

Characteristics of Gifted Students

Gifted or potentially gifted students usually differ from classmates on three key dimensions:

1. the pace at which they learn
2. the depth of their understanding
3. the interests that they hold

Maker, C.J., Curriculum Development for the Gifted, 1982.

The following is a list of characteristics typical of gifted children including positive and negative behaviors which may be exhibited. A child could exhibit both positive and negative behaviors of a characteristic depending on the environment. Also, many children exhibit these characteristics at various times. A child identified as gifted will exhibit many of the characteristics on a regular basis. The child needs to learn to modify negative behaviors.

Characteristic	Positive Behavior	Negative Behavior
learns rapidly/easily	memorizes and masters basic facts quickly	gets bored easily, resists drill, disturbs others
reads intensively	reads many books and uses library on own	neglects other responsibilities
advanced vocabulary	communicates ideas well	shows off, evokes peer resentment
retains a quantity of information	ready recall and responses	monopolizes discussion
long attention span	sticks with a task or project	resists class routine, dislikes interruptions
curious, has a variety of interests	asks questions, gets excited about ideas	goes on tangents, no follow-through
works independently	creates and invents beyond assigned tasks	refuses to work with others
alert and observant	recognizes problems	impolitely corrects adults
has a good sense of humor	able to laugh at self	plays cruel jokes or tricks on others
comprehends, recognizes relationships	able to solve social problems alone	interferes in the affairs of others
high academic achievement	does schoolwork well	brags, egotistical, impatient with others
fluent, verbal facility	forceful with words, numbers; leads peers in positive ways	leads others into negative behaviors
individualistic	asserts self and ideas, has few friends, sense of own uniqueness	stubborn in beliefs
self motivated, self sufficient	requires minimum teacher direction or help	is overly aggressive, challenges authority

Excerpt from *What to Expect When You're Raising a Gifted Child: A Handbook for Parents of Gifted Children*, published by the Ohio Association for Gifted Children.