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## Parent Checklist

Checklists provide a useful way to get a sense of whether a child may be gifted. A child does not need to show ALL these characteristics to be considered gifted and it is worth remembering that no checklist will include every possible characteristic a child may show.

Below is a list of common characteristics. If you recognise some of these in your child, you may like to look further at the Learning and Behavioural characteristics common to gifted children.

Gifted children may:

- Walk and/or talk early
- Have an unusual sense of humour
- Be very curious and ask complex questions
- Show an early or intense interest in books, often learning to read at a young age
- Make unusual connections between topics
- Be self-motivated, perfectionist, persistent or independent
- Have a long attention span and unusual memory for details or facts
- Learn rapidly, with little practice
- Think faster than they are able to write
- Prefer the company of older children
- Have unusual perception and problem solving ability
- Worry about adult issues and problems
- Need less sleep than most children
- Not always show their abilities in a school setting

If you recognise some of these characteristics in your child, you may like to look at the following characteristics of learning and behaviour for more insights.

### Learning:

- learns rapidly, understands advanced topics easily
- persists in completing tasks
- sees the problem quickly and takes the initiative, shows insight and fantasises about cause-effect relationships;
- learns basic skills quickly and with little practice;
- is reluctant to practise skills already mastered, finding such practice futile; follows complex directions easily;
- constructs and handles high levels of abstraction;
- can cope with more than one idea at a time.;
- has strong critical thinking skills and is self-critical;
- has surprising perception and deep insight;
- is a keen and alert observer, notes detail and is quick to see similarities and differences
- displays intellectual and physical restlessness; once encouraged, is seldom a passive learner
- has a remarkable range of general (or specialised) knowledge in one or more areas
- possesses extensive general knowledge (often knows more than the teacher) and finds classroom books superficial
- explores wide-ranging and special interests, frequently at great depth
- learns to read early and retains what is read; can recall in detail
- has advanced understanding and use of language, but sometimes hesitates as the correct word is searched for and then used

- asks many provocative, searching questions which tend to be unlike those asked by other students of the same age
- can ask unusual (even awkward) questions or make unusual contributions to class discussions
- demonstrates a richness of imagery in informal language and brainstorming
- has exceptional curiosity and constantly wants to know the reasons why
- displays intellectual playfulness; fantasises and imagines; is quick to see connections and manipulate ideas
- often sees unusual, rather than conventional, relationships
- can produce original and imaginative work, even if defective in technical accuracy (e.g. poor spelling and/or handwriting)
- wants to debate topics at greater depth
- mental speed is faster than writing ability, so is often reluctant to write at length

**Behavioural:**

- sets very high personal standards, is a perfectionist
- is success-oriented and hesitates to try something where failure is a possibility
- demonstrates a sense of humour and loves incongruities, puns and pranks
- may be behind peers in manual dexterity, which can be a source of frustration
- can have a negative self-concept and suffer from poor social acceptance by age peers
- daydreams and seems lost in another world •often prefers company of older students and adults
- listens to only part of the explanation and sometimes appears to lack concentration, but always knows what is going on – when questioned usually knows the answer
- when interested, becomes absorbed for long periods and may be impatient with interference or abrupt change;
- can be stubborn in own beliefs
- shows sensitivity and reacts strongly to things causing distress or injustice;
- empathises with others and often takes a leadership role; very understanding and sympathetic.
- shows unusual interest in adult problems such as important issues in current affairs (local and world), evolution, justice, the universe, etc.

Adapted from *Exceptionally Able Children*, 1997, rev. ed., Education Dept. of W.A., East Perth and Porter, L. 1999, *Gifted Young Children: A Guide for Teachers and Parents* Allen and Unwin NSW

**Please remember that children will not show ALL of these characteristics.**