

Characteristics of the Gifted

Superior Cognitive Ability

Superior cognitive ability gifted identification is characterized by one who fundamentally thinks differently than peers. Superior cognitive ability students are identified by an ability score two standardized deviations above the norm on a state approved assessment for gifted ability.

- Advanced vocabulary for age
- Independent reading, frequent preference for adult-level books
- Rapid learning and easy recall
- Quick perception of cause-effect relationships
- High level of curiosity
- Enjoyment of being with older children
- Pursuit of interests and of collecting things
- Long attention span for age
- Preference for new and challenging experiences
- Retention of information
- High level of planning, problem solving, and abstract thinking compared to peers
- Ability to generalize quickly from principles and to look for similarities and differences
- Possession of an unusually large storehouse of information about a variety of topics
- Tendency to become easily bored with routine tasks
- Concern for ethical issues, questions of right and wrong, and “adult” topics such as religion and politics
- May or may not enjoy school or be considered a good student.

Specific Academic Ability

Specific academic ability is characterized by one who is unusually knowledgeable in a specific area. Identified with an achievement score of 95th percentile or above on an approved for gifted identification test in reading, math, science, or social studies.

- Long attention span for activities related to a specific academic area
- Advanced understanding of concepts, methods, and terminology of the subject
- Ability to apply concepts from the subject to activities in other subjects
- Willingness to devote a large amount of time and effort to achieve extensive knowledge in the subject

- Competitiveness and motivation in subject
- Rapid learning in subject
- May or may not enjoy school or be considered a good student

Creativity

Creativity is characterized by one who is highly imaginative. Identified by an ability score above 111 AND an approved score on a creative abilities' checklist.

- Inquisitiveness
- Tendency to do things their own way
- Preference for working alone
- Experimentation with whatever is at hand
- Active imagination
- Ability to think up many ways to accomplish goal or solve a problem
- Tendency to respond with unexpected, clever, or smart aleck answers
- Production of original ideas
- Uninhibited expression of what may be non-conforming opinions
- Adventurousness and willingness to take risks
- Possession of a keen sense of humor
- Sensitivity to beauty
- Nonconformity and lack of interest in detail
- Lack of concern with social acceptability

Visual and Performing Arts

Performing arts gifted identification is characterized by one who is unusually advanced talent for student's chronological age. Identified by a checklist AND superior performance or exhibition.

- Makes up original tunes
- Enjoys and seeks out musical activities and opportunities to hear and create music
- Respond sensitively to music and move body in accord with tempo and mood changes
- Easily remember and reproduce melodies and rhythm patterns
- Pick out and discuss background sounds, chords, and individual instruments played
- Play a musical instrument or express a strong desire to do so
- Have good pitch

Visual/Performing Arts – Art

Visual arts gifted identification is characterized by one who has unusually advanced talent for student's chronological age. Identified by a checklist AND superior performance or exhibition.

- Fill in extra time by drawing, painting, etc.
- Demonstrate extraordinary imagination
- Draws a variety of things – not just people, houses, and flowers
- Remember things in detail
- Take art activities seriously
- Have long attention span for art activities
- Plan the composition of artwork
- Experiment with different media and techniques
- Arrive at unique solutions to artistic problems
- Produce highly original work with distinctive style, balance, and unity
- Demonstrate accelerated development of technical skill in art
- Show adeptness at representing movement
- Ask for explanations and instruction
- Respond to unusual subjects in art
- Are keen observers
- Set high standards of quality and rework their creations to achieve these standards
- Show interest in other children's products by spending time discussing and studying them

*Adapted from Kitano, Margie K. and Kirby, Darrell F., *Gifted Education: A Comprehensive View*. Boston: Little, Brown, 1986.