

Characteristics of Gifted Children

Every gifted/highly able child is different but some of the common characteristics are:

- **Humour:** Keen sense of the absurd; understands subtleties of humour beyond age level
- **Great intellectual curiosity:** Intense desire to know, do, feel, create or understand; sometimes described as a 'sponge' who absorbs knowledge easily and enthusiastically
- **Knowledge:** wide general knowledge of topics beyond peer group level
- **Interests:** passionate interests, sometimes fleeting but sometimes long-lived
- **Communication / Expressiveness:** Extraordinary ability to convey meaning or emotion through words, actions, symbols, sounds or media;
- **Vocabulary:** extraordinarily well developed oral language skills and vocabulary
- **Inquiry:** Probing exploration, observation or experimentation with events, objects, ideas, feelings, sounds, symbols or media
- **Problem-solving:** Outstanding ability to bring order to chaos through the invention and monitoring of paths to a goal; enjoyment of challenge
- **Sensitivity:** Unusually open, perceptive or responsive to experiences, feelings and to others; has a strong sense of social justice
- **Intensity:** Often feels very deeply and will be concerned about issues beyond what is usual for their years
- **Perfectionism:** can set very high standards for him/herself –this can be positive but often becomes debilitating
- **Intuition:** Sudden recognition of connections or deeper meanings without conscious awareness of reasoning or thought
- **Reasoning:** Possess superior powers of reasoning, of dealing with abstractions, of generalising from specific facts, of understanding meanings, and of seeing relationships.
- **Imagination/Creativity:** Extraordinary capacity for ingenious, flexible use of ideas, processes or materials
- **Memory/Understanding:** Unusual capacity to acquire, integrate, retain and retrieve information or skills
- **Learning:** Ability to acquire sophisticated understandings with amazing speed and apparent ease. Requires very little repetition or re-enforcement of new learnings
- **Concentration and alertness:** Shows alertness and quick response to new ideas; Has a long attention span which allows him/her to concentrate on and persevere in solving problems and pursuing interests (not necessarily school related).
- **Interaction with others:** Can tend to dominate others or direct their activities. Can sometimes appear poorly socialised with chronological age peers (a child's social peers correspond more closely to mental, rather than age peers)
- **Sometimes has a fantasy friend**

Please note:

- not all children will have all these characteristics
- these characteristics may not be reflected in school performance
- underachievement is quite common in gifted children which can make identification difficult
- it is possible for a child to be gifted whilst having a specific learning disability