



Baylor University®

SCHOOL OF EDUCATION
Center for Gifted Education and Talent Development

Fourth Annual GT Parent Conference 2023

*Gathering, informing, and
supporting parents of gifted
students*

**FEBRUARY 11
8:45 A.M.–1:45 P.M. (CST)
VIRTUAL CONFERENCE VIA ZOOM**

KEYNOTE

8:50 a.m. - 9:50 a.m. (CST)

The Psychosocial Basis of a Happy, Healthy, Productive Gifted Student

Dr. Tracy L. Cross

In this research-based session, Dr. Cross will discuss challenges to gifted students' psychosocial functioning. The day-to-day lived experience of gifted students can include a variety of stressors unique to them. Peers, teachers, and family members may support or undermine their psychological functioning. Using developmental and motivation theory, he will discuss what the research on gifted students tells us about challenges to their happiness, mental health, and productivity. From there, he will explore options for the adults in their lives to provide the support the gifted student needs so he or she can become a fulfilled person.



Tracy L. Cross, Ph.D., holds an endowed chair, Jody and Layton Smith Professor of Psychology and Gifted Education, and is the executive director of the Center for Gifted Education and the Institute for Research on the Suicide of Gifted Students at William & Mary. He has published more than 150 articles, book chapters, and columns; made more than 300 presentations at conferences; and published ten books. He received the Distinguished Service Award from The Association for the Gifted (TAG) and the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), the Early Leader, Early Scholar and Distinguished Scholar Awards from NAGC, and in 2009 was given the Lifetime Achievement Award from the MENSA Education and Research Foundation.

BREAKOUT SESSION 1
10:00 A.M.–10:50 A.M.

Session Options

Social-Emotional Learning in Early Childhood:
Practical Strategies for Families and Educators
Dr. Bronwyn MacFarlane

Living in Shades of Gray: Understanding and
Managing Cognitive Rigidity
Dr. Matthew Zakreski

BREAKOUT SESSION 2
11:00 A.M.–11:50 A.M.

Session Options

Acceleration Effects on Gifted Students
Dr. Héctor Rivera

Hot Topics in Texas GT Compliance:
Understanding Common Issues and Helping Your
District Get on Track
Emily Villamar-Robbins and Tracy Fisher

BREAKOUT SESSION 3
12:00 P.M.–12:50 P.M.

Session Options

Carry Your Own Backpack: Fostering
Independence in our Children
Barbara Allison

Unleashing the Math Potential of Gifted Students:
Strategies for Acceleration and Success
Rachel Goodlad

Overcoming Executive Function Challenges in 2e
Students: How Extracurriculars Can Help!
Gayle G. Bentley



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2023 GT PARENT
CONFERENCE

AGENDA

WELCOME AND KEYNOTE

8:45 a.m.–9:50 a.m.
The Psychosocial Basis of a
Happy, Healthy, Productive
Gifted Student

Dr. Tracy L. Cross

Parent Networking Event (Optional)

1:00 p.m.–1:45 p.m.

BREAKOUT SESSION 1

10:00 a.m.-10:50 a.m.

Social-Emotional Learning in Early Childhood: Practical Strategies for Families and Educators

Specific inclusion of social-emotional learning (SEL) is important for the development and education of young gifted children. This presentation will cover various topics and offer useful field-tested strategies for parents of young high-ability children, birth to 8 years. CASEL competencies (<https://casel.org/core-competencies/>) will be presented and discussed, specifically with a focus on three aspects of SEL: (1) Intrapersonal skills, (2) Interpersonal skills; and (3) Responsible Decision Making. Through the use of diverse case studies about advanced young children, this session will illustrate special social and emotional learning considerations for home and school when describing how to use specific SEL strategies in application with early childhood best practices. Learning begins when children are born, and quality learning experiences provide a foundation for healthy adjustment, learning, and talent development throughout life.

**Dr. Bronwyn
MacFarlane**

Living in Shades of Gray: Understanding and Managing Cognitive Rigidity

Gifted and neurodivergent students often struggle with cognitive rigidity, the intense emotional fusion of one's thoughts or opinions that makes it difficult to shift perspective or integrate new information. This rigidity can make socializing, learning, working, and interacting more challenging. This presentation will explore the neuropsychology behind cognitive flexibility and cognitive rigidity and how to inspire the former and avoid the latter. This workshop will involve communication strategies for working with students and structured activities designed to promote cognitive flexibility.

**Dr.
Matthew
Zakreski**

BREAKOUT SESSION 2

11:00 a.m. – 11:50 a.m.

Acceleration and Gifted Students

Have you ever considered accelerating your child? Both A Nation Deceived and A Nation Empowered recommend it as the best alternative for many gifted students. This session will highlight research on acceleration, share examples of how it has been implemented in Puerto Rico, and provide student testimonials focusing on the effectiveness of acceleration. Participants will learn how and why acceleration is a best practice in gifted education.

**Dr. Héctor
Rivera**

Hot Topics in Texas GT Compliance: Understanding Common Issues and Helping Your District Get on Track

All public school districts in Texas must provide gifted education services that comply with specific state requirements. Unfortunately, districts may fall short in one or more areas. What are some common compliance issues in Texas gifted education programs today, and what can parents do to fix these problems in their districts? Join two seasoned gifted education advocates to learn key requirements and strategies that parents can use to help districts get back on track.

**Emily
Villamar-
Robbins
and Tracy
Fisher**

BREAKOUT SESSION 3

12:00 p.m. – 12:50 p.m.

Carry Your Own Backpack: Fostering Independence in our Children

Students in grades K–5 are capable of much more than adults give them credit for—oftentimes even their own parents. Many parents want to make life easy for their children to ensure their happiness. Ultimately, students may not be learning to do things for themselves. As early as age 3 or 4, students can pick up their own toys, put clothes in the laundry, dress, and even carry their own backpacks. This session shares actions that parents can begin implementing today without completely disrupting their families. These strategies will empower students and ease the workload of parents, and the independence taught to children will follow them into their teens and adulthood.

Barbara Allison

Unleashing the Math Potential of Gifted Students: Strategies for Acceleration and Success

Have you seen a shift in your child when it comes to mathematics? Maybe they aren't understanding new math concepts as quickly as they did prior to the pandemic. Maybe they had been coasting in class, and now that it's getting harder, the subject has become frustrating to them. Last year, we decided to do something about it. GT School employed high school interns last summer to help fill students' gaps in math and eradicate learning loss in a matter of weeks instead of months. Check out how this virtual program not only helped put students back on track but also accelerated their learning in math and skyrocketed their confidence in themselves along the way.

Rachel
Goodlad

Overcoming Executive Function Challenges in 2e Students: How Extracurriculars Can Help!

Have you ever considered what it takes to participate in the marching band or play on the high school volleyball team? If a student has the skills and interest, this may be just the right way to develop lagging executive function skills. In this session, you will learn how to use a student's interests and strengths through extracurricular activities to overcome the executive function challenges often faced by twice-exceptional students.

Gayle G.
Bentley

**OPTIONAL
NETWORKING
SESSION**
1:00 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.

GEFN Networking Session for Parents

Join parent leaders from the Texas Gifted Education Family Network (GEFN) for an opportunity to connect with GT parents statewide, share your experiences, and ask questions! Chat with us about organizing local parent groups, parenting gifted kids, working with district administration, advocacy, or anything else GT-related on your mind. We look forward to seeing you there!

**Gifted
Education
Family
Network**