



CYPRESS-FAIRBANKS INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT

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HORIZONS: Who are the Gifted? A Parent's Guide to Understanding the Concept of Giftedness

Who are Gifted and Talented Children?

Gifted and talented students come from all socio-economic, racial, and cultural backgrounds. They are students who demonstrate significantly advanced abilities that give evidence of high performance in typical academic environments. They have unique educational needs that require educational experiences beyond those normally provided within the scope of the regular curriculum.

The Texas Education Agency defines a gifted student as “a child or youth who performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment and who

- exhibits performance capability in an intellectual, creative, or artistic area;
- possesses an unusual capacity for leadership;
- or exceeds in a specific academic field.” (TEC Section 29.121)

How can a parent or guardian tell if his or her child is gifted?

While all children differ, some children may possess certain intellectually advanced traits that cause them to stand out when comparing them to their age peers. Not all children identified as gifted will exhibit the same characteristics in the same way. If your child exhibits a large number of the following descriptors, you may want to seek more information regarding the screening process for gifted programs. Gifted children typically

- are highly curious about everything and ask an abundance of questions;
- ask unusual questions out of the blue that provoke thought such as “I wonder if...”;
- like to take things apart to see how they work and/or may design adjustments to improve the object or idea;
- are highly creative and often engage in the development of original products/ideas for their own enjoyment;
- use ordinary objects in a variety of ways that illustrate creative or critical thinking;
- may prefer the company of older children, adults, or even prefer being alone with their own thoughts;
- are very concerned with fairness and justice often to the extent that they can't easily overcome a feeling of unjust situations;
- demonstrate extreme organizational skills- either very organized or completely disorganized;

- may be highly verbal such as demonstrating advanced language or known terminology of words not typical of age peers (example: a kindergarten student who can correctly describe a black hole or other advanced concepts);
- learn and/or memorize quickly or easily with very little need for repetition;
- maintain and easily juggle an interest in a variety of special and unique activities, hobbies, or collections;
- may be very egocentric and prefer to be the center of attention;
- may be natural leaders or charismatic and able to effectively communicate and/or adapt communication skills to a variety of situations or people;
- may demonstrate an intense appreciation of art, music, and/or theater;
- may be highly critical of their own work;
- engage in activities that promote critical or creative thinking or consistently exhibit a vivid imagination;
- may often become totally absorbed in an area of interest, almost to distraction where it is difficult to pull them away from that area of interest;
- may often become totally absorbed in and enjoy artistic performances;
- may set high and unrealistic standards for themselves;
- exhibit intense behaviors physically and emotionally; easily irritated by certain sounds, noises or even tags in their clothing; make mountains of mole hills and overreact to situations easily ;
- may exhibit the need to do everything perfectly and at times not to complete work because they never reach perfection;
- may underperform academically so that they do not stand out as different;
- may exhibit a wide range of knowledge because of their need to know;
- have an unusual sense of humor; often understand sarcasm at a young age; or quickly respond with mature wit.

The diverse list of examples might reflect high-performing students with gifted potential or underachieving students with gifted potential. Parents and teachers should provide opportunities for students in a variety of formats to appropriately identify students' strengths, instead of focusing on areas of weakness.

Students may be twice exceptional, which means that they exhibit signs of gifted potential, yet also have a learning disability or intellectual/behavioral obstacles that often prevent identification. Additionally, students who are second-language learners may exhibit gifted potential in a variety of measures but are frequently overlooked because their second language is English.

Conclusion

All children are a gift to parents, but not all children will be classified as gifted. Research statistics vary regarding the numbers of gifted in a society, but generally between 2.5 to 5 percent of the population may be identified as having significantly advanced intellectual abilities.

It is important to understand that the purpose of a gifted program is to identify children with these advanced intellectual abilities. These unique intellectual abilities require a different learning opportunity than what is typically offered in a regular classroom environment.

Parents should expect that their child/children receive appropriate challenges in school. However, testing and retesting students to be placed in a gifted program is appropriate only if they consistently demonstrate significantly advanced intellectual ability within the range of giftedness.

Testing and retesting students when a preponderance of gifted ability is not consistently available may negatively impact a student's self-esteem. It is important for parents to advocate appropriately for their children in order to promote and build a healthy intellectual, social, emotional, and academic environment for them.

RESOURCES: a variety is available here to help parents understand giftedness.

HORIZONS website

<http://www.cfid.net/en/parents-students/academics/gifted-talented/>

Resources for Parents of Gifted Students

<http://www.cfid.net/en/parents-students/academics/gifted-talented/>

Resources for Gifted Students

<http://www.cfid.net/en/parents-students/academics/gifted-talented/>

TAGT: Texas Association for the Gifted and Talented

<http://www.txgifted.org>

NAGC: National Association for Gifted Children

<http://www.nagc.org>