



AUGUSTA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Gifted Education

Angela Deitz
Instructional Supervisor
68 Dick Huff Lane
Verona, VA 24482

540.245.5117
Fax: 540.245.5275
deitz.al@augusta.k12.va.us



GIFTED EDUCATION

A PARENT'S GUIDE



AUGUSTA COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

Dr. Eric W. Bond

Superintendent

www.augusta.k12.va.us

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PHILOSOPHY

All students in Augusta County Public Schools (ACPS) have the right to educational opportunities commensurate with their abilities and needs. ACPS is committed to providing these opportunities for all students and recognizes that gifted students, in comparison with their same age and grade level peers, require more rigorous and challenging learning experiences that extend, enrich, and/or accelerate core educational programs. Education of the gifted student is viewed as a collaborative effort that is facilitated by the efforts of numerous individuals in the schools and community.

Gifted students need opportunities to interact with others of their same ability level, as well as opportunities to develop social and academic relationships with students of varying abilities. ACPS seeks to provide instructional opportunities for gifted students in a variety of settings. This goal is met through acceleration, enrichment, and differentiation by the classroom teachers, gifted coordinators, enrichment teachers, administrators, and families. Augusta County Public Schools encourages gifted students to become independent, self-motivated learners who maximize their potential with the support of the involved stakeholders

National Definition Of a Gifted and Talented Student

Gifted and talented children are those identified by professionally qualified persons who, by virtue of outstanding abilities, are capable of high performance. These are children who require differentiated educational programs and/or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their contribution to self and society.

DIRECTORY



School	Principal	Gifted Coordinator
Cassell Elementary School	Adam McLaughlin	Sally Parsley
Churchville Elementary School	Carrie Barb	Julie Williams
Clymore Elementary School	Fonda Morris	Stephanie Spire Kristie Fletcher
Craigsville Elementary School	Crystal Coffman	Bridgett Armentrout-Edwards
North River Elementary School	Lori Cox	Tiffany Deavers
Riverheads Elementary School	John Matherly	Whitney Fox Debra Pitsenbarger
Stuarts Draft Elementary School	Tina Bowersox	Elisheba Cornelius
Stump Elementary School	Shawn Baska	Sarah Torrens Tanya Henderson
Wilson Elementary School	Dawn Young	Niki Cacciapaglia Tucker Abshire
Beverly Manor Middle School	Yvonne Howdysshell	Katie Baird
Stewart Middle School	Michael Conner	Allison Labadie Mark Sokolowski
Stuarts Draft Middle School	Scott Musick	Ronda Cunningham Cindy Sauder
Wilson Middle School	Vanessa Mundie	Lois Curry-Catanese
Buffalo Gap High School	Dr. Ian Marshall	Amanda Seldomridge
Fort Defiance High School	Larry Landes	Jessica Herr Erik Walker
Riverheads High School	Matt Stevens	Vicky Conyers Tracee McDonald
Stuarts Draft High School	Nick Nycum	Sara McLaughlin
Wilson Memorial High School	Dr. Kelly Troxell	Kari Hite
Shenandoah Valley Regional Governor's School	Dr. Lee Ann Whitesell	



Classroom Advocacy

DURING THE MEETING

- Start with "thank you." Let the teacher know that you realize he has many demands on his time, many students to consider, and that you appreciate him.
- Remain objective. Keep the discussion focused on the specifics of your child's characteristics, needs, and goals rather than a philosophical discussion about gifted education.
- Avoid using the words "gifted" and "bored." It's better to focus on specifically what you observe about your child related to the level of challenge, what she already knows, what she demonstrates at home, her love of a subject, and how her current classroom experience is affecting her emotionally (e.g. frustration, anger, anxiety).
- Be diplomatic, but firm. Do not make the teacher feel criticized or misunderstood. At the same time, politely convey your child's needs.
- Listen carefully. Objections to requests might not be rejections. Consider each other's point of view. Brainstorm the options; volunteer to assist if needed.
- Work for a consensus. You're looking for a solution, so be flexible where you can and be firm on the one or two points that really matter.
- Reiterate the commitments and agreed upon solution(s).
- Document the discussion, and create a timeline and action plan for follow up.

AFTER THE MEETING

- Send a follow-up thank you email, with the list of action items and deadlines agreed upon in the meeting.
- Take responsibility for tracking deadlines; send follow-up inquiries if needed.
- Talk regularly with your child and the teacher to see how things are progressing.
- Don't let the burden of extra work fall exclusively on the teacher. Is there a way you can help lighten the teacher's load?

If after you've made a valiant effort to work with the teacher—and the teacher has not responded or seems unwilling to implement the agreed upon solution—then it might be time to move up the chain of command. The next person to address may be the gifted coordinator, curriculum director, assistant principal, or principal. The same best practices outlined here apply to those meetings as well.

FOR MORE INFO

Brulles, D., & Brown, K. L. (2016). How to start the school year on a positive note with your gifted child's teacher. *Parenting for High Potential*, 5(4), 5-7.

Gilman, B. J. (2008). *Academic advocacy for gifted children: A parent's complete guide*. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.

Inman, T. F., & Kirchner, J. (2016). *Parenting gifted children 101: An introduction to gifted kids and their needs*. Waco, TX: Prufrock Press.

Rogers, K. B. (2002). *Re-forming gifted education: How parents and teachers can match the program to the child*. Scottsdale, AZ: Great Potential Press.

Smutny, J. F. (2015). Communicating effectively with your gifted child's school. *Parenting for High Potential*, 4(7), 4-8.



1331 H Street, Suite 1001
Washington, DC 20005
202-785-4268
www.nagc.org

Table of Contents

Introduction

Philosophy..... 2
Definition..... 4

Identification

Areas of Giftedness Identified by Division..... 5
Process 6
Assessments 7

Services

Elementary School Services 8
Middle School Services..... 8
High School Services..... 9

The Gifted Learner

High Achiever, Gifted Learner, Creative Thinker..... 10
Characteristics of a Gifted child..... 12
Possible concerns of Gifted children..... 14
Obstacles Gifted children face..... 16
Supporting your Gifted child..... 17

Resources

Parent Involvement 18
Opportunities for Students..... 19
Resources 20
Directory..... 21



INTRODUCTION

VIRGINIA DEFINITION OF GIFTED

"Gifted students" means those students in public elementary, middle, and secondary schools beginning with kindergarten through twelfth grade who demonstrate high levels of accomplishment or who show the potential for higher levels of accomplishment when compared to others of the same age, experience, or environment. Their aptitudes and potential for accomplishment are so outstanding that they require special programs to meet their educational needs. These students will be identified by professionally qualified persons through the use of multiple criteria as having potential or demonstrated aptitudes in one or more of the following areas:

- 1. General intellectual aptitude.** Such students demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate superior reasoning; persistent intellectual curiosity; advanced use of language; exceptional problem solving; rapid acquisition and mastery of facts, concepts, and principles; and creative and imaginative expression across a broad range of intellectual disciplines beyond their age-level peers.
 - 2. Specific academic aptitude.** Such students demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate superior reasoning; persistent intellectual curiosity; advanced use of language; exceptional problem solving; rapid acquisition and mastery of facts, concepts, and principles; and creative and imaginative expression beyond their age-level peers in selected academic areas that include English, history and social science, mathematics, or science.
 - 3. Career and technical aptitude.** Such students demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate superior reasoning; persistent technical curiosity; advanced use of technical language; exceptional problem solving; rapid acquisition and mastery of facts, concepts, and principles; and creative and imaginative expression beyond their age-level peers in career and technical fields.
 - 4. Visual or performing arts aptitude.** Such students demonstrate or have the potential to demonstrate superior creative reasoning and imaginative expression; persistent artistic curiosity; and advanced acquisition and mastery of techniques, perspectives, concepts, and principles beyond their age-level peers in visual or performing arts.
- (Virginia Administrative Code Title 8 § 20-40-20)



Classroom Advocacy



Parents often wonder when and how to approach their child's teacher if their child seems unhappy or not challenged in the classroom.

While there is no single recipe for how parents should develop a mutually supportive relationship with their child's teacher, there are some processes and best practices parents can implement as they work to bring changes to their child's educational experiences.

Difficulties parents often have in communicating with their child's school can be avoided by understanding the chain of command, doing advanced research and planning, and staying open-minded to solutions.

HOW TO GET STARTED

1. Always start with your child's classroom teacher. If the teacher perceives you've spoken to other teachers or to the principal before speaking with her, you'll start off on the wrong foot.
2. Do your homework! Talk with your child, make a list of your child's concerns (be as specific as possible), discuss various alternatives with your child, find samples of your child's work, understand your child's strengths and weaknesses, and know typical gifted terms and program options before contacting the teacher.
3. Do you have insights into the teacher's curriculum, teaching style, and philosophy? This information can be gleaned from open houses, curriculum nights, the classroom web site, and conversations you may have had with the teacher.
4. Plan in advance what you're going to say and write it down. This will keep you focused and ensure you remember the most important points.
5. Email or phone the teacher for an appointment. Don't approach the teacher in the pick-up line, on the fly, or at social events.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

» It's imperative to approach the teacher with respect, trust, kindness, and enthusiasm. Leave your anger and frustration at home.

» Focus on one or two of your most important issues, not a laundry list of complaints.

» Most teachers want to do the right thing for their students and want to give their best to all of their students. Often, teachers are also frustrated that their schools have limited resources for advanced learners.

» Beware: Well-intentioned parents sometimes pass along inaccurate information about the teacher, programming, and/or services offered to gifted students. Get the facts first.



www.nagc.org



RESOURCES

American Association for Gifted Children

www.aagc.org

American Psychological Association

<http://www.apa.org/ed/schools/gifted/index.aspx>

<http://www.apa.org/ed/schools/gifted/websites.aspx>

The Center for Gifted Education at the College of William & Mary

<http://education.wm.edu/centers/cfge/resources/index.php>

National Association for Gifted Children

www.nagc.org

National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented

<http://curry.virginia.edu/research/centers/nrcgt>

Virginia Association for the Gifted

www.vagifted.org

Virginia Department of Education

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/gifted_ed/index.shtml

Keys to Parenting the Gifted Child. By Sylvia Rimm. Great Potential Press. 2007.

A Parent's Guide to Gifted Children. By Webb, Gore, Amend, and DeVries, Great Potential Press, 2007.

Parents Guide to Raising a Gifted Child: Recognizing and Developing Your Child's Potential. Edited by James Alvino and the editors of Gifted Child Monthly, Little, Brown, and Co., 1985.

The Survival Guide for Parents of Gifted Kids: How to Understand, Live With, and Stick Up for your Gifted Child (rev.) S. Walker, Minneapolis: Free Spirit Press, 2000.

They Say My Kid's Gifted, Now What: Ideas for Parents for Understanding and Working with Schools, R. O. Olenchak, Waco, TX: Prufrock Press, 1998.

AREAS



DIVISION DEFINITION OF GIFTEDNESS

Augusta County Public Schools (ACPS) defines gifted students as those with outstanding abilities who are capable of high performance. Gifted students require differentiated educational opportunities beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their full potential. Gifted students are identified from all cultural groups and across all economic strata. The division, in accordance with the Code of Virginia, recognizes that students in kindergarten through twelfth grade are identified as having potential, ability, or high-performance capabilities in the following areas: general intellectual, art, instrumental music, vocal music, and/or theatre.

AREAS OF GIFTEDNESS

IDENTIFIED BY ACPS

AREA OF GIFTEDNESS	GRADES SERVED
General Intellectual Aptitude (GIA) Language Arts, Mathematics, Science	K-12
Visual and/or Performing Arts (VPA) Instrumental, Vocal, Theatre, Visual Arts	3-12

“Bright Child” vs. “Gifted Learner”

- A bright child knows the answers; works hard to achieve; enjoys school; and has a fine imagination.
- A gifted learner asks the questions; knows without working; enjoys self directed learning; uses their imagination to experiment with ideas and hunches.



IDENTIFICATION PROCESS

1. The student, parent, or school personnel submits a referral to the school-level gifted coordinator.
 - A. All second grade students participate in an academic screening process. Students who meet the set criteria are referred for Spring testing. All fourth grade students participate in a music screening process. Students with advanced scores will be referred for eligibility.
 - B. Students transferring from a Virginia public school district with documentation matching one of ACPS's areas of identification will be automatically entered into the program. Transferring students who do not have a matching identification must proceed through the identification and placement process.
2. The school-level gifted coordinator collects student data and administers assessments as needed. Students may need to submit portfolios or auditions.
3. Students referred for academic talent will be tested in the Spring using the OLSAT8. Scores on these assessments will determine eligibility. Students referred for visual and/or performing arts will submit portfolios and/or auditions which will be adjudicated by a team of qualified professionals. Scores received from the adjudication teams will determine eligibility. In addition to scores from cognitive assessments and adjudications, input forms and other supporting evidence is also considered.
4. The parent/guardian is notified.
5. With parent/guardian permission, students will be identified as gifted and begin receiving services.

OPPORTUNITIES



University of Virginia

Saturday and Summer Enrichment Program

<http://curry.edschool.virginia.edu/overview-enrichment-201>

Virginia Department of Education (VDOE)

Foreign Language Academies

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/foreign_language/language_academies/index.shtml

Summer Residential Governor's Schools

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/governors_school_programs/summer_residential/index.shtml

Academic-Year Governor's Schools

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/governors_school_programs/academic_year/index.shtml

Governor's STEM Academies

http://www.doe.virginia.gov/instruction/career_technical/gov_academies/index.shtml

Shenandoah Valley Governor's School

<https://svgsstudentnews.wordpress.com/>

ACPS Summer Enrichment Camp

Various activities and opportunities are offered at individual schools throughout the year.



PARENT INVOLVEMENT



- Join the school's Gifted Education Committee
- Participate in activities involving your child
- Volunteer during enrichment activities/events
- Join the state Gifted Advisory Committee
- Join the *National Association for Gifted Children* and/or the *Virginia Association for the Gifted*
- Attend conferences featuring educational opportunities and related gifted topics
- Subscribe to journals on gifted education



ASSESSMENTS

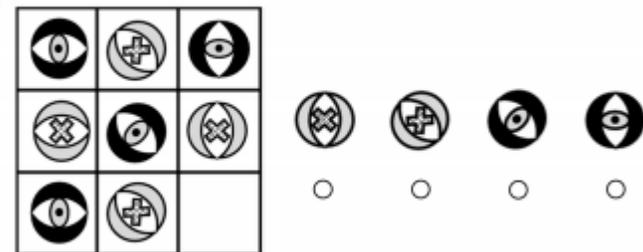
The purpose of a cognitive assessment is to measure a child's ability or potential for general thinking and problem-solving. The results of the cognitive assessment may indicate how well a student can solve verbal, quantitative, and nonverbal problems.

- Verbal - use of words and language
- Quantitative—use of symbols and math
- Nonverbal—use of pictures, shapes and puzzles

A cognitive assessment is not an achievement test. It does not measure the skills that are directly taught and practiced in school. Therefore, it is not measuring what a student has learned, but rather the potential abilities a child has for learning.

In ACPS, the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test—3rd Edition is administered to all second grade students as a universal screener. The Otis-Lennon School Ability Test - 8th Edition (OLSAT8) is administered as part of the evaluation and eligibility process.

Sample OLSAT8 Question



[1] The pictures in the box go together in a certain way. Something belongs in the empty square. Choose the picture that should go in the empty square.



GIFTED SERVICES

K-8 Gifted Education Services

The following modifications are made in the areas of General Intellectual Aptitude:

- Clustering of gifted students/small group instruction
- Ability-leveled reading groups to appropriately challenge students
- Differentiation, enrichment, and acceleration of content
- Advanced content and projects
- Cross-curricular study and projects
- 8th grade only: an opportunity to complete high school credit courses (Algebra I and/or foreign language)
- Enrichment opportunities through field trips, guest speakers, and workshops
- After school enrichment programs
- Clubs

The following modifications are made in the areas of Visual and/or Performing Arts: Music, Art, and Theater instruction:

- Differentiated instruction through assignments that do not have a “ceiling effect”.
- Enrichment opportunities through field trips, guest speakers, and workshops
- After school enrichment programs
- Clubs

SUPPORTING YOUR CHILD



- Reinforce all positives
- Model lifelong learning
- Be a good listener
- Maintain a sense of humor
- Encourage safe risk-taking
- Value effort
- Praise hard work
- Allow for free time
- Provide guidance with organization and time management
- Offer choices
- Encourage independence
- Allow them to be a child
- Mistakes are acceptable
- Don't compare your child to other children, especially siblings
- Nurture your child's passions, strengths, and interests
- Don't over schedule your child
- Encourage hobbies/activities other than academics (athletics, art, music)
- Have daily conversations with your child
- Allow him/her to be creative
- Celebrate with your child



OBSTACLES OF GIFTED CHILDREN

Major Obstacles Gifted Children Face



GIFTED SERVICES



9-12 Gifted Education Services

The following modifications are made in the areas of General Intellectual Aptitude and in the areas of Visual and/or Performing Arts: Music, Art, and Theater instruction:

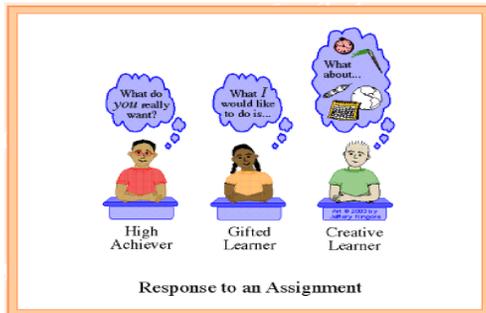
- Differentiation, enrichment, and acceleration of content
- Original research
- Mentorship program
- Advanced Placement courses
- Virtual Virginia courses
- Dual Enrollment courses
- Shenandoah Valley Governor's School
- Enrichment opportunities through field trips, guest speakers, and workshops
- After school enrichment programs
- Clubs



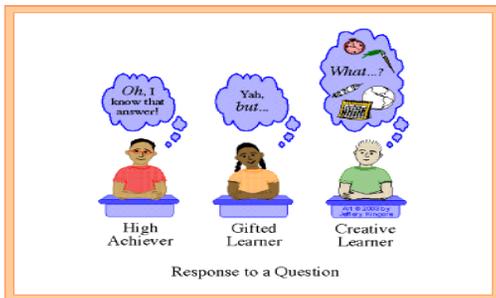
High Achiever, Gifted Learner, Creative Thinker

Bertie Kingore, Ph.D.

Identification of gifted students is clouded when concerned adults misinterpret high achievement as giftedness. High-achieving students are noticed for their on-time, neat, well-developed, and correct learning products. Adults comment on these students' consistent high grades and note how well they acclimate to class procedures and discussions. Some adults assume these students are gifted because their school-appropriate behaviors and products surface above the typical responses of grade-level students.



In the first cartoon, the teacher announces an assignment, and the high achiever quickly tries to determine what the teacher most wants so he can please and satisfy the teacher's intentions. The gifted learner ponders what to do that would most interest her as she learns. Simultaneously, the creative thinker's mind begins to race with all of the diverse and varied possibilities that could be explored.



Later, in the second cartoon, the teacher poses a question to the class. The high achiever is delighted because he knows the answer and is in control. The gifted learner considers multiple nuances and alternative perspectives. The creative thinker is still obsessed with the seemingly endless possibilities of the earlier assignment, concentrating so much on his ideas that he completely misses the teacher's question.

POSSIBLE CONCERNS



Strengths	Possible Problems
Creative and inventive; likes new ways of doing things	May disrupt plans or reject what is already known; seen by others as different or out-of-step
Intense concentration; long attention span to areas of interest; goal directed behavior; persistent	Resists interruption; neglects duties or people during time of focused interest; seen as stubborn
Sensitivity; empathy for others; desire to be accepted by others	Sensitivity to criticism or peer rejection; expects others to have same values; need for success and recognition; may feel different or alienated
Independent; prefers individualized work; reliant on self	May reject parent or peer input; nonconformist; may be unconventional
High energy, alertness, eagerness; periods of intense efforts	Frustration with inactivity; eagerness may disrupt others; needs continual stimulation; may be seen as hyperactive
Diverse interests and abilities; versatile	May appear scattered and disorganized; becomes frustrated over lack of time; others may expect continual competence
Strong sense of humor	Sees absurdities of situations; humor may not be understood by peers; may become "class clown" to gain attention
<p><i>A Parent's Guide to Gifted Children</i>, by Drs. Webb, Gore, Amend, and DeVries</p>	



POSSIBLE CONCERNS

Strengths	Possible Problems
Acquires and attains information quickly	Impatient with slowness of others; dislikes routine and drill; may resist mastering foundation skills; may make concepts unduly complex
Inquisitive attitude; intellectual curiosity; intrinsic motivation; searches for significance	Asks embarrassing questions; strong willed; excessive in interests; expects same level of intensity and effort from others
Ability to conceptualize abstract ideas or concepts; enjoys problem solving and intellectual activity	Rejects or omits details; resists practice or drill; questions teaching procedures
Can see cause-effect relations	Difficulty accepting the illogical, such as feelings, traditions, matters taken on faith
Love of truth, equity, and fair play	Difficulty in being practical; worries about humanitarian concerns
Enjoys organizing things and people into structure and order; seeks to systematize	Constructs complicated rules or systems; may be seen as bossy, rude, or domineering
Large vocabulary; broad information in advanced areas	May use words to escape or avoid situations; becomes bored with school and age peers; seen by others as a "know-it-all"
Thinks critically; has high expectations; is self-critical and evaluates others	Critical or intolerant toward others; may become discouraged or depressed; perfectionist
Keen observer; willing to consider the unusual; seeks new experiences	Overly intense focus; may be gullible

A High Achiever...	A Gifted Learner...	A Creative Thinker...
Remembers the answers.	Poses unforeseen questions.	Sees exceptions.
Is interested.	Is curious.	Wonders.
Is attentive.	Is selectively mentally engaged.	Daydreams; may seem off task.
Generates advanced ideas.	Generates complex, abstract ideas.	Overflows with ideas, many of which will never be developed.
Works hard to achieve.	Knows without working hard.	Plays with ideas and concepts.
Answer the questions in detail.	Ponders with depth and multiple perspectives.	Injects new possibilities.
Performs at the top of the group.	Is beyond the group.	Is in own group.
Responds with interest and opinions.	Exhibits feelings and opinions from multiple perspectives.	Shares bizarre, sometimes conflicting opinions.
Learns with ease.	Already knows.	Questions: What if...
Needs 6 to 8 repetitions to master.	Needs 1 to 3 repetitions to master.	Questions the need for mastery.
Comprehends at a high level.	Comprehends in-depth, complex ideas.	Overflows with ideas--many of which will never be developed.
Enjoys the company of age peers.	Prefers the company of intellectual peers.	Prefers the company of creative peers but often works alone.
Understands complex, abstract humor.	Creates complex, abstract humor.	Relishes wild, off-the-wall humor.
Grasps the meaning.	Infers and connects concepts.	Makes mental leaps: Aha!
Completes assignments on time.	Initiates projects and extensions of assignments.	Initiates more projects that will ever be completed.
Is receptive.	Is intense.	Is independent and unconventional.
Is accurate and complete.	Is original and continually developing.	Is original and continually developing.
Enjoys school often.	Enjoys self-directed learning.	Enjoys creating.
Absorbs information.	Manipulates information.	Improvises.
Is a technician with expertise in a field.	Is an expert who abstracts beyond the field.	Is an inventor and idea generator.
Memorizes well.	Guesses and infers well.	Creates and brainstorms well.
Is highly alert and observant.	Anticipates and relates observations.	Is intuitive.
Is pleased with own learning.	Is self-critical.	Is never finished with possibilities.
Gets A's.	May not be motivated by grades.	May not be motivated by grades.
Is able.	Is intellectual.	Is idiosyncratic.



THE GIFTED LEARNER

Characteristics of Gifted Children



- Exceptional Memory
- Extensive Vocabulary
- Ability to learn new material rapidly
- Intense imagination
- Long attention span and ability to focus
- Enjoys numbers, puzzles or mazes
- Learned to read at an early age and loves books
- Preference for older playmates and company of adults
- Mature sense of humor
- Compassionate for the feelings of others
- Insatiable curiosity and persistence
- Perfectionist
- High expectations for self and others
- Ability to think abstractly
- Learns a new language quickly and easily
- High levels of energy
- Concerned with global issues
- Interest in experiencing and taking risks
- Mature for age

THE GIFTED LEARNER



Difficulties May Include

- Impatient with others
- Dislikes routine
- Bored with routine tasks
- Strong-willed
- Overly sensitive
- Difficulty with peers
- Sensitive to criticism; overreacts
- Nonconforming; stubborn
- Not concerned with details; messy work
- Disagrees vocally
- Domineering
- Humor may be misunderstood, “Class Clown”

