
Preface

There is growing concern in American society that the gifted are an underserved and even unserved special needs population. The great majority of psychologists and educators—and other professionals who provide educational, psychoeducational, and mental health services to children and youth—remain ill equipped to meet the unique and challenging needs of the gifted and talented.¹ This handbook was written to provide psychologists, psychiatrists, health care professionals, and educators with contemporary, authoritative information so that those of us who work with the gifted and their families can provide quality mental health and psychoeducational services to this unique population. Whether you work in a school, a public agency, or the private sector, this book is designed to provide you with scholarly information and evidence-based strategies that can be applied to your work with gifted children and youth.

The handbook combines the disciplinary perspectives of those on the front lines of research and practice. I approached the leading experts in the field and, with very few exceptions, each agreed enthusiastically to contribute to the handbook. The scholarly work of both psychologists and educators is represented. Each author was issued the challenge of providing a succinct, contemporary, and authoritative summary of their area of expertise. I asked them to highlight how research in their particular area informs practice in work with the gifted.

The handbook has been a joint enterprise that depended on the efforts and cooperation of over thirty experts in the gifted field. I am extremely appreciative of the dedicated endeavors of everyone who worked with me to make this handbook a reality. Chapter authors, recognized authorities in their respective fields and with demanding schedules, were generous in sharing their time, expertise, and knowledge. The editorial staff at Springer Publishers was exceedingly gracious and supportive. Particular thanks go out to Judy Jones and Angela Burke. I would like to thank Florida State University, and specifically the Department of Educational Psychology and Learning Systems, for their encouragement and resources. I also would like to express my appreciation to the Jacqueline Anne Morris Memorial Foundation and the Bruce J. Heim Foundation for their generous support of my work in the gifted field. And to SENG for its commitment to the unique emotional needs of the gifted.

¹Pfeiffer, S. I. (2001). Professional psychology and the gifted: Emerging practice opportunities. *Professional Psychology: Research & Practice*, 32, 175–181.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge my family. I extend my gratitude to my spouse, Jan Pfeiffer, for her support and encouragement. Her willingness to sacrifice family time while I worked on the book was a generous gift. I would be remiss if I did not also extend my appreciation to my three children, Leslie, Kevin, and Andrea, who remind me daily that there are many kinds of giftedness and that each child is unique.

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Psychoeducational Theory, Research, and Best
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