

This information can be helpful for parents, but it shouldn't be the end-all be-all. Schools should be meeting the needs of all children, regardless of a "gifted" label. But if a parent feels that for one reason or another, they really want that "gifted" label, this chart is a good place to start. It can be helpful to all parents, because it may let you see your child in a new light. The most important thing to remember is that above all else, you are your child's best advocate. And label or no label, your school should be challenging them appropriately.



So, like, is my kid gifted or what?

When I was an elementary school principal, one of the most difficult conversations I had to have with parents was around the "gifted" label. Everyone thinks their child is brilliant. And the reality is, they are. Every child has their own set of strengths, and they excel in different areas. Where one child may be gifted in the social arena, another may be gifted in sports, music, or math. In typical public schools, however, it seems the desire for a "gifted" designation has never been higher. Sometimes, this leads parents to put undue stress and pressure on a child who is very bright but would ultimately not be eligible for a "gifted" status. The public school system is failing our children, and so we feel like we need to get them this label so that we can try to guarantee they get the services they need to be appropriately challenged. Other times, parents don't recognize the traits of their gifted children because they don't present in a way that we perceive to be typical, and their children miss out on opportunities as a result.

Meet Nicole



CREATE founder Nicole Duslak has been dreaming about revolutionizing education for years, and now she has brought her vision to life. Nicole has earned a BFA in Fine Arts, a M.Ed. in Secondary Education, and a M.Ed. in Educational Leadership and Policy Studies. An award-winning educator with extensive experience, Nicole has been involved with the education system from kindergarten through higher education. Nicole brings "Relationship Centered Leadership" to Lake County education. Her empathy, integrity, passion for creative development, and desire to change both education options and leadership standards make CREATE Conservatory the new rising star in Lake County schools.

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I want to stress that appropriate differentiated instruction should be the warcry for parents who feel their children aren't being challenged. In today's educational settings, the warcry might need to be paired with a call to action for a "gifted" label as well, but if our schools are doing their jobs, the label really shouldn't make a difference.

According to the National Association for Gifted Children, "The overall suggestion seems to be that as a teacher or even as an educational system, educationally useful information comes from knowing if one of your students is "just bright" as opposed to being "truly" gifted. In other words, if two children are otherwise identical in their level of achievement, aptitude, creativity, and so on, they should still be treated differently if one is "truly" gifted and one is "just" bright."

I don't really think this makes any sense. Regardless of whether a child is gifted or bright, they deserve to be challenged in the classroom. However, the reality of our public education system is that, unfortunately, without a "gifted" designation, some students simply won't receive the programming they need to be adequately challenged in their classrooms. Too many teachers are overworked and simply can't provide that level of differentiation without an EP to require it, and even in schools with gifted programs, a lack of funding and resources often means that even children with the "gifted" label are not being adequately challenged.

This is the reason that private schools specializing in bright and gifted education can be an ideal fit for your high-achieving child. However, we recognize that this may not be a viable solution for every family, so sometimes, that "gifted" designation may be important to get. If you're a parent who feels like your child might need that label, here's some information that might help.

Probably the most well-known information regarding gifted vs. bright learners came from Challenge Magazine in 1989. In that article, Janice Szabos published the following chart:



Bright vs. Gifted -- Characteristics of gifted learners

Source: Janice Szabos, Challenge Magazine, 1989, Issue 34

A Bright Child:	A Gifted Learner:
Knows the answers	Asks the questions
Is interested	Is highly curious
Is attentive	Is mentally and physically involved
Has good ideas	Has wild, silly ideas
Works hard	Plays around, yet tests well
Answers the questions	Discusses in detail, elaborates
Top group	Beyond the group
Listens with interest	Shows strong feeling and opinions
Learns with ease	Already knows
6-8 repetitions for mastery	1-2 repetitions for mastery
Understands ideas	Constructs abstractions
Enjoys peers	Prefers adults
Grasps the meaning	Draws inferences
Completes assignments	Initiates projects
Is receptive	Is intense
Copies accurately	Creates a new design
Enjoys school	Enjoys learning
Absorbs information	Manipulates information
Technician	Inventor
Good memorizer	Good guesser
Enjoys sequential presentation	Thrives on complexity
Is alert	Is keenly observant
Is pleased with own learning	Is highly self-critical