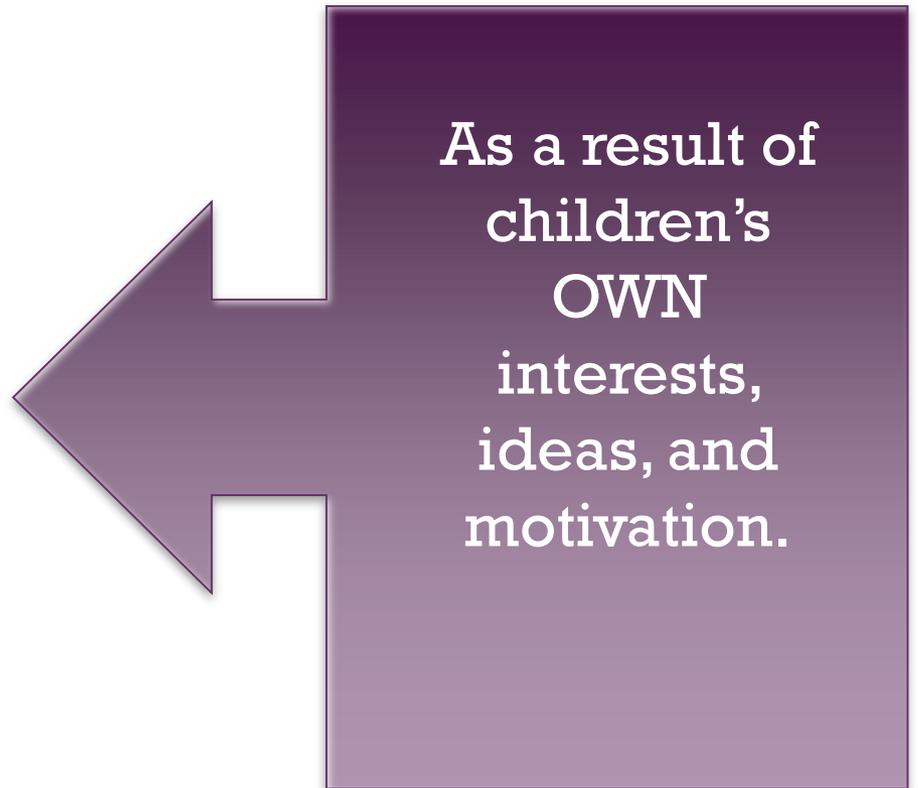




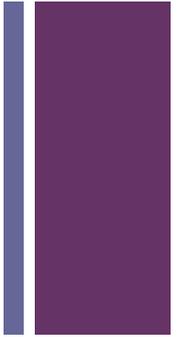
# Free Time: When Kids Take the Wheel



- Create new games.
- Solve problems.
- Conduct experiments.
- Build useful inventions.
- Figure out how things work.
- Make up stories.



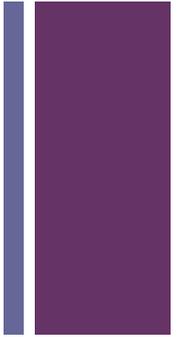
+ Creativity + Free Time



■ *What's the connection?*



# Creativity can flourish with free time....

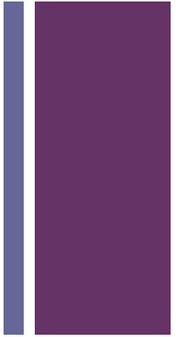


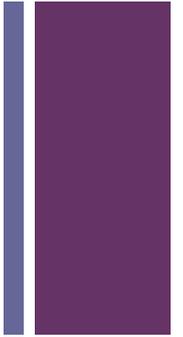
- Psychologist Howard Gardner: Five Minds for the Future
  - Changes in our world (globalization, science/technology, clash of civilizations) = new ways of learning and thinking in schools.
  - **The Creating Mind**: breaks new ground, puts forth new ideas, poses unfamiliar questions, conjures up fresh ways of thinking, and arrives at unexpected answers.



# Students Valued Imagination More Than Intellect (Pirto, 2005)

- “I chose Imaginative as my first choice on the second list because . . . I live for being creative and original.”
- “I think that being imaginative is something that should be praised just as intelligence is.”
- “Being imaginative is important because it isn’t really fun to be intellectual all the time.”
- “At the top was Imaginative. I believe the moment you stop using your imagination, you realize you’re not a kid anymore. Where’s the fun in being 40 with both feet on the ground?”
- Being imaginative is one of the neatest things in the world. If a person is imaginative, [he or she can] excel in the arts, design, and philosophy. An imaginative person could be good at any career. Imagination provides people with a different way of looking at things. Say [an unimaginative] person were to watch a movie. This person would get a lot less out of it than an imaginative person would.

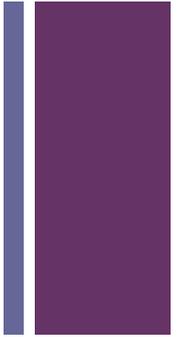




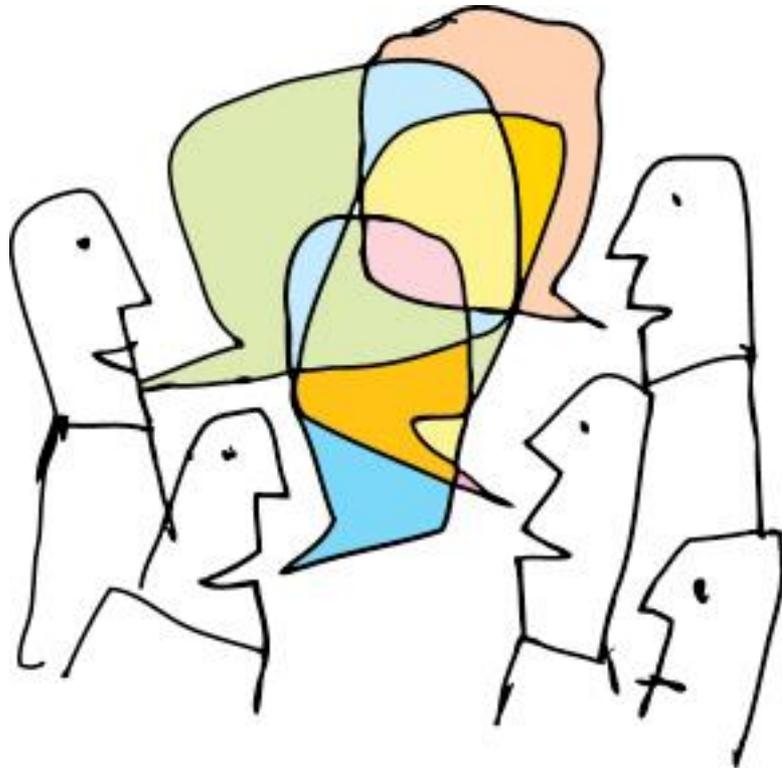
# ANALYZE YOUR CURRENT LEVELS OF FREE TIME / PLAY TIME



# How much free time does your child have?



- Parent expectations / work
- Schedule
- Activities
- Environment



# + Personal Action Plan



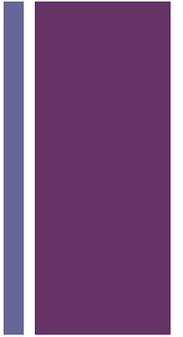
Individually, create your own plan of how you are going to infuse free time into your child's (and your) life!

**Think about:**

**WHEN**

**WHY**

**HOW**

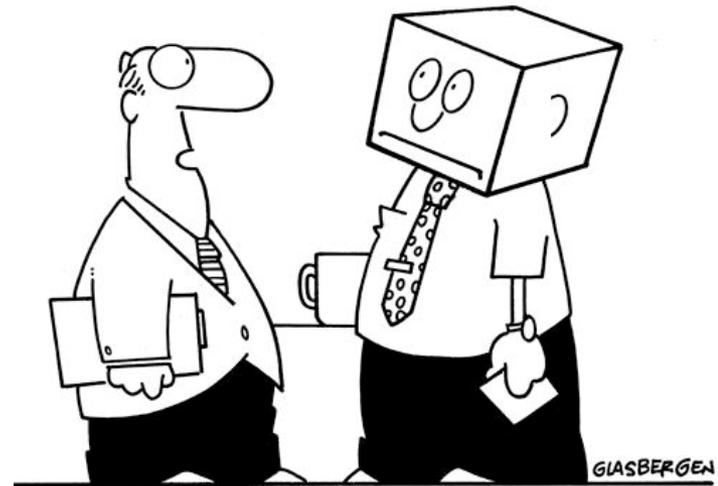


# QUESTIONS



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“Thinking outside of the box is difficult for some people. Keep trying.”

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