

GIFTED CHILDREN: A Check List

Children of high ability are likely to show the following characteristics. A child showing most characteristics on the check list, but not those starred, is likely to be under-achieving educationally.

1. As infants their milestones are often early; their eyes tend to focus early; they show early bowel and bladder control; they usually walk and talk early - but not always.
2. They often show great mental and physical energy and seem to need far less sleep than children of similar age.
3. They show great curiosity about the world around them and are particularly interested in cause and effect and in fundamental problems such as the meaning of life and death. They ask many questions.
4. They are superior in the quantity and quality of vocabulary as compared with children of similar age and their speech is often fluent.
5. They learn to read early (often well before school age). They sometimes do this without instruction. They show a fair grasp of syntax and punctuation by the age of seven, although spelling may be comparatively weak, even in an avid reader.*
6. They usually show good hand-eye motor co-ordination, though sometimes their handwriting is way behind their reading and other skills.
7. They are superior in mathematics particularly in problem solving.*
8. Have a wide range of interests and an extended general knowledge. They often pursue hobbies with great enthusiasm.
9. Exhibit keen powers of observation; can discriminate between important and unimportant details and have a superior sense as to what is relevant.
10. Possess superior powers of reasoning, of dealing with abstractions, of generalising from specific facts, of understanding meanings and of seeing relationships. They often arrive at correct answers through unorthodox methods.

11. **Learn easily and readily.***
12. **Have a broad attention-span that enables them to concentrate and persevere in solving problems and pursuing interests. It is surprising how long they can concentrate and from an early age they may show an astonishing strength of will and purpose.**
13. **Show initiative and originality in intellectual work and are not satisfied with easy and superficial tasks.**
14. **Have ability to do effective work independently.**
15. **Show alertness and quick response to new ideas. This quickness of response is common in clever children and it does not always endear them to teachers.**
16. **Are able to memorise quickly.**
17. **Often possess an unusual imagination which is sometimes shown in their responses to questions.**
18. **They tend to show a keen sense of humour and are willing to appreciate the humorous side even when it affects themselves.**
19. **Can follow complex directions easily.**
20. **When among their peers, gifted children often dominate the activities of the group. They frequently introduce new rules or variations to games. They are more likely to be chosen as leaders by their peers, both at the primary and secondary school level.**
21. **Often seek the company of older children as well as that of adults. They prefer games and pursuits which are normally associated with older children.**

The check list can act as a preliminary screen in helping the teacher to decide whether or not particular children are significantly gifted intellectually and whether it would be helpful to refer them for a full psychometric assessment. However a number of factors should be borne in mind before attempting subjective ratings of children's activities. They are:

1. **Age**
This, in relation to the spread of chronological ages of the class as a whole, should be taken into account by the teacher in rating each child. It is easy to mis-estimate children who are at the older or younger end of the class, e.g. the achievements