

# Stevie's Story



Gifted, Creative & Misunderstood

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## *From the Mother of a Gifted Child*

As both a parent and a teacher in my son's school, you can imagine my distress when Stevie's Pre-K teacher — a colleague I respect — gave me a huge hug as she shared behavioral concerns including meltdowns during transition times, imaginary friends, and questioning authority. When Stevie was asked to write his name, he complied by writing it two times wrong and then on the third try, writing the last letter upside down and backwards! Stevie reported that he did this because writing his name was boring. It was indicated that he was being obsessive and oppositional. The potential diagnosis of OCD was alluded to. With genuine concern for my 5-year old and for me, the school recommended that we consult with a psychiatrist. This was a time of high stress, and I was desperate for answers.

How lucky we were — my family, Stevie's teachers, and especially Stevie — when I discovered SENGifted.org. SENG's articles and recommended books offered descriptions of gifted characteristics that matched Stevie's behaviors. Emotionally, I was tremendously relieved to read and learn about the struggles that often accompany being gifted and the misdiagnoses that often occur. I found that other gifted children melt down, struggle with transitions because they like to work at something for longer periods of time, often don't enjoy handwriting, have imaginary friends, and question authority. As a teacher, I was also stunned that I and most teachers had not been given training about these common features found in gifted children. Stevie's school administrators and teachers reviewed the information from SENG — and to their great credit — they accepted Stevie's symptoms as signs of gifted behaviors, and implemented solutions with great success! Some behaviors instantly changed, while others gradually changed.

Stevie just turned 10. Testing confirms that he is gifted. A painter since he was three, in 2005 Stevie was recognized as the youngest person in Connecticut to ever receive the Connecticut Renewal Team's National Arts Program Award. For fun, Stevie creates silent movies with his friends, and loves to imitate Charlie Chaplin. He is fascinated by the lifestyles of the early 1900's. He enjoys visiting local museums and historical sites, as well as studying about composers, architecture, and inventions. Stevie continues to make his mark as an artist, being recognized on television, receiving national awards, and drawing crowds at gallery showings of his artwork. Having overcome a time when his different behavior was a concern, Stevie has been successfully able to have his giftedness nurtured.



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