



## Research Article

# The parenting attitudes and effects on their gifted children: a literature review

Sumeyye Yildiz<sup>1</sup>, Naime Altay<sup>2</sup>

Gazi University Health Sciences Faculty, Nursing Department, Ankara, Turkey

### Article Info

Received: 18 January 2021  
Revised: 10 March 2021  
Accepted: 18 March 2021  
Available online: 15 June 2021

#### Keywords:

Family Style  
Gifted/Talented Children  
Parents Attitudes  
Parents Effects

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### Abstract

Family is essential for physical, emotional, social developments of the gifted children. The parenting attitudes could affect the child's emotional and social development. This literature review was conducted to examine parenting attitudes and effects on their gifted children. According to inclusion criteria, 11 studies were included in study. Gifted children perceived parental attitudes as tolerant and democratic, while peer groups perceived them as authoritarian and permissive. It was also found that the authoritarian attitudes of the parents of the gifted children have negative impacts on children mental developments, anxiety level, sense of self, inter-family relations and on level of well-being. The having democratic, tolerant attitudes of parents of gifted children will increase the academic performance, self-esteem, well-being, and relations among the family members. It has been determined that the partnership of the parenting attitudes of the mother and the father should be and the mother-child interaction is important.



### To cite this article:

Yıldız, S., & Altay, N. (2021). The parenting attitudes and effects on their gifted children: a literature review. *Journal for the Education of Gifted Young Scientists*, 9(2), 123-132. DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17478/jegys.864037>

## Introduction

The concept of intelligence can be defined as a common component of the score acquired from a test, adaptation to surrounding stimuli, problem-solving skills, and innate and acquired skills of the individual (Akkan,2012; Ozbay, 2013). Whereas children who score high on intelligence tests are referred to as gifted children, since the concept of talent covers the concept of intelligence and the intelligence scores determine the academic success of individual in recent years, usage of the expression of gifted child is now preferred, rather than the expression of genius child (Ataman,2012; Ozbay,2013; Levent,2013). As the matter of giftedness is a complex and multifaceted subject, there is no universally accepted single definition for “gifted child”. The generally accepted definition for “gifted child” is children with an IQ score of 130 and above, who are successful in multiple fields and who have special superior skills in specific areas. The gifted children representing 4-5% of societies make different developments in comparison with their peers. Active throughout a baby, early language development, having an early and advanced vocabulary, abstract thinking, ability to generate original ideas, extraordinary problem-solving skills, perfectionism, creativity, vast imagination, being open to new ideas and high academic success are among the traits of gifted children (Rosenberg, Robokos, & Kennedy, 2010; Levent, 2013; Davis, 2014).

Gifted children are defined as extraordinary children due to their special skills. These children may also face with numerous positive situations, as well as negative ones, in their family, school and social environments due to their unique understanding, thinking and perception capacities. As gifted children mostly do not have any problems related to academic and language development, they can experience emotional and social problems. Gifted children may also have problems with their parents and family members, in addition to their peers and teachers. Gifted

<sup>1</sup> Research Assist, Gazi University Health Sciences Faculty, Nursing Department, Ankara, Turkey, E-mail: [sumeyye.yildiz1@gazi.edu.tr](mailto:sumeyye.yildiz1@gazi.edu.tr) Phone: +90 312 216 26 15 Fax: +90 312 216 26 36

<sup>2</sup> Assoc.Prof.Dr. Gazi University Health Sciences Faculty, Nursing Department, Ankara, Turkey E-mail: [naimealtay@gazi.edu.tr](mailto:naimealtay@gazi.edu.tr)

children need special support from their teachers and parents because of their emotional and social problems (Morawska & Sanders, 2009).

Giftedness is a dynamic concept that emerges as a result of interaction between the child and family characteristics. Parents' awareness of the developmental characteristics of children and approaching them accordingly is a significant factor for their social and emotional development. A positive parental attitude makes a substantial contribution to the child's development and the child is satisfied with his/her life, is brought up as a healthy and happy individual. As in the case of all children, family is a highly important factor for the gifted children, in terms of their physical, emotional and social development (Rudasill, Adelson, Callahan, Houlihan, & Keizer, 2013). According to Sowa and May (1997), family is the place where a gifted child finds a meaning for himself/herself. Children's having special skills as different from their peers may negatively impact the children, family members and domestic relationships (Clark, 2015).

The children's being perceived as a different person by the environment they live in, not being raised in accordance with certain rules, desire to occupy themselves with something continuously, getting bored when they are free, frequently changing areas of interest, distraction, vulnerability and oversensitivity, non-parallelism of their mental development with their social and emotional development, having an idea on every subject and speaking out (Karakus, 2010; Ogurlu & Yaman, 2013).

The underlying reasons for the problems encountered by parents include not having a thorough command of the concept of gifted children, not accurately understanding the children's developments, failing to be aware of the children's needs and inability to meet them, supporting their developments insufficiently, planning the children's needs incompletely and failing to exhibit a proper parental attitude (Levent, 2013). Besides, parents have difficulty in the following: neglecting their children's requests to spend time with their peers, failing to ensure their participation in social events, the parent's insufficient educational and socioeconomic levels for the child, spending time with the child is tiring, exhausting, and taking up so much time of the family members and guiding the child in planning the events and activities for the gifted children (Karakus, 2010).

The conducted studies determined that differences between the parental attitudes of gifted children and their peers (Morawska & Sanders, 2008; Rudasill et al. 2013; Yazdani & Daryei, 2016). The differences in the parental attitudes may affect academic successes, motivations and social environments of children (Dwairy, 2004; Morawska & Sanders, 2009). A democratic parental attitude is associated to high academic success and grade point average. An authoritarian parental attitude can adversely affect the academic successes and grade point averages of children. Positive attitudes towards children may positively impact the social development of children (Huey, Sayler, & Rinn, 2013; Olszewski-Kubilius, Lee, & Thomson, 2014). The attitudes exhibited by parents towards their gifted children also have various effects on the mental health of children (Dwairy, 2004; Morawska & Sanders, 2009).

Parents play a critical role in the organization and provision of enriched early interventions, child-appropriate education, and long and sustainable development practices (Kiewra and Rom, 2019; Witte et al. 2015). They play an important role in preventing and finding solutions for the problems related to children's education and they may face with difficulties in fulfilling their roles during the process of raising children (Morawska & Sanders, 2009; Jolly & Matthews, 2012). It is very important for parents to support and create a supportive environment in order for children to cope with the problems they experience and to form a self-concept (Luo and Kiewra, 2020; Mammadov et al. 2013). Although studies focusing on the educational requirements of gifted children and their parents' perceptions of education have been carried out, there is a limited number of studies about the difficulties encountered by the families of gifted children and their parental attitudes (Morawska & Sanders, 2008, 2009; Pilarinos & Solomon, 2017). The aim of this literature review is to examine parenting attitudes and effects on their gifted children.

## Method

This literature review was conducted on the following databases: Pubmed, Medline, SAGE Journals Online and Science Direct. The key words were "Gifted/talented Children", "Parents Attitudes", "Parents Effects" and "Family Style". Inclusion criteria were as follows: Studies, 1) conducted between 2008-2020, 2) published as full text in English, 3) accessed on the databases of Pubmed, Medline, SAGE Journals Online and Science Direct, 4) investigating the parenting attitudes and effects on their gifted children. After searching, it was reached 30 articles but found after searching, total of 11 met inclusion criteria and thus, 11 studies were included in study. The studies were evaluated in terms of year, country, sample size and characteristics, and significant results.

## Results

All gifted children representing the sample of studies analyzed as part of the research are children who receive a special education for gifted children at relevant educational institutions. Considering the number of samples in the conducted studies, the study carried out by [Olszewski-Kubilius et al. \(2014\)](#) has the highest number of samples (n=1526). The study carried out by [Wu \(2008\)](#) has the lowest number of samples (n=5). The study samples were gifted children and his/her parents in four studies; only the gifted children in three studies; and only the families in two studies. The sample group consists of parents and caregivers in one of the other two studies; and the gifted children and his/her peer group in the other study.

The studies included in the research were conducted in the USA (4), Italy (1), England (1), North Korea and the USA (1), Australia (1), China (1), Iran (1), Australia and New Zealand (1). The age range of children involved in the studies is between 4 and 17. There are studies revealing that there are differences in the perceived parental attitudes of gifted children and their peers. It has been determined that gifted children perceive the attitudes of their parents as tolerant and democratic, while the peer group perceive them as authoritarian and permissive. It has also been found out that the attitudes of gifted children's parents are less authoritarian than their peers' parents and the IQ level of children are inversely proportional to the authoritarian parental attitude. The studies determined that authoritarian parental attitude negatively affect the mental developments, anxiety level, sense of self, domestic relationships and well-being levels of the gifted children. Along with the authoritarian attitude, a permissive family structure also negatively affects domestic relationships and the academic successes of children. It has been found that a democratic parental attitude have a positive effect on the academic success of children. It has been determined that a democratic attitude and a high interaction between the mother and the child play a significant role in the cognitive development of children. It detected that supportive and respectful family environment towards the gifted child has positive impacts on the development of interpersonal skills of children and contribute to their relationships with their peers. The studies stated that parents' high level of confidence in their children is an important factor for observing less emotional problems, stress, depression and parent-child conflicts. In addition, it has been observed that the parents of gifted children have been advised to their children and parents who listen and share their children's problems.

It has been found out that a positive parental attitude along with the gift factor, the parents' supporting their children and establishing a warm relationship increase the academic success of children and enhance the motivation of children and their parents. There are studies expressing that, in order to increase the motivation of children, teachers need to perceive children sufficiently and parents need to give autonomy to their children and support them. As the ages of children decrease, they perceive their parents' attitudes as permissive. It was determined that girl children perceive their parents as more authoritarian than boy children. Moreover, it has been further found that being a boy child, educational level of the mother and low confidence of the parents in their children are an important factors in observing behavioral problems.

The studies have detected that parental attitudes vary depending on the values, beliefs and culture of the family, as well as its ethnical structure, and that culture prevails in parental attitudes. While black children evaluate their mothers as more authoritarian, Chinese families regard themselves as primarily responsible for the academic successes of their children and encourage them. Even if the gender status does not affect academic success, it has been indicated that being a male child and parents' supporting the child in his/her educational process raise the expectations of the family. The studies state that an extended family structure is important for the development, education and support systems of gifted children. On the contrary this situation, an extended family structure is considered to cause communication problems for children with their peers, as a source of stress for both the child and the family. Another source of stress for the child and the family, it has stated that is the lack of consistence between the parents and disruption of family routines. Summary of 11 articles researched as a result of the literature review is given in Table 1.

## Discussion

As a result of the literature review, 11 research articles have been accessed in order to determine the health, caring and family problems observed in gifted children, published between 2008 and 2018. It has established that there are differences in perceived parental attitudes between gifted children and peers. The study performed by [Rudasill et al. \(2013\)](#) sets forth how gifted children identify their parents' attitudes as tolerant and democratic, whereas the peer

group identifies the same as permissive and authoritarian. The study carried out by Yazdani & Daryei (2016) has ascertained that gifted children perceive their parents' attitudes as less authoritarian than their peers.

Parental attitudes are an important factor for the development of children. It has been seen that the most appropriate parental attitude for gifted children is the democratic attitude. It has been determined that a democratic and tolerant parental attitude has a positive impact on the academic successes and cognitive development of children. The study conducted by Huey et al. (2013) has designated that the democratic parental attitude has a substantial effect in increasing academic success. The authoritarian and permissive attitude, on the other hand, negatively affects the mental development, sense of self and well-being levels of children. The study performed by Yazdani & Daryei (2016) found out that an authoritarian parental attitude negatively affects the mental health, sense of self and well-beings of adolescents and leads to a high level of depression and anxiety.

Perfectionism in gifted children is affected by various factors. Margot & Rinn (2016) determined that the relationship between perfectionism and gender, birth order, and age/grade level. The examined studies wasn't found that relationship between perfectionism and parental attitude. However, researchers have demonstrated that correlation between positive and negative perfectionism and authoritative parenting style (Besharat et al. 2011; Biran & Reese, 2007). Basirion, Abd Majid & Jelas (2014) indicated that positive perfectionism is influenced by the authoritarian attitude of the father and the authoritarian attitude of the mother. the authoritarian attitude of the mother is more effective in the development of negative perfectionism than the authoritarian attitude of the father. Also, permissive parenting style positively and negatively do not affect perfectionism (Basirion et al. 2014).

It was stated that supportive and respectful family environment towards the gifted child and a high confidence in the child by his/her parents, as well as parents' supporting and encouraging their children, have positive impacts on the development of interpersonal skills of children contribute to their relationships with their peers, reduce emotional problems and increases motivation (Olszewski-Kubilius et al. 2014; Huey et al. 2013). The study conducted by Olszewski-Kubilius et al. (2014) has determined that supportive and respectful family environment towards the gifted child has positive impacts on the development of interpersonal skills of children and contribute to their relationships with their peers. A study by Morawska & Sanders (2008) indicates that parents' high level of confidence in their children is an important factor for observing less emotional and sensual problems, stress, depression and parent-child conflicts. A study by Koshy, Smith & Brown (2017) found out that parents' supporting their children and establishing a warm communication with them are important in terms of increasing the motivation of the child and the parent. Garn, Matthews, & Jolly (2010) suggest in their study that children need to be sufficiently understood by their teachers, supported at home and given autonomy, in order to increase their motivation. Eren, Cete, Avcil & Baykara (2018) indicated that parents of gifted children are more supportive of their children and show sufficiently love, respect and attention to their children.

Along with a democratic attitude, it has been determined that parental attitudes which are observed condemnations in families of gifted children. A study by Morawska & Sanders (2009) was determined that the gifted children gave advice to their parents, the children expressed themselves to their parents comfortably, and the problems they experienced were shared with their parents.

It has been also established that ages and genders of children are influential in the perceived parental attitudes. A study by Rudasill et al. (2013) states that as the ages of children decrease, they consider their parents' attitudes as permissive and that girls find their parents more authoritarian than boys. Being boys, an only child or a first-born have been observed to be effective factors in parental attitudes. The study performed by Margot & Rinn (2016) indicated that being a first-born or only child increases the concerns for making mistakes and raises parents' expectations and personal standards. The study carried out by Morawska & Sanders (2008) revealed that being a male child, a first-born or an only child, mother's level of education and parents' low confidence in their children are important factors in observing behavioral problems.

Ethnic structure of families, their racial, and cultural values have been identified as factors affecting parental attitudes. A study conducted by Wu (2008) suggested that Chinese families regard themselves as primarily responsible for the academic successes of their children and encourage them to receive education. In addition to that, the study made by Rudasill et al. (2013) established that black children consider as more authoritarian their mothers.

It has been observed that an extended family structure has both positive and negative impacts on children. The study performed by Koshy, Smith & Brown (2017) stated that a majority of families believe that an extended family structure will not help gifted children's educations, only one mother says that having an extended family structure

will help children's educations and it is an indirect support system. The study made by [Renati & Bonfiglio \(2017\)](#) established that having an extended family structure and relatives' failure to use an appropriate means of communication causes stress in the child and the family. It has been stated that the main source of stress in the family results from a lack of alliance between parents and irregular family routines.

**Table 1.** Summary of the Studies Related to The Parenting Attitudes and Effects on Their Gifted Children

Author/Year/Country	N	Sample Characteristics	Method	Results and Conclusion
1. Rudasill, Adelson, Callahan, Houlihan, & Keizer (2013) The USA	332	-Girls: About 60% -Boys: About 40% - About 67% whites - About 23% black	-Title "Gifted Students' Perceptions of Parenting Styles: Associations With Cognitive Ability, Sex, Race, and Age" -Students attending Virginia University Summer Camp -A descriptive study	-It has been determined that gifted children perceive the attitudes of their parents as tolerant and democratic, while the peer group perceive them as authoritarian and permissive. -It found that the attitudes of gifted children's parents are less authoritarian than their peers' parents and the IQ level of children are inversely proportional to the authoritarian parental attitude. -Democratic parental attitudes and child-parent interaction play an important role in the cognitive development of children. -As the age level decreases, children's attitude of their parents is considered as permissive. -Girls found their parents to be more authoritarian than boys. -Black children were found to be more authoritarian in their mothers.
2. Yazdani & Daryei (2016) Iranian	233	-Gifted children:118 (36 boys, 82 girls) -Their Peers:115 (38 boys, 117 girls) - Grade 6-9	-Title "Parenting styles and psychosocial adjustment of gifted and normal Adolescents" -Conducted in a school for gifted children and in a primary school -A descriptive study	-It has been found out that the attitudes of gifted children's parents are less authoritarian than their peers' parent -Authoritarian parental attitude negatively affect the mental developments, anxiety level, sense of self, domestic relationships and well-being levels of the gifted children. -Permissive and authoritarian parental attitudes have been found to be not suitable structures for family relations and well-being of gifted children.
3. Huey, Sayler, & Rinn (2013) The USA	88	-Girls: 34 (38,64%) -Boys: 54 (62,36%) -Age range: 14-17	-Title "Effects of Family Functioning and Parenting Style on Early Entrants' Academic Performance and Program Completion" -Conducted at Texas Academy of Mathematics and Science -Working time 2 years -A descriptive study	-It determined that gender has no effect on academic achievement. -Democratic parental attitudes were found to be associated with an increase in children's grade point averages. -Authoritarian and permissive parental attitudes have been found to have a negative effect on children's grade point averages. -Family and parent attitudes along with the skill factor have been found to have a significant effect on the success of children.



4. Olszewski-Kubilius Lee, & Thomson (2014)	1526	-1526 (52.5% Boy, 47.5% Girl) -Grade 5 and 12 -Students, mothers or fathers	-Title“Family Environment and Social Development in Gifted Student” -Conducted in a university and a center for talent development summer, weekend, and distance learning programs. -A cross-sectional study	-An affectionate, supportive and respectful family environment influenced positively the development of interpersonal ability and peer relationships for the gifted children. -Parent’s positive attitudes had positive effects on behavioral development of the gifted children.
5. Morawska & Sanders (2008)	278	-Gifted children: 278 -Age range: 2-6 years -Children with IQ>130: 214 -409 Parents	- Title“Parenting Gifted and Talented Children: What are the Key Child Behaviour and Parenting Issues?” -Conducted in a school for gifted children and in a primary school -A descriptive study	-Being a boy, having a mother with a low education level and having lower level of parental confidence were important factors related to behavioral problems. -Higher levels of parental confidence were important in less emotional problems, less stress and depression and less conflicts over parenting.
6. Koshy, Smith & Brown (2017)	21	-Mother: 19 -Father: 1 -Caregiver: 1 -Age range: 12-16 years	-Title “Parenting ‘gifted and talented’children in urban areas: Parents’ voices.” -Conducted in a university. University Based Intervention Program -A qualitative study. - They started the program at the age of 12. Lasted 4 years	-It has been found that some families have a large family structure of gifted children and that they do not help children's education. -In addition, some families have stated that having a large family structure will help children's education and increase their support systems. -Parents' support for their children and a warm communication have been found to be important in increasing the motivation of the child and parent.
7. Garn, Matthews, & Jolly (2010)	59	-Parents: 59 -30 parents completed the interviews -Gifted Children: 39 -Girls: 20 -Boys: 19 -Age range:4-17	-Title “Parental Influences on the Academic Motivation of Gifted Students: A Self-Determination Theory Perspective” - Thirty-one of these 59 parents (53%) agreed to interview requests sent to the e-mail address or telephone number. -A qualitative study.	-It was determined that negative attitudes of parents of gifted children towards academic motivation teachers were not sufficiently understood by the children. -It was found that parents applied autonomy and control strategies to create academic motivation environment at home.
8. Morawska & Sanders (2009)	6	- The average age of mothers: - The average age of fathers: - Eight mothers started the program but six people finished. - Gender of children are boys and their average age: 6	-Title “Parenting Gifted and Talented Children: Conceptual and Empirical Foundations” -South Tasmanian schools and families from the Tasmanian Union for gifted children attended. - A qualitative study.	- The parents of the gifted children advise their children to their children, children express themselves to their parents comfortably, share the problems they have with their parents; It was found that there were appropriate parental attitudes and that children improved their problem-solving skills, self-esteem and improved peer relationships.

9. Margot & Rinn (2016)	The USA	96	-96 (47 Girls, 49 Boys) -Grade 7 and 12 -70% Caucasian	- Title“Perfectionism in Gifted Adolescents: A Replication and Extension” -Conducted in a rural middle and high school -A descriptive study	-The gifted who were only or first born children had increased levels of anxiety about making a mistake, higher parental expectations and personal standards. -The parents of the gifted boys had higher expectations.
10. Wu (2008)	China	5	- Five parents living in America for over five years. -Three families live in a university town	-Title “Parental Influence on Children’s Talent Development: A Case Study With Three Chinese American Families” - The interviews were made via telephone. - All interviews were made in Chinese as the mother tongue of the families. -A semi-structured study	-It determined that parental attitudes change according to family values and beliefs and cultures and their culture is dominant. -It found that Chinese families regard themselves as primarily responsible for the academic successes of their children and encourage them and children are to be more successful in the academic field. -It was found that parents supported children's education and parents increased their academic success expectations from children.
11. Renati & Bonfiglio (2017)	Italia	49	-Mother: 26 -Father: 23 -Age average: 44 - 62% of parents are university graduates	-Title “Challenges raising a gifted child: Stress and resilience factors within the family” - Conducted in Fronez Center for Potential Development and Endurance in Milan, founded by the Italian National Association for Gifted and Talented Children. -A semi-structured study - Talk time: 20min	- One of the main sources of stress in the family is the lack of consistency between parents and the lack of regular family routines. - It is determined that families have a large family structure and that relatives do not use appropriate communication methods cause stress in children and families.



## Conclusion

In order to reduce the negative effects of parental attitudes on gifted children, parents need to be evaluated from the perspective of appropriate parental attitudes. Creating positive parental attitudes will result in a higher motivation for both the child and the family, reduction in stress factors and consistence between parents. Consultation should be made reducing the effects of the extended family structure on the child and increasing the interaction between the mother and the child. In addition, support programs for the challenges of gifted children and families should be developed and efforts to be carried out in this area should be increased.

## Biodata of Authors

**Sumeyye Yıldız**, RN, graduated from Niğde Ömer Halisdemir University. She took masters degree Department of Child Health and Diseases Nursing in the Gazi University. She continues Phd education at the Department of Child Health and Diseases Nursing of the Nursing Department of the Health Sciences Faculty in the Gazi University.

**Naime Altay**, Assoc.Prof.Dr, graduated from Ege University School of Nursing. She took masters and phd degrees Department of Child Health and Diseases Nursing in Hacettepe University. She works at the Department of Child Health and Diseases Nursing of the Nursing Department of the Health Sciences Faculty in the Gazi University.

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