

**AAEGT**  
**Gifted 2020:**  
**Maintaining Wellbeing**

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**Advocacy: In the interests of the gifted**

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**Why advocate?**

**To increase well-being.**

My research shows that when gifted youth are appropriately challenged, they feel happy.

When gifted youth are not adequately challenged, they are not happy.

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**Advocacy:**  
**It's a Parental Right & Responsibility**

Parents have a right and responsibility to speak up on behalf of their child if the child has specific educational and support needs; however parents can only be effective advocates for a child when the advocacy process is well understood and implemented.

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**Three levels of advocacy**

- **Primary Advocacy** – specifically for your child or an individual child
- **Secondary Advocacy** – for gifted children in the school, cluster or district
- **Tertiary Advocacy** – for all gifted children in the broader community, state or country

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**Effective Primary Advocacy Requires:**

- Knowledge about the child's needs
- Knowledge and evidence of abilities and levels of achievement demonstrated by the child
- Knowledge of the relevant education policies (school, district, and system)
- Knowledge of the resources and provisions currently available
- Knowledge about the school hierarchy, positions, responsibilities and individuals

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**A range of subjective information and objective data about the student is required**

**FOR THE PARENT**

- Websites
- Journal articles
- Books
- Professional development
- Public lectures - online
- Join an association
- Parent courses
- Conferences

**ABOUT THE CHILD**

- Observation
- Discussion
- Review of academic work
- Interests and activities
- Results drawn from:
  - academic work (school report)
  - competitions (e.g. ICAS)
  - national assessment (NAPLAN)
  - standardised achievement tests
  - psychometric assessment

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## Develop an awareness of your underlying emotions

- What emotions lie under the surface?
- Under what circumstances are these emotions triggered?
- How can these emotions be effectively channeled ?
- When do these emotions become a destructive force?
- Might these emotions risk undermining your advocacy?

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## ABCs of Advocacy A is for *Be Aware!*

- Advocates must be aware of people who are the decision-makers. Know those who are key to your advocacy effort.
- Effective advocates are aware of kindred spirits. Know that numbers speak loudly to decision-makers, so connect with others who share your concerns.
- Join your local, state and national advocacy groups.
- The way for an advocate's message to be loud is to have many people sharing a unified, carefully shaped message.
- Be positive; make the message clear and easy to remember.

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Adapted from Julia Link Roberts & Tracy Ford Inman, 2008

## Teachers rarely receive information about talented students during their undergraduate studies

- Teachers rarely receive information about the learning and socio-affective characteristics of talented children during undergraduate studies.
- Only a small minority of teachers are offered this information during postgraduate studies.

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Gross, Urquhart, Doyle, Juratowitch & Matheson, 2011  
*Releasing the Brakes for High-ability Learners*

## ABCs of Advocacy B is for *Know the Basics!*

- An effective advocate is well-informed, one who knows the basics of the laws, regulations and policies relating to their child's education.
- They know about the terms, research, services, programs, opportunities and understand what might be possible.
- Advocates are able to discuss all these with confidence and in terms that all decision makers understand.
- Without this basic knowledge, advocates cannot be truly effective.

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Adapted from Julia Link Roberts & Tracy Ford Inman, 2008

## ABCs of Advocacy C is for *Communicate Effectively!*

- Effective communication will make or break an advocacy plan.
- Don't wait for a crisis to begin the discussion.
- Establish a relationship; communication cannot be just a one-time occurrence.
- Messages must be clear, concise, powerful and fit your purpose.
- Use language appropriate to the audience and remember to use positive wording.
- Include information and data to substantiate your point.

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Adapted from Julia Link Roberts & Tracy Ford Inman, 2008

## Successful Advocates

- Step 1: Obtain an evaluation
- Step 2: Read extensively
- Step 3: Study the school's structure
- Step 4: Formulate a tentative plan
- Step 5: Request planning meetings
- Step 6: Generate a paper trail

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Julia Osborn, 2001