

**What does it mean to be gifted?
What is the definition of gifted?**

There is no universal definition. Some professionals will define gifted by an intelligence test (WISC) score above 130 or 140, or two or more standard deviations above the norm, or the top 2.5% of the population. Some will define “giftedness” based on scholastic achievement: a gifted child works 2 or more grade levels above his or her age or gifted children have advanced score on a particular academic test.

Typically, students who are identified as gifted learners have the potential to achieve beyond what is expected of their same-age peers and I emphasize the word ‘potential’. Key to the characteristics of giftedness is potential which is often not synonymous with achievement. Higher achievement may or may not occur and is often dependent on another influences such as the student’s relationship with his/her teacher, the degree of interest, emotional well being, health etc. Gifted children can also have learning disabilities. It is not unusual to be gifted in one area (logic, math etc.) and learning disabled in another (language, processing etc.). Gifted definitions tend to vary from one location to the next.

The Federal Definition of Gifted and Talented in NCLB (United States)

The term “gifted and talented”, when used with respect to students, children, or youth, means students, children or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities.

Note: *States and districts are not required to use the federal definition, although many states base their definition on the federal definition.*

Programs for gifted and talented students exist in every state and in many school districts, but the number and percentage of students identified as gifted and talented vary from state to state due to differences in state laws and local practices.

New Jersey Definition of “gifted and talented”: *“Those exceptionally able students who possess or demonstrates high levels of ability, in one or more content areas, when compared to their chronological peers in the local district and who require modification of their educational program if they are to achieve in accordance with their capabilities.”*

Characteristics of a Gifted Child

Learns quickly and easily.

Readily comprehends things.

Often reads above grade(s) level.

Good memory and retains what is heard or read.

Bored with routine tasks, doesn't usually benefit from any drill and repetition.

Vocabulary and linguistic ability is often quite advanced.

Natural curiosity, make inquiries.

Can be very assertive and hang tight to their own beliefs

Depending on the level of interest, can have a long attention span.

Good sense of wit, imagination and creativity.

Prefers complex ideas and activities of an investigative nature.

Can conceptualize and generalize thoughts and ideas with ease.

Often exhibits a wide range of interests.

Can be very task-committed, goal-oriented, and self-directed when the activity is within their area of interest.

Can become totally absorbed in certain areas, focusing all attention intensely on those areas.

Needs to be engaged and will become frustrated with inactivity or boring and or repetitive tasks.

Can be a perfectionist.

Can be quite sensitive.

This information was taken from Sue Watson, About.com

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