

Characteristics of High Ability Children

The characteristics of high ability children may lead to both positive and negative behaviors.

Characteristic	Positive Behavior	Negative Behavior
Learns rapidly/easily	Memorizes and masters basic facts quickly	Gets bored easily, resists drill, disturbs others, underachieves
Reads intensively	Reads, uses library on own	Neglects other responsibilities
Perfectionist	Exceptional accomplishments	Intolerant of mistakes, reluctant to try new things
Retains quantity of information	Ready recall and responses	Resists repetitions, "know it all"
Long attention span	Sticks with task of personal interest	Resists class routine, dislikes interruptions
Imaginative, curious, many interests	Asks questions, gets excited about ideas, takes risks	Goes on tangents, no follow-through, disorganized
Works independently	Creates and invents beyond assigned tasks	Refuses to work with others
Alert, observant	Recognizes problems	Impolitely corrects adults
Good sense of humor	Able to enjoy subtleties of thought	Plays cruel jokes or tricks on others
Comprehends, recognizes relationships	Able to solve problems alone	Interferes in the affairs of others, can be bossy
Aesthetic insight, awareness	Appreciation of the arts	Imposes personal values/ judgments on others
Highly verbal, extensive vocabulary	Fluent with words and numbers, leads peers in positive ways	Leads others into negative behaviors, monopolizes discussion
Individualistic, strong-willed	Asserts self and ideas, has small circle of friends, sense of own uniqueness	Stubborn in beliefs, inflexible in thinking
Self-motivated, self-sufficient	Requires minimum teachers direction or help	Aggressive, challenges authority
Prefers older peers	Wise beyond years	Isolated or misunderstood
Highly sensitive, passionate	Emphasizes fairness and morality, compassionate	Overreacts to situations
Views with a different perspective	Observes across boundaries, makes connections	Resists limitations and narrowly focused content