

香港資優教育學院
The Hong Kong Academy for Gifted Education

Factsheet

PERFECTIONISM: BEING A GOOD LOSER

For many children learning how to lose can be a hard lesson. It applies also for gifted children, as their perceptions of their abilities sometimes can cause them to feel a failure for not always achieving and succeeding, and can be further complicated by the child having social and emotional concerns.

Action worth considering:

Explaining the concept	Children have to learn to be a good loser, they need to be told exactly and simply what is expected of them, what is against the rules, and the consequences/discipline which will follow.
Understanding the Value of Participation Skills	Through social activities children can be taught how to play fair, take turns, team work, experiencing losing and celebrating other's winning, in compliment to the reason of playing to win. Enjoy socially rewarding activities which have no winner or loser, for example a bicycle ride rather than a bicycle race.
Learning How to Fail	Children need to learn and experience failure, with supportive parents praising the hard work and effort rather than highlighting the result.
Reward and Encouragement	Praise the child at every opportunity, as rewarding positive behaviour is more effective than disciplining negative behaviour.
Use of Social Stories	Stories which offer opportunities to discuss character's behaviour and emotions are excellent tools to get children thinking about their own behaviour and emotions, and what is acceptable/appropriate in particular situations.
Use of Relevance and Context	Show empathy to your child when they lose by relaying a time when you experienced similar loss, or think of real life examples such as a team losing the cup final, getting a bronze medal in the Olympics, failing a driving test etc.
Discuss Consequences of Actions	Talk about your child's reactions and how their anger or resentment at losing can affect how they are perceived by others, disrupting their friendships and relationships with peers, team mates etc.
Set Goals for Effort and Improvement	Try to avoid goals based purely on winning, but concentrate rather on sustained effort and improvement.

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Encourage other interests

Participating in an area in which a child isn't gifted or talented can help with perfectionist issues if they are not expected to be "best" or "top" but are similar to other participants, and it gives them a broader range of skills/social peers.

Show understanding

Empathising and understanding the importance of the occasion for the child is important, as being emotive shows how much it means to the child. Emphasise it is ok to feel angry or upset sometimes, but it isn't acceptable to display inappropriate behaviour because of those feelings.

Further Guidance:

Young Minds Parentline www.youngminds.org.uk	Informative website and helpline for all concerns regarding children's mental health
Slip! Slide! Skate! by G. Herman	Children's book to encourage discussion about perfectionism
Tales for the Perfect Child by F. Heide	Children's book to encourage discussion about perfectionism
Perfectionism and Gifted Children, by R. Callard- Szulgit	Informative book for parents
When Perfect isn't Good Enough: Strategies for Coping With Perfectionism by M. Antony	Informative book for parents
The Highly Sensitive Child by E.N. Aron	Informative book for parents
Freeing Our Families from Perfectionism, by T. Greenspon	Informative book for parents

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