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GIFTED AND TALENTED
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GIFTED AND TALENTED PARENT HANDBOOK 2009-10



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A Parent's Guide To Gifted Education in Jeffco

Welcome! You are taking a big step in supporting your child's gifts and talents. There is no better advocate for a gifted student than an informed and active parent.

A gifted child is one who may be defined by their extraordinary ability to quickly absorb facts and information or by their ability to write a symphony, or simply play one at a very young age. Giftedness does not look the same in every child, gifted students are extremely diverse in their abilities. Research findings have shown us that gifted children do not "make it on their own", and specific educational programming is required to ensure that these students make appropriate academic gains.

The Jefferson County Public school system (Jeffco) has expertise and [specialized programming](#) for gifted children. The mission of Jefferson County Public school system is to transform the potential of gifted students through challenging and meaningful learning experiences so that the students may become creative producers and responsible problem solvers in a multicultural world.

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INTRODUCTION TO GT

What is "Gifted" and how does the "label" benefit my child?

There is no universal definition of gifted. In the past, scoring above a certain level (often the top 2.5%) on intelligence, or even achievement, tests had been the method of identification. The current federal legal definition, which is located in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, is "Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities." (States and districts are not required to use the federal definition, although many states base their definitions on the federal definition.)

Additional information (examples of student work, parent and teacher observations, lists of traits, etc.) is often assessed in order to share a fuller picture of a child, especially in the case of very creative but perhaps not academically-inclined gifted children, or those whose gifts might be masked by a learning disability.

[Stephanie Tolan](#) notes that "understanding giftedness as a stable aspect of the self, an issue of differential development, helps us to understand and support the whole gifted child, rather than only her accomplishments".

A group of respected professionals in the field of giftedness suggest a definition based on differences from the norm: "*Giftedness is asynchronous development in which advanced cognitive abilities and heightened intensity combine to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively different from the norm. This asynchrony increases with higher intellectual capacity. The uniqueness of the gifted renders them particularly vulnerable and requires modifications in parenting, teaching and counseling in order for them to develop optimally.*"

-The Columbus Group, 1991, cited by Martha Morelock, "[Giftedness: The View from Within](#)", in [Understanding Our Gifted](#), January 1992

[Jeffco's GT Department](#) identifies children as gifted when their abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment are so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational needs. Gifted and talented students are capable of high performance, exceptional production, or exceptional learning behavior by virtue of any or a combination of these areas:

1. General or specific intellectual abilities
 1. Specific academic aptitude
 2. Creative or productive thinking
 3. Leadership and human relations ability
 4. Visual arts, performing arts, spatial or musical abilities
 5. Psychomotor abilities

The school district has comprehensive identification and programming options to support optimal development of gifted students. Parents know their children as individuals and can help optimize their child's education if they are knowledgeable about giftedness. Informed parents are the best advocates for their children. According to [Linda Silverman of the Gfited Development Center](#), "[Parents](#) are excellent identifiers of giftedness in their children: 84% of 1,000 children whose parents felt that they exhibited 3/4 of the traits in our [Characteristics of Giftedness Scale](#) tested in the superior or gifted range. Over 95% demonstrated giftedness in at least one area, but were asynchronous in their development, and their weaknesses depressed their IQ scores". Research has consistently shown that parents are significantly more successful than teachers in identifying giftedness in the early childhood years ([Miraca Gross](#), "Small Poppies").

Gifted children often need a mix of traditional, school-based gifted programming, as well as extracurricular and nontraditional educational experiences. Also, the intellectual growth of these children is often so rapid that parents need to find new options to help their child continue to thrive. Parent expertise, advocacy and partnership with the teachers can help ensure that the unique needs of the gifted child are met and children are in a learning environment that allows them to reach their potential.

Some people have concerns about "labeling" anyone, especially their own children. Some feel it is detrimental to the child to have any label – even a good one – placed on a child. The lack of the label will not prevent gifted learners from finding some advanced opportunities in their area of strength ; however, it may keep them from experiencing opportunities that will allow them to reach their potential. Studies have shown that gifted children who are not in appropriate learning settings may regress towards average and "show far less academic growth than would have been predicted by their previous achievement"([Sanders, TVAAS 1997](#)) . There is also an emotional cost of not being intellectually challenged at one's ability level.

Identification is also required by the state and federal laws in order to ensure that every child receives educational services to which they are entitled. Gifted students do not "make it on their own" and require guidance, direct instruction, and qualified teachers who understand gifted learners.

What is Federal and Colorado State Law regarding Gifted and Talented?

Jeffco's work reflects and is in part guided by the vision of the [Colorado Department of Education](#). Gifted Education is addressed in [the Exceptional Children's Education Act \(ECEA\)](#) in the Colorado Revised Statutes. In 2007 the Colorado Legislature adopted a law that also guides us in providing education that is appropriate for gifted and talented students. The Colorado Rules and Regulations for the Administration of the Exceptional Children's Act (I CCR 301-8), obligates schools to identify students with outstanding potential, especially in traditionally under-served populations. For the first time gifted education became a mandate, like Special Education, although it receives a very small budget line item.[State of Colorado GT Mission and Vision](#)

The Federal Elementary and Secondary Education Act defines gifted and talented students as "Students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services and activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities." (Title IX, Part A, Definition 22). The [Jacob Javits](#) Gifted and Talented Students Education Act was passed in 1988 as part of the [Elementary and Secondary Education Act](#) (ESEA), currently reauthorized as the [No Child Left Behind Act](#) (NCLB). However, district-level funding for gifted education programs is not included as part of the Act; the Javits Act instead has

three primary components: researching effective methods of GT testing, identification, and programming, which is performed at the National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented; the awarding of grants to colleges, states, and districts that focus on underrepresented populations of gifted students; and grants awarded to states and districts for program implementation. Therefore, funding and decisions for GT programming largely occurs at the state and local level, although of course GT best practices are an educational goal in every classroom, funded or not.

What does Gifted and Talented Education look like in Jeffco?

Jeffco's GT mission statement: To transform the potential of gifted students through challenging and meaningful learning experiences so that the students may become creative producers and responsible problem solvers in a multicultural world.

Jeffco has a department of [gifted education](#) experts. The leadership designs gifted programming options, relying on input from a steering committee of school leaders, the Jefferson County Association Gifted Children (JAGC) parent association and other key stakeholders. Gifted education experts are assigned as "Resource Teachers" to provide expert support and program evaluation to the schools. At the local level, each school administers its own programming, offering various options. Additionally, each identified GT student has an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) to serve as a plan and a record towards meeting that student's individual needs. In Jeffco there is a comprehensive system for identifying gifted children, monitoring their progress, and communicating with parents. There are many option and choice schools at each level of education.

How do I know my child is gifted?

While it is rare for a gifted child to exhibit all characteristics, it is common for a gifted child to manifest many of the following characteristics:

Characteristics of gifted children

Good memory	Longer attention span	Compassion for others
Perfectionism	High degree of energy	Prefers older companions
Wide or narrow range of interests	Unusual sense of humor	Early or avid reader
Insatiable curiosity & persistence	Intense concentration	May question authority
Advanced sense of conscience	May demonstrate intense emotional and/or physical sensitivity	Exhibits creativity
Ability with puzzles, #s	Perceives abstract ideas	Sees relationships

A Parent's Guide to Gifted Children. Devries and Webb, SENG. Scottsdale, AZ. 2007

Another quick descriptor of common gifted characteristics is [12 Traits of Giftedness](#).

ERIC Clearinghouse on Handicapped and Gifted Children (1985) cites three types of characteristics of gifted children: general behavioral, learning, and creative characteristics:

General Behavior Characteristics of Gifted Children

Gifted children's behavior differs from that of their age-mates in the following ways:

- Many gifted children learn to read early, with better comprehension of the nuances of language. As much as half the gifted and talented population has learned to read before entering school.
- Gifted children often read widely, quickly, and intensely and have large vocabularies.
- Gifted children commonly learn basic skills better, more quickly, and with less practice.
- They are better able to construct and handle abstractions.
- They often pick up and interpret nonverbal cues and can draw inferences that other children need to have spelled out for them.
- They take less for granted, seeking the "hows" and "whys."
- They can work independently at an earlier age and can concentrate for longer periods.
- Their interests are both wildly eclectic and intensely focused.
- They often have seemingly boundless energy, which sometimes leads to a misdiagnosis of hyperactivity.
- They usually respond and relate well to parents, teachers, and other adults. They may prefer the company of older children and adults to that of their peers.
- They like to learn new things, are willing to examine the unusual, and are highly inquisitive.
- They tackle tasks and problems in a well-organized, goal-directed, and efficient manner.
- They exhibit an intrinsic motivation to learn, find out, or explore and are often very persistent. "I'd rather do it myself" is a common attitude.

Learning Characteristics of Gifted Children

Gifted children are natural learners who often show many of these characteristics:

- They may show keen powers of observation and a sense of the significant; they have an eye for important details.
- They may read a great deal on their own, preferring books and magazines written for children older than they are.
- They often take great pleasure in intellectual activity.
- They have well-developed powers of abstraction, conceptualization, and synthesis.
- They readily see cause-effect relationships.
- They often display a questioning attitude and seek information for its own sake as much as for its usefulness.
- They are often skeptical, critical, and evaluative. They are quick to spot inconsistencies.
- They often have a large storehouse of information about a variety of topics, which they can recall quickly.
- They readily grasp underlying principles and can often make valid generalizations about events, people, or objects.
- They quickly perceive similarities, differences, and anomalies.
- They often attack complicated material by separating it into components and analyzing it systematically.

Creative Characteristics of Gifted Children

Gifted children's creative abilities often set them apart from their age-mates. These characteristics may take the following forms:

- Gifted children are fluent thinkers, able to generate possibilities, consequences, or related ideas.
- They are flexible thinkers, able to use many different alternatives and approaches to problem solving.
- They are original thinkers, seeking new, unusual, or unconventional associations and combinations among items of information.
- They can also see relationships among seemingly unrelated objects, ideas, or facts.
- They are elaborate thinkers, producing new steps, ideas, responses, or other embellishments to a basic idea, situation, or problems.
- They are willing to entertain complexity and seem to thrive on problem solving.
- They are good guessers and can readily construct hypotheses or "what if" questions.
- They often are aware of their own impulsiveness and irrationality, and they show emotional sensitivity.
- They are extremely curious about objects, ideas, situations, or events.
- They often display intellectual playfulness and like to fantasize and imagine.
- They can be less intellectually inhibited than their peers are in expressing opinions and ideas, and they often disagree spiritedly with others' statements.
- They are sensitive to beauty and are attracted to aesthetic values.

When and How are Gifted Students Identified in Jeffco?

Jeffco strives to provide an appropriate and challenging education to each and every student, including gifted and talented students. It is important to give the mathematically gifted child who is capable of working one, two, or even three grade levels above their typical age level, the appropriate placement, or to give the child with extraordinary ability to write fiction beyond their grade-level guidance and opportunity to reach their potential.

Approximately 7% of Jeffco students are identified as gifted and receive special services administered by the Diverse Learners Department of Jeffco to encourage them to reach their full potential. In order to receive gifted student services the student must be identified by the district. Many pieces of information are taken into consideration when identifying gifted students. These may include achievement scores, testing done by the district or outside testing, school achievement, academic or art portfolios, teacher and parent referrals, and other information that is compiled into a "body of evidence".

Identification is essentially a needs assessment, because gifted children often require instruction at a different level and pace than their age-peers. The identification process may be initiated by students, parents, teachers, or other district personnel. Gifted students' strengths usually lie in specific areas – not all gifted students are advanced in every area. It is also possible for gifted students to be "twice exceptional", meaning they have a learning challenge in addition to being gifted.

The procedure for identification varies somewhat depending on the age of the child. The following is a brief description of when children are tested and identified:

Identification for early kindergarten Ages 3-5

Some highly gifted children benefit from [early entry](#) to kindergarten or first grade at ages 4 and 5. These children typically function two or more years ahead of their peers and score at or above the 98th percentile on standardized tests and functioning levels. Testing is available for these children once per year in the spring. Parents initiate this process through an application with the district the spring, with the application process beginning in January and the being due in March before anticipated enrollment. The [application](#) and testing is required for early admission to kindergarten.

Identification in kindergarten for first grade Ages 5-6

Some highly gifted children thrive in the highly academic setting with a strong peer group and accelerated curriculum that is found in the GT center schools. Parents initiate the application with the district GT office in September for admission the following school year. The most common time for students to enter an Elementary Center School is first grade. Enrollment at these schools is limited and students who are admitted after first grade may occasionally find themselves on a waiting list or offered placement at a school further from their home. If the child is placed on a waiting list, the family is encouraged to work closely with the Director of Gifted and Talented to explore options for placement.

Assessment of all children in 2nd grade Ages 7-8

Schools are responsible for the achievement of all students, which includes students with exceptional abilities. The Colorado Rules and Regulations for the Administration of the Exceptional Children's Act (1 CCR 301-8) obligates schools to identify students with outstanding potential, especially in traditionally under-served populations. All schools identify gifted students using consistent district-wide procedures. Schools have many choices in providing programming options for gifted and talented students at their sites.

Jeffco schools screen all students in first or second grade when they administer the CogAT and NNAT tests. In addition to the tests, parents and teachers complete questionnaires describing their observations regarding students' characteristics and submit other examples of the students' work for the portfolio. This "body of evidence" is then considered as a whole and reviewed by a team of experts in order to identify students for gifted programming.

- [Interpreting the CogAT](#)
- [Interpreting the NNAT](#)

Testing at other ages

Parents and teachers can request testing and assessment at times other than those listed above. The testing is offered twice a year by Jeffco's GT office, in the fall and spring. Although testing can be done at any age, research has shown that the ideal time for testing is between 5 and 8 years of age.

Transfer students

Transfer students are identified through outside testing, prior identification for gifted programming, or through Jeffco testing at the request of parents or teachers. The body of evidence is reviewed by the GT office to determine appropriate placement and/or services.

Outside testing

Sometimes children are tested at specialized centers. These results and recommendations are considered by the district when evaluating students to determine appropriate placement and/or services.

What does "Twice Exceptional" (2x or 2e) mean?

"Twice Exceptional" is when a gifted person also has a learning disability (which could vary from Attention Deficit Disorder to dyslexia to autism spectrum to other difficulties). These disabilities, if unaddressed, can impact learning and keep a gifted child from reaching her or his potential.

Testing and assessment will occasionally lead to the identification of a learning disability. These disabilities are frequently identified during early elementary testing, however parents and teachers may request testing at any time if they suspect a learning disability. [Steven G. Zecker, Ph.D.](#), Associate Professor of Learning Disabilities Northwestern University, notes that learning disabilities are as prevalent in the gifted population as in the regular population, i.e. affecting anywhere from four to seven percent of school-age children. A learning disability can result in underachievement due to a significant discrepancy between a child's potential for learning (ability) and his or her actual ability to bring that potential to fruition because of difficulties with a learning process. Learning disabilities can be particularly difficult to diagnosis in gifted children due to their analytic and problem-solving strengths, which can often mask some of their disabilities until work becomes extremely demanding or else results in uneven, yet overall "average" achievement. Twice-exceptional students often end up with a track-record of underachievement, attributed to disinterest, boredom, or poor motivation by teachers, parents and eventually by the students themselves. The dilemma of the twice-exceptional student is described in ["Stones Across the River: An Analogy on the Twice-Exceptional Child and School"](#).

Depending on the situation, students with an identified learning disability may have these needs addressed in a number of ways through the special education department at their school, in addition to having a plan to address their needs as gifted students. The Colorado Department of Education recognizes these at-risk students and has produced [Twice-Exceptional Students Gifted Students with Disabilities: An Introductory Resource Book](#) to help educators and parents "recognize and nurture outstanding potential so that gifted students with disabilities may become all that they are capable of becoming".

What if my bright child is tested and not identified as gifted?

Gifted identification covers a wide spectrum of characteristics and the "cut off" for identification purposes may appear arbitrary, especially in the case of a very bright child who is capable of some accelerated learning. The chart below summarizes some of the different behaviors that are observed in children:

Bright child	Gifted learner
Knows the answers	Asks the questions
6-8 repetitions for mastery	1-2 repetitions
Top group	Beyond the group
Is interested	Highly curious
Grasps the meaning	Draws inferences
Copies accurately	Creates new design
Enjoys school	Enjoys learning

Bright, academically talented children, who are not identified as gifted, benefit from educational programming in neighborhood schools that use enrichment at grade level, and offer differentiated instruction, tiered learning and flexible cluster grouping. These educational strategies are used for all students and are not restricted to gifted students. Each student is encouraged to learn to their maximum potential, whether or not they are identified as gifted.

Occasionally a gifted children may not be identified through the standardized testing offered by Jeffco (the testing is not a full IQ test and is not perfect). If parents or teachers feel that the test results don't adequately reflect the child's abilities, they should discuss this observation with the school principal and the GT Department to develop a plan for further assessment, recognizing that additional testing may be required to fully understand the abilities and needs of the child. Parents may also seek additional consultation through other local experts. If the child is identified as gifted as a result of more thorough testing, Jeffco GT staff will assist the parents with another GT application as needed.

Who are the Highly Gifted?

[Highly gifted children](#) tend to be those students who demonstrate extremely asynchronous development. Due to their high cognitive abilities and high intensities, they experience and relate to the world in unique ways. Highly gifted children demonstrate characteristics such as the extreme need to:

- Learn at a much faster pace.
- Process material to a much greater depth.
- Show incredible intensity in energy, imagination, intellectual prowess, sensitivity, and emotion which are not typical in the general population.

As a result, just as gifted children in general are considered to be so exceptional or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their needs, highly gifted children particularly require responsiveness to meet their academic, social, and emotional needs.

These children are often found as a result of extremely high scores on an individually scored IQ tests, generally above the 140 IQ range. Others may be prodigies in areas such as math, science, language and/or the arts. Profoundly gifted children can score in excess of 170 IQ. The child of 160+ is as different from the child of 130 IQ as that child is different from the child of average ability. (From the [Hollingworth Center for Highly Gifted Children](#)) This can make it inappropriate for [highly gifted children](#) to be placed in a regular classroom, where they are unlikely to find academic challenge or intellectual peers.

What is an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP)?

Once a student has been identified as gifted, an Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) is created. An [ALP](#) is "a written record of gifted and talented programming utilized with each gifted child and considered in educational planning and decision making." (Colorado Revised Statutes 22-20-103) The purpose of the ALP is to plan and communicate the development of gifted students' high potential through proactive programming. Teachers should be aware of gifted students' strength and passion areas and allow for various opportunities throughout the curriculum for related growth and learning. The ALP is used as a tool to assist teachers in instructional planning by documenting annual goals and monitoring one year commensurate academic growth. The plan tracks a student's strengths, interests, goals, and achievement, wherever they attend school.

The ALP includes the student's test results, achievement scores, cumulative academic folder, portfolios, and any other qualifying information (except parent and teacher referrals), as well as a profile of strengths. These strengths may include verbal reasoning (the great debater that astounds you with their ability to manipulate a situation and won't let you have the last word), verbal reading (the ability to comprehend written material above and beyond age-appropriate levels), verbal writing (the ability to write above and beyond age-appropriate levels), quantitative (the math whiz), non-verbal (visual and auditory processing strengths — the ability to "see" things differently, solve puzzles, 3-d, and "draw out thinking"), creative (art, music, dance, etc.), talent (physical ability above and beyond age-appropriate levels), and/or leadership (ability to lead peers and others in a manner above and beyond age-appropriate levels).

The ALP is updated and reviewed with the student and parents at least once a year, usually during parent teacher conferences and subsequent follow up meetings if needed. During this review parents have the

opportunity to ask questions and ensure that steps are being taken to help the child reach his or her potential and that the ALP reflects the child's unique needs. The teacher writes and updates the ALP, and documents evidence throughout the year describing the accommodations and progress towards goals.

A [GT Resource Teacher](#) is assigned to each school to consult and collaborate with teachers and parents. The GT Resource teachers have specialized expertise in gifted education and hold, at a minimum, a GT Specialist endorsement on their teaching license. They advise teachers regarding ALP development, specialized GT instruction techniques, and classroom planning. They are available to advise parents and frequently work as part of the parent-teacher team.

Parents also play an important role in the ALP process. In discussing ALPs, the Colorado Dept. of Education notes, "Parents have a great deal to add to our knowledge about a child due to their insight into their child's strengths, interests and social-emotional characteristics. Educators have an obligation to seek their perspective. Thus, parents contribute to the collaborative effort of ALP development by offering information about their child and their child's advancement along the learning continuum. They, too, oversee the accountability for the ALP process." ([Fast Facts, 2008](#))

What is Response to Intervention (RtI) and what does it have to do with parents?

"[Response to Intervention](#)" is a three-tiered problem-solving model used to develop academic and behavior intervention strategies in the district and in school systems through Colorado. This adaptable system provides a structure for addressing academic and/or behavioral concerns identified by teachers or parents. The model emphasizes the importance of partnerships with family and community to support student success and can be used to address needs of ALL students, including the gifted. RtI uses ongoing assessment and problem-solving as well as a continuum of benchmarks and tiered programming options (ie. parents, teachers and students identify concerns and then decide on goals to be met at regular intervals; the system is flexible so that goals and deadlines can be adapted if everyone decides down the road that this would be appropriate).

The RtI problem-solving model can be a good format for teachers and parents (and older students) to discuss issues if they become a concern. The Colorado Department of Education notes, "RtI should be used for students identified as G/T. Students who are Gifted and Talented and are underachieving (based on screening measures and progress monitoring tools) should be provided strength-based intervention to increase the potential for sufficient progress. RtI is also appropriate for the exceptionally advanced learner who needs a more challenging curriculum or opportunities for growth. Because the RtI Model is a system-wide model, all students who are making insufficient progress should be provided more intensive interventions based on their individual needs, which include students identified as G/T or who are underachieving." ([SLD Guidelines.pdf](#))

PROGRAMMING OPTIONS

What school should my child attend?

Gifted students and their families have many options for where they receive their instruction. An Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) will be created for all identified GT students, whether they attend a Gifted Center School, a neighborhood school, or one of Jeffco's other schools. Because gifted students are not identical in their strengths, interests or needs, there is not a single "right" answer as to where a student should attend school, rather the best "fit" is to be sought.

Most elementary students attend their neighborhood school, where specialized gifted programming is available. Gifted students' needs are met with carefully coordinated instruction delivered in traditional neighborhood schools, in regular classrooms, or through special instruction and opportunities. The ALP helps define each individual student's needs and how these will be met.

Jeffco offers a selective program, Gifted Center Schools, for highly academic gifted students. This program is offered at a number of locations throughout the district for grades 1-12. Students may apply for placement at a Gifted Center School if they desire the highly academic setting and have the ability/need to benefit from a peer support group, accelerated curriculum, enrichment, and attention to affective (social and emotional) needs.

Gifted Center Schools provide focused support for gifted students in an alternative setting, employing accelerated curriculum and the use of complex, advanced materials that emphasize higher-level thinking skills. Consideration for the Gifted Center Schools is through application only.

Jeffco also offers a number of [charter](#) and [option](#) schools, home-schooling support, as well as online classes and other academic opportunities such as [concurrent enrollment](#). Jeffco Public Schools offers [Choice Enrollment](#) — any student in the county can attend any [Jeffco School](#) that has space available. Whatever the gifted child's needs, Jeffco is committed to helping the student successfully navigate all the possibilities for school choice so they may reach their highest potential.

Jeffco Gifted Center Schools

A Gifted Center School provides focused support for gifted learners in an alternative setting, employing complex, advanced materials that emphasize higher-level thinking skills. Qualified students must demonstrate advanced learning potential across a range of academic areas, including verbal reading, reasoning, and math, as well as the ability to benefit from a peer support group and accelerated curriculum. Gifted Center Schools provide focused support for gifted learners in an alternative setting, employing complex, advanced materials that emphasize higher level thinking skills. Curriculum is compacted, accelerated, and differentiated to meet the unique academic as well as social-emotional needs and goals of each student.

Important Features of a Gifted Center School

- Curriculum is accelerated 1-2 years across all subject areas.
- Curriculum is compacted to provide opportunities for independent studies, passion projects, extended learning.
- Students are in classrooms with other identified gifted learners, allowing an intellectual peer group.
- Students may or may not be in a multi-age classroom.
- Transportation is the responsibility of the parent.
- Attending a Gifted Center, is a "family commitment"; siblings are given consideration in the Choice Enrollment process of the school
- Social-emotional (affective) needs are nurtured

Jeffco Neighborhood Schools

The neighborhood school is the primary placement for gifted students in Jeffco. Staff and parents determine the appropriate level of interventions that will be used to facilitate commensurate academic growth, affective and social development, and talent development for the gifted students in their particular community. Advanced learning opportunities at each school are defined depending upon student needs, interests, and resources, and may include forms of acceleration, differentiated instruction, advanced enrichment, independent study, and leadership development. The Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) is used as a tool to assist teachers in instructional planning with GT students' strengths and goals in mind.

Important Features of Gifted Programming in a Neighborhood School

- Instruction is specifically targeted to the subject area needs of the student.
- Students are in a heterogeneous classroom with students of all ability levels.
- For many students and families the community of their neighborhood school is an important consideration.

Option Schools

[Option schools](#) are public schools created and governed by the Board of Education, housed in district facilities, operated under district policies, and financed like any neighborhood school. These schools select a particular approach to teaching and learning that may not normally be found in neighborhood schools. The district hires licensed, Highly Qualified faculty, who receive district benefits. An application for enrollment must be filed, and a waiting list is possible.

Charter Schools

A charter school is a public school founded and operated by a group of parents, teachers, and/or community members that is responsible to, but run autonomously from, the school district. [Charter schools](#) are approved by the school board and must negotiate a contract, or "charter," with the board outlining the school's goals, standards, educational design and curriculum, governance, and operations. A charter school's admission policies must be non-sectarian, non-religious, and non-discriminatory. The charter school must comply with district policies and all state and federal laws, rules, and regulations unless specifically waived. Charter schools must also meet or exceed state academic standards. Teachers are hired as employees of the charter school and are not usually subject to the school district's salary schedule or requirements. Certification is not required in all charter schools, although most teachers have a state certificate or are working on it. (see Jefferson County's League of Women Voters' [Education Study 2007](#))

Home-Schooling

Some GT families choose the non-traditional option of [home-schooling](#) with district support for arts and humanities and/or athletics. This typically means the student is home-schooled by a parent but attends the neighborhood school for music or art instruction and/or may be a member of an athletic team(s). The [H.O.P.E.](#) (Home Option Program of Education) program offers an alternative to full-time home-based education. This Jeffco option school provides professional educational support in the core curriculum and selected elective areas at Littleton and Arvada locations.

What is the Gifted Center Application Process?

Jeffco uses a thoughtful and rigorous process to identify students who would most benefit from attendance at one of its Gifted Center Schools. The process involves a systematic review of individual student strengths as reflected by teacher recommendations, parent input, cognitive testing, and academic achievement. The evaluation team looks for a "best fit" between the student and the academic setting with decisions based on the profile of each individual child.

The application process is "continuous" with the school year's first application window opening in June with testing in October and notification by January. The next application window opens in January with testing in March or April (depending on Spring Break) and notification by May; then the next application window opens in June again. Check the [Jeffco GT website](#) for exact dates.

Cognitive testing is available free-of-charge two times each year for all students; however, a child may only test once within any 12-month window as testing more often invalidates the test. (A fee is charged for the early entrance program.) [Gifted center application](#)

Teachers and parents may recommend students for the Gifted Center application process. Those who qualify are offered placement into the center school program. Although students may apply at any time, the most common time for students to enter an Elementary Center School is first grade.

Students who are admitted for second and third grade may occasionally find themselves on a waiting list or offered placement at a school further from their home. If the child is placed on a waiting list, the family is encouraged to work closely with the Director of Gifted and Talented to explore options for placement.

Questions about the application process can be directed to the Jeffco GT Department:

- E-mail: gtcent@jeffco.k12.co.us (preferred)
- Phone: 303-982-0390

[GT application](#)

What GT Opportunities are Available in Jeffco for a REALLY Precocious 3 or 4 Year Old?

Determining a Good Fit for the Early Access Program

To meet the needs of highly advanced children who have not yet entered kindergarten or first grade, Jeffco Public Schools may grant early entrance to school. Jeffco is offering a new program to support highly advanced and gifted children under age 6, facilitating early entrance to kindergarten or first grade for these students. While regular public and private preschools have been shown to meet the needs of the majority of gifted 4- and 5-year-olds, research has shown many highly advanced and gifted young learners benefit from appropriate early access, including academic success, participation in extra-curricular activities, and positive self concepts. The article "[Small poppies: Highly gifted children in the early years](#)" by Miraca Gross is a classic on the development and needs of profoundly gifted children in infancy, toddlerhood and the preschool years. It discusses some of the hallmarks of extreme precocity in the very young as well as identification and accommodation of these children.

What does highly advanced and gifted mean?

A highly advanced and gifted child is one whose body of evidence demonstrates a profile of exceptional ability or potential compared to same-age gifted children. In a Colorado Department of Education summary of Early Access legislation ([HB 1021](#)) it's noted that this programming is intended for children who are "academically gifted, socially and emotionally mature, in the top 2% or less of the gifted peer group, motivated to learn, ready for advanced placement, and has exhausted the resources of preschool or home schooling. Therefore, to meet the needs of this highly advanced development, early access to educational services MAY be considered as a special provision.

Things to consider:

- Children for early access are exceptionally precocious and ready for school.
- Academic achievement, reasoning ability, performance and motivation are keen compared to other gifted children.
- Many young gifted children are ready for advancement in one area of development.
- Grade level acceleration may be considered at ANOTHER POINT in time.

Early Access Prerequisites:

- Strong support for early access when students are evaluated to be exceptional in aptitude/ cognitive reasoning, academics, school readiness and motivation.

The process for early access must use varied indicators and a body of evidence.

An early access process requires a positive support system provided by a teacher, administrator and family.

Early Access Application: Step By Step:

1. Contact the JEFFCO SCHOOLS Child Find office at 303-982-7247 to request a Developmental History Form and to initiate an intake form.
2. The Child Find Office will generate an Intake Form that will be routed to the Gifted and Talented Office. The Gifted and Talented Office will contact you regarding your interest via a phone call.
3. An appointment will be made to review the Developmental History Form. At this time a determination will be made regarding the continuation of the process.
4. The Gifted and Talented Office will provide a Parent Information Packet for Early Access that will include an Application and Portfolio Requirements.
5. All applications and portfolios will be due by the Friday prior to Spring Break.
6. Upon the return of a completed application and portfolio, a review will be scheduled with the parent.
7. Testing will cost \$250.00. Testing will occur in two sessions, with both at Anderson Pre-School in Wheat Ridge.
 - Session One: Please allow up to 2 hours
 - 1:1 cognitive testing **AND**
 - Session Two: Please allow up to 2 hours
 - TEMA-3 (Test of Early Math Ability)
 - TERA-3 (Test of Early Reading Ability)
 - Observable Play opportunity
8. An assessment team will review all testing data and determine if Early Access is a viable option for the child and will meet both academic and social needs of the child.
9. Acceptance into Early Access is always at the discretion of the school district.
10. A placement review team, will determine placement for the child, by the last school day in May.
11. Determination will be made regarding appropriate level of instruction:
 - Kindergarten for 4 year olds
 - First Grade for 5 year olds
12. An ALP (Advanced Learning Plan) will be written by September 30 of the school year for the child.
13. Ongoing monitoring will occur to assure that the child is progressing appropriately socially, emotionally and academically.

Schools offering Early Access:

- [Coronado](#)
- [Kendrick Lakes](#)
- [Hackberry Hill](#)
- [Parmalee](#)

What GT Opportunities are available for Elementary School?

Gifted programming is provided for elementary students at GT Center schools, neighborhood schools, [option schools](#), [charter schools](#) and [homeschooling](#).

GT Center Elementary Schools

The Elementary GT Center Schools Program is offered at the following schools:

[Coronado](#)

[Kyffin](#)

[Devinny](#)

[Parmalee](#)

[Hackberry Hill](#)

[Westridge](#)

[Kendrick Lakes](#)

These schools provide a selective, highly academic GT program that operates as a "school within a school" design. Class size depends on the grade level; for grades 1-3 the range is 18 - 22; grade 4 range is 20 - 24; grades 5-6 range is 26 - 30. Teachers with GT education credentials instruct students in classes comprised solely of GT students. Students must apply for admission to these schools in early fall of the year prior to enrollment.

Neighborhood Elementary Schools

Most Jeffco GT students remain at their neighborhood elementary school where GT programming is available. Teachers update each identified GT student's ALP annually with goals, opportunities and learning plans. Programming varies between schools and instruction is targeted to the subject area needs of the student within a classroom of students of all ability levels. Because Jeffco has [Choice Programming](#), parents can choose to have their child attend any of [Jeffco's 94 neighborhood schools](#) that has space available. Each school has its own personality and benefits; for families considering several schools, [school websites](#), principals, [GT Building Liaisons](#), and PTA presidents can be excellent resources to find out more about the opportunities at a particular school.

International Baccalaureate

The International Baccalaureate program offers an accelerated and challenging curriculum. While it is not a gifted program, it provides a highly academic environment for students who enjoy a rigorous liberal arts curriculum where all coursework is accelerated. The program of international education strives to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who become active, compassionate and lifelong learners. This mission is met through a shared academic and community service experience at school. To learn more about IB programming worldwide, visit their homepage at [IBO](#).

[Patterson Elementary](#) in Lakewood has been authorized as an IB Primary Years Program. The Middle Years program will be implemented in the sixth grade at Deane, Kendrick Lakes, Lasley, Patterson, and Stein elementary schools.

Option Schools

[Dennison Elementary School](#) is an alternative elementary school serving students district-wide, with an emphasis on fundamental learning skills and academic rigor. Instruction occurs largely in self-contained classrooms. Grade-level materials are taught in a whole-group instructional setting, and students are not grouped by ability. Basic skills are emphasized and textbooks are the basis for sequential instruction. The Open Court reading and writing program is used for teaching phonics.

[Jefferson County Open School](#) is unique as a PK-12 school; inter-age activities are thoughtfully planned to include art projects, school-wide musicals, outdoor activities away from the school building, and a variety of celebrations and all-school activities throughout the year. Travel, apprenticeships, and internships provide hands-on experiences through which students see the relevance of their learning.

Charter Schools

[Collegiate Academy](#), a K-12 school, is based on Core Knowledge, incorporating ability grouping with hands-on and rigorous academic training, utilizing extensive science and technology tools.

[Wheat Ridge Compass Montessori](#) serves students ages 3 through 12 in grades pre-K through 6. Teachers must have either a Montessori or a Colorado teaching certificate, but some have both. Montessori materials are utilized more than textbooks, but there is usage of some traditional textbooks.

[Golden Compass Montessori](#) offers an authentic Montessori curriculum in a unique setting for students age 3 through grade 6.

[Excel Academy](#) offers a rigorous K-8 academic program delivered in both traditional and non-traditional ways, organized around the Core Knowledge curriculum. Classes are multi-aged so that each student spends two years with the same teacher. Teaching methods include whole-class instruction and non-traditional methods such as experiential, reality-linked, and differentiated instruction.

[Free Horizon Montessori](#) Emphasis is placed on hands-on, self-paced learning in multi-aged classrooms, featuring studies of mathematics, science, geography, cultures, and languages. Each student is educated using his/her own individual learning plan as a guide. Students use prepared Montessori classrooms use manipulatives to assist growth in math, reading & writing skills, however Saxon Math, and math manipulatives/tools are used as needed.

[Jefferson Academy](#) Focusing on a rigorous academic program in a disciplined environment, Jefferson Academy uses the Core Knowledge curriculum in grades Kindergarten through Eighth.

[Lincoln Academy \(preK-8\)](#) follows the Core Knowledge Sequence, a back-to-basics curriculum which emphasizes strong discipline in the classroom and school.

[Mountain Phoenix Community School](#) (K-8) is a Waldorf-inspired arts and nature-based education. No textbooks are used. Students are divided into three multi-age groups: kindergarten, grades 1-3, and grades 4-8 and use interdisciplinary and experiential approach in order to address all learning styles.

[Montessori Peaks Academy](#) (preK-6) offers an authentic Montessori program.

[Rocky Mountain Academy](#) (preK-8) is based on the Core Knowledge program. RMAE teachers differentiate in the area of strength for each student. By sixth grade all students are advanced one level in mathematics.

[Woodrow Wilson](#) is a K-8 charter school that is centered on Core Knowledge, with Open Court and Saxon Math curricula.

A Jeffco charter school addressing specific needs (a choice for [twice exceptional](#) deaf students):

[Rocky Mountain Deaf School](#) Rocky Mountain Deaf School offers a full-service program for deaf children in grades preK-8 who reside in the Denver metro area. The bilingual philosophy employs ASL as the language of instruction while teaching English print as a second language, which allows deaf children to utilize what they know in ASL as the bridge to English learning

Home-Schooling

[H.O.P.E.](#) The Home Option Program of Education program offers an alternative to full-time home-based education. This Jeffco option school provides professional educational support in the core curriculum and selected elective areas at Littleton and Arvada locations.

[Woodrow Wilson Academy Home School Connection](#) Serving students in Kindergarten through 6th grades, this is a fine arts and enrichment program including Performing Arts, Music, Art, Creative Writing, hands-on science, PE, and more.

What GT Opportunities are Available in Jeffco for Middle School?

As with elementary school, most GT students tend to have their academic needs met at their neighborhood school, using their ALPs to direct their services. However, GT center school-within-a-school programming is needed to meet the academic and affective needs of some GT students. Students may also choose a [charter school](#), [option school](#), [home-schooling](#), or to use online education and acceleration (taking classes at the high school) in order to meet their learning needs in an optimal environment. Enrichment opportunities also tend to play a important role in gifted students lives, especially as they look towards becoming young adults and explore new interests.

Parents and students will also want to look at their student's [Six Year Plan](#). Jeffco Public Schools and CollegeIn Colorado have partnered to improve access to college and change expectations about educational options for all Colorado students. Starting in seventh grade, Jeffco students will use the plan as a roadmap toward completing high school successfully and making good career decisions. Clearly school selection, as well as the opportunities a student takes advantage of within that school, are part of a student's roadmap.

GT Center Middle Schools

GT Center School programs are available for grades 6 through 8 to align with the elementary school grade design.

The 6th through 8th grade programs are at [Evergreen Middle School](#) and at [West Jefferson Middle School](#). These programs are designed for students enrolled in a neighborhood school GT program that ends after 5th grade. They are designed as a continuation of the elementary school programming for 6th through 8th grade. Students apply in the fall of 5th grade for admission the following year.

Center School programs are offered at [Creighton](#), [North Arvada](#), and [Ken Caryl Middle Schools](#) for 7th and 8th grade. These schools provide a selective, highly academic GT program that operates as a "school within a school" design. Each GT "school" has 80-120 students in courses taught by teachers who have specialized GT credentials. Students mix with the full student body for elective classes. Similar to the elementary schools, students must apply for admission to these schools in early fall of the year prior to enrollment in middle school.

Neighborhood Middle Schools

Most GT middle school students continue their education at their [neighborhood middle school](#) where GT programming is addressed through the ALP process. Teachers continue to update the ALP annually with goals, opportunities and learning plans. Because Jeffco has [Choice Programming](#), parents can choose to have their child attend any [Jeffco's 20 neighborhood middle school](#) that has space available. As with elementary, each middle school has its own personality and benefits; for families considering several schools, [school websites](#), principals, [GT Building Liaisons](#), and PTA presidents can be excellent resources to find out more about the opportunities at a particular school.

International Baccalaureate

The International Baccalaureate program offers an accelerated and challenging curriculum. While it is not a gifted program, it provides a highly academic environment for students who enjoy a rigorous liberal arts curriculum. The program of international education strives to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who become active, compassionate and lifelong learners. This mission is met through a shared academic and community service experience at school. To learn more about IB programming worldwide, visit their homepage at [IBO](#). In Jeffco, IB programming is available in the sixth grade at Deane, Kendrick Lakes, Lasley, Patterson International, and Stein elementary schools and at [O'Connell Middle School](#).

Option Schools

[Jefferson County Open School](#) is unique as a PK-12; inter-age activities are thoughtfully planned to include art projects, school-wide musicals, outdoor activities away from the school building, and a variety of celebrations and all-school activities throughout the year. Travel, apprenticeships, and internships provide hands-on experiences through which students see the relevance of their learning.

[The Manning School](#) serves grades 7-8. Its philosophy is based on the belief that all students can achieve in an environment that includes rigorous standards, a close partnership between home and school, and high expectations for student conduct. It uses Saxon math.

Charter Schools

[Collegiate Academy](#) is based on Core Knowledge, incorporating ability grouping with hands-on and rigorous academic training, utilizing extensive science and technology tools. A K-12 school, a college preparatory curriculum is offered 7-12.

[Compass Montessori School - Golden Campus Farm School](#), for 7th through 9th Grades, offers an Erdkinder Montessori for 7th through 9th grades, with agricultural activities, cooking classes, and a rigorous interdisciplinary, research-based course of studies.

[Excel Academy](#) offers a rigorous K-8 academic program delivered in both traditional and non-traditional ways, organized around the Core Knowledge curriculum. Classes are multi-aged so that each student spends two years with the same teacher. Teaching methods include whole-class instruction and non-traditional methods such as experiential, reality-linked, and differentiated instruction.

[Jefferson Academy](#) Focusing on a rigorous academic program in a disciplined environment, Jefferson Academy uses the Core Knowledge curriculum in grades Kindergarten through Eighth.

[Lincoln Academy \(preK-8\)](#) follows the Core Knowledge Sequence, a back-to-basics curriculum which emphasizes strong discipline in the classroom and school.

[Mountain Phoenix Community School](#) (K-8) is Waldorf-inspired arts and nature based education. No textbooks are used. Students are divided into three multi-age groups: kindergarten, grades 1-3, and grades 4-8 and use interdisciplinary and experiential approach in order to address all learning styles.

[Rocky Mountain Academy](#) (preK-8) is based on the Core Knowledge program. RMAE teachers differentiate in the area of strength for each student. By sixth grade all students are advanced one level in mathematics.

[Woodrow Wilson](#) is a K-8 charter school that is centered on Core Knowledge, with Open Court and Saxon Math curricula.

Home-Schooling

[H.O.P.E.](#) The Home Option Program of Education program offers an alternative to full-time home-based education. This Jeffco option school provides professional educational support in the core curriculum and selected elective areas at Littleton and Arvada locations.

What GT Opportunities are Available for High School in Jeffco?

Gifted learners at the high school level have a variety of educational programs and environments to choose from in Jeffco. Jeffco now has a high school program geared specifically to the unique needs of GT learners. And in addition to choice schools with very different programming, students at all Jeffco neighborhood high schools have access to some Honors Courses and Advanced Placement (AP) Courses. Also, some schools provide access to online education. It is important for entering high school students and their parents to discuss these many opportunities to determine the best fit for the individual student. As with the younger grades, there are many considerations when determining the best school fit for a student: academics, enrichment, school philosophy/personality, the student's particular learning style, interests and future plans, as well as family dynamics and transportation. Parents and students will want to continue considering their student's [Six Year Plan](#) as they work on that roadmap for the future.

PEAK GT Center School

The PEAK G/T Center at [Wheat Ridge High School](#) provides a flexible, accepting climate for gifted and talented learners. PEAK offers an individualized program of study designed to enhance critical and creative thinking skills as well as encourage exploration in a student's areas of interest. In addition, students will experience career mentoring and affective education addressing their unique social and emotional needs. This groundbreaking, alternative program for Jeffco gifted high school students with unique needs is intended to provide differentiated educational opportunities which do not replicate the programming currently available at any other Jeffco high school. Like the Gifted Center Schools at the elementary and middle school levels, students must apply. Applications include student-created portfolios, teacher recommendations, cognitive testing data and achievement data. Application dates are in the early fall for admission the following year.

Neighborhood High Schools

[Jeffco neighborhood high schools](#) have access to in-situ challenging or advanced programming through International Baccalaureate, Honors Courses, Advanced Placement (AP) Courses, and CU Succeed Courses. What is offered will vary from school to school. Visit individual high school websites to learn more about specific courses and the requirements for admission to those courses.

International Baccalaureate

The International Baccalaureate program offers an accelerated and challenging curriculum. While it is not a gifted program, it does provide a highly academic environment for students who enjoy a rigorous liberal arts curriculum. The program of international education strives to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who become active, compassionate and lifelong learners. This mission is met through a shared academic and community service experience at school. To learn more about IB programming worldwide, visit their homepage at [IBO](#).

At the high school level, IB programming is available in Jeffco at [Lakewood High School](#) and [Alameda High School](#).

Honors Courses

Honors courses, designed by high schools to help meet the needs of accelerated learners, are offered at all [Jeffco High Schools](#). Honors classes generally offer the same curriculum as non-honors courses, but are faster paced and cover topics at greater depth, providing more challenge. Students generally need to apply and/or provide teacher recommendations to qualify for honors courses. Unlike AP courses, honors courses are generally not considered to be college-level and do not qualify for college level credit. Please see [individual school course offerings](#) for the AP courses available at that particular school.

High School AP Courses

Advanced Placement (AP) Courses are college-level courses available to high school students. They are typically offered to students who are in an honors program or who have completed all available courses in a subject area. Jeffco students have wide access AP courses, including Math, English, History (American, European, and World), World Languages, Psychology, Chemistry, Biology, Economics, and many other disciplines. These courses prepare students to take the College Board Advanced Placement tests. AP courses are more rigorous than high school courses, and students can sometimes receive college credit for taking the courses and scoring well on the AP exam, although not all colleges grant students college credit for the tests. Please see [individual school offerings](#) for the AP courses available at that particular school. The [College Board AP site](#) lists the AP courses and exam information.

CU Succeed

Within the school district some high school teachers hold honorarium faculty appointments at University of Colorado, Denver, and as such they are able to offer certain classes they teach at the college level for college credit through agreement with the University of Colorado. When these honorarium faculty are teaching [CU Succeed](#) courses, students have the option to sign up to take certain high school classes at the college level of rigor and, for a considerably reduced tuition rate, begin earning college credit early.

Visit individual neighborhood high school websites to learn more about specific advanced and regular courses and the requirements for admission to those courses:

[Alameda High](#)

[Arvada High](#)

[Arvada West High](#)

[Bear Creek High](#)

[Chatfield High](#)

[Columbine High](#)

[Conifer High](#)

[Dakota Ridge High](#)

[Evergreen High](#)

[Golden High](#)

[Green Mountain High](#)

[Jefferson High](#)

[Lakewood High](#)

[Pomona High](#)

[Ralston Valley High](#)

[Standley Lake High](#)

[Wheat Ridge High](#)

Option Schools

[North Area Option School](#) is a rigorous college preparatory school operates as an integral yet separate instructional program at Arvada High School. Traditional courses are offered but are expanded to include college preparatory work.

[D'Evelyn Junior/Senior High School](#) is a highly-structured accredited college preparatory school secondary school (grades 7-12) with rigorous academic and behavioral standards.

[Jefferson County Open School](#). Six "Passages" are required for graduation: Adventure, Career Exploration, Creativity, Global Awareness, Logical Inquiry, and Practical Skills. Travel, apprenticeships, and internships provide hands-on experiences through which students see the relevance of their learning.

[Warren Tech](#) offers career and technical training in 25 different programs, which prepare students for employment, additional career training, or post-secondary education. Programs include Accounting, Auto Collision Repair, Entertainment and Event Planning, Cosmetology, Computer Technician, Biotechnology, Culinary Arts, Graphic Design, Video Game Programming, and many more. Students age 16 and older attend Warren Tech for half the day and their home school the other half-day. Several programs provide nationally recognized industry certificates. Students may also attend more than 25 career programs at Red Rocks Community College. This school can be an important opportunity for nurturing the passions of those students who's gifts and talents lie in these areas.

Some gifted high school students have a difficult time in traditional and other settings and may even be at risk of dropping out of school. [McLain](#), [LongView](#) and [Brady Exploration](#) offer additional possibilities for these at-risk students. The [New America Charter High School](#) specifically targets non-English speaking, lower income, and at-risk background students. The [JCAPPP](#) at McLain program is available to teens who are pregnant or parents. Jeffco NEVER wants a student to give up on getting a high school diploma and moving successfully to that next step. Jeffco's new resource in drop-out prevention is [Project Finish Line](#).

Charter Schools

[Collegiate Academy](#) (K-12) is based on Core Knowledge, incorporating ability grouping with hands-on and rigorous academic training. The school offers a college preparatory curriculum including many advanced placement classes.

[Golden Compass Montessori High School](#) uses the Montessori High School program that focuses on individual studies.

[Jefferson Academy](#). The high school uses a rigorous educational "Coordinated Humanities" model, following the Core Knowledge foundation.

Online Education

Jeffco Public Schools offers several options for online education:

[Colorado Online Learning](#), (*COL*), founded as a consortium led by the Jefferson County school district, provides supplemental online high school courses for students throughout the state. It's the largest statewide provider of supplemental online courses. Students choose this online option for a number of reasons, including enrichment and advanced learning. Some, but not all, Jeffco high schools offer Colorado Online Learning as an option for students. Students generally complete coursework at their local school, but they can also access courses from home. Schools are asked to provide a Site Coordinator who will maintain personal contact with *COL* staff, students, teachers and parents. *COL* teachers are highly qualified in their subject areas based on NCLB requirements, and many have multiple years of successful online teaching experience.

[JeffcoNet Academy](#), located at McClain Community High School, is considered a "hybrid" approach to online education. Not only does it offer a flexible schedule of district aligned standards-based classes, but it also offers mandatory face-to-face classes to help students achieve in online education. It is a full-time program in which students may complete all of the required credits to earn their high school diplomas, including physical education. Self-direction and self-discipline are necessary for students to succeed but for some students this can be a great fit. Students value the flexible schedule, courses to suit many different learning styles, individualized instruction and the freedom to pursue far-ranging interests afforded by Jeffco-Net's partnerships with Red Rocks Community College, Warren Tech, and local employers. Some students enrolled in JeffcoNet are gifted and talented students, particularly in the arts or athletics.

[21st Century Virtual Academy](#) In addition to instruction and access to Concurrent Enrollment and Advanced Placement courses, this Jeffco option school includes an Advisement Program, online real-time learning connections, clubs, and student organizations. Credit advancement classes are available, as well as credit recovery. Supplemental courses, which are tuition-based, are available for high school students who want to gain additional high school credits.

[Red Rocks Community College](#) offers online classes as well as classroom instruction. If a high school student was participating in [concurrent enrollment](#), then online classes would be a possibility through that avenue as well.

High School and College - Concurrent Enrollment

With concurrent enrollment a student is enrolled in both a traditional high school and a college which provides gifted students the opportunity to have a regular high school experience while meeting the challenge of college level courses. Replacing the "Postsecondary Enrollment Options Act", under [HB09-1319](#), the Concurrent Enrollment Public School Students Act (May 21, 2009), qualified high school students may take college classes under cooperative agreements between school districts and institutions of higher learning. This means that a student is enrolled in high school in Jeffco and also enrolled in one or more college courses, with a community college such as [Red Rocks](#), although in the past [Colorado School of Mines](#) or the University of Colorado have also been attended. College tuition is reimbursed by Jeffco when certain conditions are met (for example, the course is not offered at the high school, the students' grade is B or above and the appropriate forms are completed); parents should clarify tuition parameters for their situation when exploring this option.

In partnership with [Red Rocks Community College](#), [Jefferson High School](#) will be the site of Jeffco's Early College Program and offer students the chance to graduate with both a high school diploma and as many as 60 college credits – the equivalent of two years of study or an associate's degree. Under the [Early College High School Initiative](#) "low-income youth, first generation college goers, English language learners, students of color, and other young people underrepresented in higher education can simultaneously earn a high school diploma and an Associate's degree or up to two years of credit toward a Bachelor's degree, paying only application fees. For more information contact the counseling office at Jefferson High School (303-982-6056) or [Karen Jaramillo](#) at Red Rocks Community College (720-987-4849).

Home-Schooling

Students seeking a Jefferson County Schools high school diploma must be enrolled in a Jefferson County Public School and meet [graduation requirements](#). For more information call 303-982-8597.

[H.O.P.E.](#) The Home Option Program of Education program, at Littleton and Arvada locations, offers an alternative to full-time home-based education. This Jeffco option school provides support to families home-schooling their children and is not considered full-time Jeffco enrollment. The professional educational support is in the core curriculum and selected elective areas.

How might my child's academic needs be met in the classroom? What is differentiation?

Differentiation is teaching to the needs of each student, rather than "to the middle" or only to the class as single unit. Depending on the situation, this can mean providing instruction in a variety of ways: **Tiered assignments** are designed to meet a number of abilities and learning styles. Flexible **cluster grouping** puts together students of similar ability. With **curriculum compacting** students are pre-tested for readiness/mastery, and if it is appropriate an area of study can be streamlined or even skipped. That time can be used instead for **enrichment** (in which the student or group can study a topic in more depth or in a special way) or **acceleration** (in which the student or group moves ahead at a faster pace) so each student's time is spent expanding his or her understanding.

SOCIAL AND EMOTIONAL NEEDS OF GIFTED STUDENTS

The term "peer" does not, in essence, mean people of the same age, but refers to individuals who can interact at an equal level around issues of common interest. -- W. C. Roedell

Gifted students share the emotional and social needs of their peers. However, because of their advanced learning potential, these issues may be intensified among gifted learners. Social isolation, depression, and underachievement are specific issues that gifted children and their families may face. In Jeffco, teachers of gifted children, as well as school counselors, psychologists, and administrative staff are aware of the special needs of these students and will work with families and students to help address any of social or emotional issues that may affect a student's learning and achievement. Here are some specific links that may help families better understand these unique needs.

[The "me" behind the mask: Intellectually gifted students and the search for identity](#) by Miraca Gross. The process of identity development in intellectually gifted children and adolescents is complicated by their innate and acquired differences from age-peers. To be valued within a peer culture which values conformity, gifted young people may mask their giftedness and develop alternative identities which are perceived as more socially acceptable.

[The impact of giftedness on psychological well-being](#) This article by Maureen Neihart reviews the empirical research regarding the connection between being gifted and psychological well-being. The research reviewed suggests that being gifted in and of itself does not affect a child's psychological well-being. However, the author points out that there are some correlations between adult psychological disorders and high IQ and creativeness, which the author addresses in a lengthy discussion. There is also a discussion of the factors involved in creating (or avoiding) psychological distress among gifted students.

[Competing with myths about the social and emotional development of gifted students](#) by Tracy L. Cross. A discussion of some of the most common and insidious examples of myths pertaining to the social development of gifted students, including the need for same-age, heterogeneous classmates, "well-roundedness", and what it is to be gifted.

[Gifted Kids at Risk: Who's Listening?](#) Giftedness impacts a child's psychological growth and well-being through the relationship among these characteristics, the type of giftedness manifested, the degree of giftedness (above average to profound), and how well the needs of the child are being met.

[Caring for your Introvert: The habits and needs of a little-understood group](#) by Jonathan Rauch. This March 2003 *Atlantic* article notes that introverts process information differently from other people.

[Nurturing Social-Emotional Development of Gifted Children](#) To a large degree, the needs of gifted children are the same as those of other children, however esom arise because of the interaction with the environmental setting (e.g., family, school, or cultural milieu) and those very characteristics that define the gifted child.

[Giftedness: The View from Within](#) Martha Morelock's article notes the importance of understanding asynchrony and defining giftedness as experienced by the person involved.

ADVOCACY AND INVOLVEMENT

No matter how gifted, children do not develop their gifts without a parent or surrogate parent behind them encouraging, stimulating, and pushing. But the parents do not create the gift. The children are usually pushing the parents, sending out clear signals of their need for a stimulating environment. Parents try to accomodate. --Ellen Winner in "Gifted Children"

There is no better advocate for a gifted child than a knowledgeable and active parent. Gifted children need specialized services and enjoy legal rights under the [Exceptional Childrens Education Act](#). However, gifted services can be affected by budget cuts, insufficient training and conflicting priorities for educators and school systems. Grassroots advocacy is needed to keep the focus on the needs of gifted children and to continue to improve the educational services. Colorado students are fortunate to have many expert resources in the state, as well as a state office of GT. There is a long and positive history of state, school and parent leaders collaborating to make improvements. Parents are powerful advocates at all levels, from the student and school, to the district and the state. Many of the Jeffco programs have been initiated through positive advocacy projects.

When it comes to the individual student, [Julia Osborn](#) notes that it is important to remember that such advocacy is for the *child* and not for the *educational plan*. Under the [Response to Intervention](#) (RtI) model, parents as well as students are important and valued contributors in the process of determining -- and, if need be, redefining -- what intervention is most useful in meeting the student's needs. Although teachers have information about gifted education from which students and parents can benefit, parents need to proactively share from their understanding of the child as an individual. Likewise, decisions about school choice, enrichment, etc. are best made with the individual child and the particular family situation in mind. Successful gifted parenting and advocacy often requires asking extra questions, doing research, suggesting new and creative solutions, being open to the suggestions of others, and maintaining a willingness to dedicate limited parental energies to causes that others may not always understand.

What are some things parents can do to help their Gifted Student?

- Become informed of the special needs of the gifted through reading, attending conferences or enrolling in classes.
- Be involved at home in your child's learning.
- Volunteer to help in the classroom (share your time!). For example, volunteer to share your career, interests, or travel experiences in your child's classroom or school, or act as a resource on children's individual projects. Help locate resource persons to meet with small special interest groups.
- Share what you know about your child with his/her teacher.
- Consider joining local or state organizations such as Jefferson County Association for Gifted and Talented ([JAGC](#)) and Colorado Association of Gifted and Talented ([CAGT](#)).
- Form partnerships with teachers for support and assistance.
- Remember to communicate your appreciation to the teacher who makes extra efforts on behalf of gifted children AND let the principal know that the teacher's work is valued.

- Take on a leadership role at your school by serving on the Accountability or Gifted committee.
- Volunteer as a "parent ambassador" through JAGC.
- Read and use the [Grassroots Advocacy toolkit](#).

The outstanding [Hoagies website](#) (run by the parent of gifted children) presents [Gifted 101: A Guide for First Time Visitors](#) (it's also a good introduction for the parent new to GT). See [Ten Tips for Parents of Gifted Students](#).

What if I have questions and need help navigating the school system?

The first place to direct questions is usually to the teacher, or to the principal for questions regarding comprehensive GT services at the school. The GT options do vary between schools, so discussion with the principal is a good way to understand the schools' approach to GT.

Each school has one teacher (or counselor) who, in addition to teaching, serves as a GT Building Liaison; this teacher's role is to communicate GT information between the school and district and to direct parents to appropriate resources.

The district also employs a staff of [GT Resource Teachers](#) who are assigned to schools to consult and collaborate with teachers and principals. The GT Resource teachers have specialized expertise in gifted education and hold, at a minimum, a GT Specialist endorsement on their teaching license. They advise teachers regarding ALP development, specialized GT instruction techniques, and classroom planning. They are available to advise parents and frequently work as part of the parent-teacher team. They help develop ALPs and assist with planning, training, and evaluation of school based GT programs as well as parent questions. They are available for discussions with parents and often work as part of the teacher-parent team. They are also responsible for district-wide GT evaluation, reporting and credentialing.

Parents of gifted children are another excellent resource. Some schools have GT parent groups and GT advisory committees with parent representation. The parent community can easily be accessed through [The Jefferson County Association for Gifted Children](#), which is a non-profit group of parents, teachers, administrators and community leaders who strive to advocate and provide resources for the educational and emotional needs of gifted children.

RESOURCES FOR PARENTS

What books are useful reading for GT parents?

Parenting

- Parenting Gifted Kids: Tips for Raising Happy and Successful Children by James R. Delisle.
- Guiding the Gifted Child: A Practical Source for Parents and Teachers by James T. Webb, Elizabeth A. Meckstroth, and Stephanie S. Tolan.
- A Parent's Guide to Gifted Children by James T. Webb, Janet L. Gore, Edward R. Amend, and Arlene R. DeVries
- "Mellow out" They Say. If I Only Could: Intensities and Sensitivities of the Young and Bright by Michael M. Piechowski.
- The Mislabeled Child: How Understanding Your Child's Unique Learning Style Can Open the Door to Success by Brock Eide and Fernetta Eide.
How the Gifted Brain Learns by David Sousa.
- The Survival Guide for Parents of Gifted Kids: How to Understand, Live With, and Stick Up for Your Gifted Child by Sally Yahnke Walker
Gifted Children: Myths and Realities by Ellen Winner
Counseling the Gifted and Talented by Linda Kreger Silverman

Advocacy

- NAGC Mile Marker Series: Your Road Map to Successfully Support Gifted Children More than a map or one-dimensional tour book, the NAGC Mile Marker series is a CD-ROM with a multi-dimensional navigational toolbox that you'll need to traverse the vast landscape of gifted education.
- Academic Advocacy for Gifted Children: A Parent's Complete Guide by Barbara Jackson Gilman
- Genius Denied: How to Stop Wasting Our Brightest Young Minds by Jan and Bob Davidson.
- Re-forming Gifted Education by Karen Rogers, PhD.

Visual-Spatial

- Upside-Down Brilliance: The Visual-Spatial Learner by Linda Kreger Silverman.
- Right-Brained Children in a Left-Brained World: Unlocking the Potential of Your ADD Child by Jeffrey Freed and Laurie Parsons.
- Raising Topsy-Turvy Kids: Successfully Parenting Your Visual-Spatial Child by Alexandra Shires Golon.

Perfectionism

- Freeing Our Families from Perfectionism by Thomas S. Greenspon.
- Perfectionism: What's Bad About Being Too Good? by Miriam Adderholdt and Jan Goldberg

Gender Issues

- Smart Girls: A New Psychology of Girls, Women, and Giftedness by Barbara Kerr and Sanford Cohn
- Smart Boys: Talent, Manhood and the Search for Meaning by Barbara Kerr and Sanford Cohn

What links for parents?

The links below provide information you need to work effectively with your child's school and to support your child at home. Additional information can be obtained from your school's Gifted and Talented Building Liaison, who is the liaison between your school and the district Gifted and Talented office. They will have the most recent information and updates.

Advocacy

- [Is It A Cheetah?](#) by Stephanie Tolan. The classic gifted child metaphor.
- [Communicating effectively with your gifted child's school.](#) Joan Franklin Smutney's article offers parents helpful and applicable tips on introducing themselves to and communicating effectively with their child's school. A number of advocacy resources are provided.
- [The art of writing letters](#) This webpage, which is a chapter from the book *Wrightslaw Tactics & Strategy Manual*, provides information and ideas for writing letters to the school in compliance with the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1997. Sample letters are provided as well as different approaches to take when writing about your child.
- [Dealing with Schools](#) by Valorie J. King Several great essays for gifted parents dealing with the schools, including "Gifted? I See No Gifted Children Here!," "What's Really Going On Here?," and "In the Principal's Office".
- [Getting Change in the System](#) by Monique Prevost Lloyd

Organizations/Associations/Institutes/Libraries-of-GT-Knowledge

- [Hoagies' Gifted Education Page](#) Resources for parents, educators, and advocates of gifted children.
- [Jefferson County Association for Gifted Children \(JAGC\)](#) A non-profit advocacy group committed to providing leadership and support to the parents and educators of gifted young people in Jeffco.
- [Davidson Institute's GT-Cybersource](#) Davidson Institute for Talent Development provides a variety of programs including: Davidson Young Scholars, Davidson Fellows scholarships, the THINK Summer Institute, Educators Guild and The Davidson Academy of Nevada. Articles for parents, educators, and advocates of gifted children.
- [National Association for Gifted Children \(NAGC\)](#) The National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), an organization of parents and educators, supports and engages in research and development, staff development, advocacy, communication, and collaboration with other organizations and agencies who strive to improve the quality of education for all students.
[Colorado Association of Gifted and Talented \(CAGT\)](#) Learn about local and national legislative issues, conferences, current practices in our state
- [The Gifted Development Center](#). Site of Linda Silverman, a counselor and author who pioneered the concept of visual/spatial intelligence.
[ERIC Digests on Gifted Education](#) Many valuable short essays on different aspects of gifted education and parenting from the ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education (ERIC EC), one of 16 former federally funded ERIC Clearinghouses, are still available via the Hoagiesgifted.org website.
[The Association for the Gifted](#) (a division of The Council for Exceptional Children: the Voice and Vision for Special Education) The primary purpose of this organization is promoting the welfare and education of children and youth with gifts, talents, and/or high potential.
- [AEGUS](#) Association for the Education of Gifted Underachieving Students.
- [All Kinds of Minds](#) Based on the work of Dr. Mel Levine

Education Policy

- [A Nation Deceived: How Schools Hold Back America's Brightest Students](#). This 2004 national report on acceleration and educational beliefs and practices has resulted in an ongoing national conversation about acceleration and gifted students.
- [Colorado Dept. of Education](#): Gifted & Talented Division. See what the Colo. Dept. of Education has to say about GT. Includes links to Colorado law related to GT education and "Fast Facts" (very useful summaries of what the laws really mean for Colorado GT students).
- [Center for Gifted Education Policy](#): This Center, housed within the American Psychological Association (APA), provides public awareness, support, new research discoveries and clinical applications that develop success and performance for gifted and talented children and adolescents.
- [Rigor at Risk](#) A report from the ACT testing association argues that just taking the recommended "core curriculum" is insufficient to prepare High School students for college because of a lack of rigor in many "core" classes.
[High-Achieving Students in the Era of No Child Left Behind](#) This publication reports the results of the first two (of five) studies of a multifaceted research investigation of the state of high-achieving students in the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) era.

Social-Emotional Issues

- [Supporting Emotional Needs of the Gifted \(SENG\)](#) Current articles and conference information on supporting social and emotional issues that affect the gifted population.
- [Living and Learning with Dabrowski's Overexcitabilities](#) a teaching unit by Cindy Strickland to help gifted middle school students understand Dabrowski's concept of overexcitabilities
- [Gender and Giftedness](#) by Barbara A. Kerr and Megan Foley Nicpon. Both gifted girls and gifted boys experience conflicts between gender identity and achievement motivation. These conflicts can prevent gifted young people from attaining the education they need, from following through on career goals, and from forming satisfying and healthy relationships.

Understanding Testing

- [Understanding Tests and Measurements for the Parent and Advocate](#) by Peter D. Wright and Pamela Darr Wright. Written for parents of learning disabled children, but a very thorough explanation of different sorts of testing and how to interpret test scores. Long and somewhat dense, but worth the time.
- [What Do the Tests Tell Us?](#) Explains what the scores do, and do not, mean. In-depth discussion of testing terminology, types of tests.

Twice-Exceptional Resources:

- [Uniquely Gifted](#) Resources for gifted children with special needs (ADD/ADHD, learning disabilities, Asperger Syndrome, etc.)
[Twice-Exceptional Newsletter](#) Online articles, resources, events and book recommendations for families with twice-exceptional children
- [Eide Neurolearning Blog](#) Commentary about new research and Internet articles related to any aspect of learning, learning differences and disabilities, including gifted and visual learners, autism, dyslexia, attention deficit disorders, sensory, visual, or auditory processing difficulties and more by Brock and Fernette Eide

- [LD Online: twice-exceptional](#) Information about learning disabilities experienced by extremely gifted people who have above average abilities in academic areas
- [A Dyslexic Child in the Classroom: A guide for teachers and parents](#): Hosted by the Davis Dyslexia Association International website, this article offers information that may help to inform the misunderstanding of what can appear as a student's carelessness or lack of effort.
- [LD Info: Gifted LD](#) Some answers to FAQs.
- [Dual Exceptionalities](#) Article from the The ERIC Clearinghouse on Disabilities and Gifted Education by Colleen Willard-Holt. Lists characteristics of gifted students with specific disabilities.
- [Gifted and Learning Disabled: A Neuropsychologist's Perspective](#) The challenge is how to provide a practical, whole-person understanding. Most twice-exceptional children would respond well to minor accommodations and a better understanding of their relative strengths and weaknesses.
- [WrightsLaw](#) Accurate, reliable information about special education law, education law, and advocacy for children with disabilities.

Highly/Exceptionally/Profoundly Gifted Children

- ["The Highly Gifted" columns](#) by Kathi Kearney. These first appeared in Understanding our Gifted 1988-1990, but are still relevant.
[The Hollingworth Center for Highly Gifted Children](#) A clearinghouse of information and events concerning the needs of highly gifted children
- [Davidson Institute for Talent Development](#)'s mission is "to recognize, nurture and support profoundly intelligent young people and to provide opportunities for them to develop their talents to make a positive difference". An excellent data base. The opportunity to apply for Young Scholars Program.
- [Unique Needs require a Unique Response: Differentiating Educational provisions for Highly and Exceptionally Gifted Children](#) Within the gifted population there are varying degrees of giftedness and therefore the need for differentiation within gifted provisions.
Exceptionally Gifted Children by Miraca Gross. Book detailing a study following a small group of exceptionally gifted (IQ>160) children over 20 years.
- [Frequently Asked Questions About Extreme Intelligence in Very Young Children](#) Kathi Kearney speaks to common questions about early signs of extreme intelligence, developmental needs, testing and assessment, challenges in raising a profoundly gifted young child, educational needs, play and preschool.
- [Parents of the extraordinarily gifted](#) by Linda Silverman and Kathi Kearney. Descriptive data on families of 38 children who scored above 170 IQ on the Stanford-Binet L-M. The remainder of the article describes the impact of the extraordinarily gifted child on family life and the specific issues these families face.
- [Advocating for Exceptionally Gifted Young People: A Guidebook](#) The Davidson Institute Team designed this guidebook for parents interested in addressing the needs of their exceptionally gifted children; it is to be used as an organizational tool and informational guide to building a strong foundation for parent advocacy efforts.

On-Line Communities:

- [JAGC on Facebook](#) The on-line support community extension of the Jefferson County Association for Gifted Children.
- [TAG Project](#) The TAGFAM Online Community. TAG Families is a community of parents who support the value of individuality in giftedness. This site includes three different sections where parents can come to find answers, discussions, reviews, and other issues dealing with giftedness. The sections depend on the method of schooling.
- [GT World](#) An on-line support community for gifted and talented individuals and those who support and nurture them. Includes several sections including one for twice-exceptional issues.
- [Unwrapping the Gifted](#) The blog of Tamara Fisher, a K-12 gifted education specialist for a school district located on an Indian reservation in northwestern Montana and President of the Montana Association of Gifted and Talented Education. She discusses news and developments in the gifted education community and offers advice for teachers on working with gifted students.

GT Publishers:

- [Great Potential Press](#) An award-winning publishing company devoted to books and videos for parents and teachers of gifted children.
- [Free Spirit Publishing](#) Award-winning books and learning materials for children, teens parent, educator, counselors, and everyone else who cares about gifted children
- [Gifted Education Press](#) For the last twenty-six years, a publisher of books on identifying and educating the gifted, as well as a quarterly publication, *Gifted Education Press Quarterly*.
- [Gifted Psychology Press](#) Specializes in books for parents, teachers, counselors and educators of gifted and talented children.
- [Prufrock Press](#) Award-winning products focused on gifted education, gifted children, and advanced academic education.
- [Royal Fireworks Press](#) The world's largest publisher of books for gifted children. Also sells back issues of *Our Gifted Children Magazine*.

Newsletters:

- [Duke Gifted Letter](#) Quarterly magazine-type newsletter with articles and book/product reviews of general interest to the parents of gifted and highly gifted children.
- [Understanding Our Gifted iJournal](#) Monthly online publication.
- [Gifted Psychology Press](#) Specializes in books for parents, teachers, counselors and educators of gifted and talented children.

Enrichment Opportunities

Science

- [Space Voyage Academy](#) - Summer/Weekend Program (Litteton): Summer Academy Space Voyage programs bring to life the importance of math and science, reinforces concepts identified in academic content standards, build confidence through genuine achievement and offer a fun place for kids to imagine the possibilities, learn and grow. Parents of gifted children report that the program is challenging and supportive of their gifted children. The Summer Camp offers 10 weeks to choose from for ages 5-16.
- [Denver Museum of Nature and Science Youth and Family Programs](#): Workshops offer your child the opportunity to investigate the Museum's unique collections and specimens, venture into various cultures, and wonder at the human body through activities, experiments, and crafts. We also offer parent-child workshops, so you can explore the world together. The Adult Programs Department offers a year-round selection of courses, workshops, and lectures for the 18-and-older crowd. Classes are on subjects ranging from Artifact Illustration to Space Art, and slide presentations from visiting scientists and Museum curators.
- [CU Science Discovery Wilderness Camps](#): Science Discovery is an experience-based educational outreach program of the University of Colorado in Boulder. Science Discovery's mission is to stimulate scientific interest, understanding, and literacy among Colorado's youth, teachers, and families by interfacing with university resources and academic expertise. Science Discovery is dedicated to engaging the whole person in the journey of learning, and strengthening individual capacities to participate actively in local and world communities. Programs include after-school classes, homeschool classes, summer programs, and wilderness camps.
- [Dinosaur Ridge Science Day Camp](#): This is a one-week summer program in Morrison, Colorado for ages 10-13. Science Level 1 is for ages 10-12, and focuses on geology and paleontology. Activities typically include measuring dinosaur footprints, examining dinosaur bones on-site, learning excavation techniques, understanding contour maps, and observing wildlife, plants, and insects. Science Level II is for ages 11-13 and is an advanced camp for those who have completed Science I or have equivalent experience. The programs are conducted outdoors, except during inclement weather. Summer camp sessions are offered in June and July.
- [CU Wizards Program](#): The last Saturday of each month during the year, professors from different fields at CU Boulder give lectures with demonstration on topics related to their research. These lectures are at a level accessible to kids in grades 5 thru 9. Kids really enjoy the demonstrations. These are very popular, well attended and are free.
- [Space Voyage Summer Academy](#): The program offers ten different weeks of summer camp with in-depth studies of manned space flight, space station operations and living and working in space.
- [Mad Science Summer Camps](#): Mad Science Camp programs are designed to educate, entertain, and enrich children's knowledge of science. With programming varies from individual hands-on activities to spectacular shows and using an inquiry-based technique, children become junior scientists for the week.

Creative Arts

- [Quill Kids](#) A recreational program based in Denver that guides budding authors ages 6 to 13, through a challenging yet rewarding experience of creative and non-fiction writing.
- [Art Students League of Denver](#): At the League's Summer KidArt Camps, kids of all ages can embark on an imaginative, artistic journey.

Computers

- [iD Tech Camps & Gaming Camps](#): A week long summer camp at DU. Make your own game, design a website, create a digital video.
- [Bits, Bytes and Bots](#): Offering Lego® Mindstorm® NXT robotics classes, stop-motion animated movie making, and computer video game creation classes for children ages 6-14, and will soon be expanding its offerings for high schoolers. Children obtain a variety of technical skills and build competence and confidence while having a GREAT time during after school programs, private workshops, birthday parties, and summer camp.
- [Pixels, Programming, Play & Pedagogy \(P4Games\)](#): A project which explores the creation of interactive videogames as a holistic, project-based teaching method in high schools.

Invention and Problem Solving

- [Destination Imagination](#): Many Jeffco schools sponsor DI teams, which consist of teams of five to seven members working together to apply creativity, critical thinking and their particular talents to solve a Team Challenge. K-12, primary teams (K-2) are non-competitive. (the national website: <http://www.idodi.org/>)
- [Camp Invention](#): Sponsored by the National Inventors Hall Of Fame, a nationally recognized summer day camp that integrates science, math, history, and the arts. This one-week program fosters creativity, teamwork, inventive thinking skills, and science literacy by enabling children to learn through fun hands-on experiences, subject immersion, and discovery. The enrichment program consists of five activity-oriented thematic modules designed to enhance the students' learning and understanding. Several Jeffco school run this program each summer.
[DU Early Experience Program](#): The Early Experience Program is designed for high school students with exceptional academic ability who wish to enrich or accelerate their education with university-level courses. The program is offered during the traditional school year and in the summer. Eligible students take regular University of Denver courses for college credit while still in high school. Participating students have taken courses in computer science, mathematics, chemistry, astronomy, biology, statistics, physics, accounting, engineering, art, foreign languages, history, psychology, music, sociology, literature, business, and political science. The program provides course selection advising and follow-up counseling. This is a commuter only program.
- [Univ of N. Colorado, Summer Enrichment Program \(SEP\)](#): Designed for students entering 5th grade through 10th grade, this two-week residential summer program offers high interest, hands-on, brains-on courses developed by specialists in gifted education and/or in specialized content areas.
[Young Americans Center for Financial Education](#): their mission is to further the economic education of young people so they will be competent and knowledgeable in managing their financial affairs and may prosper in the free enterprise system.
- [Chess Academy of Denver](#): All ability levels, Open to ages 6-18. Great care is taken to place students into correct age and ability groupings before the camp begins in order to custom design the camp curriculum to maximize the chess learning experience for all students.

- [Mountain Day Camp](#): Nature-based experiences for children and families across Colorado's Front Range.
- [Clear Creek History Park](#): A summer history camp, presented by Golden History Museums, where kids pan for gold, bake a homemade pie and feed chickens at the week-long Hands-On Summer Sessions.

A Glossary of Common Educational Terms Particular to GT

Many specialized terms are used when communicating with educational professionals, as well as when networking with other parents who have more experience dealing with the education system. Hopefully this glossary will help demystify some of this terminology, also known humorously as "EDUspeak".

A

- Ability grouping** - the flexible regrouping of students based on individual instructional needs.
- Acceleration** - moving at a faster pace through academic content. There are many different forms such as full grade acceleration, subject acceleration and curriculum compacting.
- Accountability** - holding students, teachers, administrators, and other school personnel responsible for instructional outcomes.
- Accreditation** - means by which schools are acknowledged as providing adequate education to student while fulfilling all mandates and laws governing education
- Achievement Tests** - instruments that measure what a child knows academically and what he/she can do academically.
- Advanced Placement** - college-level courses for high school students.
- Advanced Learning Plan (ALP)** - a written record of gifted and talented programming utilized with each gifted child and considered in educational planning and decision making
- Affective needs** - the social and emotional needs of students
- Alternative Assessment** - a process of evaluating student learning using portfolios, student products, performances, and in-class observations to replace or supplement the commonly used written assignments or tests. Alternative assessment allows students to be evaluated with regard to their individuality and creativity.
- Articulation** - the process of moving students between grades and learning levels.
- Asynchronous Development** - differing rates for physical, cognitive and emotional development. If you tell a gifted child to "act your age!" s/he may legitimately respond, "which one?" The gifted child may have a chronological age of 8 years, a mental age of 12 years and an emotional age of 5 years.
- At-Risk** - a designation for students who show indications that they may underachieve or drop out of school. Unmet economic, physical, emotional, linguistic, and/or academic needs may inhibit a student's ability to learn, value education, and/or attend school.

B

- Benchmarks** – broad standard against which students' learning may be assessed to set worthwhile goals for all by describing expected levels of achievement. Their primary focus is to make a clear statement to teachers, parents and students about expected results.
- Bloom's Taxonomy** - developed in 1956 by Benjamin Bloom, the taxonomy is often used to develop curriculum for gifted children. There are six levels within the taxonomy that move from basic to high levels of thinking. These include knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.
- Body of Evidence** - the information used when identifying gifted students and determining appropriate placement and/or services: the student's test results, achievement scores, academic profile, portfolios, teacher and parent referrals, and any other qualifying information.
- Building Liaison** - in Jeffco, this is the teacher in each school who acts as the bridge for GT information between the district level and the school.

C

Cluster grouping - the intentional placement of a group of similar-ability students in an otherwise heterogeneous (mixed-ability) classroom for a particular learning activity. ex. Placing gifted and talented students in a special class or together in a group in one regular class.

Cognitive needs - the intellectual needs of an individual.

Commensurate growth - the academic and affective progress that can be measured and should be expected of a gifted student given the student's level of achievement, learning needs, and abilities matched with the appropriate instructional level.

Compacted Courses - individual accommodation in which a student's demonstrated mastery of the subject unit at hand, frequently reassessed by the instructor, excuses him or her from repetitive work designed to develop that mastery in those who don't yet have it. Championed by Joseph Renzulli and Linda H. Smith, compacting allows students to "buy back" time the teacher had planned to spend on one thing and invest it in an area of interest mutually acceptable to teacher and student.

Concurrent (or Dual) Enrollment - most often refers to high school students taking college courses, often for college credit.

Cooperative learning - an instructional strategy in which small, usually heterogeneous groups of students work collaboratively to learn.

Critical Thinking - using higher order thinking skills, eg analysis or evaluation, to gain understanding of complex problems or ideas

Cross-grade/multi-age grouping - grouping strategy that mixes children of different ages for instruction. Other variations include family or teacher grouping.

CSAP - Colorado Student Assessment Program, state assessment testing for students in grades 3 - 10.

Curriculum compaction - an instructional strategy in which a student's grasp of a subject area is frequently reassessed by the instructor, and following demonstration of mastery of the subject, the student is allowed to progress to the next level or is given more in-depth work in the same subject area.

D

Differentiation - the modification of programming and instruction based on a student's academic need and intellectual ability.

Distance Learning - a high-tech alternative to correspondence courses, these classes are offered via satellite or internet.

Divergent Thinking - the opposite of convergent thinking, divergent thinking focuses on many answers to a single question or problem, resulting in novel, unique, or creative solutions or answers.

Dual Enrollment - students take courses part time at college in addition to attending classes at their regular school.

E

Enrichment - the enhancement of the curricular program with additional opportunities and avenues of learning. The process of covering a subject in greater depth than is usual, or tackling subjects not usually covered.

Exceptional Children's Educational Act - a Colorado law that groups students with disabilities, students for whom English is not the primary language, and gifted/talented students as those who have different educational needs based on their identified exceptionally.

F

G

Grade Skipping (also called Grade Acceleration) - advancing or accelerating gifted and talented students through grades ahead of the usual age or date.

H

Heterogeneous/homogeneous groupings - those in which students are taught in groups of mixed/similar ability, respectively.

I

Independent study - students demonstrating content mastery and having a special interest may contract with a teacher for an independent study project. Together they plan a method of investigating the problem or topic and agree on a product.

Instructional Level - determined by diagnostic testing and full assessment of a child's rate of acquisition and rate of retention of skills. Diagnostic testing may include curriculum based assessment in reading and math and/or standardized normed tests; i.e. Woodcock-Johnson.

J

K

L

Learning contracts - an agreement between the teacher and student granting certain freedoms and choices about how a student will complete tasks, and the student agrees to use the freedoms appropriately in designing and completing work according to specifications.

Learning Disability (LD) - a disorder that affects how a person takes in, stores, or uses information; the processes involve understanding or using language, spoken or written, resulting in difficulty with listening, thinking, speaking, writing, spelling, or doing mathematical calculations. Gifted children sometimes also has learning disabilities.

Learning plans - an individualized educational program (IEP) set on paper that may include such options as acceleration, differentiated instruction, enrichment activities, and affective counseling and guidance.

M

Mentorship - a cooperative arrangement between a student and a professional adult for the purpose of sharing common interests in a particular skill, knowledge or career orientation.

Modifications - gifted students with special education needs would have their IEP's written with potential modifications for the standards in the area of disability.

N

Norm-referenced Test - an assessment that sorts or ranks students by comparing each student's performance to other same age/grade children (from a norm group that is typical of the wider population) who took the same test under similar conditions. (e.g. Cognitive Abilities Tests - CogAT).

O

Outcome-Based Education - a theory of structured learning in which decisions about curriculum and instruction are based on desired competencies students should demonstrate at the end of their formal education.

Out-of-level testing - testing typically given to a particular grade or age of student and used to assess abilities of younger students at a higher level than their developmental peers.

P

Pull-out programs - classes and activities held during the school day but outside the regular classroom. Students are "pulled" from classes for an hour or more each week for extension or enrichment study.

Q

R

Resource Teacher - in Jeffco this is a teacher who is a GT specialist serving the students and teachers at the schools in a given articulation area.

Response to Intervention (Rtl) - an adaptable problem-solving model for parents and teachers to use to assess and address student needs

S

Standards - consistent expectations of all learners, generally speaking of: Colorado State Standards (used with CSAP and

CSAP-A), Jefferson County Content Standards (developed and continually upgraded within the District), National Standards (available for some disciplines)

Subject Acceleration - allowing a student to take one or more classes with the children in the grades ahead of him or her. A second-grader with strong mathematics talent might be subject accelerated into the fourth grade math class.

T

Tiered assignments - assignments are designed for different abilities and learning styles.

Tracking - a rigid, inflexible system in which students are selected for semi-permanent grouping based on ability. In the past, students with high ability in one subject might have been selected for the high track in all subjects.

Twice Exceptional (2x or 2e) - a student who is identified as both gifted and as a child with a disability.

U

Underachievement - a discrepancy between recognized ability and actual academic performance. The causes of underachievement may be social, emotional, physical, and/or academic. Inappropriate curriculum can have as its consequence the underachieving gifted student.

V - Z