

# Things to Consider when Referring for Gifted & Talented Assessment

## Common Characteristics of Gifted Individuals<sup>1</sup>

Because gifted children are so diverse, not all exhibit all characteristics all of the time. However, there are common characteristics that many gifted individuals share:

- Unusual alertness, even in infancy
- Rapid learner; puts thoughts together quickly
- Excellent memory
- Unusually large vocabulary and complex sentence structure for age
- Advanced comprehension of word nuances, metaphors and abstract ideas
- Enjoys solving problems, especially with numbers and puzzles
- Often self-taught reading and writing skills as preschooler
- Deep, intense feelings and reactions
- Highly sensitive
- Thinking is abstract, complex, logical, and insightful
- Idealism and sense of justice at early age
- Concern with social and political issues and injustices
- Longer attention span and intense concentration
- Preoccupied with own thoughts—daydreamer
- Learn basic skills quickly and with little practice
- Asks probing questions
- Wide range of interests (or extreme focus in one area)
- Highly developed curiosity
- Interest in experimenting and doing things differently
- Puts idea or things together that are not typical
- Keen and/or unusual sense of humor
- Desire to organize people/things through games or complex schemas
- Vivid imaginations (and imaginary playmates when in preschool)

## Social & Emotional Issues<sup>2</sup>

Because gifted children demonstrate greater maturity in some domains over others, they may be at greater risk for specific kinds of social-emotional difficulties if their needs are not met.

These aspects may include heightened awareness, anxiety, **perfectionism**, stress, issues with peer relationships, and concerns with identity and fit. Parents, adults, and caregivers in their lives need to stay in tune with their specific child's needs, and help shape a strong framework for social-emotional health.

Keep in mind:

- A child gifted in one area does not mean gifted in all
- Giftedness can lead to the masking and misunderstanding of problem signs
- Not all gifted children are alike, including their own unique social-emotional profile
- There is no single, definitive recipe for maintaining a child's emotional equilibrium
- Parents need to model balance and set the tone to reduce stress/anxiety in the gifted child's life
- We can teach our children strategies and provide tools for dealing with the ebb and flow of life

<sup>1</sup> Reproduced by permission from: Webb, J., Gore, J., Amend, E., DeVries, A. (2007). *A parent's guide to gifted children*. Tuscon, AZ: Great Potential Press, [www.greatpotentialpress.com](http://www.greatpotentialpress.com).

<sup>2</sup> Source: <https://www.nagc.org/resources-publications/resources-parents/social-emotional-issues>

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## Traits of Giftedness<sup>3</sup>

No gifted individual is exactly the same, each with his own unique patterns and traits. There are many traits that gifted individuals have in common, but no gifted learner exhibits traits in every area. This list of traits may help you better understand whether or not your child is gifted.

Cognitive	Creative	Affective	Behavioral
<p>Keen power of abstraction</p> <p>Interest in problem-solving and applying concepts</p> <p>Voracious and early reader</p> <p>Large vocabulary</p> <p>Intellectual curiosity</p> <p>Power of critical thinking, skepticism, self-criticism</p> <p>Persistent, goal-directed behavior</p> <p>Independence in work and study</p> <p>Diversity of interests and abilities</p>	<p>Creativeness and inventiveness</p> <p>Keen sense of humor</p> <p>Ability for fantasy</p> <p>Openness to stimuli, wide interests</p> <p>Intuitiveness</p> <p>Flexibility</p> <p>Independence in attitude and social behavior</p> <p>Self-acceptance and unconcern for social norms</p> <p>Radicalism</p> <p>Aesthetic and moral commitment to self-selected work</p>	<p>Unusual emotional depth and intensity</p> <p>Sensitivity or empathy to the feelings of others</p> <p>High expectations of self and others, often leading to feelings of frustration</p> <p>Heightened self-awareness, accompanied by feelings of being different</p> <p>Easily wounded, need for emotional support</p> <p>Need for consistency between abstract values and personal actions</p> <p>Advanced levels of moral judgment</p> <p>Idealism and sense of justice</p>	<p>Spontaneity</p> <p>Boundless enthusiasm</p> <p>Intensely focused on passions—resists changing activities when engrossed in own interests</p> <p>Highly energetic—needs little sleep or down time</p> <p>Constantly questions</p> <p>Insatiable curiosity</p> <p>Impulsive, eager and spirited</p> <p>Perseverance—strong determination in areas of importance</p> <p>High levels of frustration—particularly when having difficulty meeting standards of performance (either imposed by self or others)</p> <p>Volatile temper, especially related to perceptions of failure</p> <p>Non-stop talking/chattering</p>

<sup>3</sup> Source: Clark, B. (2008). *Growing up gifted (7<sup>th</sup> ed.)* Upper Saddle River, NJ: Pearson Prentice Hall.