

Description of Parents' Knowledge of the Nature and Needs of Gifted Children  
and Their Parenting Styles

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Description of Parents' Knowledge of the Nature and Needs of Gifted Children  
and Their Parenting Styles

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## Abstract

To support the parents of gifted children, school leaders need to provide informative, research-based parent workshops that share information about the nature and needs of gifted children and effective parenting strategies. There is very little research about the parents of gifted children in the parenting practices (Jolly & Matthews, 2012). This lack of information creates a problem for schools that want to create workshops. The purpose of this study was to use a quantitative, descriptive survey design to assess the perceived knowledge about the nature and needs of gifted children and the perceived parenting styles of a sample of parents with gifted children. Online surveys were sent to the parents of gifted children from four public-schools resulting in 985 total participants. The findings revealed that 58% of participants stated that they want more information about gifted children, and 84% responded that they would attend a parent presentation if it was offered. Only 36% of participants said their school offered a gifted parent presentation; however, 67% reported that they attended. In looking at the participants' level of knowledge, 53% of participants were in the low-level knowledge category. This finding confirmed the need for school leaders to provide information about the nature and needs of gifted children to parents through parent workshops. The final findings were that 90.8% of parents use the authoritative parenting style, 1.4% use the permissive parenting style, and 0% use the authoritarian parenting style.

*Keywords:* gifted, gifted children, parenting, parenting practices, parenting behaviors, parent involvement, parents' knowledge, and parent education.

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## **Chapter I**

### **Introduction**

Who will be our society's next Pablo Picasso, Albert Einstein, or Steve Jobs? Could it be a gifted first grader who is begging her parents to read the second book in Hunger Games series while her parents wonder how she read the first book and how she handled the content? Could it be an unmotivated middle school gifted student, with poor grades, who designs his own video games on the weekends? Could it be a socially struggling gifted fourth grader who has already skipped one grade level but still is not challenged by the curriculum since he needs high school level math? Each of these children has many gifted characteristics that are positive experiences, but at the very same time they also have characteristics that are challenging and difficult for parents to navigate. Schools need to provide support to the parents of gifted children. These supports not only help the parent but the gifted child as well.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Gifted children have specific and unique needs (Neihart, Reis, Robinson, & Moon, 2002; Silverman & Waters, 1984; Webb, Gore, Amend, & DeVries, 2007). Due to these needs, "Parents of gifted children may face additional parenting challenges" (Garn, Matthews, & Jolly, 2012, p. 656). Parents of gifted children expressed difficulties in dealing with their child's social and emotional behaviors and the struggle to find resources and assistance (Renati, Bonfiglio, & Pfeiffer, 2017; Webb et al., 2007). Numerous studies link parental involvement to increased student achievement (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Cripps & Zyromski, 2009; Epstein, 2008; Epstein, 2001; Epstein & Voorhis, 2010; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jeynes, 2005; Shaver & Walls,

1998; Westat & Policy Studies Associates, 2001); therefore, it is imperative for schools to support the parents of gifted children by forming partnership programs, specifically parent workshops that inform, support, and involve families (Epstein, 2008). In evaluating a parent involvement program, Chrispeels and Gonzalez (2004) found that increasing parents' knowledge level about how to help their child and about how a school system works was most significant in increasing the parent involvement. A meta-analysis of 77 research studies showed parenting style and expectations had the largest impact on student achievement (Jeynes, 2005). Steinberg (2001) stated that quality parenting information is irrelevant unless it is shared with parents. "Due to the inconsistent and sporadic nature of the research base, there exist substantial gaps in what we know about the parents of gifted children and their parenting practices" (Jolly & Matthews, 2012, p. 274). This lack of information creates a problem for schools that want to provide meaningful educational opportunities for the parents of gifted children.

### **Purpose and Significance of the Study**

The purpose of this study was to clarify and add to the literature by describing parents' self-perceived knowledge level of the general characteristics and needs of gifted children. Also, this study investigated what parenting style (which also highlights the parent's expectation level and parenting behaviors) they use with their gifted child. In an effort to understand the audience of parents of gifted children, school administrators and gifted coordinators can use the data to design gifted parenting intervention education sessions (workshops) for parent support networks. Parenting interventions are effective for supporting parents by educating families and providing a safe place to discuss and learn from each other (Morawska & Sanders, 2009a; Weber & Stanley, 2012).

## **Research Design**

This study used a quantitative, descriptive survey design to assess the perceived knowledge (about the nature and needs of gifted children) and the perceived parenting styles of a sample of parents with gifted children. The purpose of the design was to collect statistics to describe a situation as it existed (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008), and to report characteristics and patterns of behavior in the data set (Rudestam & Newton, 2007; Salkind, 2014). There is limited information about the parenting knowledge and behaviors of the parents of gifted children and a gap in the research exists (Dai, Swanson, & Cheng, 2011; Jolly & Matthews, 2012). The foundation data collected added to the literature and provided summary descriptions and patterns to be investigated further in future studies (Agresti & Finlay, 1997). The setting of the research study took place in four suburban, public school districts in Northeast, Ohio. The research population surveyed parents of state identified gifted children. The online, voluntary survey link was sent to 2,880 possible participants via email with permission of the district superintendent. The researcher's role was to collect and analyze data using the secure, confidential SurveyMonkey platform.

## **Research Questions**

1. What is the self-perceived knowledge level parents have about the general characteristics and needs of gifted children?
2. What type of parenting style do parents of gifted children use with their gifted child?

## **Operational Definitions**

The definitions listed below are frequently used throughout this study. The definitions are well-established in the literature.

**Asynchronous development:** Asynchronous development is being out-of-sync in the different areas of physical, psychological, intellectual, social, and emotional development (Silverman, 1997).

**Authoritarian Parenting Style:** Authoritarian is defined by being high in demandingness (high expectations) but low in responsiveness (low level of warmth) (Baumrind, 1971).

**Authoritative Parenting Style:** Authoritative is defined by being high in demandingness (high expectations) and high in responsiveness (high level of warmth) (Baumrind, 1971).

**Gifted:** Children are gifted when their cognitive ability is significantly above the norm compared to children of the same age (National Association for Gifted Children (2017)).

**Heightened sensitivity:**

Gifted children seem to have an extra emotional sensor, or special awareness, that picks up the slightest emotions. The attitudes and actions of others may be a major source of stress to them. As children, they may take a joke or teasing far too seriously. They may even overreact and have a temper tantrum if they feel slighted or misunderstood. (Webb et al., 2007, p. 119)

**Overexcitabilities:** “Overexcitabilities are inborn intensities indicating a heightened ability to respond to stimuli” (Lind, 2011, p. 1).

Perfectionism: “Perfectionism is the setting of excessively high standards of performance” (Frost, Marten, Lahart, & Rosenblate, 1990, p. 450).

Permissive Parenting Style: Permissive is high in responsiveness (high level of warmth) but low in demandingness (low level of expectations) (Baumrind, 1971).

Underachievement: “Underachievement is a discrepancy between potential (or ability) and performance (or achievement)” (Reis & McCoach, 2000, p. 153).



## **Chapter II**

### **Literature Review**

Chapter II begins with a brief introduction of the important role parents play in the successful development of a gifted child. Next, Vygotsky's theory of cognitive development is presented as the theoretical framework which further emphasized the importance of parents in a child's total development. These sections set the stage for the presentation of the research in the review of literature section related to schools providing parent workshops to support the needs of gifted students and their parents. The research themes of (a) understanding that parent involvement increases student achievement, (b) understanding effective parenting styles for gifted children, (c) understanding the nature and needs of gifted children, and (d) understanding the benefits of participating in parent workshops are outlined. Finally, the chapter finishes with a summary which synthesized the research into the most important takeaways.

Each fall, parents are fraught with uncertainty about their child's readiness to start the new school year. The angst for what awaits these students, cognitively and socially, is often compounded for those parents of students who may not know how to help their child at home. Additional pressure may be present if the child is a gifted student. Parental care and guidance is paramount to a child's core development (Olszewski-Kubilius, 2000). The reality is that a parent is a child's first teacher. Every day, children watch and learn from how they see their parents responding to daily life. Children then take these cognitive and social skills developed at home and apply them to learning in school (Landry et al., 2017). The high potential for the parental roles and responsibilities to impact a child makes it advantageous for caretakers to consider what parenting behaviors

can most contribute to, and/or complement, their child's success in school and life. Parental education and support about best practices in parenting can enhance parents' awareness of how those actions can be leveraged to support their child's success and help them to become more deliberate in their relationship with their child. Studies show that parents who receive training in effective parenting practices have children with increased school readiness skills (Landry et al., 2017). Effective parenting helps children to be successful in school and can be a strong contributor to ensuring the work toward their full potential. Recognizing this, schools can proactively plan to provide parent workshops to help this process and improve results for students.

### **Theoretical Framework**

Vygotsky's Theory of Cognitive Development underscores the important role of parents in a child's life. Vygotsky's theory is based on three principles in which learning occurs: (1) through social interaction, (2) under the guidance of a more knowledgeable person, and (3) within a child's zone of proximal development (McLeod, 2014). Vygotsky (1978) stated, "That children's learning begins long before they attend school is the starting point of this discussion. . . . Learning and development are interrelated from the child's very first day of life" (p. 85). Children learn by watching and interacting with their family in day-to-day life. Vygotsky (1978) explained that children enter preschool with early math and literacy skills learned from home. Parents operate as the more knowledgeable person who guide the child towards advanced cognitive behaviors. In home learning situations, parents often place the child in the zone of proximal development. Vygotsky defined zone of proximal development as, "the distance between the developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of

potential development through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers” (p. 86). This theory is illustrated in the home when parents introduce early literacy skills. Many parents regularly read with their children. The first type of books introduced are sturdy, hardbound picture books. As the child advances in literacy skills, parents slowly increase the difficulty of the books, moving from single word pages to multiple sentence pages. As the child grows in literacy competency, the parent respond by increasing the complexity of the books. At each step in the learning process, the child moves from a dependent learner to an independent learner. In his book, *Parenting: A Dynamic Perspective*, Holden (2014) linked the previous example to parents using Vygotsky’s scaffolding. The specific action of the parent supportively scaffolding (slowly increasing) the difficulty reading level increases the child’s cognitive development of literacy skills. Vygotsky’s research emphasized understanding the social context and environment of a child and the role parents in the child’s total development (McLeod, 2014).

### **Review of the Literature**

According to Webb et al. (2007), parenting a gifted child can present challenges. To overcome these challenges, parents need to understand the nature and needs of gifted children. After conducting a review of the literature, several themes emerged related to schools providing parent workshops to support the needs of gifted students and their parents. As schools began to develop supportive, informational workshops, limited empirical research was available. Jolly and Matthews (2012) produced a critique of the literature on parenting gifted learners, “Due to the inconsistent and sporadic nature of the research base, there exist substantial gaps in what we know about the parents of gifted

children and their parenting practices” (p. 274). In a survey of giftedness, empirical studies from 1998-2010, only 29 (2.3%) of all the studies were about parenting gifted children (Dai et al., 2011). This poses a problem for schools that want to support the parents of gifted children. In many of the research discussions, gifted parenting practices research was encouraged for future streams of research (Jolly & Matthews, 2012).

A continued review of the literature provided an outline of information, centered on four major themes, that parents of gifted children should know and understand. Informed and aware parents can guide and support the gifted children to reach their full potential. The four themes are (a) understanding that parent involvement increases student achievement (Epstein, 2008), (b) understanding effective parenting styles for gifted children, (c) understanding the nature and needs of gifted children, and (d) understanding the benefits of participating in parent workshops.

Theme one research revealed the specific parental involvement factors of parental knowledge and parenting style most impacted student achievement (Jeynes, 2005). To further explain the parental involvement factors, the second theme defined the parenting styles of authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive (Baumrind, 1971). Parents’ level of expectations, warmth, and responsiveness and other distinct behaviors demonstrated by each style were also highlighted. Several studies linked parental style behaviors to student outcomes by illuminating effective and ineffective parenting styles for gifted children (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Rudasill, Adelson, Callahan, Houlihan, & Keizer 2013).

The third theme was that gifted children display specific, unique characteristics (Silverman, 1993). Several researchers confirmed that some of the distinct characteristics

of gifted children make parenting more complex (Garn et al., 2012; Webb et al., 2007) and in several studies, parents recognized the complexity of their child's needs and expressed a need for support (Koshy, Brown, Jones, & Portman Smith, 2013; Morawska & Sanders, 2009b; Preece et al., 2017). To educate parents about the specific needs of gifted children, the literature highlighted the traits of heightened sensitivities (Neihart et al., 2002), overexcitabilities (Tieso, 2007; Webb et al., 2007), asynchronous development (Silverman, 1997), perfectionism (Neihart et al., 2002; Neumeister, 2004), underachievement and motivation issues (Neihart et al., 2002). The research also revealed effective and ineffective parenting behaviors and parenting styles to use with gifted children. Finally, the fourth theme showed parenting interventions are effective for supporting parents by educating families and providing a safe place to discuss and learn from each other (Morawska & Sanders, 2009a; Weber & Stanley, 2012;).

### **Parental Involvement Increases Student Achievement**

School leaders play an essential role in the facilitation of programs to support families. In 2011, the National Policy Board of Educational Administration updated a series of standards known as the Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards. These standards outline what quality district leaders need to know, understand and can do. Embedded in each standard, improving student achievement is the central focus. ELCC standard four emphasizes the necessity for school leaders to be able to understand and respond to the needs of the students' parents and caregivers. Healthy families encourage student growth and learning. Marzano, Waters, and McNulty (2005) emphasized a key component of leadership is deciding which improvement efforts to focus on. The authors pointed out, "The problem in low-performing schools is not getting

people to work, it is getting people to do the right work” (p. 76). School leaders can identify the specific improvement needs of a school by examining the Factors in the “What Works in Schools Model” (Marzano, 2003). As a school works to increase student achievement, school leaders must take a deep look at the school-level factors, teacher-level factors, and student-level factors that may need to be improved to meet the goal. In the model, factor 9 relates to the student-level factors which include the home environment of the child. Marzano (2003) detailed (1) parent communication about the importance of school and providing support and resources to help with homework, (2) parental supervision of home activities, and (3) parenting style are the three foundational home environment elements that link to student success in school. Marzano (2003) further elaborated that the authoritative parenting style does correlate with academic achievement and the permissive parenting style does not. Finally, Marzano (2003) concluded that school leaders can provide a targeted intervention to the home environment factors by offering parent training about how to strengthen their communication with their child about the importance of school, how to engage in the appropriate amount of supervision, and how to use the authoritative parenting style (pp. 81-95).

Numerous studies link parental involvement to higher student achievement scores (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Cripps & Zyromski, 2009; Epstein, 2001 2008; Epstein & Voorhis, 2010; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jeynes, 2005; Shaver & Walls, 1998; Westat & Policy Studies Associates, 2001). Epstein (2008) stated, “Successful students have families who stay informed and involved in their child’s education” (p. 9). At times, schools only contact parents when children misbehave. Schools need to have an

intentional plan to regularly engage parents through developing partnership programs (Epstein & Voorhis, 2010). The goal is to produce positive and effective actions between the home, school, and community that support the needs of the child. Epstein (2008) outlined the six types of involvement: (type 1) parenting, (type 2) communicating, (type 3) volunteering, (type 4) learning at home, (type 5) decision making, and (type 6) collaborating with the community (p. 11). The parental involvement framework provides schools with a list of explicit activities that can be used to increase parents' engagement with the school. For this current study, Epstein's (2001) foundational work on type one, parenting, was the focus. Type one involvement places the school in the role information provider and supporter to the students' parents. The goal is to provide information and support to the parent that helps families create a home environment that supports learning. These supports can be workshops, trainings, videos, home visits, phone calls, and sharing any information that educates families about parenting skills, parenting styles, child development, health and nutrition, and how to support learning at home (Epstein, 2001; Epstein & Voorhis, 2010).

## **Understanding Parenting Styles**

### **Parenting Styles Defined**

To further describe the parental involvement research, it is first important to define the parenting styles of authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. The literature describes parents' level of expectations (as described as demandingness) and distinct behaviors demonstrated by each style. In 1966, developmental psychologist Diana Baumrind created a measure to identify three specific parenting styles. The styles are illustrated by the authoritarian parenting style, the permissive parenting style, and the

authoritative parenting style. These three parenting styles are defined by the parent's level of responsiveness (level of warmth) and the parent's level of demandingness (level of expectations). Another component of demandingness is control. This refers to the level of control the parent exercises over the child. The authoritative parenting style is defined by being high in demandingness (high expectations) and high in responsiveness (high level of warmth). An authoritative parent balances the needs of the child with maintaining a consistent level of control. These parents do not use coercive discipline but instead use supportive yet assertive discipline. Authoritative parents encourage individuality and independence while using an open, honest communication (Baumrind, 1971).

Authoritarian parenting style is defined by being high in demandingness (high expectations) but low in responsiveness (low level of warmth). These parents maintain total control with very high expectations of the child and do not allow the child to be independent. Discipline may include harsh, coercive actions (Baumrind, 1971). The permissive parenting style is high in responsiveness (high level of warmth) but low in demandingness (low level of expectations). These parents respond to all the needs of the child but hold low expectations for the child's behavior. These parents do not use punishment to control the child, instead the child is allowed to make his own decisions (Baumrind, 1971).

### **Parenting Styles Link to Child Outcomes**

Henderson and Mapp (2002) led a broad review of 51 quality research studies from 1993-2002 outlining the findings pertaining to parental involvement's correlation with increased student achievement. The benefits of parental engagement are abundant and clear. The studies revealed that students with involved families are more likely to



have higher achievement scores, be enrolled in advanced classes, advance in grade level, have steady attendance, good behaviors, acclimate to the school environment and graduate and attend college (Henderson & Mapp 2002). In a longitudinal study contracted by the U.S. Department of Education, Westat and Policy Studies Associates. (2001), examined 71 Title 1 schools and found that teacher outreach methods correlated with improved students' math and reading scores. The teachers' outreach methods included face-to-face conferences, sharing information with parents about how to help their child at home, and ongoing phone calls to discuss positive student progress and to address any concerns.

What aspects of parental involvement have the most impact on student achievement? Jeynes (2005) performed a meta-analysis of 77 research studies to answer this question. Jeynes (2005) found, "Two patterns that emerged from the findings were that the facets of parental involvement that required a large investment of time, such as reading and communicating with one's child, and the more subtle aspects of parental involvement, such as parental style and expectations, had a greater impact on student educational outcomes than some of the more demonstrative aspects of parental involvement, such as having household rules and parental attendance and participation at school functions (p. 2). Also, the meta-analysis revealed that parental expectations had the largest effect size on student achievement. The study's implications encourage schools to inform parents about the importance of spending quality time reading and talking with their children and how specific parenting styles with high expectations increase student learning (Jeynes, 2005).

Chrispeels and Rivero (2001) conducted a qualitative study to discover parents' perceptions of parenting practices after attending an 8-week parent education class (PIQE- Parent Institute for Quality Education). Parenting styles was a prominent theme in the data. Parents reported changes to parenting behaviors after taking the class. Chrispeels and Rivero (2001) stated, "As they explored their parenting practices in the supportive PIQE classes, these parents perceived their actions as adversely affecting their child's self-esteem. The authoritarian parents discovered new strategies for dealing with discipline and communication issues that included more dialogue and involving the child in the decision-making process. The parents reported a desire and described actions they were taking to move toward a more authoritative style" (p. 164). In another study evaluating the PIQE parenting program, parents' knowledge was identified as a construct (Chrispeels & Gonzalez, 2004). The authors surveyed a sample of 1,156 parents who attended a 9-week parent education classes. The surveys assessed the following areas: home learning activities, parenting practices, and home-school connections (p. 2). The pre- and post-test results showed a significant increase in parents' knowledge (1.06 elementary and .89 secondary) about how to help their child and about how a school system works which was most significant in increasing the parent involvement. The study also showed parenting practices as the largest effect on home learning activities. Chrispeels and Gonzalez (2004) believed the connection is grounded in the program's focus on effective parenting practices that support the child's social emotional needs coupled with effective learning activities to do at home. A study of 335 Title 1 students found that students with parents who attended a series of school district created workshops increased their reading and math scores more than students with parents who

did not attend. The workshops covered topics on parenting (such as effective discipline strategies), school-home communication, parent involvement at school and at home, and involvement in school decision making (Shaver & Walls, 1998). Cripps and Zyromski (2009) highlighted the link between authoritative parenting style and higher levels of self-esteem in adolescents. The authors encouraged schools to hold parent workshops and discussion groups about the benefits of the authoritative parenting style. Steinberg (2001) confirmed that quality parenting information is irrelevant unless it is shared with parents.

### **Overview of the Research on Parenting Styles With Gifted Children**

The empirical research about parents' knowledge about the nature and needs of gifted children and their parenting styles and behaviors is very limited. Robinson, Weinberg, Redden, Ramey, and Ramey (1998) stated, "We find the essential ingredients of parental responsiveness, time, involvement, and high expectations reappearing" (p. 155). Specific studies comparing parents of the gifted children with parents of non-gifted children showed parental behavioral differences. In a study by Clausing-Lee (1992), the research revealed gifted fathers provided more learning opportunities than the fathers of non-gifted children. This research supported the idea that if parents know their child is gifted, they respond with behaviors different from parents of non-gifted children. Karnes and Shwendel (1987) did a pilot study to determine the differences in attitudes and practices between the fathers of young gifted children and the fathers of young non-gifted children. Through a series of semi-structured interviews, the fathers of young gifted children exhibited the following behaviors when compared to fathers of non-gifted children. The first three areas showed the fathers of the gifted children as more involved. They read to their children three times as long. These fathers spent less time on their own

hobbies reporting only 2.5 hours per week versus the non-gifted fathers reporting six hours a week. The gifted fathers reported 20% more time engaging in parent-child activities such as going to the movies, the zoo, and sporting events. They also reported providing a higher percentage of learning activities such as an emphasis on oral language learning so that the child could exhibit vocabulary gains. The fathers of the gifted children also provided more opportunities for fine motor development such as playtime with Legos by reporting this activity 57% of the time versus 20% of the time reported by fathers of non-gifted children. Finally, the gifted fathers provided more strategies for positive self-esteem reporting 57% of the time versus 30% of the time.

Rimm and Lowe (1988) found some parental behaviors that negatively affected gifted children. In their study focused on the family environments of underachieving gifted students, they reported that the home environment of underachievers was more likely to be child-centered yet did not provide a consistent level of parental expectations. These parents may have employed the permissive parenting style of high responsive behaviors but low expectations and control.

### **Authoritative Parenting Style Preferred With Gifted Children**

Research identified the authoritative parenting style as an effective parenting style for gifted students (Dwairy, 2004; Webb et al., 2007). Dwairy (2004) compared the parenting styles with the mental health level of gifted and non-gifted adolescents. The parents of gifted adolescents reported to using the authoritative parenting style corrected with their gifted children who reported higher self-esteem and fewer psychological difficulties. In academic achievement, De Oliveira (2015) pointed out the authoritative parenting style is most associated with the academic success of adolescents. De Oliveira

used the instrument created by Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen, and Hart (1995) titled the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ-Short Version) based on Baumrind's (1966) authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles. This study did not specifically look at gifted adolescents as a subgroup. Rudasill et al. (2013) found that students with higher cognitive scores perceived their parents as more flexible and authoritative. The authors pointed out two possible explanations. First, the authoritative parenting style is linked to student success resulting in the student's higher cognitive scores. Second, the child's cognitive ability enables the child to be aware of and perform the desired behaviors solicited by the authoritative parenting style (Rudasill et al., 2013). Snowden and Christian (1999) studied 46 parents of young gifted children. The findings revealed a description of parenting behaviors that made up the authoritative parenting style. The parents encouraged creativity, displayed low levels of frustration, used flexible control, exhibited confidence, and assisted in the teaching and learning at home and at school. Confirming Snowden and Christian (1999), Solomon and Pilarinos (2017) identified most parents of gifted children reported to having an authoritative parenting style. In measuring adjustment problems in gifted children, 39.6% of parents responded that their child experiences peer social difficulty. This quantitative study did not show an association between parenting styles and child difficulties.

### **Authoritarian and Permissive Discouraged for Use With Gifted Children**

Dwairy (2014) pointed out the authoritarian parenting style negatively affects the mental health of the gifted. In agreement with the previous study, De Oliveira (2015) confirmed that authoritarian and permissive parenting styles have negative correlations with academic achievement. Several research studies stated that the permissive parenting

style is also not recommended for gifted children (Rimm & Lowe, 1988; Webb et al., 2007). Permissive parenting style leads to child self-centeredness by reinforcing the idea that the child does not need to follow the rules set by society (Roeper, 1982). Finally, a study by Neumeister (2004) examined the development of perfectionism in gifted college students. The study identified the authoritarian parenting style as a contributing factor to the development of perfectionism. The following account begins with the theoretical framework about the characteristics of gifted children and how these characteristics make parenting more complex.

## **The Nature and Needs of Gifted Children**

### **Characteristics of Gifted Children**

Annemarie Roeper, a pioneer in the field of gifted education, wrote “giftedness is a greater awareness, a greater sensitivity, and a greater ability to understand and transform perceptions into intellectual and emotional experiences” (Roeper, 2000, p. 33). Not only did she open her own gifted school, but during her lifetime of work with gifted children, she sought to get to know who they were at their core. In 1983, she developed the Annemarie Roeper Model of Qualitative Assessment (QA). During the 90-minute QA, Roeper would interview the gifted child’s parents and then the gifted child. The questions were not designed to identify the child’s cognitive levels but to gather information intended to get to the heart of who they were. At the end, she would reconvene with the child’s parents to offer insights and recommendations on how to support their gifted child (Delisle, 2006).

If a parent thinks their child is gifted, many tools are available to learn about the characteristics of gifted children. Silverman (1997) created the Characteristics of Giftedness Scale. The characteristics were selected to represent the traits of most children

who were tested for possible giftedness, generalizable to children from diverse backgrounds, gender-neutral, traits easily observed at home, and easy for parents to interpret. After multiple years of research and considerable revision, the Characteristics of Giftedness Scale became a parent questionnaire listing 25 possible gifted characteristics. This scale has been used in multiple research studies certifying its validity and reliability. Listed below are the 25 Characteristics of Giftedness Scale (Silverman, 1997; Silverman & Golon, 2008; Silverman & Waters, 1984):

1. good problem-solving and reasoning abilities
2. rapid learning ability
3. extensive vocabulary
4. excellent memory
5. long attention span
6. personal sensitivity
7. compassion for others
8. perfectionism
9. intensity
10. moral sensitivity
11. unusual curiosity
12. perseverance when interested
13. high degree of energy
14. preference for older companions
15. wide range of interests
16. great sense of humor
17. early or avid reading ability
18. concerned with justice, fairness
19. at times judgment seems mature for her age
20. keen powers of observation
21. vivid imagination
22. high degree of creativity
23. tends to question authority
24. shows ability with numbers
25. good at jigsaw puzzles (Silverman & Golon, pp. 201-202)

This trait list reveals the commonalities found in gifted children and what a parent may most likely see in their child. If a parent answers yes to the question that their child

demonstrates more than three fourths of these traits, it is likely the child is gifted (Silverman & Golon, 2008; Silverman & Waters, 1984).

### **Parenting Complexities**

Neihart et al. (2002) pointed out the specific characteristics of gifted children such as heightened sensitivity and asynchronous development that impact parenting practices. Morawska and Sanders (2008) concluded that gifted children do not display more difficulties than non-gifted children except for two areas. Gifted children responded at higher levels to the statements "often seem worried" and "gets along better with adults than other children." Also, in this study, parents who rated higher confidence scores reported using less ineffective parenting behaviors and less negative behavior problems with their child. Regardless of the debate, the parents of gifted children need support and education about how to meet the needs of their child. It would be helpful for school counselors to share information with parents about how certain parenting behaviors may encourage or discourage their child's academic motivation (Garn et al., 2012). The challenges in finding appropriate educational supports may push some parents to create their own opportunities for their child. Jolly, Matthews, and Nester (2013) explored the reasons why parents chose to homeschool their gifted child and provided a description of those experiences. In their qualitative study, 13 parents' (of homeschooled gifted children) responses centered on the themes of parents know best, isolation, challenges, and family roles. One reason parents decided to homeschool was that they wanted to provide curriculum that tapped into their child's interests and coincided with their child's ability level. Unfortunately, this is exactly what the child was not receiving in school. The authors revealed a connection between choice and parental self-efficacy beliefs.



Homeschooling gave parents the control to use whichever curriculum and methods they saw fit to maximize their child's learning.

Parents of children with special needs expressed a need for education and support. Parents of children with unique needs often seek out additional support. In a study surveying parents of autistic children, 90% responded that they would like to attend parent training classes (Preece et al., 2017). Regarding gifted children, Koshy et al. (2013) surveyed 21 parents of gifted children to collect their perceptions of support that they had received and what types of support were still needed to maximize the potential of their gifted child. Most of the parents felt they had good relationships with and high expectations for their child, although, 86% of parents felt unqualified to assist in their child's education and to make decisions about advanced class and college pathways. In another study, parents expressed needing help understanding and managing their child's emotional needs. They revealed that at times, they did not feel confident in how to parent their gifted child (Morawska & Sanders, 2009b).

### **The Special Needs of Gifted Children**

Gifted children have several specific needs. It is important for parents to understand and learn about these needs to develop strategies that guide and support their gifted child. The literature highlights the areas of greater sensitivity, overexcitabilities, asynchronous development, perfectionism, underachievement, and motivational issues as particular needs in relation to gifted children.

**Greater sensitivity and overexcitabilities.** The gifted characteristic of heightened sensitivity is another important element of giftedness for parents to

understand. A gifted child's heightened sensitivity creates specific needs in particular situations.

Gifted children seem to have an extra emotional sensor, or special awareness, that picks up the slightest emotions. The attitudes and actions of others may be a major source of stress to them. As children, they may take a joke or teasing far too seriously. They may even overreact and have a temper tantrum if they feel slighted or misunderstood. (Webb et al., 2007, p. 119)

Being sensitive is a positive quality in many circumstances; however, as demonstrated in the examples, heightened sensitivity can manifest many difficult situations for gifted children.

Many gifted children are also hyper aware of their surroundings. In a specific room, a gifted child may be affected by the number of people, the noise level, and the tactile elements they are directly touching such as the hardness of the chair. At times, a parent will need to pay attention and regulate the amount of stimulus in a room to align to the ideal comfort of the gifted child. Due to heightened sensitivity, too much stimulation may be stressful.

A psychiatrist from Poland, Kazimierz Dabrowski, created a theory of overexcitabilities. His research described individuals who were particularly inclined to different types of stimulation. "Overexcitabilities are inborn intensities indicating a heightened ability to respond to stimuli (Lind, 2011, p. 1). A person may demonstrate excitability in one or several of the five types of stimulation: intellectual, imaginal, emotional, sensual, and psychomotor (Webb et al., 2007). Lind (2011) explained that a child exhibiting intellectual overexcitability may have an intense need to learn and

synthesize new information. A child demonstrating traits of imaginal overexcitabilities has a strong ability to visualize and use metaphors to express their fantasies and imaginations. These children are described as “being in their own world” and often have difficulty paying attention in the classroom (Lind, 2011). Emotional overexcitabilities in children are demonstrated through intense reactions and feelings to day-to-day situations. These children have deep, emotional relationships; however, they are often cited for overreacting to circumstances (Lind, 2011). Sensual overexcitability produces an intense awareness of the senses. Children may experience smell, sights, taste, touch, and sounds more than an average person. At times, children become overstimulated and feel uncomfortable in their environment (Lind, 2011). Psychomotor excitability is demonstrated by a child’s need to constantly move and be active in physical activities. These children may respond impulsively and act out (Lind, 2011). Research reveals a correlation between individuals with high cognitive ability and overexcitabilities (Bouchet & Falk, 2001). To understand the various intense behaviors of gifted children, it is important to share the theory and traits of Dabrowski's overexcitabilities with parents and teachers (Tieso, 2007).

**Asynchronous development.** In 1991, the Columbus Group developed the following widely used definition of giftedness and asynchronous development, “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 modification in parenting, teaching, and counseling for them to develop optimally”

(Silverman, 1993, p. 51). Dr. Linda Silverman (1997) defined asynchronous development as being out-of-sync in the different areas of physical, psychological, intellectual, social, and emotional development. A child may be chronologically 10 years old but more like an 18-year-old intellectually while being closer to an 8-year-old, socially and emotionally. Also, a gifted child has the intellectual ability to understand the complex problems of the world coupled with the unfortunate lack of life experience to balance the excitements, fears, and anxieties of their advanced knowledge. As the Columbus Group mentioned, it imperative for parents to be aware of asynchronous development in gifted children to bridge the different levels of development faced by the child in their day-to-day life.

**Perfectionism.** Underneath the surface, a gifted child with high academic performance may be struggling with perfectionism and may appear accomplished and successful. Parents need to be keenly aware of the pitfalls of perfectionism. Frost et al. (1990) defined perfectionism as, “setting of excessively high standards of performance” (p. 450). The authors noted that this definition does not delineate between a healthy strive towards high standards and an unhealthy drive enough is never enough. A gifted child attempting to never make a mistake experiences tremendous stress with the day-to-day ups and downs of life. These children are highly critical of themselves and often highly critical of others (Dweck, 2000).

Gifted children who are particularly at risk for perfectionism and stress are those who, by temperament, need structure, are highly organized, have a concrete-sequential style of thinking, and take things very seriously. With their intensity, they are so serious and rule-bound that they experience little joy or spontaneity in

their lives. Others see them as rigid, overly worried, or depressed, even though they themselves may be comfortable with their lifestyle. (Webb et al., 2007, p. 124)

Parents can help their child by identifying the difference between healthy perfectionism, persistent actions resulting in accomplishment versus unhealthy perfectionism, extreme actions combined with anxiety, fear, and possible avoidance tendencies. If a gifted child is experiencing unhealthy perfection, parents can encourage the child to focus on their achievements and praise their efforts during the process (Neihart et al., 2002).

Offering advice to parents, Dweck (2007) revealed one secret to raising intelligent children is to not tell them they are smart. Based on her extensive research, she outlined effective praise techniques for parents which promote a growth mindset over a fixed mindset. Dweck explained the difference between the two theories of intelligence. Individuals who have a fixed mindset believe their abilities are innate and unable to be changed or improved. A person with a growth mindset believes their abilities can be improved with effort and perseverance. A child with a fixed mindset may have difficulty facing adversity because his belief in his fixed abilities holds him back from growing and improving. A child with a growth mindset sees mistakes as opportunities for learning enabling them to continually improve and overcome challenges. Dweck's research revealed the actual words of praise (from parents or teachers) confirm a child's theory of intelligence. Dweck encouraged parents of gifted children to praise the effort and processes the child uses instead of praising a child's inherent abilities of intelligence. Parents should avoid phrases such as, "You are so smart." Instead, parents should use

phrases such as, “Wow, you earned an A on your test because of your strong study habits.” These words guide and reinforce the elements of hard work and perseverance needed to face any challenge. Children who develop a growth mindset have the necessary tools to ward off perfectionism (Dweck, 2007).

**Underachievement and motivational issues.** The final areas of special needs of gifted children involve issues with their approach to learning. As mentioned, gifted children may experience perfectionism; in contrast, gifted children may also experience underachievement. Both extremes are common with gifted children. Parents need to be aware of the warning signs and characteristics of each extreme. It can be surprising for a parent when their child with a high I, gets poor grades in school. Gifted students underachieve for a variety of reasons. At times, the curriculum may be too easy for them causing disengagement from participation. Gifted students may be struggling with friendships or facing difficulties with their family taking their attention away from school. The root of the underachievement could possibly be centered on internal feelings of anxiety or depression. Some gifted students are deeply rebellious and reject school's constant requests for compliance. Other gifted underachievers use their non-compliance actions as a mask to hide learning struggles or possible learning disabilities of a twice exceptional child. Finally, many gifted students underachieve because of the lack of work ethic, organization, and self-regulation (Neihart et al., 2002). Whatever the reason for the underachievement, parents and teachers need to work together to get the child back on track.

Research centers on two approaches to reversing underachievement: counseling and school interventions (Neihart et al., 2002). Many schools use both methods to help

students become re-engaged in school. In a study by Obergriesser and Stoeger (2015), less self-efficacy and more anxiety were associated with gifted underachievers. In having an awareness of the factors that contribute to underachievement, parents and teachers can provide interventions for support. In the study, a self-regulated learning intervention was implemented and both gifted achievers and gifted underachievers benefited (Obergriesser & Stoeger, 2015). Garn, Matthews and Jolly (2010) researched the home environments of gifted children to determine what parenting approaches were used to encourage motivation for learning. In their qualitative interviews of 30 parents of gifted children, scaffolding and behavior modification were found to be strategies used to motivate their gifted child. Over half of the parents expressed frustrations with the school's lack of ability to motivate their child. They reported school activities felt meaningless and boring to their child because the activities did not tap into their child's interests or appropriate ability level. As a result, parents felt the responsibility to motivate their child at home. Additionally, 80% of the participants described a variety of ways they support their child's academic needs such as overseeing homework by providing assistance and a learning environment at home complete with all the supplies to complete the work. Also, the parents linked the school content to the child's interest to increase motivation. These parents also stressed the importance of learning by relating school work to later life goals. Parents used behavior modification to motivate their child by having clear expectations for the completion of school work in conjunction with rewards and punishments matched consequently to the child's behavior choices.

Garn and Jolly (2014) also conducted motivation research from the child's perspective. They asked 15 gifted children to share experiences of when they felt

motivated and experiences of when they did not feel motivated. The gifted children related their experience of feeling intrinsically motivated to incidences when their parents and teachers linked learning opportunities to their personal interests and aspirations. Students also mentioned that they were extrinsically motivated when their parents offered rewards for good grades and punishments for poor grades. One negative aspect of incentivizing performance was that students reported decreased motivation when they encountered parental pressure to maintain perfect grades and keep up the image of a successful "gifted" student. Sometimes, parental support can be too controlling. Garn and Jolly (2015) researched the link between parental achievement-oriented psychological control (APC) and gifted students' academic amotivation and school avoidance behaviors. Parents exhibit APC through demanding and coercive behaviors. They often have unattainable expectations for their child to have perfect academic scores. As a result of less than perfect achievement, APC parents harshly punish or withhold love and affection from their child. The 230 gifted student participants reported low scores for parental APC, academic amotivation, and school avoidance; however, when parental APC was reported, it was indirectly associated with academic amotivation and fear of failure. The most significant relationship was academic amotivation and school avoidance. Gifted children who perceive their parents' expectations as unattainable may experience amotivation and lead to school avoidance.

### **Effective Parenting Behaviors for Gifted Children**

The experts in the field of gifted parenting recommend establishing limits for gifted children, using effective discipline and creating a close, cohesive, flexible but structured home environment for school success. Olszewski-Kubilius, Lee, & Thomson



(2014) surveyed 1,500 gifted children and their parents to examine the link between social competence and the family environment. Respondents who rated their family as close, cohesive, and flexible correlated with positive social ability. Stoeger, Steinbach, Obergriesser, and Matthes (2014) study confirmed their hypothesis that elementary aged children need the environmental needs met through supportive families and schools more than individual motivation and learning behaviors. As mentioned earlier, Garn et al. (2010) parents used scaffolding and behavior modification to motivate their gifted child. It is important to establish clear limits for your gifted child. Rimm (2010) emphasized the importance of parents setting limits and not over empowering their children. She explained that children feel secure when parents set clear limits for the child's environment. As children grow, parents can allow the child to have more choices within their environment; however, the parent must remain in charge. If a child is empowered to make too many decisions too early, these children then expect to be treated as adults. This over empowerment can lead to many problems at school. These children may resist the instructions of their teachers and have difficulty completing tasks that are not their choice.

As parents set limits, children can recognize the boundaries of their environment and begin to develop self-control (Webb et al., 2007). Parents of gifted children need to develop effective discipline routines that move beyond just punishment. Effective discipline helps a child regulate their own behaviors through clearly established expectations and rules, consequences, and rewards (Webb et al., 2007). It is most important for parents to be consistent and follow through with all aspects of discipline enabling a child to predict and trust their environment. Webb et al. (2007) highlighted the

preferred parenting style of authoritative. Authoritative parents have clear expectations for their children and clear consequences for behaviors. The child can have some choices while the parent continues to hold the child accountable for behaviors. The authors take the position against the authoritarian style because all the decision making is made by the parents leaving the child void of experiencing self-regulation. Webb et al. (2007) also stated that the permissive parenting style is not recommended. This style allows the child to make all the decisions pertaining to their needs and wants. Unfortunately, a child becomes used to completely controlling their environment and may experience trouble adjusting when they are in situations where they are not in control such as school. These children may become rebellious to any structure placed upon them.

Along with effective discipline and praise, parents need to create a home environment that fosters and supports learning. As mentioned earlier, underachievement may be a result of the lack of organization and focus. Rimm (2007) set forth general rules for creating a time and a place for school work. After a quick afternoon snack, gifted children should finish their homework before they can do anything else. Children will be motivated knowing they get to do their preferred activity after homework is done. Parents should set up a quiet, distraction-free homework zone complete with all supplies to get the school tasks completed. Parents should encourage the gifted child to complete their work on their own only assisting if the child is stuck on a specific problem. Parents should monitor assignments and deadlines of young children gradually pulling back supports as the child grows. If the child struggles with organization, interventions may need to be put in place to teach the child organizational strategies. It is vital for parents to work with the child's teacher to develop a system that guides organization and holds the

child accountable. Finally, Rimm (2007) highlighted the need for parents to be vigilant about checking and monitoring an underachieving gifted child. Consistent and regular progress monitoring will provide the support needed for a child to overcome underachievement.

### **Parenting Interventions Support Families**

Parenting interventions are effective for supporting parents by educating families and providing a safe place to share their experiences, discuss parenting concerns, and learn from each other. A study by Windecker-Nelson, Melson, and Moon (1997) revealed intellectually gifted preschoolers observed competence compared with their mother's attitudes, concerns, and support level. Consequently, gifted preschoolers were found to have a greater perceived competence when their mothers were involved in support networks. These support networks provided guidance resulting in mothers that had fewer concerns about parenting their gifted child. Not only with gifted children, but parenting interventions provide support parent for any child with unique needs. Parent intervention training increased the effective parenting behaviors of foster care parents (Akin, Yan, McDonald, & Moon, 2017). After attending a parent education program, parents responded to supportive information about how to help their child (Nolan, 2017).

A study by Cornell and Grossberg (1987) also revealed parent support networks appear to be important component of the effective parenting of gifted children. Weber and Stanley (2012) detailed how an educational group in Florida created free parent workshops to inform the parents of gifted children and give quality information about the nature and needs of gifted kids. The study measured parents' knowledge before the workshop and parents' knowledge after the workshop. The researchers showed that

parents' knowledge increased (from pre-to post assessment). In the literature, two parenting interventions are referenced specifically to support the parents of gifted children. The SENG Parent Model is a resource for the parents of gifted children. Parents can organize gatherings to cover the 10 topics over the course of 10 meeting sessions (DeVries & Webb, 2003). The authors provided a book outlining materials for parenting sessions. To the best of the researcher's knowledge there is not empirical research on the effectiveness of this parenting intervention. The second gifted parent intervention is the Gifted and Talented Triple P Parent program. Morawska, and Sanders (2009b) conducted the first study of a parenting program specifically designed to support the needs of the parents of gifted children. Gifted and Talented Triple P is an adjusted version of Sanders (2000) Triple P Parent program. Sanders' Triple P Parent program is widely used and has extensive empirical research attesting to its effectiveness (Nowak & Heinrichs, 2008). In the Gifted and Talented Triple P, parents identified dealing with their child's emotional issues, school concerns, parenting strategies, and peer relationships as areas they hoped would be covered in a parent program (Morawska & Sanders, 2009b).

Attending a parent intervention workshop can be difficult for families who are juggling work and family responsibilities. A self-administered parent intervention (completed online) was effective in increasing parental knowledge and parents reported decreases in the child's concerning behaviors (Thomson & Carlson, 2017). The positive effects revealed a self-administered parent intervention is a quality option. Even though this online option may be effective, face-to-face parent interventions give parents a safe place to discuss and parents valued having a place to share stories about their child and hear the stories of other parents (Morawska & Sanders, 2009a; Weber & Stanley, 2012).

Wu (2017) interviewed prominent gifted education professor, Dr. Carolyn Callahan. Callahan encouraged the parents of gifted children to work in partnership with their child's school and advocate for their child's educational needs. Callahan also suggested that schools work in partnership with parents by providing supportive parent groups. Callahan stated that this allows a place for parents to gather and openly discuss and learn from each other. Illustrating this point, participants in a Family Fun Night parent program reported that they appreciated how the program created a safe gathering for parents to discuss issues without being judged. One drawback of the Family Fun Night parent program is that only 5 of the 27 families attended all the sessions. Families reported illness or transportation issues as the reason for the absences (Knowles, Harris, & Norman, 2017).

### **Summary**

From this review of the literature, it is known that gifted children have specific and unique needs (Neihart et al., 2002; Silverman & Waters, 1984; Webb et al., 2007) and parents of these children may encounter increased parenting challenges (Garn et al., 2012). Parents of gifted children expressed difficulties in dealing with their child's social and emotional behaviors, and the struggle to find resources and assistance (Renati et al., 2017; Webb et al., 2007). It is also known that numerous studies link parental involvement to increased student achievement (Chrispeels, & Rivero, 2001; Cripps, & Zyromski, 2009; Epstein, 2001, 2008; Epstein, & Voorhis, 2010; Henderson, & Mapp, 2002; Jeynes, 2005; Shaver, & Walls, 1998; Westat & Policy Studies Associates, 2001). One vital piece of parental involvement is forming partnership programs, specifically parent workshops that inform, support, and involve families (Epstein, 2008). What is

unknown from this review of the literature is how to create parent workshops that inform and support the needs of the parents of gifted children. There is substantial research about the nature and needs of gifted children and which parenting styles are effective with gifted children; however, more research is needed on developing parent workshops that shares this research to inform and support parents. Additional research is needed about parents' knowledge level about the nature and needs of gifted children and what is their parenting style with their gifted child. Their parenting style outlines how they relate to their child in terms of level of expectations, demandingness, and warmth. Schools should use survey data to understand the knowledge level and parenting style of their audience. The data will inform what information would be included in parent workshop to specifically meet the needs of a district's gifted parents.

## **Chapter III**

### **Methodology**

The methodology chapter contains the following categories in the order of research questions, research design, participants, sampling procedures, instruments, data collection, statistical treatment, limitations, and summary (Newman, Benz, Weis, & McNeil, 1997). These distinct subsections provided a detailed account of how the study was performed and analyzed. The comprehensive information described the population being investigated within various aspects of demographic contexts. Since the research was collected to describe the data set, not to describe the relationship between the variables, this non-inferential statistical study did not require a hypothesis. However, this research study was guided by the research questions listed below.

#### **Research Questions**

1. What is the self-perceived knowledge level parents have about the general characteristics and needs of gifted children?
2. What type of parenting style do parents of gifted children use with their gifted child?

#### **Research Design**

This study used a quantitative, descriptive survey design to assess the perceived knowledge level (about the nature and needs of gifted children) and the perceived parenting styles of a sample of parents with gifted children. The major features of a descriptive survey design enable the researcher to describe the general characteristics in a data set, isolate the dimensions of the sample, and organize a large amount of data into clear, manageable parts (Trochim, 2006). The purpose of the design was to collect

statistics to describe a situation as it existed (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008) and report characteristics and patterns of behavior in the data set (Rudestam & Newton, 2007; Salkind, 2014). The data described general trends for parent knowledge and parenting style. Surveys were used to gather the data from the participants. Kelley, Clark, Brown, and Sitzia (2003) listed the advantages of survey research as (1) research is based on real-world observation, (2) the broad coverage is more likely to represent the sample, and (3) a large data set can be obtained in a short amount of time in a cost-effective manner (p. 262). The authors also pointed out the disadvantages of survey research are the paucity of depth about the topic and the difficulty gaining a high response rate (Kelley et al., 2003, p. 262). Surveys need to address the quality control related to sampling validity, instrumentation, and content validity. Each of these items are addressed later in the sampling procedures and instrument sections. There is limited information about the parenting knowledge and behaviors of the parents of gifted children and a gap in the research exists (Dai et al., 2011; Jolly & Matthews, 2012). The data collected added to the literature and provided summary descriptions and patterns to be investigated further in future studies (Agresti & Finlay, 1997).

### **Participants**

The target population consisted of parents or guardians of gifted children from four public, suburban school districts in northeast Ohio. The four public schools were chosen for their convenience to the researcher and for their similarities in total students enrolled (all between 2,909 - 4,509), suburban environments, and northeast Ohio locations. Each possible participant had at least one or more gifted child who had been identified by the public-school system as gifted following the identification rules in Ohio



Gifted Operating Standards as criteria to be included in the sample (Ohio Department of Education, 2017c). Each of the four public school districts verified the gifted parent list for the researcher to ensure that participants met the criteria. Participants may include one or all the following: mother, father, and/or legally appointed guardian of each gifted child. Table 1 outlines the demographic information of the four school districts. Districts A, C, and D agreed to forward the invitation to participate to all the parents of all the identified gifted students. District B agreed to forward the invitation to participate only to their grade 3-5 students. The researcher respected and followed the districts' guidelines for participation.

Table 1

*2017 District Profile Report From the Ohio Department of Education*

District Demographic Data	District A	District B	District C	District D
End of year enrollment	3726	4509	4207	2909
Asian %	2.2%	4.9%	3.4%	4.2%
Pacific Islander %	0%	0%	0%	.2%
Black %	3.9%	1%	2.4%	3.1%
American Indian or Alaskan Native %	.3%	0%	0%	0%
Hispanic %	7.1%	205%	6.4%	2.6%
White %	83.2%	87.7%	83.5%	86.9%
Multiracial %	3%	3.6%	3.9%	2.7%
Disadvantaged Student %	39.8%	4.9%	8.8%	8.5%
Average Family Income	54,136	150,360	99,571	109,801
# of Gifted Students	577	1396	1743	351
# of Gifted Students' parents invited to participate	577	209	1743	351
Local Report Card Gifted Grade	A	A	A	A
Gifted Performance Index Score	114.48	116.16	116.61	116.78

## **Sampling Procedures**

Nonprobability, purposive sampling (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008) was used to survey the parents of gifted students from four suburban public school districts in northeast Ohio. Nonprobability, purposive sampling was chosen to identify a target sample of parents who have children who were identified as gifted (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). The advantages were that the results measured typical parents in this specific group. Unfortunately, the disadvantage was that this type of sampling has weak external validity due to the nature that it is not representative of the total population (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). To increase validity, Fowler's (1988) sample size recommendations were followed. According to Fowler's (1988) Sample Size Table, the confidence range of less than 6% error required at least a sample size of 200 with a 20/80 chance of differentiating responses among the levels on the Likert-type scale. To adequately obtain the sample size for the study, parents of gifted children from four public school districts were surveyed. Each of the four districts had 2,880 gifted students. Keeping in mind that sample error would increase with a low response rate of completed questionnaires (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008), specific reminder procedures, sent by the researcher (via the school district contact), were conducted to encourage participants to complete and return questionnaires. One week after the initial invitation to participate email was sent, a follow-up email was sent to encourage participation and that there is still one more week to complete the survey.

## **Instruments**

A general set of demographic questions (see Appendix B) and two instruments and were used in the study. The instruments were the Gifted Knowledge Questionnaire

(see Appendix C), and Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ- Short Version; Robinson, Mandlco, Olsen, & Hart, 2001) (see Appendix D). The researcher converted the demographic questions and the two instruments into a four-page online survey so that participants completed all parts in one sitting in approximately 10 minutes. The words parent/guardian and child/student were added to all parts of the online survey to respect any non-parents or guardians who may have filled out the survey. The first set of questions contained the demographic data. Next, the Gifted Knowledge Survey was used to assess parents' self-perceived knowledge level of the nature and needs of gifted children. The final set of questions was from the PSDQ instrument which measured the parenting styles of target group (Robinson et al., 2001).

To provide context to the participant responses, 12 demographic questions were included on page two of the survey. The first seven questions ask the person filling out the survey general demographic questions of who is the person completing the survey (mother, father, other, please specify), gender, ethnicity, age group, highest level of education, and how many identified gifted children (1, 2, 3, 4 or more) they have and what is the grade range of their gifted child or gifted children (Grades K-3 Lower elementary, Grades 4-5 Intermediate Elementary, Grades 6-8 Middle school, Grades 9-12 High School). Questions 8-12 ask specific demographic questions that placed participants in the following groups, those participants who desired more information about the nature and needs of gifted children and those who did not, participants who had schools that offered parent presentations and those who did not, and if the participants had attended before or would attend a gifted parent presentation in the future. The final demographic question inquired about the various methods participants obtained information about

gifted children. They were asked to check all that apply to the following: online, libraries and bookstores, from my child's teacher or school administrator, from talking with other parents, I have trouble finding quality information, and an open text box to specify other.

The Gifted Knowledge Questionnaire was created by the researcher to address the problem that schools need to have an instrument available to assess parents' knowledge level to provide appropriate and meaningful gifted education information, see Appendix C for details. Also, the questionnaire was created because there was not a suitable survey available to address the problem (Newman et al., 1997). Burgess (2001), in his *Guide to the Design of Questionnaires*, provided tips for creating a questionnaire. He suggested that respondents are more likely to complete surveys that are brief, concise, organized, easy to complete, and interesting (Burgess, 2001). Following these guidelines, the Gifted Knowledge Questionnaire was made up of only 12 questions utilizing a Likert-type scale of 1 = *Not at all knowledgeable*, 2 = *Slightly knowledgeable*, 3 = *Somewhat knowledgeable*, 4 = *Moderately knowledgeable*, and 5 = *Extremely knowledgeable*. This format was modeled after Vagias' (2006) Likert-type scale response anchors for level of awareness. The response anchors were the same except the word *aware* was changed to *knowledgeable*. For example, *not at all aware* was modified to *not at all knowledgeable*. A parent with very little knowledge of the nature and needs of gifted children may have answered 1 = *Not at all knowledgeable* for all 12 questions yielding the lowest self-perceived knowledge level score of 12. A parent's self-perceived knowledge resulted in the highest possible score of 60 if the participant had answered all 12 questions with 5 = *Extremely knowledgeable*. A score of 24 was reached if all 12 questions were answered as 2 = *Slightly knowledgeable*. Lastly, a score of 36 was reached if the participant

answered all 12 questions with 3 = *Somewhat knowledgeable*. It was highly unlikely that participants answered every question the same; therefore, the researcher detailed a range for determining the knowledge level from the results (see Table 2). When designing the questions, content, question type and question sequence was thoroughly considered (Burgess, 2001). The researcher repeated the question part “I know the term . . . as it relates to gifted children” for five of the questions and repeated “I know the definition of” for three questions to limit the number of different types of questions for the participant (Burgess, 2001).

Table 2

*Gifted Parent’s Level of Self-Perceived Knowledge*

Level of Self-Perceived Knowledge	Score Range
Lowest level of self- perceived knowledge	scores between 12-35
Medium level of self- perceived knowledge	scores between 36-47
Highest level of self- perceived knowledge	scores between 48-60

When constructing the Gifted Knowledge Questionnaire about the nature and needs of gifted children, the researcher addressed Trochim and Donnelly’s (2008) distinct elements of measurement *translation* validity which is comprised of face validity and content validity. The authors stressed the importance of having well defined constructs, specifically able to translate the research ideas into an operational measurement. Using the literature review as a foundation, the operationalized definitions of giftedness, common gifted child characteristics, heightened sensitivity, asynchronous development, overexcitabilities, perfectionism, underachievement, praising gifted children for effort, authoritative parenting style, authoritarian parenting style, permissive parenting style, and increased parent involvement increases student achievement as they related to gifted

children were all used to itemize the overarching construct of parent knowledge of the nature and needs of gifted children. Trochim and Donnelly (2008) highlighted face validity and content validity to judge the ability of the measurement to *translate* the research ideas into a useable survey. Roberts (2010) suggested that modified and created instruments are field tested with at least five *experts in the field* to provide feedback on the validity of the instrument. The field test strategy was not used to collect data only to gather feedback from the experts in the field of gifted education.

### **Expert Review**

The researcher field tested the Gifted Knowledge Questionnaire by administering the online survey to five experts in the field of gifted education. These experts were purposely chosen for their experience, job position, and graduate degree. The experts included one county gifted coordinator, and four elementary and middle school gifted teachers. Two of the gifted teachers are also university professors. All experts hold an Ohio Gifted Validation on their teaching license that required at least 18 credit hours in gifted education. As gifted teachers and a coordinator, they all have extensive experience (each between 12-26 years' experience) working with gifted children and their parents. After completing the questionnaire, the experts were asked to give feedback by answering a series of corresponding questions to evaluate the face validity (how it looks at face value) and content validity (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). The feedback questions included: (1) Were the directions clear? (2) As experts in the field of gifted education, does the survey cover the major topics about the general nature and needs of gifted children that would be helpful for parents to know? (3) Did the questions have clear wording? (4) Is the survey convenient in length of time to take and online method of

delivery? and (5) Please describe other comments or feedback. Each question contained a yes and no response with a text box available for comments. Table 3 lists the detailed feedback and statements from the experts along with the researcher's response.

Table 3

*Feedback Statements From Five Experts in Gifted Education*

Feedback Statements	Researcher's Response
"Perhaps something about differentiated instruction?"	The topic of differentiated instruction was not added because the topic of differentiated instruction focused on the gifted child at school; this study focused on the gifted child at home.
"Authoritative vs authoritarian vs passive. For parents, you may want to give an example of each, then have them choose on the Likert if that applies to them. (i.e. Since birth, your child was a sponge absorbing all the knowledge you presented and was always a great listener of directions, etc.) or (I don't need to say much, my child has always been naturally talented, etc.). You may also want to be situations that describe each of the characteristics (i.e. overexcitability, sensitivity, etc.) to better define the vocabulary of each."	The feedback that authoritative and authoritarian are very similar is true; although, to individuals with knowledge about these terms, the terms have very different definitions. Since the goal is to assess knowledge level, participants ability to notice the subtle difference between the two words is part of the assessment. Just as the expert suggested and the researcher agreed, the third page of the survey does allow for participants to answer questions on a Likert scale about their parenting style based on examples of behaviors. Also, the researcher agreed with this feedback and chose to add content to the directions to clarify the wording of the survey questions but not lead the participants. The researcher added the following to the directions before the Parent Gifted Knowledge Survey: You may be unfamiliar with terms listed in the questions. Since the research is attempting to find out what topics parents know a lot about, a little about and not at all about, definitions to the terms are not provided. If you have not heard of the terms mentioned in the questions, an answer of "not at all knowledgeable" is acceptable.

(continued)

Table 3

*Feedback Statements From Five Experts in Gifted Education (continued)*

<p>The other responded no, and added, “Perhaps give levels of degree? Knowledgeable vs non?”</p>	<p>The researcher chose to keep the scale of 1= Not at all knowledgeable, 2= Slightly knowledgeable, 3= Somewhat knowledgeable, and 4= Moderately knowledgeable, 5= Extremely knowledgeable because this format was modeled after Vagias” (2006) Likert-type scale response anchors for level of awareness. The response anchors were the same except the word “aware” was changed to “knowledgeable”. For example, “not at all aware” was modified to “not at all knowledgeable”</p>
<p>“Yes, it covers the major things, but it might also be helpful to know from the perspective of a GIS (gifted intervention specialist) or GC (gifted coordinators), what topics are of major importance.”</p>	<p>These topics were not added because both topics are focused on the gifted child at school and school personnel instead of gifted children at home. Also, to maintain the quantitative nature of the study, the open-ended question, asking what topics are of major importance, was not added.</p>
<p>“Questions (#22) and (#23) seem very similar. authoritative and authoritarian.”</p>	<p>The feedback that authoritative and authoritarian are very similar is true; although, to individuals with knowledge about these terms, the terms have very different definitions. Since the goal is to assess knowledge level, participants ability to notice the subtle difference between the two words is part of the assessment</p>
<p>“Maybe an open-ended question such as „what other topics of gifted education are important to parents“ might be important information, (I think about twice exceptional).”</p>	<p>In response to the feedback, “maybe an open-ended question such as "what other topics of gifted education are important to parents" might be important info. (I think about twice exceptional), the researcher wanted to preserve the quantitative design of the study and not add qualitative questions. Another suggestion of adding, “what questions do you have about gifted education” was not added for the same reason. Adding the topic of “twice exceptional” was deeply considered by the researcher. Twice exceptional refers to children who are identified as gifted and identified as having a learning disability and in need of special education services at school. This research study is narrowly focused on parents“knowledge about general nature and needs of gifted children and their parenting styles at home. The process for identifying a child with a learning disability is based on the child’s need for assistance to access to the core curriculum at school. This study is focused on the home perspective. Also, special education services for a learning disability take place at school not at home.</p>
<p>“Survey hit of the major topics of gifted and terms parents should be aware and knowledgeable of to help with their own child.”</p>	<p>The researcher agreed.</p>

(continued)

Table 3



*Feedback Statements From Five Experts in Gifted Education (continued)*

“In Question 12, is it possible to have them „select all that apply“ or top 2, etc. This might have you narrow down whether the parent thinks the ability is nature or nurture. Maybe one other question could be, what questions do you have about gifted education.”

“Do you think you need to define any of the words or is that part of what you are looking for? I just wonder if some would know the topic but not the name. I'm torn on this one because you don't want to lead too much.”

In effort to keep the research project focused, the feedback of “Question 12. is it possible to have them "select all that apply" or top 2, etc. This might have you narrow down whether the parent thinks the ability is nature or nurture” was not added.

The researcher agreed with this feedback and chose to add content to the directions to clarify the wording of the survey questions but not lead the participants. The researcher added the following to the directions before the Parent Gifted Knowledge Survey: You may be unfamiliar with terms listed in the questions. Since the research is attempting to find out what topics parents know a lot about, a little about and not at all about, definitions to the terms are not provided. If you have not heard of the terms mentioned in the questions, an answer of “not at all knowledgeable” is acceptable.

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The expert feedback for question (1) was five out of the five experts responded that the directions were clear. For question (2), four out of the five experts responded that the survey covers the major topics about the general nature and needs of gifted children that would be helpful for parents to know. One expert responded, no, and provided the following feedback: “Perhaps something about differentiated instruction?” For question (3), three out of the five experts responded that the questions have clear wording. One expert answered no and the feedback for why the expert answered no is dictated as follows:

Authoritative vs. authoritarian vs. passive. For parents, you may want to give an example of each, then have them choose on the Likert if that applies to them (i.e., Since birth, your child was a sponge absorbing all the knowledge you presented and was always a great listener of directions, etc.) or (I don't need to say much, my child has always been naturally talented, etc.). You may also want to be situations that describe each of the characteristics (i.e., overexcitability, sensitivity, etc.) to better define the vocabulary of each.

The other responded no, and added, “Perhaps give levels of degree? Knowledgeable vs. non?” For question (4), five out of the five experts responded that the survey was convenient in length of time to take and online method of delivery. For question (5), the experts provided the following feedback: (a) “Yes, it covers the major things, but it might also be helpful to know from the perspective of a GIS (gifted intervention specialist) or GC (gifted coordinators), what topics are of major importance;” (b) “Questions (#22) and (#23) seem very similar. authoritative and authoritarian;” (c) “Maybe an open-ended question such as „what other topics of gifted education are important to parents“ might be important information, (I think about twice exceptional)”; (d) “Survey hit of the major topics of gifted and terms parents should be aware and knowledgeable of to help with their own child;” (e) “Question 12. is it possible to have them „select all that apply“ or top 2, etc. This might have you narrow down whether the parent thinks the ability is nature or nurture. Maybe one other question could be, what questions do you have about gifted education;” and (f) “Do you think you need to define any of the words or is that part of what you are looking for? I just wonder if some would know the topic but not the name. I'm torn on this one because you don't want to lead too much.” The next section details the researcher’s response to the feedback that was given.

The researcher chose not to adjust the wording for the questions (#22) I know the definition of authoritative parenting style, (#23) I know the definition of authoritarian parenting style, and (#24) I know the definition of permissive parenting style. The expert feedback suggested adding examples of each to define the vocabulary and then add a Likert scale to allow participants to respond. The goal of the question was to assess

parent knowledge level. If they do not know the definition, their response should be the not at all knowledgeable. Adding an example would provide information about the parenting style and potentially add knowledge. One of the experts mentioned, “Do you think you need to define any of the words or is that part of what you are looking for? I just wonder if some would know the topic but not the name. I'm torn on this one because you don't want to lead too much.” The researcher agreed with this feedback and chose to add content to the directions to clarify the wording of the survey questions but not lead the participants. The researcher added the following to the directions before the Gifted Knowledge Survey: You may be unfamiliar with terms listed in the questions. Since the research is attempting to find out what topics parents know a lot about, a little about and not at all about, definitions to the terms are not provided. If you have not heard of the terms mentioned in the questions, an answer of “not at all knowledgeable” is acceptable.

The feedback that authoritative and authoritarian are very similar is true; although to individuals with knowledge about these terms, the terms have very different definitions. Since the goal is to assess knowledge level, participants’ ability to notice the subtle difference between the two words is part of the assessment. Just as the expert suggested and the researcher agreed, the third page of the survey does allow for participants to answer questions on a Likert scale about their parenting style based on examples of behaviors.

In response to the feedback, “maybe an open-ended question such as "what other topics of gifted education are important to parents" might be important info. (I think about twice exceptional), the researcher wanted to preserve the quantitative design of the study and not add qualitative questions. Another suggestion of adding, “what questions

do you have about gifted education” was not added for the same reason. Adding the topic of “twice exceptional” was deeply considered by the researcher. Twice exceptional refers to children who are identified as gifted and identified as having a learning disability and in need of special education services at school. This research study is narrowly focused on parents’ knowledge about general nature and needs of gifted children and their parenting styles at home. The process for identifying a child with a learning disability is based on the child’s need for assistance to access to the core curriculum at school. This study is focused on the home perspective. Also, special education services for a learning disability take place at school not at home. Two other items of feedback were about adding questions that cover the topics of differentiated instruction and what topics are of major importance from the perspective of a GIS (gifted intervention specialist) or GC (gifted coordinators). Both topics are focused on the gifted child at school and school personnel instead of gifted children at home.

Also, in effort to keep the research project focused, the feedback of “Question 12. is it possible to have them "select all that apply" or top 2, etc. This might have you narrow down whether the parent thinks the ability is nature or nurture” was not added. Question 12 was developed using language straight from the literature review. The topic of whether parents think ability is nature versus nurture would take the study in a different direction. The final questionnaire (see Appendix C) reflects the input of the five experts in the field of gifted education.

### **Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ)**

With permission of Robinson et al. (2001), the second instrument, Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ- Short Version; Robinson et al., 2001) was used to measure the parenting styles of the target group. The original version by the same authors (1995) detailed a 62-item questionnaire. For their current research, the authors chose to shorten the version to a 32-item questionnaire to be completed by parents (self-reporting) to measure authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive parenting styles (Robinson et al., 2001). With permission from the author of the PSDQ questionnaire, child was listed as child/student and parent was listed as parent/guardian. Also, the 32-item survey was reduced to 30 items because two questions from the physical coercion were removed. The questions, “I grab my child when being disobedient” and “I slap my child when the child misbehaves,” were removed. The rationale was based on the possibility that these items could be offensive to participants and could affect the number of participants due to a desire to not answer these questions. In a research study mentioned previously, De Oliveira (2015) who used the PSDQ removed all four physical coercion questions to not offend participants and to not limit responses. This study chose to keep two of the physical coercion questions of “I use physical punishment as a way of disciplining my child” and “I spank my child when my child is disobedient,” to keep the context of this form of discipline that some parents may use. The instrument measures dimensions of authoritative parenting style by 15 items in three subgroups defined by levels of warmth and support, reasoning/induction, and autonomy granting. The authoritarian parenting style is identified in 10 items in three subgroups of non-reasoning, physical coercion, and verbal hostility. The final parenting style measured is permissive which is identified with 5 items. To each item, the respondent rates on a 1-5 scale (1 =

*Never*, 2 = *Once in a while*, 3 = *About Half the Time*, 4 = *Very Often*, 5 = *Always*. The parent rates how often they exhibit the parenting behavior listed in each of the 32 items. This instrument has been widely used in research since its creation demonstrating a strong reliability and validity. Robinson et al. (2001) provided the internal consistency at .86 for authoritative, .82 for authoritarian, and .64 for permissive style (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). In a study by Hubbs-Tait et al. (2008) the shortened PSDQ was used and generated Cronbach's alpha score of for .82 for authoritative, .78 for authoritarian, and .76 for permissive style (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Robinson et al. (1996) studied the psychometric characteristics of the 62 item PSDQ to increase the construct validity (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008) for cross-cultural use. The study included a comparison of parenting styles questionnaires for the U.S., Australia, China, and Russia. The results concluded a correspondence with the four country questionnaires with Baumrind's authoritative, authoritarian, and permissive parenting styles.

The Gifted Knowledge Questionnaire and the PSDQ used close-ended Likert-type questions. These types of questions provided easy to understand statistical data to describe the responses and allowed the researcher to process data rapidly (Houtkoop-Steenstra, 2000). There were several drawbacks to using this method. The close-ended questions did not provide an opportunity for participants to share additional information not listed possibly contributing to less rich responses (Houtkoop-Steenstra, 2000). Despite the limitations of this method, the survey format provided a straightforward approach to obtaining information. Participants were contacted via email and surveys were completed using SurveyMonkey. The electronic administration saved the researcher time and money (postage costs). Possible threats to the validity and reliability were

present due to issues with instrumentation clarity. Threats may have included respondents not understanding the content of the question or how to answer on the knowledge scale. The online format may not have worked with respondents who preferred a standard paper and pencil administrated questionnaire.

### **Data Collection and Privacy Practices**

The data collection was approved by the Youngstown State Institutional Review Board. All Institutional Review Board policies and guidelines were followed. Also, the researcher gained permission and cooperation of each school district's superintendent to forward the survey to the parents of identified gifted students in their district. The online survey was forwarded to gifted parents from four northeast Ohio public school districts with 2,880 possible participants. The forwarded invitation to participate email introduced the researcher and invited the participant to click on the embedded link. The link took willing participants to secure online survey hosted at SurveyMonkey. The four-page survey began with a consent form, followed by demographic questions, the Gifted Knowledge Questionnaire, and the PSDQ. The total survey took approximately 10 minutes to complete and informed possible participants that the survey could have been completed by one parent or both parents. It was stated that consent was given by when respondents click the "I agree" statement. All responses were kept confidential and no identifying information was used in the research report. The respondents were given two weeks to complete the online survey. SurveyMonkey provides a safe, secure, private online platform to conduct research. For this study, the researcher followed the Terms of Use outlined on the company's website. By following the Terms of Use, SurveyMonkey gives permission to create, share, collect, and analyze data on the platform (see attached

permission letter from SurveyMonkey in Appendix F). After the researcher created the survey, using the collector options tab, the anonymous responses option was turned on so that data collected excluded email and IP addresses. On the introduction page of the survey, the privacy practices were disclosed so that participants felt comfortable participating. The introduction states, “The online survey will not collect personal information, such as emails or computer IP addresses. Your answers will be sent to and stored a password protected link. No one, including the researcher will know if you participated in the study.” The survey was shared using the web link collector type function. After the survey was created, a usable web link was generated. The link was embedded in an email which was then forwarded to parents from the school districts. Under the collector control option, the survey was set to open at a specific time. Once the survey was open, respondents could complete the survey and data were collected. Also, the survey was set to close two weeks later. If respondents attempted to complete after the deadline, a message that the survey was closed popped up. An online consent form was created at the start of the survey (see Appendix A). If the participants met the criteria and willingly chose to participate, a button stated, “I agree” began the survey. The online consent stated, “ELECTRONIC CONSENT: By clicking “I agree” below you are indicating that you are at least 18 years old, have read and understood this consent form and you voluntarily agree to participate in this research study.”

### **Statistical Treatment**

Salkind (2014) stated, “Descriptive studies are used to organize and describe the characteristics of a collection of data” (p. 8). Several methods were used to find the central tendency, including the mode, mean, and median. (Trochim, 2006). The Gifted



Knowledge Questionnaire was scored by adding the numeric value given to the 12 questions utilizing a Likert-type scale of 1 = *Not at all knowledgeable*, 2 = *Slightly knowledgeable*, 3 = *Somewhat knowledgeable*, 4 = *Moderately knowledgeable*, 5 = *Extremely knowledgeable*. Participants were divided into one of the three levels which corresponded to their score. Scores between 12-35 were placed in the low level of self-perceived knowledge. Scores between 36-47 were placed in the medium level of self-perceived knowledge, and scores between 48-60 were placed in the high level of self-perceived knowledge. The mode was used to find which question (aspect of giftedness) has the highest level of knowledge and which question (aspect of giftedness) has the lowest level of knowledge.

Each of the three parenting styles had a list of specific questions relating to the characteristics of each style. In the PSDQ instrument scoring guide, questions 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 18, 20, 21, 24, 26, 28, and 30 illustrated the construct of the authoritative parenting style. Questions 2, 4, 6, 10, 13, 16, 22, 25, 27, and 29 detailed the aspects of the authoritarian parenting style. Questions 8, 15, 17, 19, and 23 characterized the permissive parenting style. For each numbered statement in the PSDQ, the respondent rated on a 1-5 scale (1 = *Never*, 2 = *Once in a while*, 3 = *About Half the Time*, 4 = *Very Often*, 5 = *Always*). The parent rated how often they exhibited the parenting behavior listed in each of the 30 items. The numeric value of each question was added up and an average was taken to find the mean of each parenting style. The highest mean score among the three parenting styles signified the participant's parenting style. Within the whole data set, the mean was used to find the parenting style that was used the most and the least with gifted children.

Finally, the researcher compared each of the findings to the context items asked in the demographic items using frequency distribution (Trochim, 2006). Most and least frequently used parenting style, and highest and lowest level knowledge aspects were examined in the demographic context of person completing the survey (mother, father, guardian), gender, ethnicity, age group, highest level of education, and how many gifted children (1, 2, 3, 4 or more), and the grade range of the gifted child (children). The researcher also compared the major findings to the specific demographic questions that placed participants in the following groups. Those participants who desired more information about the nature and needs of gifted children and those who did not. Participants who had schools that offered parent presentations and those who did not. Also, the results explained if the participants had attended before or would attend a gifted parent presentation in the future. The final demographic question sorted parents' various methods for obtaining information about gifted children. The mode was used to report which methods were used the most and the least.

### **Limitations**

Researchers do their best to properly collect and analyze data; unfortunately, threats to validity and reliability of the study still exist. In this study, threats may have been present due to instrumentation clarity, self-reporting and social desirability, and nonprobability, purposive sampling.

Clear possible threats to the validity (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008) included the self-reporting of the respondents. Parents may not have been completely truthful in their rating of negative parenting behaviors and possibly inflated their rating of positive parenting behaviors. Trochim and Donnelly (2008) stated, "Respondents generally want

to look good in the eyes of others. None of us likes to look as if we don't know the answer. We don't want to say anything that would be embarrassing" (p. 123). Parents may have exhibited this type of social desirability when they described their relationships with their children. It was possible that respondents answered in the way that they believed would be the most accepted parenting practices in society. Also, parents may have also inflated their knowledge level answers so that they would appear to have more knowledge than they do.

Purposive sampling had weak external validity due to the nature that it was not representative of the total population. Even though the data generated the perceptions of a specific group, the threat was that a possible subgroup was formed, and their responses may have weighed more heavily in the data results (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). For example, in this study, parents from one specific school district that may have had the opportunity to attend multiple parent education sessions. It may be likely that a subgroup of these parents had strong perceptions about gifted children that may have slanted the data in a direction.

### **Summary**

The quantitative, descriptive survey design was used to obtain data detailing the perceived knowledge level (about the nature and needs of gifted children) and the perceived parenting styles of a sample of parents with gifted children. This chapter provided justification and clarification for the research design, participants, sampling procedures, instruments, data collection, statistical treatment, and the limitations used to describe the sample population of parents of gifted children. Once again, since there is limited information about the parenting knowledge and behaviors of the parents of gifted

children and a gap in the research exists (Dai et al., 2011), the data collected added to the literature and provided patterns of information to be investigated further in future studies (Agresti & Finlay, 1997).

Chapter IV includes a detailed description of the results from the demographic questions, the Gifted Knowledge Questionnaire, and the PSDQ results as they relate to the research questions.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Results**

This quantitative, descriptive study assessed the perceived knowledge about the nature and needs of gifted children and the perceived parenting styles of a sample of parents with gifted children. The researcher collected statistics to describe a situation as it existed (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008) and to report characteristics and patterns of behavior found in the data set (Rudestam & Newton, 2007; Salkind, 2014). This chapter presents findings by describing the sample's general demographic data including participants' exposure to information about the nature and needs of gifted children. Also, findings are presented as they relate to both research questions.

The total responses received for the Gifted Parent Survey were 985. To increase validity, Fowler's (1988) sample size recommendations were followed. According to Fowler's (1988) Sample Size Table, the confidence range of less than 6% error required at least a sample size of 200 with a 20/80 chance of differentiating responses among the levels on the Likert-type scale. The survey was forwarded via email to the parents of 2,880 gifted students in four school districts resulting in a 34% response rate. The data set was scanned for accuracy and all responses were within range. Missing data were present in the results. The four pages of the survey were ordered beginning with the consent form on page one, followed by the demographic questions on page two, then the Gifted Knowledge Questionnaire on page three, and ending with the Parenting Style Survey (PSDQ) on page four. The missing data increased in occurrence after pages two and three. The consent page and demographic questions were completed by 985 participants. At the beginning of page three, 39 participants stopped the survey which resulted in 946 participants who completed the Gifted Knowledge Questionnaire. At beginning of page four, an additional 38 stopped the survey which resulted in 908 participants who

completed the PSDQ. Of the 30 questions on the PSDQ, participants randomly skipped some of the questions. Table 4 shows how many respondents answered the questions and how many skipped the questions within the PSDQ.

Table 4

*PSDQ: How Many Respondents Answered the Questions and How Many Skipped It*

Question number	Answered	Skipped
26	908	0
27	908	0
28	905	3
29	904	4
30	904	4
31	904	4
32	901	7
33	906	2
34	904	4
35	908	0
36	902	6
37	904	4
38	907	1
39	906	2
40	903	5
41	906	2
42	907	1
43	906	2
44	905	3
45	903	5
46	904	4
47	904	4
48	902	6
49	905	3
50	904	4
51	895	13
52	902	6
53	901	7
54	905	3
55	905	3

Most questions were skipped by seven people or less. The questions with over five skipped responses are listed in Table 5 to scan for patterns. These questions do not show any pattern and appear to be randomly skipped except for question 51.

Table 5

*Questions With Five or More Skipped Responses*

Question #	Question	Answered	Skipped
32	I encourage my child/student to talk about his/her troubles.	901	7
36	I emphasize the reasons for rules.	902	6
40	I give into my child/student when the child/student causes a commotion about something.	903	5
45	I show respect for my child/student's opinions by encouraging my child to express them.	903	5
48	I spoil my child/student.	902	6
51	I have warm and intimate times together with my child/student.	895	13
52	I punish by putting my child/student off somewhere alone with little if any explanations.	902	6
53	I help my child/student to understand the impact of behavior by encouraging my child/student to talk about the consequences of his/her own actions.	901	7

Question 51 was the only question skipped by more than seven people, with 13 skipped responses. Question 51 states, "I have warm and intimate times together with my child." The increase in number of individuals that skipped this question may not have been random. Due to the language used in the questions, the participants may have felt uncomfortable answering this question and chose to skip it and move on to the rest of the questions. According to the SurveyMonkey time calculator, survey participants spent an average of seven minutes on the survey. The missing data may have also occurred due to

unclear directions about moving on to the multiple pages or because survey was too long. The missing data within the questions of the PSDQ may have resulted because participants accidentally missed a question, or the questions may have made them feel uncomfortable or perhaps they did not like how the question was worded so they intentionally skipped it.

### **Demographic Data**

To provide context to the participant responses, 12 demographic questions were included on the survey. The questions asked the participant the general demographic questions of who is the person completing the survey (mother, father, other, please specify), gender, ethnicity, age group, highest level of education, and how many identified gifted children (1, 2, 3, 4 or more) they have and what is the grade range of their gifted child or gifted children (Grades K-3 Lower elementary, Grades 4-5 Intermediate Elementary, Grades 6-8 Middle school, Grades 9-12 High School). Table 6 reveals a snapshot of the demographic details of the sample. It is important to note the ethnicity results mirror the ethnicity percentages of the four districts as referenced in Chapter III. The demographic responses below show that 72% were mothers who completed the survey as compared to 28% of fathers who did. There were 5 (1%) other responses which included grandma, you, sister, stepfather, and teacher as participants who filled out the survey. The gender of participants was 72% female and 28% male. The ethnicity percentages of participants were 0% American Indian or Alaskan Native, 5% Asian or Pacific Islander, 1% Black or African American, 2% Hispanic or Latino, 90% White, 2% prefer not to answer and 1% other. Eighty-three percent were ages 35-54 and 85% held a bachelor's degree or graduate degree. Ninety-two percent had one or two



gifted children. Participants reported 30% had children in grades kindergarten through third, 25% have children in grades 6-8, and 36% have children in grades 9-12.

Table 6

*Demographic Characteristics of Participants*

Demographic Question	Characteristic	N	%
Person completing survey:	Mother	707	72%
	Father	273	28%
	Other (please specify)	5	1%
Gender:	Female	708	72%
	Male	277	28%
Ethnicity:	American Indian or Alaskan Native	4	0%
	Asian or Pacific Islander	48	5%
	Black or African American	10	1%
	Hispanic or Latino	24	2%
	White/ Caucasian	886	90%
	Prefer not to answer	21	2%
	Other	12	1%
Age group:	18 to 24	1	0%
	25 to 34	31	3%
	35 to 44	480	49%
	45 to 54	432	44%
	55 to 64	40	4%
	65 to 74	1	0%
	75 or older	0	0%
Highest degree obtained:	Did not graduate from high school	1	0%
	High school diploma/GED	22	2%
	Some university but no degree	121	12%
	Bachelor's degree	428	43%
	Graduate degree	413	42%
How many children identified as gifted:	One child/student	599	61%
	Two children/students	308	31%
	Three children/students	57	6%
	Four children/students or more	21	2%
Grade range of gifted child/children:	Grades K-3 Lower Elementary	292	30%
	Grades 4-5 Intermediate Elementary	246	25%
	Grades 6-8 Middle School	375	38%
	Grades 9-12 High School	353	36%

The final demographic questions sought to determine how parents of gifted children had exposure to information about the nature and needs of gifted children. The current research findings show 58% of parents want more information about the nature and needs of gifted students. Respondents reported that only 36% of their schools offered a gifted parent presentation, most of schools (64%) have not offered gifted parent presentations. However, of those participants who answered yes (their school offered a gifted parent presentation), 67% reported that they attended the presentation. When participants were asked if they would attend a gifted parent presentation if their school offered it, 84% responded that they would attend and only 16% responded that they would not attend. Table 7 shows where parents find information about gifted children. It is important to note that 14% of parent stated that they have trouble finding quality information.

Table 7

*Where Parents Find Information About Gifted Children*

Parents find information about gifted children (participants checked all that applied):	N	%
Online	525	53%
Libraries and bookstores	126	13%
From my child/student's teacher or school administrator	546	55%
From talking with other parents	324	33%
I have trouble finding quality information	137	14%
Other	160	16%

The Table 8 outlines the range of the 160 “other” responses and groups them by the frequency of repeated answers. Five responses were listed in the miscellaneous group because they did not answer the question and contained personal information that may compromise the confidentiality of specific participants.

Table 8

*Categorized “Other” Responses for Where Participants Find Information About Gifted Children*

Categories of Reponses:	Total Responses
I have not looked for information	41
I work at a school as a teacher, school counselor, school psychologist, or administrator	41
My degree, courses in college, professional development or workshops	14
From teachers I know or am related to, or other schools	14
From Professionals: school psychologists, counselors, therapists, doctors, child support organizations	9
My child's school has sent limited or no information	10
I am gifted also, my own experience	7
Journal articles, professional gifted organizations, mailings	7
From my child	7
I conduct my own research	3
Church	1
Television	1
Miscellaneous	5
I have not looked for information	41
Total other responses	160

### Research Question #1

#### **What is the self-perceived knowledge level parents have about the general characteristics and needs of gifted children?**

The findings of this study show the self-perceived knowledge level parent participants have about the nature and needs of gifted children. Table 9 compares each of the 12 knowledge questions in descending order with the least knowledgeable question at the top and the most knowledge questions at the bottom. This is shown using a mean score of the total responses. The mean score was calculated from all the responses on the five-point Likert-type scale of 1 = *Not at all knowledgeable*, 2 = *Slightly knowledgeable*, 3 = *Somewhat knowledgeable*, 4 = *Moderately knowledgeable*, 5 = *Extremely knowledgeable*. Parents had the least knowledge about the term asynchronous

development. Parents had the highest mean score on the knowledge scale for the statement: I know that parent involvement in the child/student's education, such as reading to the child/student and helping the child/student with homework, increases student achievement at school. Parents were slightly knowledgeable about the terms overexcitabilities (2.10), heightened sensitivity (2.46), underachievement (2.52), definition of gifted (2.71) and common characteristics of gifted children (2.93). Also, were slightly knowledgeable about the three different parenting style types of authoritarian (2.86), permissive (2.92), and authoritative (2.92). Parents were somewhat knowledgeable about perfectionism (3.21) and praising children for effort instead of the grades they receive (3.50). Finally, parents were moderately knowledgeable about the correlation between increased parent involvement increases student achievement (4.38).

Table 9

*Knowledge Level Responses From Least to Most Knowledgeable*

Knowledge level question	Mean Score
I know the term "asynchronous development" as it relates to gifted children.	1.77
I know the term "overexcitabilities" as it relates to gifted children.	2.10
I know the term "heightened sensitivity" as it relates to gifted children.	2.46
I know the term "underachievement" as it relates to gifted children.	2.52
I know of the definition of "gifted" as defined by the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC).	2.71
I know the definition of authoritarian parenting style.	2.86
I know the definition of permissive parenting style.	2.92
I know the definition of authoritative parenting style.	2.92
I know and can list some of the common characteristics of gifted children.	2.93
I know the term "perfectionism" as it relates to gifted children.	3.21
I know I should praise gifted children/students for their effort instead of the grades they receive.	3.50
I know that increased parent involvement in the child/student's education, such as reading to the child/student and helping the child/student with homework, increases student achievement at school.	4.38

Note: N = 946

Table 10 shows a breakdown of each knowledge level question detailing the percentage of total responses in each of the five Likert scale anchors of (1) *not at all*

knowledgeable, (2) slightly knowledgeable, (3) somewhat knowledgeable, (4) moderately knowledgeable, and (5) extremely knowledgeable. This table captures the questions that had a high percentage in the “not at all knowledgeable” response. Specifically, 63% of participants responded “not at all knowledgeable” about the term asynchronous development and 46% for the term overexcitabilities.

Table 10

*Knowledge Level Responses From Least to Most Knowledgeable Detailed by Likert Scale Anchors*

Knowledge Questions	Not at all knowledgeable	Slightly knowledgeable	Somewhat knowledgeable	Moderately knowledgeable	Extremely knowledgeable
I know the term "asynchronous development" as it relates to gifted children.	63%	14%	10%	9%	4%
I know the term "overexcitabilities" as it relates to gifted children.	46%	20%	15%	13%	5%
I know the term "heightened sensitivity" as it relates to gifted children.	36%	17%	20%	20%	7%
I know the term "underachievement" as it relates to gifted children.	30%	22%	23%	17%	8%
I know of the definition of "gifted" as defined by the National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC).	23%	19%	28%	24%	6%

(continued)

Table 10

*Knowledge Level Responses From Least to Most Knowledgeable Detailed by Likert Scale Anchors (continued)*

I know the definition of authoritarian parenting style.	22%	18%	22%	26%	12%
I know the definition of permissive parenting style.	20%	19%	23%	26%	12%
I know the definition of authoritative parenting style.	20%	18%	23%	27%	12%
I know and can list some of the common characteristics of gifted children.	14%	21%	31%	28%	7%
I know the term "perfectionism" as it relates to gifted children.	14%	18%	21%	30%	18%
I know I should praise gifted children/students for their effort instead of the grades they receive.	11%	12%	19%	29%	28%
I know that increased parent involvement in the child/student's education, such as reading to the child/student and helping the child/student with homework, increases student achievement at school.	1%	3%	9%	32%	55%

To understand the knowledge levels, this section provides a short description of how the high, medium, and low levels were developed. After taking the survey, a parent with very little knowledge of the nature and needs of gifted children may have answered 1 = *Not at all knowledgeable* for all 12 questions yielding the lowest self-perceived knowledge level score of 12. A parent's self-perceived knowledge resulted in the highest

possible score of 60 if the participant had answered all 12 questions with 5 = *Extremely knowledgeable*. A score of 24 was reached if all 12 questions were answered as 2 = *Slightly knowledgeable*. Lastly, a score of 36 was reached if the participant answered all 12 questions with 3 = *Somewhat knowledgeable*. It was highly unlikely that participants answered every question the same; therefore, the researcher detailed a range for determining the knowledge level from the results (see Table 11).

Table 11

*Gifted Parent’s Level of Self-Perceived Knowledge*

Level of Self-Perceived Knowledge:	Score Range
Lowest level of self- perceived knowledge:	scores between 12-35
Medium level of self- perceived knowledge:	scores between 36-47
Highest level of self- perceived knowledge:	scores between 48-60

Out of 985 participants, 39 did not fill out the Gifted Knowledge Questionnaire. Of the 946 that did complete the questionnaire, 53% (N = 519) of parents were in the low-level knowledge category with scores ranging between 12-35. Total knowledge level scores were found by calculating the sum of all 12 knowledge questions. The medium level category contained 31% of the parents (N = 301) and the high-level category contained only 13% (N = 126) of the parent participants. Table 12 outlines the knowledge level categories with a frequency table.

Table 12

*Level of Knowledge of Participants*

Levels of Knowledge Categories	N	Percent
Participants with High Level (Total score 48-60)	126	13%
Participants with Medium Level (Total score 36-47)	301	31%
Participants with Low Level (Total score 12-35)	519	53%
Missing	39	4%
Total	985	100.0

It is important to point out, of the 126 respondents in the high-level knowledge category, 28 stated that they found information about gifted children because of their college degree or college courses, professional development, workshops, or working in a school as a teacher, school counselor, school psychologist or administrator. This group of 28 has knowledge from their college degree or because they work at a school. If the group of 28 education degree holders were taken out of the high-level knowledge group, only 98 high-level participants would remain.

The following section used cross tabulations to compare participants' knowledge level to various demographic characteristics. Table 13 cross tabulated participants' level of knowledge and the highest level of school completed. Table 13 emphasizes that even though the participants were highly educated, 247 participants who held bachelor's degrees and 180 participants who held graduate degrees were also in the low-level knowledge group.



Table 13

*Crosstabulation: Knowledge Level and Highest Level of Education*

Categories		Highest Level of Education					Total
		Did not graduate from high school	High school/GED	Some university but no degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate degree	
High Level	Count	0	1	8	40	77	126
	% within Level of Knowledge	0.0%	0.8%	6.3%	31.7%	61.1%	100.0%
Medium Level	Count	1	1	31	121	147	301
	% within Level of Knowledge	0.3%	0.3%	10.3%	40.2%	48.8%	100.0%
Low Level	Count	0	18	74	247	180	519
	% within Level of Knowledge	0.0%	3.5%	14.3%	47.6%	34.7%	100.0%
Missing	Count	0	2	8	20	9	39
	% within Level of Knowledge	0.0%	5.1%	20.5%	51.3%	23.1%	100.0%
Total	Count	1	22	121	428	413	985
	% within Level of Knowledge	0.1%	2.2%	12.3%	43.5%	41.9%	100.0%

Table 14 cross tabulated participants' level of knowledge and the grade level of their gifted children. The researcher sought to examine if parents of children in higher grade levels had more knowledge than parents of children in lower grade levels. After reviewing Table 14, the answer is no. The even distribution of participants in each of the groups shows no difference between parents' level of knowledge and having children who are in higher grade levels.

Table 14

*Crosstabulation: Level of Knowledge and Grade Level of Gifted Child/Children*

Level of Knowledge		Grade K-3	Grade 4-5	Grade 6-8	Grade 9-12	Total
High Level	Count	25	26	33	42	126
	% within Level of Knowledge	19.8%	20.6%	26.2%	33.3%	100.0%
Medium Level	Count	62	57	97	85	301
	% within Level of Knowledge	20.6%	18.9%	32.2%	28.2%	100.0%
Low Level	Count	137	104	149	129	519
	% within Level of Knowledge	26.4%	20.0%	28.7%	24.9%	100.0%
Missing	Count	6	7	12	14	39
	% within Level of Knowledge	15.4%	17.9%	30.8%	35.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	230	194	291	270	985
	% within Level of Knowledge	23.4%	19.7%	29.5%	27.4%	100.0%

Table 15 shows that parents (N = 236) who responded yes that they attended a gifted parent presentation at their child's school had more participants in the high knowledge category than if they did not attend. Of the high knowledge category, 56.87% attended the school presentation and 43.2% did not attend. In the low-level category, 66% (N = 175) of the participants did not attend a gifted parent presentation.

Table 15

*Crosstabulation: Level of Knowledge and Attended a Gifted Parent Presentation*

Category Levels		Did you attend a gifted parent presentation?		
		Yes	No	Total
High Level	Count	54	41	95
	% within Level of Knowledge	56.8%	43.2%	100.0%
Medium Level	Count	87	107	194
	% within Level of Knowledge	44.8%	55.2%	100.0%
Low Level	Count	90	175	265
	% within Level of Knowledge	34.0%	66.0%	100.0%
Missing	Count	5	19	24
	% within Level of Knowledge	20.8%	79.2%	100.0%
Total	Count	236	342	578
	% within Level of Knowledge	40.8%	59.2%	100.0%

### **Research Question #2**

#### **What type of parenting style do parents of gifted children use with their gifted child?**

The parenting style for each participant was found by adding and calculating the mean of the total number of responses from each series of questions that related to each of the three different parenting styles. In the PSDQ instrument scoring guide, questions 1, 3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 12, 14, 18, 20, 21, 24, 26, 28, and 30 combine to create the construct of the authoritative parenting style. Questions 2, 4, 6, 10, 13, 16, 22, 25, 27, and 29 outline the aspects of authoritarian parenting style. Questions 8, 15, 17, 19, and 23 illustrate the permissive parenting style. Participants revealed how often they exhibited each parenting behavior question by selecting the corresponding Likert-type scale anchors of 1 = *never*, 2 = *once in a while*, 3 = *about half the time*, 4 = *very often*, and 5 = *always*. Table 16 shows the frequency of each parenting style. Authoritative parenting style is used the

most by 90.8% (N = 894) of the participants. Out of 908 completed parenting style surveys, only 1.4% (N = 14) were permissive and 0% (N = 0) were authoritarian.

Table 16

*Frequency of Parenting Style*

	Frequency	Percent
Authoritative	894	90.8%
Authoritarian	0	0.0%
Permissive	14	1.4%
Incomplete data	77	7.8%
Total	985	100.0%

Table 17 cross tabulated parenting style and gender. This cross tab shows 72% of females were authoritative and 27% of males were authoritative. This pattern mirrors the demographic data of 72% were female that completed the survey and 27 were male that completed the survey. Permissive parents were 50% female and 50% male.

Table 17

*Crosstabulation: Parenting Style and Gender*

		What is your gender?		Total
		Female	Male	
Authoritative	Count	652	242	894
		72.9%	27.1%	100.0%
Permissive	Count	7	7	14
		50.0%	50.0%	100.0%
Incomplete data	Count	49	28	77
		63.6%	36.4%	100.0%
Total	Count	708	277	985
		71.9%	28.1%	100.0%

Table 18 highlights the cross tabulation of parenting style and age of the participant. The highest percentage of participants using the permissive parenting style fell into the age range of 45-54. The age range of 45-57 had 64.3% of permissive parents.

Nine out of the 14 permissive parents were in this age range. Also, 49.8% of authoritative parents were in the age range of 35-44.

Table 18

*Crosstabulation: Parenting Style and Age Range*

Parenting Style		Age Range						Total
		18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	
Authoritative	Count	0	28	445	388	32	1	894
	% within	0.0%	3.1%	49.8%	43.4%	3.6%	0.1%	100.0%
Permissive	Count	0	0	4	9	1	0	14
	% within	0.0%	0.0%	28.6%	64.3%	7.1%	0.0%	100.0%
Incomplete data	Count	1	3	31	35	7	0	77
	% within	1.3%	3.9%	40.3%	45.5%	9.1%	0.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	1	31	480	432	40	1	985
	% within	0.1%	3.1%	48.7%	43.9%	4.1%	0.1%	100.0%

Table 19 shows the crosstabulation of parenting style and highest level of schooling. 71.4% of the permissive parents held either a bachelor’s degree or graduate degree.

Table 19

*Crosstabulation: Parenting Style and Highest Level of Education*

Parenting Style		What is the highest level of school you have completed or the highest degree you have received?					Total
		Did not graduate from high school	High school/GED	Some university but no degree	Bachelor's degree	Graduate degree	
Authoritative	Count	0	18	102	389	385	894
	% within	0.0%	2.0%	11.4%	43.5%	43.1%	100.0%
Permissive	Count	0	1	3	5	5	14
	% within	0.0%	7.1%	21.4%	35.7%	35.7%	100.0%
Incomplete data	Count	1	3	16	34	23	77
	% within	1.3%	3.9%	20.8%	44.2%	29.9%	100.0%
Total	Count	1	22	121	428	413	985
	% within	0.1%	2.2%	12.3%	43.5%	41.9%	100.0%

Table 20 examines the cross tabulation of parenting style and those participants who answered “yes” that they attended a gifted parent presentation at their child’s school.

Only 14.3% of permissive parents attended a gifted parent presentation as compared to 85.7% who did not attend the presentation at their child’s school.

Table 20

*Crosstabulation: Parenting Style and Attended a Gifted Parent Presentation*

Parenting Style		If Yes, did you attend the school's presentation?		Total
		Yes	No	
Authoritative	Count	223	303	526
	% within	42.4%	57.6%	100.0%
Permissive	Count	1	6	7
	% within	14.3%	85.7%	100.0%
Incomplete data	Count	12	33	45
	% within	26.7%	73.3%	100.0%
Total	Count	236	342	578
	% within	40.8%	59.2%	100.0%

Table 21 highlights parents’ level of knowledge and their parenting style. Of the 14 parents in the permissive parenting category, 13 (93%) were also in the low-level knowledge category. Only one permissive parent was in the high-level knowledge category and none were in the medium level category.

Table 21

*Crosstabulation: Parenting Style and Knowledge Level*

Level of Knowledge		Authoritative	Permissive	Incomplete data	Total
High Level	Count	120	1	5	126
	% within Level of Knowledge	95.2%	0.8%	4.0%	100.0%
Medium Level	Count	287	0	14	301
	% within Level of Knowledge	95.3%	0.0%	4.7%	100.0%
Low Level	Count	487	13	19	519
	% within Level of Knowledge	93.8%	2.5%	3.7%	100.0%
Missing	Count	0	0	39	39
	% within Level of Knowledge	0.0%	0.0%	100.0%	100.0%
Total	Count	894	14	77	985

**Summary**

Chapter IV presents the results of the study. The results show that of the 985 participants, 72% were mothers, 90% were white, 93% were ages 35 to 54, 85% held either a bachelor's or graduate degree, and 61% had one gifted child. Participants reported having gifted children as 30% in grades K-three, 25% in grades four through five, 38% in grades six through eight, and 36% grades nine through 12.

The research findings show that 58% of parents want more information about the nature and needs of gifted children; however, only 36% of schools offered a gifted parent presentation. When a gifted parent presentation was offered, 67% reported they attended the presentation. Also, 84% responded that they would attend a gifted parent presentation if it was offered at their child's school.

When asked about how parents find information about gifted children, 55% of parents in this sample reported that they obtained their information from their child's teacher or school administrator. This was the most frequently checked response. Fifty-

three percent of participants reported that they found information about gifted children online. Participants added 160 “other” responses to detail other ways that they obtained information about gifted children. Fifty-five of the 160 (34%) responses included participants who obtained information from their job as a teacher, school psychologist, counselor, or administrator or their college degree, graduate classes, and workshops.

Looking at the sample holistically, most parents (53%) are in the low-level knowledge category. Only 13% of participants have a high level of knowledge. Parents had the least knowledge about the term asynchronous development. Parents had the most knowledge about increased parent involvement in the child/student’s education, such as reading to the child/student and helping the child/student with homework, increases student achievement at school. Even though the participants were highly educated, 247 participants who held bachelor’s degrees and 180 participants who held graduate’s degrees were also in the low-level knowledge group.

Out of 908 participants who filled out the parenting styles survey, 894 used the authoritative parenting style. Zero parents reported that they used the authoritarian parenting style, and only 14 parents reported that they used the permissive parenting style. Permissive parents (64.3%) were ages 45 to 54. Parents who reported using a permissive parenting style are highly educated with 71.4% who held either a bachelor's degree or graduate degree. Finally, 85.7% of the permissive parents did not attend a gifted parent presentation at their school.



## **Chapter V**

### **Summary of the Study**

This study sought to emphasize the need for schools to support and educate the parents of gifted children. With the goal of increasing student achievement, school leaders must examine the student level factors which include the home environment of the child and determine how to support parents so that parents can better support their children. Also, gifted children have specific and unique needs that may add additional challenges in the household (Neihart et al., 2002; Silverman & Waters, 1984; Webb et al., 2007). To support parents, educational school leaders need to provide quality, researched-based information to parents through parent workshops (Epstein, 2008; Marzano, 2003).

Schools that desire to support the parents of gifted children confront several obstacles. Jolly and Matthews (2012) pointed out how there is very little information about the parents of gifted children and their parenting styles. This lack of information creates a problem for schools that want to provide meaningful parent workshops for the parents of gifted children. The findings of this study help solve this problem by providing information about the knowledge level and parenting styles of parents of gifted children.

This chapter contains sections titled: summary of the findings, discussion, recommendations for practice, recommendations for future research, and conclusion. The organization of the content begins by closely analyzing the findings and their connection to the literature. Then, the discussion takes the patterns of the findings out to a big picture view in relation to transferring the research data to broader populations. Next, the content focuses on the practical implications of the findings that this research study can be useful by school leaders. Then, the content proceeds with recommendations for future research

and points to areas in need of closer examination. Finally, the content ends with a conclusion as a final summation synthesizing all pivotal elements.

### **Summary of Findings**

The summary of findings section highlights each finding and analyzes its meaning as to why it may have occurred. This section also examines whether the findings correspond or conflict with the literature. The section is organized by findings related to (1) the demographic data, (2) parents' desire for more information about gifted children and where they find information, (3) parents' knowledge level, and (4) parents' parenting styles. Descriptive research studies describe the various aspects of a large data set. The following section outlines the various characteristics of the demographic details of the sample. The picture developed provides context for comparing parents' knowledge level and parenting style attributes.

The first survey question determined who was completing the survey. Seventy-two percent were mothers and 28% were fathers. The number of mothers compared to fathers was significant. During the process of exploring the research findings, the researcher analyzed and contemplated possible reasons for why the data turned out the way it did. When analyzing why more mothers than fathers completed the survey, the statistic may have occurred if the participants were mothers who handle most of the child rearing responsibilities in the household. They may have been more likely to read an email about gifted children and participate in the research study about parenting a gifted child. Also, three of the four districts are affluent, suburban communities with an average household income of \$119,911. Due to the economic advantage, the larger number of mothers filling out the survey may be the result of these communities having more stay-

at-home moms who may have had more time to complete this survey. It is important to note, the response rate data for 72% of the respondents being mothers will make the data less transferable to the whole population of gifted parents. The ethnicity of participants was not significant because the percentages of various ethnicities were like ethnicity percentages of the districts (see Table 1). For example, Table 22 shows that 90% of participants were white as compared to the four districts' average at 85% white. These percentages closely aligned with the 2017 Ohio Department of Education's District Profile Report (Ohio Department of Education, 2017b).

Table 22

*District Profile Data as Compared to Survey Ethnicity Data*

Ethnicity	Average of Districts A-D listed in %	Ethnicity Data from Survey
Asian & Pacific Islander %	3.75%	5%
Black %	2.60%	1%
American Indian or Alaskan Native %	0%	0%
Hispanic %	4.70%	2%
White %	85%	90%
Multiracial % (on District data)	3.30%	n/a
Other (on survey data)	n/a	1%
Prefer not to answer (on survey data)	n/a	2%

Additional parenting information may have been found if the sample would have included districts with more ethnic diversity. The response data showed that 93% of the participants were ages 35 to 54.

The demographic data also shows that the participants are highly educated with 85% holding bachelor's and or graduate degrees. These findings are significant and important to keep in mind while processing and analyzing the rest of the data. Since 85% hold a bachelor's or graduate degree and 72% are mothers, could these variables be related to 90% of participants being in the age range of 35 to 54? Only 3% of the participants were in the age range 18 to 24-year-olds. It is possible to connect that female participants' time spent earning advance degrees may have impacted their age when having children. Also, this age range of 35 to 54-year-olds would most likely include more mature and experienced parents due to their age and life experience as compared to the age group 18 to 24-year-olds (which only had 3% of the participants). When analyzing the findings of highly educated participants, it is possible that individuals with bachelor's and graduate degrees value education and make learning a priority. This point may link to parents' willingness to learn more about gifted children and their increased knowledge level that will be discussed in later findings. The participants' high education level corresponds with three of the four districts having an average family income of near \$100,000 or higher.

One finding that was not significant was that 61% of participants have one gifted child and 31% have two gifted children. The study failed to examine how many children each participant had in total. This figure could have compared how many gifted children they had as compared to the total number of children in the family. This additional information could have broadened the variable to determine the typical size of participants' families. Specifically, do parents of gifted children have small, medium, or large families?

Finally, 30% of participants reported they had children in grades kindergarten through third, 25% reported that they had children in grades fourth through fifth, 38% reported that they had children in grades sixth through eighth, and 36% reported that they had children in grades ninth through 12th. The variety of participants' responses and having children at all grade levels gives the data of balanced perspective. Anecdotally, school administrators may have predicted a stronger response rate from parents of younger children; however, this was not the case. The data set could have been from the perspective of only a few grade bands which would have skewed the information towards those grade levels. Fortunately, a well-proportioned distribution of parents with gifted children at all grade levels participated.

The focus of this study was to collect information about the parents of gifted children so that schools could create gifted parent workshops to support the needs of gifted children and their parents. The survey findings outlined parents' desire to learn more about the nature and needs of gifted children and to understand where to find information about gifted children. The first finding is that 58% of participants responded that they want more information about gifted children. This is consistent with the literature when parents recognized the complexity of their gifted child's needs and expressed a need for support (Preece et al., 2017; Koshy et al., 2013; Morawska & Sanders, 2009a). Also, Morawska and Sanders (2009b) pointed out that 86% of parents felt unqualified to assist in their child's education and that sometimes they did not feel confident in how they parented their gifted child. The next set of findings were very significant and concur with what the researcher expected. Eight-four percent of participants responded that they would go to a gifted parent presentation if it was offered

at their child's school. This finding matches the research that 90% of parents of children with special needs responded that they would attend a parenting presentation (Preece et al., 2017). Participants reported that 64% of their children's schools did not offer a gifted parent presentation and only 36% of the schools did. Once again, confirming that parents want more information, when the gifted presentation was presented, 67% of respondents said they attended.

The next section of the survey asked participants where they find information about gifted children. The possible answer choices were the following: (1) online, (2) in libraries and bookstores, (3) from my child's teacher or school administrator, (4) from talking with other parents, (5) I have trouble finding quality information, and (6) "other" (please specify). The question encouraged participants to check all that apply. The most checked option was "from my child's teacher or school administrator." This was checked 546 times accounting for 55% of the total responses. This finding was considerable and supports the overall research study's focus that schools should actively provide support to parents of gifted children through the sharing of quality research-based information. This specific finding stresses that parents rely on schools for this information. The literature accentuates the challenge parents have in finding appropriate educational supports (Jolly et al., 2013). The next highest checked option was online. This had 525 responses at 53% of the total. This statistic is also significant to understanding how participants obtain information. Online searching is typically easily acceptable and convenient since most smartphones equal in online searching capacity as compared to most home computers. This question elicited 160 "other" responses about where participants obtain information about gifted children. One important finding is that 41 of the participants explained that

they get this information at their job as a teacher, school counselor, school psychologist, or school administrator. Also, 14 of the participants replied that they get their information from their college degree or staff development workshops. This group will be discussed later pertaining to findings dealing high-level knowledge respondents. This finding also underscores the fact that this group is highly educated.

### **Research Question #1**

#### **What is the self-perceived knowledge level parents have about the general characteristics and needs of gifted children?**

There were several notable findings detailing the first research question: What is the self-perceived knowledge level parents have about the nature and needs of gifted children? It is important to restate the theoretical framework. Vygotsky's Theory of Cognitive Development underscores the important role of parents in a child's life cite. Vygotsky's theory is based on three principles in which learning occurs: (1) through social interaction, (2) under the guidance of a more knowledgeable person, and (3) within a child's zone of proximal development (McLeod, 2014). Vygotsky's theory is based on the foundation that children learn by watching and interacting with their family in day-to-day life (Vygotsky, 1978). Since children are always watching and learning from their parents, it is vital that parents have knowledge to understand how to support and nurture the gifted child.

The research data revealed that parent participants reported that they know the least about the term asynchronous development. On a five-point Likert scale from one equaling *not at all knowledgeable* to five equaling *extremely knowledgeable*, the mean score for the knowledge level for the term asynchronous development was 1.77. This

could be considered in between *not at all knowledgeable* and *slightly knowledgeable*. This finding is substantial and was expected by the researcher. The term asynchronous development is specific to the literature about gifted children; therefore, it is likely to conclude that parents would not be exposed to this term unless they were reading literature about the nature and needs of gifted children. The literature emphasizes the importance of parents understanding this term. Silverman (1997) illuminated asynchronous development as a key to understanding gifted children. She also highlighted how asynchronous development and gifted children can be difficult for both gifted children and their parents to manage. Silverman (1997) stated:

A young child who has heightened emotions coupled with advanced cognitive awareness of the suffering and perils in the world feels helpless and afraid. To be gifted is to be vulnerable. To have the mental maturity of a 14-year-old and the physical maturity of an eight-year-old poses a unique set of challenges analogous to those that face the child with a 14-year-old body and an eight-year-old mind. Parenting a child with large developmental discrepancies in either direction is equally challenging; even moderate discrepancies can be daunting. Only one of these conditions receives societal recognition, sympathy, and public support: gifted children and their parents must deal with their concerns alone; few appreciate the magnitude of the task. (p. 37)

Silverman captures the sensitive nature of asynchronous development and underscores the importance for parents to understand this term.

With mean scores between 2.10 and 2.93, parents were only slightly knowledgeable about the terms overexcitabilities, heightened sensitivity,



underachievement, the definition of giftedness, and the common characteristics of gifted children. The aforementioned rationale also applies to these terms. The researcher anticipated that parents would have a low knowledge level about these terms because the terms are predominantly present in gifted literature; and if parents do not have easy access to this, they may not have been exposed to these terms. The literature repeatedly confirms the need for parents to understand these terms (Neihart et al., 2002). With mean scores between 3.21 and 3.5, parents were somewhat knowledgeable about perfectionism and praising children for their effort instead of results. Parents may have had increased knowledge about these terms because they may have been more exposed to these terms. Perfectionism, or not wanting to make a mistake, and praising students for effort is referenced in general education literature, parenting and child development websites, journals, popular magazines, and even in sports. Understanding perfectionism and praising children for effort is most synonymous with the research on growth and fixed mindsets by Carol Dweck (2007). Dweck (2007) explained that individuals with growth mindsets see mistakes as opportunities for learning. Her research focuses on how to help children and adults develop a growth mindset. Her research outlines strategies for overcoming perfectionism and seeing the value in continued growth. Dweck's research has been featured in many readily available popular magazines. For example, her research was featured in the popular sports magazine, ESPN. In the article, head football coach of the Seattle Seahawks, Pete Carroll, referenced how he uses Dweck's research (and her research partner, Angela Duckworth) to further develop growth mindsets with his football players (Kapadia, 2016). Dweck's widespread exposure is one piece of evidence as to why participants had more knowledge about these terms.

Parents were most knowledgeable (mean score for 4.38) about how parent involvement increases student achievement. This outcome may also be related to parents' exposure to prominent trends in school improvement efforts to actively increase parent involvement. The connection is clear that this sample of participants understands the link between reading to their child and helping their child with homework increases the child's school achievement.

The survey data calculated the overall knowledge score for each participant. Fifty-three percent of parents were in the low-level knowledge category; 31% were in the medium-level category, and 13% were in the high-level knowledge category. This statistic was anticipated by the researcher, and it also provides the foundation for this study. Parents of gifted children have a low-level of knowledge about the nature and needs of gifted children; therefore, schools need to proactively provide quality gifted literature so that parents can become more knowledgeable and understand how to help their child at home and with their learning. At this point it is critical to highlight the 28 participants in the high-level knowledge category who revealed that they found information about gifted children through their work at a school or because of their college degree. If this group were taken out (because they already have information from their job) of the high-level knowledge category, the category would only be left with 98 participants out of a total of 985 that participated. This vital statistic reconfirms the low-level knowledge of the group. Once again, the literature confirms that parents' low level of knowledge may be due to the struggle to find quality resources (Renati et al., 2017; Webb et al., 2007).

When reviewing the cross tabulations between parents' level of knowledge and demographic variables, the researcher examined several questions. First, do parents with higher levels of education have more knowledge? The answer is also no. Even though the participants were highly educated, 247 participants who held bachelor's degrees and 180 participants who held graduate's degrees were also in the low-level knowledge group. Also, do parents of children in higher grade levels have more knowledge than parents of children in lower grade levels? After reviewing Table 14, the answer is no. The even distribution of participants in each of the groups shows no difference between parents' level of knowledge and having children who are in higher grade levels.

In conclusion, the level of exposure to quality research-based information about gifted children most likely links to the knowledge level of the parent. These data make the case for why school leaders need to proactively create opportunities for parents to not just gain access to information but to create opportunities for parent learning and increased knowledge development.

## **Research Question #2**

**What type of parenting style do parents of gifted children use with their gifted child?**

The purpose of the second research question was to examine the parenting behaviors of the parents of gifted children as grouped within three possible parenting styles. The goal was to assess if parents were in accordance with what the literature recommends or were parents using parenting styles and behaviors that are not recommended in the literature. The following research findings were very significant and unexpected by the researcher. The researcher expected most participants would use the

authoritative parenting style but not at such a high percentage. Also, the researcher expected more parents to use the permissive and authoritarian parenting styles as well. The majority (90.8%) of participants reported that they use the authoritative parenting style. Only 1.4% reported using the permissive parenting style and 0% reported using the authoritarian parenting style; 7.8% of participants did not complete the parenting style survey leaving this portion of the data missing.

First, the findings are confirmed in the literature because in several studies with gifted children, most parents use the authoritative parenting style (Dwairy, 2004; Pilarinos & Solomon, 2017; Rudasil et al., 2013). This study chose to examine parenting style because of its link to student outcomes. Jeynes' (2005) meta-analysis of 77 research studies isolated parenting style with high expectations had the greatest impact on increasing student learning. The authoritative parenting style is a balance of parents having high expectations coupled with warm and responsive parenting behaviors (Baumrind, 1971). Marzano (2003) confirmed that the authoritative parenting style correlates with academic achievement and the permissive parenting style does not. This study's data set of 894 participants report using the authoritative parenting style which coincides with recommended research practices. Robinson et al. (1998) pinpointed the elements of effective parenting as parental warmth and responsiveness, quality time spent with the child, involvement, and high expectations as reoccurring themes in the literature. Dwairy (2004) reported that the parents of gifted adolescents who reported using the authoritative parenting style correlated with their gifted children who reported higher self-esteem and fewer psychological difficulties. Dwairy's research emphasized that authoritarian parenting style negatively affects the mental health of the gifted child. De

Oliveira (2015) also confirmed that the authoritarian and permissive parenting styles have negative correlations to academic achievement. Webb et al. (2007) and Rimm and Lowe (1988) also confirmed that the permissive parenting style is not recommended for gifted children.

Although this finding is remarkable in that parents' adherence to the preferred parenting style, it is important to keep in mind that most participants were white mothers from affluent suburbs who are also highly educated and mostly between the ages of 35 to 54. The zero amount of authoritarian parenting and only 1.4% reported to using the permissive parenting style highlight possible limitations in the study. As predicted in chapter III, possible threats to the validity may have occurred in this data set due to the self-reporting of the participants (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Parents may not have been completely truthful when rating themselves on negative parenting behavior questions. Bias issues may have existed in participants' own ideas on what they believe are the most socially accepted parenting behaviors (Trochim & Donnelly, 2008). Social desirability may have had an impact on parents rating themselves higher on positive parenting behaviors and lower on negative parenting behaviors. According to Trochim and Donnelly (2008), "Respondents generally want to look good in the eyes of others" (p. 123). One key component of the authoritarian parenting style is the use of physical punishment such as spanking. With a quick google search, the anti-spanking public message is readily available on multiple websites and newspapers. For example, on August 16, 2017, the *USA Today* newspaper featured an anti-spanking article titled, "Harmful Effect of Spanking a Toddler Can Trigger Bad Behavior Even Ten Years Later (Abbasi, 2017)." Also, the American Psychological Association (2012) published an

article titled, “The Case Against Spanking: Physical Discipline is Slowly Declining as Some Studies Reveal Lasting Harms for Children (Smith, 2012).” These types of readily available anti-spanking viewpoints may have impacted parents to rate themselves lower on the authoritarian behaviors which resulted in zero parents who reported to using the authoritarian parenting style.

Minor findings emerged while analyzing the permissive parent data. In this section, the researcher illuminates how the use of percentages with such a small data set may mislead the reader. To clarify the findings, the total number of participants is included in each statement. Out of 908 participants who completed the parenting styles survey, only 14 reported to using the permissive parenting style. Of the 14, 50% were female and 50% were male. In looking back at the demographic data, 708 females completed the survey and 227 males completed the survey. This means that seven out of 708 females factor out to .9% of the females reported to using the permissive parenting style. Seven of the 277 males factor out to 2.5% of males reported to using the permissive parenting style. It would be beneficial to see if this trend held up with a larger sample of permissive parents. 64.3% (N= 9) were ages 45 to 54. 71.4% (N = 10) of permissive parents held either a bachelor's degree or graduate degree. Finally, 85.7% did not attend a gifted parent presentation. This percentage is somewhat misleading because only seven participants answered the question about attending a parent presentation. Six participants did not attend a parent presentation and only one participant who uses the permissive parenting style attended a parent presentation. One unexpected finding was that 10 of the 14 permissive parents were highly educated. This statistic appears to contradict previous findings that 93% of permissive parents were in the low knowledge category. The

researcher thought that highly educated parents would use the authoritarian parenting style. Although, it is important to keep in mind the low number of permissive parents somewhat skews the picture of these data.

### **Discussion**

This discussion section centers on holistic picture of the findings from the data set. The findings emphasize that parents want more information about the nature and needs of gifted children. It is also clear from the data that parents rely on their child's school to give this information. When parents were asked where they get their information about gifted children, 160 "other" responses were recorded. Ten of these responses stated that their child's school does send some information; however, it is too limited, and they expressed a need for more information. Parents also revealed that they look online for more information. Eight-two percent of participants said they would attend a gifted parent presentation if it was offered. Of the parents that reported that their school did have a parent presentation, 67% said they did attend. Not only do parents want information; 53% of parents were in the low-level knowledge category and only 13% were in the high-level knowledge category. Findings also revealed that parents had very little knowledge about the most important terms related to gifted children. The researcher proposed that parents' lack of exposure to quality research-based materials about gifted children was a reoccurring theme contributing to low knowledge.

These valuable research findings can be transferable to other topics beyond the nature and needs of gifted children and parenting styles. Schools can take an active approach to increasing parent knowledge about other topics that would inform parents and consequently help the child. One example could involve increasing parents'

knowledge about child development with a focus on tips for parents at the critical stages such as the young child, the adolescent, and the young adult. Like gifted literature, parents may not have access to quality child development information. This knowledge would increase their understanding of their child's needs.

This research study lays the groundwork for improving parent education. It is often referenced as an unpopular idea when it is perceived that schools are attempting to tell parents how to parent. But the findings in this study show that parents want information and they rely on schools to give it to them. Research shows that if parents have increased knowledge, increased parent involvement in their child's education (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Cripps & Zyromski, 2009; Epstein, 2001, 2008; Epstein & Voorhis, 2010; Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jeynes, 2005; Shaver & Walls, 1998; Westat & Policy Studies Associates, 2001), and use effective parenting styles (Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jeynes, 2005; Rudasill et al., 2013), student achievement will increase. Essentially, a successful parent equals a successful child. A current trend in education is the idea of educating the whole child using social and emotional competencies (Bargagliotti, Gottfried, & Guarino, 2017). This current study supports the idea for moving beyond just educating the whole child to focusing on educating the whole family. In the literature review, parent education classes were often referenced as parent interventions because the focus was to assist parents who were dealing with difficult issues. For example, parent intervention training was provided to increase effective parenting behaviors of foster care parents (Akin et al., 2017). The negative connotation of parenting education may have developed because the term implies that the parents are deficient and therefore need to be educated. The term also compares the parent to a



student which may not be appealing. To make parent education more appealing and more socially acceptable, the whole idea needs rebranding and reworked.

Is it possible to create parent education that can be more focused on increasing parent knowledge, increasing parent involvement, and increasing the use of effective parenting styles? Could parent education be reformulated to move beyond the perception that the child or the family has a serious problem and needs intervention. Parent education needs to be more engaging to families. Learning activities should focus on application, synthesis, and evaluation type learning exercises. The sit and listen format should be avoided. Fulton (2012) detailed the current trend in education titled “flipped classrooms.” He explains that teachers “flip” the use of student learning in the classroom from the passive student listening to a teacher’s lecture to an active student engaged in application activities. Teachers accomplish this by having students watch rich, informative videos, like a teacher’s lecture, for homework. The next day, the teacher facilitates activities for students to apply the content (Fulton, 2012). Like the “flip the classroom” strategy, parents could watch a series of informative online videos at convenient times that work for them. A face-to-face learning activity would then be available so that parents could actively learn more about quality research. This hybrid learning considers the busy schedules of families by having quality information online coupled with the benefits of face-to-face learning and group members support. This rebranding of parent education requires focusing on five purposeful attributes. The goal would be to share quality, useful, practical research making it easily accessible, through a variety of repeated exposures during engaging learning activities while benefiting from the group’s peer support. This idea can further take traction if schools partner with other

helping organizations such as PTAs, local libraries, and any other organization that seek to educate parents.

### **Recommendations for Practice**

The results of this study show that even though this group of parents is highly educated, they have a low-level of knowledge about the nature and needs of gifted children. The findings also capture the fact that parents want more information and 84% of parents would attend a gifted parent presentation if offered. Only 36% of schools offered a gifted parent presentation about gifted children; however, 67% of participants reported that they attended it. Further emphasizing the need for schools to take an active role in providing this information, the study revealed that parents reported that of all the ways that they find out information about gifted children, “from their child's teacher or school administrator” was the most checked response. Also, the next highest response was that parents find information online. The majority (90.8%) of participants in this study used the authoritative parenting style and only 1.4% use the permissive parenting style. None of the participants used the authoritarian parent parenting style. This is consistent with several studies with gifted children and gifted parents. Dwairy (2004), Solomon and Pilarinos (2017), and Rudasil et al. (2013) found that most parents of gifted children use the authoritative parenting style. Also, the participants in this study correspond with the literature in using the preferred authoritative parenting style for gifted children. The literature clearly indicates that permissive and authoritarian parenting styles are not recommended for gifted children. This group of participants complies with this piece of literature as well. This section offers clear steps for gifted coordinators and

school leaders that oversee district gifted services about how to use these findings in practice.

First, school leaders need to pay close attention to this study's demographic sample. The participants were mostly white, suburban, highly educated moms, ages 35 to 54, with 92% having either one or two gifted children. Practitioners need to be cautious in generalizing these findings in districts that have a differing demographic makeup. One specific recommendation would be for school leaders to administer the survey to the parents of gifted children within their district. Like this research study, the online administration would make the survey easy for administrators to send out and convenient for parents to complete. The survey results would provide a clear outline of the information that is needed by the parents and what parenting style they use with gifted children.

Secondly, school leaders need to create a method for the parents of gifted children to have access to quality, practical, research-based information about gifted children. Based on the findings, this information needs to be provided by the school and have an online component which allows parents to obtain information at a time that's convenient for them. The literature also emphasizes the need for creating parent support networks as an important component of effective parenting of gifted children (Cornell & Grossberg, 1987). The literature offers the SENG Parent Model (DeVries & Webb, 2003) Gifted and Talented Triple P Parenting Program (Morawska & Sanders, 2009b) as examples for school leaders who may be planning knowledge-building activities for parents. The research pinpoints the need for school leaders to plan for a face-to-face learning opportunity. In the literature, parents reported that face-to-face parent workshops gave

them a safe place to discuss, and they valued having an opportunity to share stories about their children and hear stories from other parents (Morawska & Sanders, 2009b; Weber & Stanley, 2012). Some administrators may argue that it is not their job to educate parents. Although, the 2011 Educational Leadership Constituent Council (ELCC) standards highlights the central role of school leaders is to increase student achievement. Standard number four emphasizes the necessity for school leaders to be able to understand and respond to the needs of students' parents and caregivers. Workshops to support parents will not happen unless there is buy in from the top district administrators. District superintendents must believe in the connection between parent knowledge and student achievement. Marzano, Waters and McNulty (2005) pointed out that leaders must figure out which improvement efforts to focus on. Marzano's (2003) research emphasized the need for school leaders to look at school level factors, teacher level factors, and student level factors that may need improved to meet the goal. In Marzano's (2003) model, factor nine relates to student level factors which include the home environment of the child. Marzano directs school leaders to offer parent training so that parents can improve in three areas: (a) parent communication about the importance of school and providing support and resources to help with homework, (b) parental supervision of home activities, and (c) parenting style. Marzano (2003) confirmed that the authoritative parenting style does correlate with academic achievement and the permissive parenting style does not. Even if school leaders feel that this is beyond their role, the ELCC standards and the aforementioned researchers say it is a key component of their role. Since numerous studies link parent involvement to higher student achievement scores (Chrispeels & Rivero, 2001; Cripps & Zyromski, 2009; Epstein, 2001, 2008; Epstein & Voorhis, 2010;

Henderson & Mapp, 2002; Jeynes, 2005; Shaver & Walls, 1998; Westat & Policy Studies Associates, 2001). Epstein (2008) emphasized parenting as one of the six types of parent involvement aspects that can be improved upon to increase student achievement. This type of parent involvement places the school in the role of knowledge provider to support parents. Research confirms that schools can provide this information through workshops, trainings, videos, home visits, phone calls, and sharing any information that educates families about parenting skills, parenting styles, child development, health and nutrition, and how to support learning at home (Epstein, 2001; Epstein & Voorhis, 2010). District superintendents have the power to implement supports to parents through providing earmarked and dedicated funding and personnel to oversee parent workshops. Without definite staff and resources allocation, these parent supports will not materialize.

The third recommendation is that the findings in this research study outline what information needs to be shared with the parents of gifted children. If a school district's profile is different from the districts used in this study, it would be beneficial for school leaders to begin by administering the Gifted Knowledge Questionnaire and the Parenting Styles Survey to the parents of gifted children within their district. It is important to differentiate that parental knowledge and parenting styles may be distinct in diverse communities. The surveys will provide data to create an individualized parent workshop to educate parents within a community. If districts are like districts profiled in this study, gifted coordinators and school leaders should use the findings as an outline for planning. They should provide information about asynchronous development, overexcitabilities, heightened sensitivity, underachievement, the definition of gifted children, and the common characteristics of gifted children. All these terms were only slightly understood

by parents on the knowledge level questionnaire. The findings show that parents know the most about how parental involvement such as reading to your child and helping your child with homework increases student achievement. School leaders can take this opportunity to build on that knowledge by sharing other ways that parents can be involved in their child's education. Schools could host events about how to help your child with specific curriculum areas such as math and reading. Finally, school practitioners can share resources and hold information nights about the importance of using authoritative parenting. This study showed that this population of gifted parents does use this authoritative parenting style; however, are they able to understand the aspects of this parenting style that make it the research-based preferred parenting style. The authoritative parenting style uses a balance of having high expectations for children (which is a key component to student achievement) with a warm and responsive approach to the child's needs. It may be important for parents to understand why these are effective attributes and be aware of the negative attributes of the permissive and authoritarian parenting styles so that those behaviors can be avoided. If gifted coordinators and school leaders follow these recommendations, parents will have more knowledge, they will be more involved in their child's education, and they will use more effective parenting styles all of which lead to increased student achievement.

### **Recommendations for Future Research**

The findings in this study raise questions that could be answered in future research studies. With only 14 participants reporting that they use the permissive parenting style out of 985 total participants, the small sample led more questions than answers. This study showed that more males reported that they used the permissive

parenting style compared to the number of females that reported this. It is recommended that future studies actively pursue a broader sample size of permissive parents to be able to analyze more about who they are and what they know. This would answer the question, are men more likely to be permissive parents?

An equally important future research study could replicate this study with gifted parents in urban, disadvantaged, and ethnically diverse districts. Would diverse districts have parents of gifted children practicing different parenting styles? Would there be authoritarian parenting styles used? Would there be more permissive parents? What would be the knowledge level about the nature and needs of gifted children within this population?

Another recommendation for future research would be to examine the correlation between increasing parent knowledge about the nature and needs of gifted kids as compared to increasing student learning. It would be important to measure the effect size of parent workshops and other methods that districts could use to increase parent knowledge. This study made the case for why schools need to actively share research-based information with parents; however, the next question that needs to be answered is does it make a difference? Could a researcher prove that specific school efforts to educate parents directly increased student achievement.? These studies would greatly add to the body of research and confirm to practitioners what makes the difference for increasing student achievement.

Finally, future research has an obligation to examine the macro picture in gifted education. There is a sizeable discrepancy between federal dollars allocated to special education (which distribute resources to child with disabilities) as compared to gifted

education. The National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) website (2018) points out that federal funding is not required by law to support gifted education. The only program federally funded for gifted education is the Jacob K. Javits Gifted and Talented Students Education Act. In 2014, \$5 million was set aside for this program. The focus of the Javits Program is to encourage and support schools in identifying and servicing gifted students from underrepresented populations such as English learners, special-education students, and children from disadvantaged backgrounds. NAGC also points out that since money is not designated from the federal government, states have the choice in whether to fund gifted education or not. The lack of federal regulation creates great differences between what states spend on gifted students. From the 2014-2015 State of the States in Gifted Education Report (2015), NAGC reported that 12 states provided no funding to local school districts, two states spend less than \$1 million, eight states spend between 1 million-9.9 million, five states spend between 10 million- 29.9 million, five states spend between 30 million- 49.9 million and only two states spend over 50 million (out of 34 states that responded) as shown in the Figure 1.

Davidson, Davidson, and Vanderkam (2004) estimated that all the states combined spent over \$50 billion on special education services in the school year 1999-2000. The authors go on to point out that a child with severe disabilities may require additional funding to meet their needs. Davidson et al. (2004) stated:

When the number of children with disabilities and the number who could be labeled as at least moderately gifted both hover around a tenth of the population each, why does special education receive twenty cents on the educational dollar while gifted education receives a fraction of a penny? Part of the answer is a



visceral: disabled students clearly have needs, and what politicians wants to ignore these children? (p. 37)

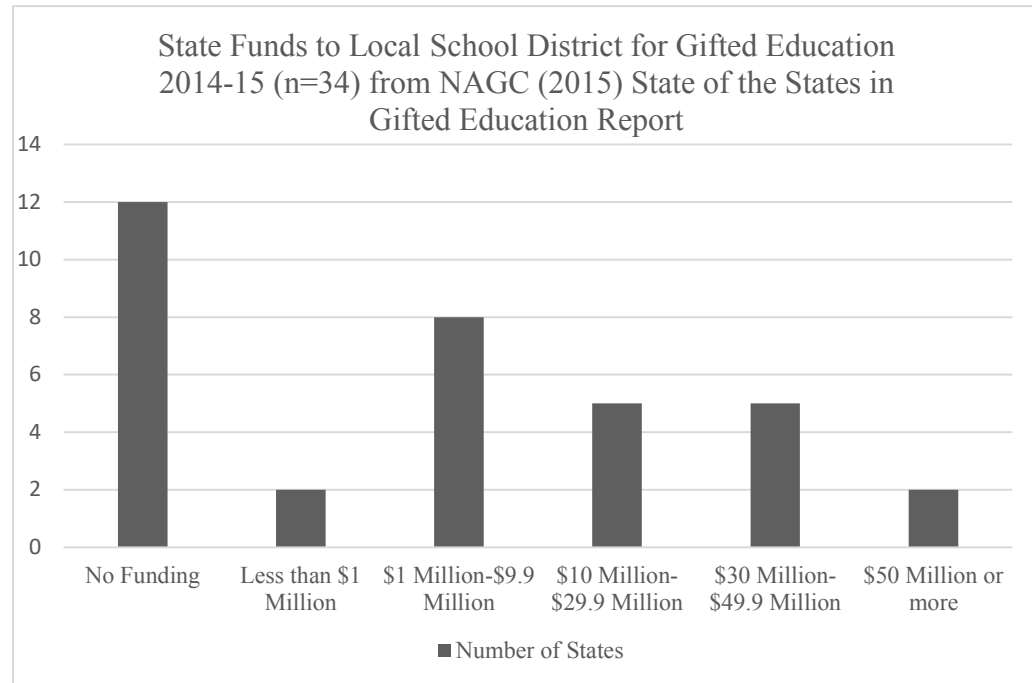


Figure 1. State funds for gifted education.

The authors go on to capture the responsibility for supporters of gifted education to lobby law makers to pay attention to the vast inequity. Our nation’s resources need to be allocated as priority for our most talented gifted students. Jolly and Hughes (2015) confirmed that this lack of funding restricts gifted children from reaching their full potential. Focusing on the micro-level, local school leaders and parents of gifted children need to band together to send the message to state and federal legislators: gifted children deserve support as evidenced through state and federal funding.

Research needs to further connect this lack of gifted education funding to the poor performance of students from the United States as compared to students’ performance from other countries. Finn (2014) highlighted that the 2006 PISA math test showed 12

other countries had double the amount of advanced math students as compared to students from the United States. Finn (2014) stated:

The American educational system is not producing enough high achievers to sustain the country's long-term well-being in an internationally competitive world. It is important to note, however, that our problem is not that we lack smart children; it's that gifted students are not being given the tools they need to realize their potential and compete. (p. 51)

Future research can shine a spotlight on this lack of support for gifted education and its direct effect on the United States declining student achievement.

### **Conclusion**

This study used quantitative, descriptive statistics to answer the questions, what is the knowledge level parents have about the nature and needs of gifted children and what parenting style do they use with the gifted child. The findings show that 53% of the participants had a low level of knowledge about the nature and needs of gifted children. The majority (90.8%) of the parents report using an authoritative parenting style. The low knowledge level of the participants as well as the majority of parents wanting more information about gifted children build a solid case for why schools need to actively share practical research-based information in a convenient, accessible and engaging way. These findings illuminate the idea of access and exposure to quality research. Gifted coordinators and school leaders often read and use research to highlight best practices; however, most parents do not have access to these resources. Once again, this pinpoints the schools' responsibility to provide this to parents. Another piece of evidence is that

84% of participants reported that they would attend a gifted parenting presentation if offered.

This research study sought to gather information about parents' knowledge about the nature and needs of gifted children and about the parenting styles they use at home with their gifted child. These findings achieved their purpose by providing school leaders the necessary information that can be used to design gifted parent workshops which will educate and inform. Most importantly, these research findings can be transferable to other topics beyond gifted services. Schools can offer other avenues for increasing parents' knowledge. Ultimately the goal is to support parents so that they feel confident in supporting their child's learning at home. This powerful partnership between parents and the school benefits the child by providing a seamless, connected, and supportive environment for the child that fosters continued lifelong learning.

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## APPENDICES

## APPENDIX A

### ONLINE SURVEY CONSENT FORM

You are being invited to take part in a research study titled "Description of Parents' Knowledge of the Nature and Needs of Gifted Children and their Parenting Styles". This study is being done by doctoral student, Heather Keenan, from Youngstown State University. You were selected to participate because you are the parent/guardian of a gifted child. This survey can be completed by one or both parents/guardians. The researcher asked school districts to share this link with you, no email addresses were shared with the researcher.

The purpose of this study is to find out more about parents'/guardians' understanding of gifted children and to understand the different parenting styles used. If you agree to take part in this study, you will be asked to complete the following pages.

Page 1 - Online Survey Consent Form

Page 2 - Demographic Questions

Page 3 - Gifted Knowledge Questionnaire

Page 4 - Parenting Style Survey

The survey should take about 10 minutes to complete.

You may not directly benefit from this study; however, we hope that your participation in the study may provide meaningful information to schools to support the parents of gifted children.

We believe this study has no known risks; however, as with any online activity the risks related to confidentiality are always possible. To the best of our ability your answers in this study will remain confidential. We will minimize any risks by using the secure, password protected website of SurveyMonkey. The online survey will not collect personal information, such as emails or computer IP addresses. Your answers will be sent

to and stored on a password protected link. No one, including the researcher will know if you participated in the study.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you can withdraw at any time. The online survey link will be open for two weeks.

If you have questions about this project or have a problem with the survey, you may contact the researcher, Heather Keenan at 440-503-1834 or the Doctoral Chair, Dr. Jane Beese at 330-941-2236. If you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact the Office of Research Services at [YSUIRB@ysu.edu](mailto:YSUIRB@ysu.edu) or 330-941-2377.

Thank you for your participation!

Please complete the electronic consent below:

ELECTRONIC CONSENT: By clicking “I agree” below you are an adult who is at least 18 years old, have read and understood this consent form and voluntarily agree to participate in this study.

I Agree

I Do Not  
Agree

## APPENDIX B

### GENERAL DEMOGRAPHIC QUESTIONS

(answer options listed below each question)

Click or fill in the response that applies to you (the word student is listed for guardians who may filling out this survey):

1. Person completing this survey?

Mother

Father

Other (please specify)

2. What is your gender?

Female

Male

3. What is your ethnicity?

American Indian or Alaskan Native

Asian or Pacific Islander

Black or African American

Hispanic or Latino

White/ Caucasian

Prefer not to answer

4. What is your age group?

18 to 24

25 to 34

35 to 44

45 to 54

55 to 64

65 to 74

75 or older

5. What is the highest degree obtained?

Did not graduate from high school

High school diploma/GED

Some university but no degree

Bachelor's degree

Graduate degree

6. List how many children/students you have identified as gifted:

One child/student

Two children/students

Three children/students

Four children/students or more

7. List the grade level range of your gifted child/student (children/students) \* check all that apply

Grades K-3 Lower Elementary

Grades 4-5 Intermediate Elementary

Grades 6-8 Middle School

Grades 9-12 High School

8. Do you desire more information about the general characteristics and needs of gifted children?

Yes

No

9. Has your school offered a gifted parent presentation about the nature and needs of gifted

children?

Yes

No

10. If yes, did you attend?

Yes

No

11. Would you attend a “gifted parent presentation” if offered at your school?

Yes

No

12. Where do you find information about gifted children (check all that apply):

Online

Libraries and bookstores

From my child/student’s teacher or school administrator

From talking with other parents

I have trouble finding quality information

## APPENDIX C

### GIFTED KNOWLEDGE SURVEY

Please indicate your level of knowledge of the following 12 statements using the scale below (the word student is listed for guardians who may filling out this survey):

- 1= Not at all knowledgeable
- 2= Slightly knowledgeable
- 3= Somewhat knowledgeable
- 4= Moderately knowledgeable
- 5= Extremely knowledgeable

***You may be unfamiliar with terms listed in the questions. Since the research is attempting to find out what topics parents/guardians know a lot about, a little about and not at all about, definitions to the terms are not provided. If you have not heard of the terms mentioned in the questions, an answer of “not at all knowledgeable” is acceptable.***

Questions:

1. I know the National Association of Gifted Children's definition of "gifted".
2. I know about the common characteristics of gifted children.
3. I know the term "heightened sensitivity" as it relates to gifted children.
4. I know the term "asynchronous development" as it relates to gifted children.
5. I know the term "overexcitabilities" as it relates to gifted children.
6. I know the term "perfectionism" as it relates to gifted children.
7. I know the term "underachievement" as it relates to gifted children.
8. I know I should praise gifted children for their effort instead of the grades they receive.
9. I know the definition of authoritative parenting style.
10. I know the definition of authoritarian parenting style.
11. I know the definition of permissive parenting style.
12. I know that increased parent involvement in the child/student's education, such as reading to the child/student and helping the child/student with homework, increases student achievement.

## APPENDIX D

### PARENTING STYLE SURVEY- PSDQ

(PSDQ- Short Version; Robinson, Mandleco, Olsen, & Hart, 2001)

For each of the 30 items, rate how often you exhibit this behavior with your child/student using the scale below (the word student is listed for guardians who may filling out this survey):

I EXHIBIT THIS BEHAVIOR:

1= Never

2= Once In Awhile

3= About Half the Time

4= Very Often

5= Always

1. \_\_\_ I am responsive to my child/student's feelings and needs.
2. \_\_\_ I use physical punishment as a way of disciplining my child/student.
3. \_\_\_ I take my child/student's desires into account before asking him/her to do something.
4. \_\_\_ When my child/student asks why he/she has to conform, I state: because I said so, or I am your parent/guardian and I want you to.
5. \_\_\_ I explain to my child/student how I feel about the child/student's good and bad behavior.
6. \_\_\_ I spank when my child/student is disobedient.
7. \_\_\_ I encourage my child/student to talk about his/her troubles.
8. \_\_\_ I find it difficult to discipline my child/student.
9. \_\_\_ I encourage my child/student to freely express (himself)(herself) even when disagreeing with me.
10. \_\_\_ I punish by taking privileges away from my child/student with little if any explanations.
11. \_\_\_ I emphasize the reasons for rules.
12. \_\_\_ I give comfort and understanding when my child/student is upset.
13. \_\_\_ I yell or shout when my child/student misbehaves.
14. \_\_\_ I give praise when my child/student is good.
15. \_\_\_ I give into my child/student when the child/student causes a commotion about something.
16. \_\_\_ I explode in anger towards my child/student.
17. \_\_\_ I threaten my child/student with punishment more often than actually giving it.
18. \_\_\_ I take into account my child/student's preferences in making plans for the family.
19. \_\_\_ I state punishments to my child/student and do not actually do them.
20. \_\_\_ I show respect for my child/student's opinions by encouraging my child/student to express them.
21. \_\_\_ I allow my child/student to give input into family rules.
22. \_\_\_ I scold and criticize to make my child/student improve.
23. \_\_\_ I spoil my child/student.
24. \_\_\_ I give my child/student reasons why rules should be obeyed.
25. \_\_\_ I use threats as punishment with little or no justification.
26. \_\_\_ I have warm and intimate times together with my child/student.
27. \_\_\_ I punish by putting my child/student off somewhere alone with little if any explanations.
28. \_\_\_ I help my child/student to understand the impact of behavior by encouraging my child/student to talk about the consequences of his/her own actions.
29. \_\_\_ I scold or criticize when my child/student's behavior doesn't meet my expectations.
30. \_\_\_ I explain the consequences of the child/student's behavior.



## APPENDIX E

### PERMISSION FROM CLYDE ROBINSON TO USE THE PSDQ

#### **To Dr. Robinson:**

On Thu, Nov 16, 2017 at 6:25 AM Dan & Heather Keenan <keenan3111@gmail.com> wrote:

Dear Dr. Robinson,

I hope this email finds you well! My name is Heather Keenan, I am doctoral student at Youngstown State University working on my dissertation titled, "Parents' Knowledge of the Nature and Needs of Gifted Children and their Parenting Styles." Under the direction of my doctoral committee chair, Dr. Jane Beese, I request your permission to use the Parenting Styles and Dimensions Questionnaire (PSDQ-Short Version) in my doctoral study. With your permission, I would like to use the instrument in an online format and adjust the word parent to parent/guardian for any guardian who may be filling out the survey.

I truly appreciate all of the research you have done! Your research has provided a valuable foundation for understanding parenting styles. Your 32 question instrument enables researchers to collect information from participants in a straightforward, easy to understand, and brief format. I believe the easy to complete format will increase my response rate. Thank you!

I am working on my IRB approval and my hope is to collect data in January 2018.

Thank you for your consideration,

Heather Keenan

**From Dr. Robinson:** at clyde.robinson47@gmail.com

Greetings Heather,

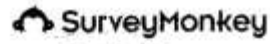
You have permission to use the PSDQ and you may alter it in any way to meet your research requirements.

Best wishes,

Clyde Robinson

## APPENDIX F

### PERMISSION TO USE SURVEY MONKEY



SurveyMonkey Inc.  
[www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com)

For questions, visit our Help Center  
[help.surveymonkey.com](http://help.surveymonkey.com)

**Re: Permission to Conduct Research Using SurveyMonkey**

To whom it may concern:

This letter is being produced in response to a request by a student at your institution who wishes to conduct a survey using SurveyMonkey in order to support their research. The student has indicated that they require a letter from SurveyMonkey granting them permission to do this. Please accept this letter as evidence of such permission. Students are permitted to conduct research via the SurveyMonkey platform provided that they abide by our Terms of Use, a copy of which is available on our website.

SurveyMonkey is a self-serve survey platform on which our users can, by themselves, create, deploy and analyze surveys through an online interface. We have users in many different industries who use surveys for many different purposes. One of our most common use cases is students and other types of researchers using our online tools to conduct academic research.

If you have any questions about this letter, please contact us through our Help Center at [help.surveymonkey.com](http://help.surveymonkey.com).

Sincerely,

SurveyMonkey Inc.



APPENDIX G

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

**Youngstown**  
STATE UNIVERSITY

One University Plaza, Youngstown, Ohio 44555

Office of Research  
330.941.2377  
www.yzu.edu

January 2, 2018

Dr. Jane Beese, Principal Investigator  
Ms. Heather Keenan, Co-investigator  
Department of Counseling, School Psychology and Educational Leadership  
UNIVERSITY

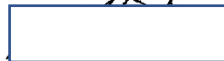
RE: HSRC PROTOCOL NUMBER: 066-2018  
PROTOCOL TITLE: Description of Parents' Knowledge of the Nature and Needs of  
Gifted Children and their Parenting Styles

Dear Dr. Beese and Ms. Keenan:

The Institutional Review Board of Youngstown State University has reviewed the above mentioned Protocol via expedited review and determined that it fully meets YSU Human Subjects Research Guidelines. Therefore, I am pleased to inform you that your project has been fully approved for one year. You must submit a Continuing Review Form and have your project approved by January 1, 2019, if your project continues beyond one year.

Any changes in your research activity should be promptly reported to the Institutional Review Board and may not be initiated without IRB approval except where necessary to eliminate hazard to human subjects. Any unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects should also be promptly reported to the IRB. Best wishes in the conduct of your study.

Sincerely,

Michael A. Hripko  
Associate Vice President for Research  
Authorized Institutional Official

MAH:cc

c: Dr. Jake Protivnak, Chair  
Department of Counseling, School Psychology and Educational Leadership

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