Listed below are some differences to help you distinguish between a bright child and a gifted learner. The list below does not describe all the traits and attitudes of gifted children, as all children are diverse in their characteristics; however, it is a good reference of distinguishing characteristics.

Bright Child	Gifted Learner
1. Knows the answers	1. Asks the questions
2. Is interested	2. Is highly curious
3. Is attentive	3. Is mentally and physically involved
4. Has good ideas	4. Has wild silly ideas
5. Works hard	5. Plays around, yet tests well
6. Answers the questions	6. Discusses in detail; elaborates
7. Top group	7. Beyond the group
8. Listens with interest	8. Shows strong feelings and opinions
9. Learns with ease	9. Already knows
10. 6-8 repetitions for mastery	10. 1-2 repetitions for mastery
11. Understands ideas	11. Constructs abstractions
12. Enjoys peers	12. Prefers adults
13. Grasps the meaning	13. Draws inferences
14. Completes assignments	14. Initiates projects
15. Is receptive	15. Is intense

LEARNING CHARACTERISTICS	
Has unusually advanced vocabulary for age or grade	
Possesses a large storehouse of information about a variety of topics	
Has quick mastery and recall of factual information	
Has rapid insight into cause-effect relationships; tries to discover the how and why of things	
Tries to understand complicated material by separating it into its respective parts; reasons things out for himself/herself	
Is a keen and alert observer; usually "sees more" or "gets more" out of a story, film, etc.	
Likes to solve puzzles and trick questions	
Is able to retain more information with less repetition	
Has long-term recall of information	
Asks many provocative questions	

MOTIVATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS	
Exhibits quick mastery of skills	
Becomes absorbed and involved in certain topics or problems	
Has interest in how things work	
Is easily bored with routine tasks	
Needs little external motivation to learn, is a self-advocate for their learning	
Strives toward perfection; is self-critical; is not easily satisfied with work or product	
Prefers to work independently; requires little direction from teachers	
Signals perfectionist tendencies	
Often is self-assertive (sometimes even aggressive); stubborn in his/her beliefs	
Likes to organize and bring structure to things, people, and situations	

LEADERSHIP	
Carries and handles responsibility in a positive manner	
Is self-confident with children his/her own age as well as adults	
Seems to be well liked by his/her classmates	
Can express himself/herself well; has helpful communication skills and is usually well understood	
Is cooperative with teacher(s) and classmates	
Adapts readily to new situations; is flexible in thought and action and does not seem disturbed when the normal routine is changed	
Listens to others; tries to understand a situation and use reasoning before reacting	
Excels in athletic activities; is well coordinated and enjoys all sorts of athletic games	
Tends to dominate others when they are around; generally directs the activity in which he/she is involved	
Participates in most social activities connected with the school; can be counted on	

CREATIVITY/CURIOSITY	
Displays a great deal of curiosity about many things	
Generates a large number of ideas or solutions to problems and questions; often offers unusual ("way out"), unique, clever responses	
Is uninhibited in expressions of opinion	
Is a high risk taker; is adventurous and speculative	
Displays a good deal of intellectual playfulness; fantasizes; imagines; is often concerned with adapting, improving, and modifying institutions, objects, and systems	
unusually aware of his/her impulses and more open to the irrational in himself/herself	
Criticizes constructively; is unwilling to accept authoritative explanations	
Displays a keen and mature sense of humor, sees humor irregular situations	
Is nonconforming; accepts disorder; is not interested in details; is individualistic	
Is sensitive to beauty; attends to aesthetic characteristics of things	