

# Gifted or High Achiever

There are clear differences between children who are high-achieving and those who are gifted.



## Frustrated Allen Calls out

In this game Allen had a 3d  
game. In the fourth quarter he  
scored 10 of those points because  
his team did not pass to him. but  
thing that people did not know  
is that from the very beginning of  
the season Allen was bidding up  
every game after game the anger  
was bidding up and last night in the  
locker room it came out. He was  
very angry at his team mates for  
not passing the ball to him in  
the fourth quarter and not in  
any of the other three quarters.  
When Brady cost the Patriots  
from a two point game. Allen  
couldn't Allen was saying that  
Patriots need someone else to step  
score some points. The Patriots  
fourth point scorer because they  
they only have three of them and  
doesn't seem to be working for  
Patriots. At least that's what Allen

Supporting Your Child

# They develop differently.

At school, **high-achievers** are motivated extrinsically by making good grades and pleasing their teachers. They typically succeed, for they show interest in assignments, learn and understand easily, are talented memorizers, and thrive on knowing the answers. Because of their desire to please and stand out, high achievers prefer detailed and concrete instructions to follow for assignments, sometimes including the font type and size and if they should put a cover on their project. They want to know exactly what to do to turn in an exemplary product, and they work hard to produce one.

Although **gifted students** also may produce commendable report cards and care about their grades, their motivation does not stem from pleasing others or performing well. Instead, they are motivated intrinsically, showing interest and performing well if the activity is meaningful and worth their energy. They value real, individualized learning, particularly when the content relates to their passions. Although gifted children, too, learn easily, they understand more deeply. They dislike memorizing and spending time on content already mastered. Correct answers are not so important. They prefer to ponder, to look at multiple perspectives, to delve into the abstract, and to ask the questions sometimes questions to which no one has the answer. They prefer general guidelines for projects, if any at all, and understanding how projects relate to them or to the world is essential. They are not primarily concerned about producing an exemplary product and, at times, may not even turn one in.

Sometimes **gifted children** underachieve, even fail, when their needs for mental stimulation and purpose are not

supported in the classroom. Alternatively, when their cognitive needs and passions are supported, gifted children may become completely consumed in a topic or project. (Davis & Rimm, 2004; Juntune 2013)

## They perceive and react to the world differently.

Because their emotional domain develops more rapidly, children who are gifted tend to exhibit even more awareness, sensitivity, and emotional intensity than their non-gifted peers, including **high achievers**. Generally, gifted students seem to intuitively understand situations, people, and their behaviors more completely than their peers, perhaps due to their ability to see situations from multiple perspectives. They understand why certain actions are good or bad without needing explanation. They know when adults or peers like and dislike them.

Children who are gifted feel on a different level than others as well. Certainly high achievers experience a wide range of emotions, including sympathy and empathy. The difference, however, lies in the degree. Gifted children tend to react with significantly more intensity to both joyful and saddening events, whether within their own circles of friends and family or within the larger community. As a result, they are much more concerned with right versus wrong and develop steadfast values and a keen sense of justice.

## They replenish their energy differently.

Both average and **high-achieving** youth typically are energized through spending time with others. They study with their peers and frequently call their friends. They thrive in groups.

Children who are **gifted**, on the other hand, may find groups distracting, particularly when groups are based on age. Consequently, they may exhibit more introverted behaviors. In the classroom, when a teacher assigns a group activity, it is not uncommon for a gifted child to ask, "Is it okay if I am in a group of one?" They replenish their energy while being alone, and they may at times need to sit by themselves or take a walk in nature. (Juntune 2013)

## Dabrowski's Theory of Overexcitabilities

has added to our understanding of how strengths of **gifted** - particularly the more highly gifted - can also cause difficulties or potential problems, especially if these characteristics are not recognized or understood by parents and educators.

**Gifted** individuals view the world in different ways than others, and their thoughts, actions, and feeling are more intense. It has been said that an exceptionally gifted individual sees the world as if he/she is looking through an electron microscope, as compared with normal vision. They see what others do not see, and what others cannot even imagine.



## Smart/High Achiever vs Gifted

	High Achiever	Gifted
<b>Questioning Style</b>	Ask questions that have answers.	Ask questions about abstract ideas, concepts, and theories.
<b>Learning Speed and Application of Concepts</b>	Learn step-by-step.	Jump from step 2 to 10.
<b>Emotional Outlook</b>	Get past an upsetting incident fairly easily.	Experience heightened, sometimes all-consuming emotions.
<b>Level of Interest</b>	Ask questions and are curious about many things.	Show intense curiosity about nearly everything and immerse themselves in areas of interest.
<b>Language Ability</b>	Learn new vocabulary easily and choose words typical for their age.	Extensive and advanced vocabulary and understand nuance, wordplay, and puns.
<b>Concern with Fairness</b>	State firm opinions about fairness related to personal situations.	Show concern about fairness and equity more intensely and on a more global scale.

# SMART or GIFTED?

As parents, we all want to believe our children are smart and stand out as a good student in class. To look like the “smart kid” in class, often the child has to put effort into his/her work. Handwriting is neat and assignments are handed in on time, or even before they are due.

## A smart/high achiever

student is a child who is successful in class and does not need outside help to be an achiever.

**A gifted student** does not always “look” smart. Instead, the gifted student may not have to put much effort into his/her work and may not do the work at all if he/she does not see a reason for doing it. Gifted students may not have patience with the repeated practice that is usually needed for the average student. A gifted student’s mind may be thinking so rapidly that handwriting is difficult to read which may cause the teacher not to realize what the student is actually able to do. Rarely do we see a gifted student that is good at everything. Usually he/she excels in a certain area like math or writing.

*Taken from <http://www4.isdschools.org/>.*



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