

Definitions of “Gifted”

Iowa Code 257.44 Gifted and talented children defined.

"*Gifted and talented children*" are those identified as possessing outstanding abilities who are capable of high performance. Gifted and talented children are children who require appropriate instruction and educational services commensurate with their abilities and needs beyond those provided by the regular school program.

Gifted and talented children include those children with demonstrated achievement or potential ability, or both, in any of the following areas or in combination:

1. General intellectual ability.
2. Creative thinking.
3. Leadership ability.
4. Visual and performing arts ability.
5. Specific ability aptitude.

89 Acts, ch 135, § 44

--adapted from Marland, (1972)

[Intelligence] is the ability to solve problems or create products which are valued in one or more cultural settings.

--Howard Gardner (1983)

Giftedness is asynchronous development in which advanced cognitive abilities and heightened intensity combine to create inner experiences and awareness that are qualitatively different from the norm. This asynchrony increases with higher intellectual capacity. The uniqueness of the gifted renders them particularly vulnerable and requires modifications in parenting, teaching, and counseling in order to develop optimally.

--Columbus Group (1991)

Children and youth with outstanding talent perform or show the potential for performing at remarkably high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of their age, experience, or environment...They require services or activities not ordinarily provided by the schools. Outstanding talents are present in children and youth from all cultural groups, across all economic strata, and in all areas of human endeavor.

--from *National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent* (1994)

According to Robert Sternberg's Triarchic Theory of Human Intelligence, there are three main kinds of giftedness:

Analytic – involves being able to dissect a problem and understand its parts. People who are strong in this area of functioning tend to do well on conventional tests of intelligence.

Creative – being insightful, intuitive, creative, or just adept at coping with relatively novel situations. People who are creatively gifted do not necessarily do well on conventional measures of intelligence.

Practical – involves applying whatever analytic or creative ability the person may have to everyday, pragmatic situations. The practically gifted person is one who can go into an environmental setting, figure out what needs to be done, and then do it.

--Sternberg (1985) as cited in Colangelo and Davis, 1997

- Knowing a solution before knowing the problem
- Thinking in song before reading or talking
- Doing by intuition what others must do by instruction
- Expressing from the heart and the depths of one's soul in ways that others can only begin to comprehend or appreciate
- Willingly sharing one's extraordinary gifts with those who have the least to give
- Finding humor and wit in the mundane occurrences of life

--Julie Gonzales, parent of gifted children (2000)

"Giftedness" is the mother of all contradictions...I like it, yet I hate it. It is the greatest thing on earth, yet it is the worst thing on earth. It is great to be gifted, but it can also feel like the world is coming down on my head. For example, I can take an easy, required, ordinary-level class at school, yet be bored out of my mind and get low grades. I need to be able to control and focus my giftedness on things I enjoy and am good at. For example, I was getting pretty average grades at my middle school. I got interested in the Japanese language over the summer between 7th and 8th grade. So my mother signed me up for a Japanese language class at the University of Colorado. My grades went up and I had more fun at school.

Giftedness really doesn't have a definition. It is usually an area of life which one likes and excels in constantly.

--Nick Leggett, 13 years old, 9th grade student