

MULTI-SENSORY CHILDREN

by Therese Rowley Ph.D.

All children are gifted. And although it often goes unsaid, it is undoubtedly our job as adults to seek out, evoke, and name the giftedness in each child. It is vitally important that we identify gifts, because people cannot see their own gifts except when they are recognized in contrast with others. Even for the profoundly gifted, their talent and its expression are “normal” to them. It is also important to focus on a child’s giftedness because there is a growing trend to do the opposite: to look for and label children as “disordered.” There seems to be a growing number of children who are talented in unusual or unusually intense ways. Many of these children do not find traditional schools helpful or happy places. In my opinion, those diagnosed as “learning disordered” are actually “differently ordered” when measured by the shrinking definition of (educationally) “normal”.

It is not easy to tell whether the phenomenon of children who are differently ordered is new, or whether it has always been with us. We don’t know whether evolution is having a hand in producing brighter children who have different ways of knowing and accessing experience than past generations. We have no idea what the collective impact of electromagnetic fields such as cell phones, computers, videogames, microwave ovens, wireless environments, etc. is on those born after these items became commonplace. We also don’t know if it is simply that our reporting systems and criteria are more sophisticated and able to differentiate what would have previously gone unnoticed.

What we do know is that there is an alarming increase in medicating children with psychotropic drugs so that they can fit in better at school. And we do know that psychic children, conscious children, and mystic children are communicating with each other and with us, both telepathically and through the internet. Finally, we know that traditional education has no tools to measure these gifts as competencies – and even if they did, it is unlikely they would be honored and supported as valuable intelligences.

As an intuitive who conducts energetic readings and healings for adults and adolescence alike, I believe that more and more children are “multi-sensory.” This is a term I use for those who gather information, experience life, and/or express themselves through more than five senses and/or through multiple senses with great intensity. The characteristics associated with “learning disorders” lead me to believe that many children who fall under these categories are multi-sensory, and are caught in a system that cannot see or recognize them as gifted or value their differences as gifts. My perceptions regarding giftedness and some ways we may both learn from and support these children are:

Autistic – There is a spectrum of autism, so no description captures all children under this diagnostic label. However, many of these children live in an inside out world, relating less to the outside physical world and more to the one that they are experiencing within. And ironically, their inside world is often outside their body. They are often spiritually connected in a way that most of us do not experience. Their vibration is very high and touches into physical reality every so often, but they do not typically use their five senses to relate to others in the three dimensional world. Finding ways to effectively communicate with these children is important. They may have as many things to teach us about the world of Spirit as we have to teach them about the physical world.

Practitioners who are highly conscious and can contact these children telepathically make the most progress in understanding the child and in helping the child’s awareness and development in a three dimensional world. Decreasing the stimuli in their environment on all levels supports them. Meditating in the presence of the children and honoring the richness of silence may also help.

ADHD – These children are often highly creative and relate to life in holographic ways, resulting in less linear, logical, sequential brain access. “A picture speaks a thousand words”, and these children may be better at communicating through art or theater than linear language. Also, competition means less in a holographic, un-sequenced world, so they may be less inclined to want to compete. They are also highly sensitive and can vibrate at higher frequency than others, slipping in and out of their bodies. ADHD children are more inside their bodies than those with autism, but they are not relating to physical reality in a relational way. They are in touch with other worlds that feed their imaginations and offer them ever more out-of-the-box creativity.

Honoring and nurturing their creativity and connecting them to environments that support their creative gifts are very beneficial. Professionals who can measure and support the development of spatial intelligence may also be helpful.

ADD – These children often notice and can take in more sensory data than others. This includes light, sound, vibration, verbal tones, and non-verbal cues, to name several. While they are sensitive to more stimuli, these children and even adolescents, may not have the brain function developed to process this overload of sensory data until their mid-twenties. So they can be overwhelmed more quickly than others. Physical problems, such as anxiety, panic, stomach aches, etc. may result as they try to take on the challenge of digesting their multi-sensory experience. They may have a harder time organizing material, distinguishing big picture from detail, and determining what information is most important. There may be a capacity to be sequential, but it may not be a common version of logical. Their nervous system may be vibrating faster than the rest of their body can comfortably contain.

Their energy and gift often leads them to be more comfortable in expansive and visionary roles than in routine or operational ones. For these children, helping them find and practice their energetic and physical relationship to the ground and the boundaries of their body is very helpful. It is also beneficial to help them with mental boundaries and structures in their thinking.

Highly Sensitive: Like the others, these children are also highly sensitive to external stimuli. In addition, they can be very intense, mature beyond their years, feel responsible for the world, be insightful, clear, very intuitive or conscious, and sometimes mystic. They can organize their world around their spiritual awareness and are therefore often misunderstood. They can be very good symbolic, abstract thinkers, but may not be able to communicate their experiences. Many can easily leave their bodies and merge or find spiritual union. Some have extraordinary gifts.

These children in particular may pick up others’ thoughts, feelings, emotions, and moods. They may pick up information about another person’s current situation or the future, and try to make sense of it in present time, or they can carry around past family patterns (ancestral or “past life”) with a sense of responsibility and intensity. These children may be labeled ADD, though they seem (even if not until later childhood or adolescence) to exhibit specific spiritual, intuitive and/or psychic gifts.

It is helpful for these children to have a regular spiritual practice and to articulate their values. Assure they have a place they can describe their experiences (through arts or verbally) and have their expressions honored. It is also beneficial for them to allow their awareness of the state of the world to become a prayer for the world rather than an overwhelming personal responsibility — and to be assisted in the notion of giving the responsibility for the world back to Spirit/God/Universe.

Practical Recommendations for Multi-Sensory Children

There is no magic bullet or right answer that will make life smooth for these children and their families. It is a painful experience to hear the judgments of others, to project into a bleak future for a child labeled with “learning disorders”, and to wade through conflicting advice and recommendations that come from well meaning physicians, psychologists, teachers, and others. Parents’ attitude toward their child makes the biggest difference in a child’s life. Parents can name and celebrate their child’s gifts and also address development opportunities. While all kids want to fit in and feel “normal”, it is more instructive for parent to model and teach that “normal” is not optimal.

The most important things a parent can do is to love their child, stay in their heart, trust themselves, believe in their child, and see their child through the lens of their gifts so that the world can learn what the children came here to teach us.

There are environmental conditions, spiritual practices, attitudes, and actions that serve multi-sensory children well. Here are seven:

1. Coordination of mind and body through conscious movement
 - Martial Arts
 - Yoga
 - Nia
2. Nutrition that keeps them in line with a healthy relationship with the planet
 - As much as possible organic vegetables, fruits, and grains
 - Natural sugar (honey, molasses)
 - No preservatives or additives, as few processed foods as possible
3. Environment in the home that is as calm and peaceful as possible
 - As violence-free and technologically slow as possible (though ADD-types often thrive on technological speed – less violence is still most helpful)
 - Space and place for alone time
 - Television-free or selective television and regulated number of hours
 - Video game-free or selective non-violent programs
 - Fresh air on a regular basis
4. Spiritual Practice as the touchstone for health, gratitude, and challenges
 - Meditation
 - Centering prayer
 - Visualization/Imagination about spiritual support & its consistent availability
 - Authentic talking/ listening with an intimate/personal God
 - Nature as a touchstone for rejuvenation or calming
 - Spiritual practice with a somatic (body-centered) correlate to encourage body/spirit integration
5. Validation and Appreciation as regularly as food
 - Validating a child’s perceptions as true– even if the adult has no similar experience
 - Respecting differences in style, gifts, and expression

- Non-judgmental receptivity of thoughts and ideas
 - Encourage reading material that supports spiritual growth and development
 - See through the eyes of the children's gifts
 - Reframe negative feedback (i.e. "disorders" means "differently ordered" and "no leader in history has ever 'fit in'")
6. Leadership opportunities
- Point out and connect kids to opportunities to apply their gifts in service to others or a cause bigger than themselves
 - Help them see the difference they have and can make – connection to outcome, especially in other people's lives
7. As much as possible, use facilitative language rather than authoritative language:
- Allow kids' thoughts/opinions to be "interesting data" rather than "right" or "wrong"
 - Move from an "I know" point-of-view to "curiosity" point-of-view by asking him/her:
 - what interests you about what you just heard or said?
 - what do you make of that?
 - what do you think is important about that?
 - what do you think that means?

Remember you can learn as much from children as they can from you.