

An Early Childhood Assessment Tool to Identify Young Gifted Children rev. 2018

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The following information is a research-based tool to identify young gifted children in 10 areas to assess preschool and Kindergarten students. These areas are not mutually exclusive; some information may overlap, and some students will fall into multiple categories. Students only need to have one descriptor, though, to be considered gifted. This tool is based on 10 Descriptors of high Potentiality. Activities and prompts for each descriptor are designed to support identification of students including diverse learners, ESL/ELL students, and children in poverty. See *Optimal use of the Early Identification Tool*, page 9, for information regarding data collection suggestions.

10 Descriptors of High Potentiality in Young Children

1. **Asynchronous development and/or self-critical behaviors**
2. **Early use of advanced vocabulary, complexity, and humor**
3. **Early literacy skills; interest in symbols**
4. **Excellent memory; retention from varied sources**
5. **Keen observation; curiosity and inquisitiveness**
6. **Intense interests in specific topics; concentration; perseverance; enjoys tinkering**
7. **Strong critical thinking skills; organizational skills**
8. **Creativity; imaginative capacity**
9. **Ability to understand complex concepts; thinks abstractly**
10. **Early demonstration of talents in music, art, athletics, or the performing arts**

(Betts & Neihart, 2010; Dabrowski & Piechowski, 1977; Gadzikowski, 2013; Kingore, 2001; National Kindergarten Alliance, 2014; Rogers, 2002; Ruf, 2009; Sayler, 1992; Slocumb & Payne, 2000; Teaching Strategies Gold-Assessments, 2014).

| | DESCRIPTORS | EXPLANATIONS and ACTIVITIES | OBSERVATION – ASSESSMENT OPPORTUNITIES |
|----|---|---|--|
| #1 | <p>Asynchronous development and/or Self-critical behaviors</p> | <p>Description: Asynchrony means uneven development; being out-of-sync within oneself or age mates and the expectations of the classroom, having heightened emotions and awareness, known as “overexcitabilities”, and being vulnerable, due developmental and psychological differences from the norm. May exhibit skills or maturity usually associated with older children; is sensitive to others’ feelings and shows distress at other children’s or adult distress. Reads body language. High need for fairness. Perfectionistic, hard on themselves, easily frustrated and critical of self and others.</p> | <p>Asynchronous behaviors in all cultures exist. Some cultures may view “overexcitabilities” as being “naughty” especially in a collectivist culture (Cherry, 2014) where goals of the group exceed goals of the individual.</p> <p>Look for evidence of social emotional imbalance such as kids who clearly know behavioral expectations but struggle with self-discipline and self-regulatory management.</p> |

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| | <p>Intentional Activities for Descriptor #6</p> | <p>ELL/ESL Students May use their native language.</p> <p>Teacher or Parental Anecdotal Observations of prior experiences: For example, does the child show particular fascination with bugs or nature?</p> <p>iPad© Prompt with kids: Give kids an iPad© with various interactive apps. SEE list. Observe attention span, “moving” applications from one platform to another. Observe individuals or small groups sustain attention with various applications. (e.g. students who download their own videos or photos into a Blog or use creative apps).</p> <p>Tinkering Task with kids: Provide non-working hand appliances to examine, take apart and reassemble.</p> <p>Conversation Prompt with kids: Ask the child: “If you could do ANYTHING you wanted to do today, what would it be?”</p> <p>Animal Prompt with kids: Show book of animals. Flip through pages together. Listen to what they know about any of these animals. Ask “What would you want to know about any of these animals?”</p> | <p>Encourage growth in this area: Find student’s area of interest or expertise (ask parents) and let them share with you individually. Possibly use photos, video, or record for translation purposes. Allow prolonged center/learning time to encourage in-depth study and exploration on topic of interest. Warn students of transition changes ahead of time (possibly using timers) and let child know that they will be able to return to this area/topic.</p> <p>iPad Apps suggestions from 5 year-old: Flow; Clifford; PBS Kids; Super WHY; Angry Birds; DoodleDandy; Cars Match; Toy Story; Thomas the Tank Engine; Planes; Bob the Builder; Heroes of the City; Build a Truck; ChatterPixKids.</p> |
| #7 | <p>Strong critical thinking skills; organizational skills</p> <p>Intentional Activities for Descriptor #7</p> | <p>Description: Thinks in a nonlinear, open-ended, complex way; provides multiple responses and perspectives, unspecified answers. Engages in independent inquiry. Naturally organizes own belongings. May organize by size, color, collection type or other. Can explain arrangement and why.</p> <p>Teacher or Parental Anecdotal Observations of prior experiences: For example, how they organize their room, their desk, toys, etc.</p> <p>Organization Prompt with Kids: Provide manipulatives such as Legos, blocks, marbles, assorted buttons, match box cars, etc. Watch how they categorize objects and ask child to explain their categorization.</p> <p>Design Prompt with Kids: Ask kids to design a new play area (or other idea). See how they arrange things differently and ask them why.</p> <p>Dimensional Block Puzzle with Kids: Using puzzle block with 16 pieces with 6 different pictures, allow child to work at putting the pieces together to make pictures.</p> <p>Deck of Cards Prompt with kids: Use a “kids” deck of cards. Give the deck to a small group of kids or an individual and ask them to make up “rules” for a new game</p> <p>Set© Game Prompt with kids: Play Set© card game with 2-4 people. Follow game directions or make up your own directions or outcomes of the game. Variations include color, number, shading and shape. Observe.</p> | <p>Look for and/or develop opportunities where child can:</p> <p>Compare and contrast</p> <p>Organize in multiple ways or very specific about one way of organizing</p> <p>Think critically</p> <p>Encourage growth in this area: Allow time and attention for students to organize manipulatives. Seek items of familiarity from child’s home. Possibly use photos, video, or recordings for observation from home or school.</p> |
| #8 | <p>Creativity; imaginative capacity</p> | <p>Description: Makes ingenious or functional things from LEGO or other building toys; uses toys in unique or non-traditional ways; plays with or carries on conversations with imaginary friends; makes up believable endings to stories. May create, do, and/or talk about things in new or inventive ways in order to solve a problem or for pleasure.</p> | <p>Look for and/or develop opportunities where child can:</p> <p>Demonstrate positive approaches to learning</p> <p>Show flexibility and inventiveness in thinking. Research suggests <i>flexibility</i> is broader than social interactions.</p> |

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| | <p>Intentional Activities for Descriptor #8</p> | <p>Parental Anecdotal Observations of prior experiences: For example, do they have imaginary friends? Also ask parents for personal anecdotes.</p> <p>Teacher Anecdotal Observations of child in play and creative experiences.</p> <p>Puppet Play prompt with kids: Have the child use toys such as stuffed animals, puppets (one in each hand) and make up a story. Could use finger puppets or draw faces on their fingers. Listen to personalization of behaviors and details.</p> <p>Prompt with “imaginary friends” with kids: Ask kids to tell you all about their “imaginary friends” or ask parents to share with you about the examples at home.</p> <p>Creativity Task with kids: What could you make out of supplies (e.g., milk cartons, rubber bands, plastic drinking straws, paper clips, scotch tape, toilet paper roll, etc.)</p> <p>Kids Invent Structures with Goldieblox: See video and site www.goldieblox.com</p> | <p>Encourage growth in this area: Probe for ways that the child can exhibit creativity: fluency, flexibility, elaboration, and originality in creative thinking capacity in language and play activities.</p> <p>Look for ways that thinking, creativity and imagination are beyond the norm of what is expected or typically observed in early childhood.</p> |
| #9 | <p>Ability to understand complex concepts; thinks abstractly</p> <p>Intentional Activities for Descriptor #9</p> | <p>Description: Exhibits play and/or organizational interests that resemble those of older children; likes to play board games designed for older children, more apt to be interested in cooperative play, complex play situations or sophisticated play activities.</p> <p>Makes connections, perceives relationships.</p> <p>ELL/ESL Students May use their native language.</p> <p>Ask the parents about games in their culture and in which way the child participates or interacts.</p> <p>Teacher or Parental Anecdotal Observations of prior experiences.</p> <p>Prompt with kids: Can you make up a game? (any kind of game)</p> <p>Time or relationship prompt with kids: Can they tell a story using “time” or “relationships?” e.g. yesterday, tomorrow, next week? Can they figure out relationships such as “who is your mother’s mother?” Not many kids can say “grandma” etc.</p> <p>Time or relationship prompt with kids: Can they share comments on who is sitting next to whom at the dinner table. For example, daddy is ACROSS from me, Mommy is NEXT to me. Ask child to use the words today, tomorrow, and yesterday in a sentence.</p> | <p>Look for and/or develop opportunities where child can:</p> <p>Use symbols and images to represent something not present</p> <p>Think symbolically</p> <p>Show increasing ability to interpret and record ideas and thoughts and to solve problems without concrete points of reference.</p> <p>Mentally manipulate information and use logical arguments with increasing regularity; needs concrete points of reference for complex concepts and text; reflects on his or her work</p> <p>Encourage growth in this area: Engage in time and relationship conversations, or other topics of interest that are not concrete in nature.</p> |

Sample Observational Tool of Opportunities for Intentional Activities

Indicate which descriptors may fit each child.

Describe the intentional activity provided and the child's responses.

| | Asynchronous development and/or Self-critical behaviors | Early use of advanced vocabulary, complexity, and humor | Early literacy skills; interest in symbols | Excellent memory; retention from varied sources | Keen observation; curiosity and inquisitiveness | Intense interests in specific topics; concentration perseverance; enjoys tinkering | Strong critical thinking skills; organizational skills | Creativity; imaginative capacity | Ability to understand complex concepts; thinks abstractly | Early demonstration of talents in music, art, athletics, or the performing arts |
|---------|---|---|--|---|---|--|--|----------------------------------|---|---|
| Sarah | | | | | | | | | | |
| Simon | | | | | | | | | | |
| Solomon | | | | | | | | | | |
| Peter | | | | | | | | | | |
| Henry | | | | | | | | | | |
| Kira | | | | | | | | | | |
| Gracie | | | | | | | | | | |
| Isla | | | | | | | | | | |

Optimal use of the Early Childhood Identification Tool: Prompts must occur during frequent and multiple opportunities for exploration and observation. It is important to engage students in a safe interactive or play environments, not necessarily in an adult pleasing environment. The observer/teacher would ideally consult and collaborate with parents, extended family, and previous teachers or instructors for various observational data about the child. The 10 Descriptors are used to support the identification of the early childhood advanced learner. This is not a checklist, a ranking scale, or rating scale. Children do NOT need to exhibit all 10 behaviors. Any ONE of these may be an indication that the child needs a “qualitatively differentiated” classroom experience. The matrix above is a framework for data collection through anecdotal notes and observation of the student. The observer will take notes and fill in the cells with appropriate information and possible reference to pictures and video somewhat similar to Karen Rogers’ Data Collector. Date the boxes for reference.

Future Research Goals: Increase suggestions from feedback from under-resourced, ESL/ELL, and diverse culture families. Recommendations include analysis of results comparing children to their peer groups within the identification process. Linda’s current teaching role has allowed her to identify young ESL children. In her international teaching role she has found that typically her gifted ESL students have gained enough English by the end of 1st grade for a successful skip to 3rd grade. Sally continues work through NAEYC and updating research.

Revised Profiles of the Gifted & Talented

| Type | Feelings & Attitudes | Behaviors | Needs | Adult/Peer Perceptions | Identification | Home Support | School Support |
|------------------------|---|---|--|--|---|--|--|
| The Successful | <p>Complacent Dependent Good academic self--concept Fear of failure Extrinsic motivation Self--critical Works for the grade Unsure about the future Eager for approval Entity view of intelligence</p> | <p>Achieves Seeks teacher approval Avoids risks Doesn't go beyond the syllabus Accepts & conforms Chooses safe activities Gets good grades Becomes a consumer of knowledge</p> | <p>To be challenged To see deficiencies To take risks Assertiveness skills Creativity development Incremental view of intelligence Self knowledge Independent learning skills</p> | <p>Liked by teachers Admired by peers Generally liked & accepted by parents Overestimate their abilities Believe they will succeed on their own</p> | <p>Use many multiple criteria Grades Standardized test scores Individual IQ tests Teacher nominations Parent nominations Peer nominations</p> | <p>Parents need to let go Independence Freedom to make choices Risk--taking experiences Allow child to be distressed Affirm child's ability to cope with challenges</p> | <p>Subject & grade acceleration. Needs more than AP, IB & Time for personal curriculum. Activities that push out of zone Development of independent learning skills In--Depth Studies Mentorships Cognitive Coaching Time with Intellectual Peers</p> |
| iThe Creative | <p>Highly creative Bored & frustrated Fluctuating self--esteem Impatient & defensive Heightened sensitivity Uncertain about social roles More psychologically vulnerable Strong motivation to follow inner convictions Wants to right wrongs High tolerance for ambiguity High Energy</p> | <p>Expresses impulses Challenges teacher Questions rules, policies Is honest and direct Emotionally labile May have poor self--control Creative expression Perseveres in areas of interest (passions) Stands up for convictions May be in conflict with peers</p> | <p>To be connected with others To learn tact, flexibility, self awareness and self control Support for creativity Contractual systems Less pressure to conform Interpersonal skills to affirm others Strategies to cope with potential psychological vulnerabilities</p> | <p>Not liked by teachers Viewed as rebellious Engaged in power struggle Creative Discipline problems Peers see them as entertaining Want to change them Don't view them as gifted Underestimate their success Want them to conform</p> | <p>Ask: In what ways is this child creative? Use domain specific, objective measures Focus on creative potential rather than achievement</p> | <p>Respect for their goals Tolerate higher levels of deviance Allow them to pursue interests (passions) Model appropriate behavior Family projects Communicate confidence in their abilities Affirm their strengths Recognize psychological vulnerability & intervene when necessary</p> | <p>Tolerance Reward new thinking Placement with appropriate teachers Direct & clear communication Give permission for feelings Domain specific training Allow nonconformity Mentorships Direct instruction in interpersonal skills Coach for deliberate practice</p> |
| The Underground | <p>Desire to belong socially Feel Unsure & Pressured Conflicted, Guilty & Insecure Unsure of their right to their emotions Diminished sense of self Ambivalent about achievement Internalize & personalize societal ambiguities & conflicts View some achievement behaviors as betrayal of their social group</p> | <p>Devalue, discount or deny talent Drops out of GT & advanced classes Rejects challenges Moves from one peer group to the next Not connected to the teacher or the class Unsure of direction</p> | <p>Freedom to make choices Conflicts to be made explicit Learn to code switch Gifted peer group network Support for abilities Role models who cross cultures Self understanding & acceptance An audience to listen to what they have to say (to be heard)</p> | <p>Viewed as leaders or unrecognized Seen as average & successful Perceived to be compliant Seen as quiet/shy Seen as unwilling to risk Viewed as resistant</p> | <p>Interviews Parent nominations Teacher nominations Be cautious with peer nominations Demonstrated performance Measures of creative potential Nonverbal measures of intelligence</p> | <p>Cultural Brokering Normalize their dissonance College & career planning Provide gifted role models Model lifelong learning Give freedom to make choices Normalize the experience Don't compare with siblings Provide cultural brokering Build multicultural appreciation</p> | <p>Frame the concepts as social phenomena Welcoming learning environment Provide role models Help develop support group. Open discussions about class, racism, sexism Cultural Brokering Direct instruction of social Teach the hidden curriculum. Provide college planning Discuss costs of success</p> |

| Typ | Feelings & Attitudes | Behaviors | Needs | Adult/Peer Perceptions | Identification | Home Support | School Support |
|-------------------------|---|--|---|--|--|--|---|
| The At-Risk | Resentful & Angry Depressed Reckless & Manipulative Poor self-concept Defensive Unrealistic expectations Unaccepted Resistive to authority Not motivated for teacher driven rewards A subgroup is antisocial | Creates crises and causes disruptions Thrill seeking Will work for the relationship Intermittent attendance Pursues outside interests Low academic achievement May be self-isolating Often creative Criticizes self & | Safety and structure An "alternative" environment An Individualized program Confrontation and accountability Alternatives Professional Counseling Direction and short term goals | Adults may be angry with them Peers are judgmental Seen as troubled or irresponsible Seen as rebellious May be afraid of them May be afraid for them Adults feel powerless to help them | Individual IQ testing Achievement subtests Interviews Auditions Nonverbal measures of intelligence Parent nominations Teacher nominations | Seek counseling for family Avoid power struggles Involvement in extracurricular activities Assess for dangerous behavior Keep dialogue open Hold accountable Minimize punishments | Don't lower expectations Diagnostic testing Non-traditional study skill In-depth Studies & Mentoring G.E.D. Academic coaching Home visits Promote resilience Discuss secondary options Aggressive advocacy |
| Twice/Multi Exceptional | Learned helplessness Intense frustration & anger Mood disorders Prone to discouragement Work to hang on Don't see themselves as successful Poor academic self concept Don't know where to belong | Makes connections easily Demonstrates inconsistent work Seems average or below More similar to younger students in some aspects of social/emotional functioning May be disruptive or off-task Are good problem solvers Behavior problems Thinks conceptually Enjoys novelty & complexity Is disorganized Slow in information processing May not be able to cope with | Emphasis on strengths Coping strategies Skill development Monitoring for additional disorders --- especially ADHD To learn to persevere Environment that develops strengths To Learn to self-advocate | Requires too many modifications because of accommodation Seen as "weird" Underestimated for their potential Viewed as helpless Seen as not belonging in GT Perceived as requiring a great deal of structure Seen only for disability | Measure of current classroom functioning Achievement test scores Curriculum based assessment Examine performance over time Look for pattern of declining performance paired with evidence of superior ability Do not rely on IQ scatter analysis or test discrepancy analysis | Focus on strengths while accommodating disability Develop will to succeed Recognize & affirm gifted abilities Challenge in strength areas Provide risk-taking opportunities Assume college is a possibility Advocate at school Family Involvement Nurture self-control Teach how to set & reach realistic goals | Challenge in area of strength priority Acceleration in area of strength Accommodations for disability Ask, "what will it take for to succeed here?" Direct instruction in self-reg strategies Give time to be with GT peers Teach self-advocacy Teach SMART goal setting |
| Autonomous Learner | Self-confident Self-accepting Hold incremental view of ability Optimistic Intrinsically motivated Ambitious & excited May not view academics as one o their highest priorities Willing to fail and learn from it Shows tolerance and respect for others | Appropriate social skills Works independently Set SMART goals Seek challenge Strongly self directed Follows strong areas of passion Good self-regulators Stands up for convictions Resilient A producer of knowledge Possesses understanding & acceptance of self | More support not less Advocacy for new directions & increasing independence Feedback about strengths & possibilities Facilitation of continuing growth Support for risk-taking On-going, facilitative relationships Become more adept at managing themselves A support team | Admired & Accepted Seen as capable & responsible by parents Positive influences Successful in diverse environments Psychologically healthy Positive peer relationships | Demonstrated performance Products Nominations Portfolios Interviews Standardized Test scores Awards | Advocate for child at school & in the community Provide opportunities related to passion areas Allow friends of all ages Remove time & space restrictions for learning Help them build a support team Include in parent's passions Include in family decision making Listen Stay out of their way | Allow development of long term integrated plan of study Remove time & space rest Develop multiple, related studies, including mentors Wide variety of accelerated Mentors & cultural broker Waive traditional school regulations Stay out of their way Help them cope with psychological costs of success |

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- www.hoagiesgifted.org
- [www. Goldieblox.com](http://www.Goldieblox.com) A website to invite young girls in the ideas of engineering



Great iPad Apps for Young Children!

**A1 Spelling App
Activities**

Angry Birds

Angry Birds RIO

AppMATes

Be BIG

Bob the Builder

Branch Line

Witch Saga

Build a Truck

Camouflage

Cars 2

Cars Match

Cartoon HD

ChatterPix Kids*

Circle Game

Clifford

Day of Diesels

Differences

DoodleDandy

Elastic

Flow

Flow Free

Heroes of the City

Humpty Dumpty

Look Again

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Match Animals

Mathdoku +

MatrixMatch 1

Meet Toby

My Tom

Number Maze

PBS Kids

Pet Rescue Saga Bubble

Planes

Power 4

Puzzle Book

Puzzle Me

R-Tap Drums

Sand in a Box

Snowplow

Spencer Lite

Spot the Animals 2

Super WHY

Talking Gina

Talking Super Car

Tangram

The Castle

Thomas the Tank Engine

TouchBand

Toy Story

UNO Social Mad Math

Apps from Seth Buxton, age 5