



# Ordinary Gifted Children: The Power and Promise of Individual Attention

*Jessica Hoffmann Davis*

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This is the remarkable story of the Hoffmann School for Individual Attention, where the principal believed in a diverse, challenging, and challenged group of students—with extraordinary results. With a definition of gifted that included all children, Ann Hoffmann embraced students that other schools had failed, and she helped them not just to learn, but to learn to love learning. Written with candor and humor by renowned arts educator (and Ann Hoffmann's daughter) Jessica Hoffmann Davis, this portrait will resonate with anyone who has known or been a champion of children. Ann Hoffmann's example will inspire and delight the reader, reminding us of what matters most in education and that if we love what we do, anything is possible.

This fascinating narrative addresses the timeless features of teaching and learning with important implications for how we think about curriculum, instruction, and classroom life. The story of the Hoffmann School is an insider's view of a place in time that is more importantly a vision and set of beliefs that can reoccur in anyone's classroom or adult life.

**Jessica Hoffmann Davis** is a cognitive developmental psychologist and founder of the Arts in Education Program at the Harvard Graduate School of Education. She is the author of *Why Our Schools Need the Arts* and *Framing Education as Art: The Octopus Has a Good Day*.

"Blending the rigor of a social scientist, the heart and artistry of a poet, the wisdom and compassion of an educator, and the devotion of a daughter, Jessica Hoffmann Davis writes the story her mother asked her to tell... a book about the kind of education every child deserves, and about the ordinary teacher whose mission it was to see the goodness and gifts in each one of her students. Teachers and parents will draw powerful lessons from this beautiful book."

—**Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot**, Emily Hargroves Fisher Professor of Education, Harvard University and author of *Balm in Gilead*, *Respect*, and *The Third Chapter*

"As a graduate of the Hoffmann School, I was thrilled to read Jessica Hoffmann Davis's brilliant new book. Her rich language and engaging style capture the school's generous spirit and its warm atmosphere of comfort and support. Ann Hoffmann encouraged each child's individuality and interest and instinctively recognized what was needed to unlock his or her passion to learn. The Hoffmann School experience totally changed the direction of my life, opening horizons that would not have been conceivable without Ann Hoffmann's guidance."

—**Austin C. Hill**, Clinical Psychologist in Private Practice, New York City

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