



## Characteristics and Traits of Gifted Children

Many may feel gifted children stand out because of their good grades or high achievements. However, many of us who work with gifted children know that they stand out for other reasons like their quirky sense of humor, their intense questioning, or their refusal to sit still in the classroom and repeat math facts when they would much rather be discussing the nature of infinity. Looking for gifted traits in children can provide information for parents, educators, and students themselves to decide whether they want to pursue intelligence testing, acceleration, or simply have a better understanding of who these children are.

## What is Giftedness?

Giftedness is a brain-based difference that contributes to our vibrant and neurodiverse world. This neurological difference means profoundly gifted students experience a different intellectual, academic, and social-emotional development trajectory than neurotypical individuals. Profoundly intelligent young people are often not properly identified and, thus, do not receive an appropriately challenging education which can lead to underachievement or even dropping out of school.

Like most people, highly capable students are unique individuals with varied and multifaceted talents and interests. Some demonstrate mastery in multiple areas while others excel in a single subject. Gifted identification often relies on a mix of [gifted testing](#) and more qualitative observations of gifted characteristics and behaviors.

## Common Characteristics of Gifted Children:

- Surprising emotional depth and sensitivity at a young age
- Strong sense of curiosity
- Enthusiastic about unique interests and topics
- Quirky or mature sense of humor
- Creative problem solving and imaginative expression
- Self-aware, socially aware, and aware of global issues

## What are Traits of Profoundly Gifted Children?

- **Rapid Comprehension:** An advanced ability to learn and process information rapidly, combined with a need for constant mental stimulation; profoundly gifted students often work at a different pace than neurotypical peers --going far ahead or pausing to dive deeply in areas of interest.
- **Intuitive Understanding of the Basics:** Difficulty concentrating on tasks that are not intellectually challenging, including repetitious materials or rote tasks; profoundly gifted children often need less practice to master an idea or concept.
- **Tendency toward Complexity:** A need to understand the “big picture” of what they are learning; they may ask endless “why” questions or prefer to learn whole-to-part rather than part-to-whole.
- **Need for Precision:** An appreciation for nuance and a need for precision in thinking and expression; they may often respond to questions with “that depends...” and they may struggle with multiple choice assessments that ask them to make definitive decisions without an extensive contextual background to questions.
- **High Expectations:** A tendency to hold themselves and others to high standards, which can sometimes present as perfectionism or a very defined sense of justice; this may lead to challenges when understanding rules set by others or interacting with same-age peers who don’t hold the same standards.
- **Divergent Interests:** A vivid imagination and niche interests may make it difficult to connect with same-age peers; profoundly gifted students may seek out older children or adults who share their interests, or they may connect with younger children who are flexible in their thinking.

Each gifted student is unique, and they may present with a mix of these traits or only two very intensely or perhaps you find that none of them at all fit. The National Association for Gifted Children lists additional [traits of giftedness](#) that parents may find useful.