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SEX DIFFERENCES: IMPLICATIONS FOR PROGRAM PLANNING FOR THE ACADEMICALLY GIFTED

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Studies of gifted children have typically ignored sex differences, yet in the past gifted women have achieved far less than men.

This paper reviews the research on sex differences in intellectual abilities, achievement, values, and interests that have relevance to educational planning for gifted children. Early admission to kindergarten or first grade, and early college entrance both appear to be valuable for gifted boys and girls. Grade-skipping, subject-matter acceleration, and advanced placement programs in mathematics and the sciences in the junior high school years are, however, more effective for gifted boys than gifted girls. Homogeneously grouped accelerated programs in mathematics can promote achievement of gifted girls as well as of gifted boys in some classroom environments but not others. Part of the differential academic success of the sexes in subjects such as mathematics is a result of the sex-role stereotying activities in early childhood and adolescence. The reduction of sex role stereotyping should increase both male and female creativity and achievement in many areas. Early identification of children and counseling of parents is needed. Career eductaion and early planned intervention are particularly crucial for gifted girls. Teachers need to help gifted students, especially girls become better intellectual risk-takers.

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