

IQ tests alone do not completely identify all gifted students. *How can parents and teachers tell if a child is gifted without IQ tests?* There are common traits to examine and while no gifted individual is exactly the same, each with his own unique patterns and traits, many gifted children have clusters of similar traits.

This list of traits may help you better understand whether or not your child is gifted.

Cognitive	Creative	Affective	Behavioral
Keen power of abstraction	Creativeness and inventiveness	Unusual emotional depth and intensity	Spontaneity
Interest in problem-solving and applying concepts	Keen sense of humor	Sensitivity or empathy to the feelings of others	Boundless enthusiasm
Voracious and early reader	Ability for fantasy	High expectations of self and others, often leading to feelings of frustration	Intensely focused on passions—resists changing activities when engrossed in own interests
Large vocabulary	Openness to stimuli, wide interests		Highly energetic—needs little sleep or down time
Intellectual curiosity	Intuitiveness	Heightened self-awareness, accompanied by feelings of being different	Constantly questions
Power of critical thinking, skepticism, self-criticism	Flexibility	Easily wounded, need for emotional support	Insatiable curiosity
Persistent, goal-directed behavior	Independence in attitude and social behavior	Need for consistency between abstract values and personal actions	Impulsive, eager and spirited
Independence in work and study	Self-acceptance and unconcern for social norms	Advanced levels of moral judgment	Perseverance—strong determination in areas of importance
Diversity of interests and abilities	Radicalism	Idealism and sense of justice	High levels of frustration—particularly when having difficulty meeting standards of performance (either imposed by self or others)
	Aesthetic and moral commitment to self-selected work		Volatile temper, especially related to perceptions of failure
			Non-stop talking/chattering

Source: Clark, B. (2008). *Growing up gifted (7th ed.)* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.

The characteristic overviews included in this pamphlet are possible expressions of a gifted trait along with commonly heard adult responses. You may see a bit of yourself and your child in these example scenarios. Remember, keywords for gifted children emphasize intensity, sensitivity, and depth.

What can parents do to support and encourage gifted children?

- Offer structure at home with a balance between choices and authority.
- Remember, they are still children regardless of high intellectual ability.
- Allow your child to develop as a whole person, including social, emotional, and spiritual areas. Don't limit them by one of these facets.
- Offer a secure place where being different is okay. Teach that strengths and weaknesses of all people are to be respected.
- Offer exposure to many different experiences and peer groups. Support your child's passionate interests.
- Create a place where learning can be joyful.
- Learn about giftedness through reading, conferences, and parent advocacy groups at:

www.massgifted.org

www.hoagiesgifted.org

www.gro-gifted.org

www.nagc.org

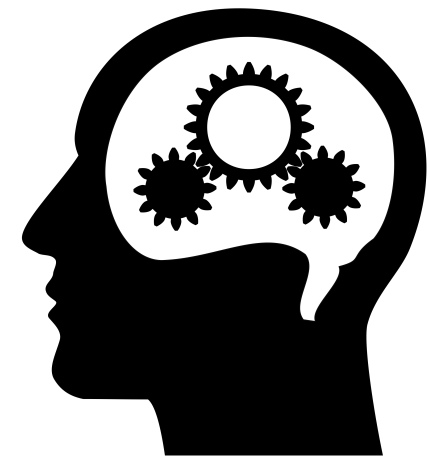
www.sengifted.org



www.massgifted.org

Is My Child Gifted?

A Brief Parents' Guide



A list of common characteristics found in Highly Intellectual kids

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The Massachusetts Association for Gifted Education



Example Expressions of Gifted Traits and Adult Responses

Intense interest in reading/books

- As a pre-reader, loves to listen to books
- Learns to read at an earlier age
- Reads avidly

"You've already read a dozen books this week. Let's find something else to do."

Unusual emotional depth and intensity

- Moral judgments are advanced
- Very vulnerable to criticism
- High levels of recognition needed
- Don't have emotional resources to match what they understand intellectually

*"It *is* upsetting that someone left a puppy on the side of the road."*

Intense interest in intellectual topics

- Pursues knowledge in particular topics in a deeply driven need to understand it
- Persistently asks questions until full understanding is reached
- May seem obsessed or passionate about topic

"How can I get my child to stop asking questions about _____?"

Unusually large vocabulary

- Loves words: sounds, meanings, origins
- Plays with words, often with puns
- Finds lots of ways to include a new word upon discovery of it

"Honey, most kids don't know the word 'loathe' in preschool."

High expectations of self and of others

- High levels of perfectionism
- Focuses on questions missed rather than questions answered.

"Dear, you missed that question 2 years ago. It's okay to let it go..."

Divergent thinking: ability to put ideas together in unusual but accurate ways

- Thinking "outside the box"
- Delights in finding a second way to solve a problem

"No, I've never thought of it that way."

Strong sense of justice

- Idealism appears at an early age
- Needs consistency between social values and personal behavior
- Can become very passionate or upset if social injustice is suspected

"No, I don't believe 'Mrs. Jones feels her behavior is hypocritical.'"

"You want to start a school drive to stop child slavery? And it can't wait an hour?"

Ability to learn basic skills more quickly and with less practice than age peers

- Picks up on ideas "right away"
- Can see implications of a new concept quickly

"It's okay that it took you two sessions before you completely understood long division, however, the rest of class isn't ready to move on after only 2 days."

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Longer attention span, persistence, and intense concentration on subjects they enjoy

- Spend hours on particular passions
- Can forget basic needs like eating or sleeping when caught up in a new interest

"You must put down the model and eat. You already skipped lunch."

Ability to remember large amounts of information

- Remembers obscure facts only taught once
- Does well at trivia games
- Seem to learn from the air: they pick up everything

"Where did you learn about archeologists? Oh- from the show you watched for 5 minutes before Sesame Street came on three months ago?"

Additional characteristics

- Great sense of humor
- Prefers the company of adults or older kids
- Keen imagination (Imaginary friends are common in preschool years)
- Questions authority
- Senses differences from peers
- Insomnia is common. So can be a need for less sleep than normal.
- May talk very early- or very late
- May have sensory sensitivities - either seeking out stimulation or avoiding it
- Their development is ASYNCHRONOUS - having big areas of strength and other big areas of challenge