

Self-Assessment: The Characteristics of Gifted Children

In an effort to provide an appropriate education for gifted children in Las Virgenes Unified School District, we believe that it is important to understand the characteristics of giftedness. The California Association for the Gifted (CAG) has created the below inventory of qualities seen in gifted individuals, based on years of research, which shows gifted individuals exhibit high levels of functioning in the *cognitive, affective, physical, and intuitive* areas. As CAG notes, intellectual processing integrates all of these elements, and individuals vary in the degree to which they are exhibited. No one child will have all of these characteristics. Please review the qualities below and verify that they are exhibited in your child prior to referring him or her for the required IQ testing.

The **cognitive area** is the logical, rational thought processing characterized by:

- an extraordinary quantity of information
- an unusual capacity for processing information at an accelerated pace
- persistent, goal-directed behavior
- high levels of abstract thought
- flexibility of thought
- rapid acquisition of a new language

The **affective area** is the social/emotional interaction expressed by:

- unusual sensitivity to the environment
- empathy and high levels of awareness of the expectations and feelings of others
- early development of idealism and a sense of justice
- emotional intensity
- high expectations of self and others

The **physical/sensory area** is characterized by:

- heightened sensitivity to light, sound, touch, smell, and taste
- asynchrony, the unusual discrepancy between physical and intellectual development
- high energy, alertness, and eagerness that might be misdiagnosed as a hyperactivity disorder
- a tendency to avoid physical activity in favor of intellectual pursuits

The **intuitive area** is expressed through non-linear reasoning characterized by:

- creative approaches and inventiveness in any area of endeavor
- insightfulness leading to leaps in understanding
- curiosity
- sensitivity to aesthetic qualities
- interest in the future
- ability to predict

Some gifted students also have characteristics that can act as a barrier to the identification process. Some adults may believe that these same characteristics are incompatible with giftedness.

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| <input type="checkbox"/> lack of organization | <input type="checkbox"/> keen sense of humor that may not be understood |
| <input type="checkbox"/> extensive daydreaming | <input type="checkbox"/> perfectionism (e.g. fear of failure) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> failure to complete work | <input type="checkbox"/> inability to prioritize interests that can result in mediocrity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> argumentativeness | <input type="checkbox"/> emotional intensity |
| <input type="checkbox"/> challenge to authority | <input type="checkbox"/> experience of different reality |
| <input type="checkbox"/> challenge to assignments that seem pointless to the learner | |