

Gifted and Talented Children: What is Giftedness?



What is giftedness?

Exploring the different definitions

To some parents, giftedness might simply mean an advanced ability or talent they observed in their child. And the signs can be different: a musical or artistic ability not typical of same aged peers; early reading ability with comprehension in a two year old; intense curiosity or sensitivity; a great memory or high verbal ability. However, parents need to be aware that not all gifted kids show these signs and not all of these signs means giftedness,

Definition by the US Department of Education, 1993:

"Children and youth with outstanding talent who perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment."

Definition by the National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC):

"Gifted individuals are those who demonstrate outstanding levels of aptitude (defined as an exceptional ability to reason and learn) or competence (documented performance or achievement in top 10% or rarer) in one or more domains. Domains include any structured area of activity with its own symbol system (e.g., mathematics, music, language) and/or set of sensorimotor skills (e.g., painting, dance, sports)".

Definition by the Javits Act (1988) states:

"The term gifted and talented student means children and youths who give evidence of higher performance capability in such areas as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools in order to develop such capabilities fully."

Definition by the New York State Education Department:

Chapter 740 of the Laws of 1982 defines gifted students as "pupils who show evidence of high performances capability and exceptional potential in area such as general intellectual ability, special academic aptitude and outstanding ability in visual and performing arts. Such definition shall include those pupils who require educational programs or services beyond those normally provided by the regular school program in order to realize their full potential."

Dr. James Borland, a professor at Teachers College, Columbia University whose expertise is Special Education with an emphasis on the education of gifted and research *does not have a definition* as he is less concerned about labeling a student as gifted. He is much more concerned about how a curriculum can be adjusted and modified to a student's specific needs and strengths and weaknesses.