

Quick Facts about Gifted Characteristics

Core Beliefs About Gifted Children

Gifted students are unique and are as different from one another as they are from the population as a whole.

- Gifted children may evidence uneven development in intellectual, emotional and physical domains.
- Gifted children have potential that is extraordinary and idiosyncratic.
- Gifted students are generally not gifted in all areas and may not be "straight-A" students.

Gifted students exist in all cultural groups, within all economic levels, among populations with other special needs, and in all areas of human endeavor.

- Gifted students may be twice exceptional, having gifts as well as disabilities.
- Gifted students evidence different characteristics depending on their cultural, educational and economic backgrounds.

Gifted students learn differently and require special educational experiences in order to grow academically and achieve their highest potential.

- Gifted students need instruction tailored to their unique abilities, interests and learning styles.
- Gifted students need academically challenging curriculum that is both accelerated and enriched.

- Gifted students need to explore many fields of study, to “fall in love” with ideas, and to study subjects in depth.
- Gifted students need to engage in learning that requires persistence and task commitment.
- Gifted students need the opportunity to use and develop their creativity.

Gifted students, because of heightened intellectual and social-emotional intensities, need support and encouragement from individuals who recognize, validate and nurture their giftedness.

- Gifted students are a special needs population and can be “at risk.”
- Gifted students benefit from the expertise of both classroom teachers and specially trained gifted education teachers.
- Gifted students benefit from contact with intellectual peers and mentors.
- Gifted students benefit from parents who help them achieve meaningful social, emotional and academic goals.
- Gifted students are children first and need to be valued for who they are.

Characteristics of Gifted Children

Although the following characteristics generally describe academically gifted children, not all of these characteristics may be present in each child.

- Learns rapidly and easily, and retains and uses what is heard or read without appearing to need much drill.
- Has an advanced vocabulary.
- Thinks clearly, recognizes implied relationships, comprehends meanings, accurately generalizes and thinks

abstractly.

- Is intellectually curious and investigative, asking penetrating and searching questions.
- Is independent, individualistic and self sufficient.
- Produces original or unusual ideas or products.
- Has a long attention span in his area of interest.
- Prefers complex ideas.
- Demonstrates proficiency in basic skills beyond their grade level.
- Has many and varied interests.
- Is more aware of national and world problems and events than his peers.
- Sees the relationship of self to the immediate world.

Realistic Expectations in the Regular Classroom

It is realistic to expect...

- Gifted children to have learning strengths and weaknesses as do all children
- The balance between the emotional and the intellectual to be uneven- especially for the primary child. Emotionally the child may be age six but age eleven intellectually.
- A certain percentage to be unmotivated and dissatisfied with their school experiences. According to national figures 20% of high school dropouts are gifted.
- Classroom work to be average or above average, unless they are working at their instructional level. If they are working at their instructional level, they should be doing above average or better work.
- The child to want to learn for learning's sake rather than to learn merely for someone else's standards.
- The intellectually gifted to be avid readers.
- Gifted children to hate drill and repetition, they will rush through that type

of work... and make numerous mistakes.

- Some of them to be perfectionists. Assignments may be handed in late or not at all, because the final results of his work may not please the student. This often makes gifted students anxious and inhibits them from trying anything new.
- These students to set unrealistic goals for themselves. They expect an extreme amount from themselves. Everyone else expects them to achieve the unachievable; things do not get completed.
- These students to have unusual hobbies and projects outside of school. It is realistic for them to consider these activities far more important than homework assignments.
- To be children first and gifted second.
- To need instruction in areas of weakness.
- Need to learn also in areas of strength.

Unrealistic Expectations in the Regular Classroom

It is unrealistic to....

- Expect the intellectually gifted to be enthusiastic about drill and repetition.
- Expect the gifted to excel in every subject.
- Expect them to do their best work that is too easy or that they already know.
- Expect them to make the best grades. Grades reflect the completion of assigned tasks, not cognitive ability.