

Giftedness Defined

A Simple Definition

Those who are gifted have been described as the ones who do things a little bit earlier, a little bit faster, a little bit better, and perhaps a little bit differently from most others. SOME of those who are gifted do things a *lot* earlier, a *lot* faster, a *lot* better, or a *lot* differently from most others! Others don't do any of that; however, they still show abilities and/or insights that are far beyond those of others. Because of their advanced or accelerated development and because they have a high level of awareness and intensity and a greater depth of thinking and feeling, those who are gifted are particularly vulnerable and require modified services or activities not ordinarily provided to others.

–Developed by Dr. Ellen Fiedler in collaboration with parents, graduate students, and teachers, based on those of Gina Ginsberg-Riggs, Barbara Clark, and The Columbus Group.)

Barbara Clark's View

“Giftedness is a biologically rooted concept that is the result of a high level of integration and acceleration among the neural cells within the brain. The level of intelligence and the structure and process of thinking and learning change, becoming more complex, accelerated, and in-depth. Giftedness may be developed and expressed to a moderate, high, or profound level.

–Barbara Clark in Growing Up Gifted (7th Ed.), Merrill Publishing Co., 2008, p. 56

A Developmental Perspective

“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 for them to develop optimally.”

–The Columbus Group, 1991

The Federal Definition

The term “gifted and talented,” when used with respect to students, children, or youth, means students, children, or youth who give evidence of high achievement capability in areas such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacity, or in specific academic fields, and who need services or activities not ordinarily provided by the school in order to fully develop those capabilities.

–No Child Left Behind, U.S. Department of Education, 2001, p. 544

Annemarie Roeper's Definition

Giftedness is a greater awareness, a greater sensitivity, and a greater ability to understand and transform perceptions into intellectual and emotional experiences.

–Roeper, 2000, p. 33.

Gina Ginsberg-Riggs' Definition

“Gifted children are those who do things a little bit earlier, a little bit faster, a little bit better, and perhaps a little bit differently from most other children.