



**Davidson Institute**  
for Talent Development

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## Frequently Asked Questions About Giftedness

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### General Information

#### Q. Who are the "profoundly intelligent"?

Profoundly intelligent young people are those with an exceptionally high level of intellectual precocity. While neither exceptionally high nor low intelligence can be determined only in terms of an intelligence quotient, an IQ score can be a useful index for identifying the intellectual potential of an individual by looking at the individual's "mental age" and comparing it to his/her "chronological age."

In terms of measurement, different tests produce different numbers. So, generally speaking, profoundly intelligent individuals are those individuals who have IQ's that are at the 99.999% percentile. For an overview of commonly used assessments, please view the Test, Score and Portfolio Guide.

It's important to also note that, despite many stereotypes, profoundly intelligent young people come from all ethnic groups, races, economic levels, and geographic areas. Like other young people, the profoundly intelligent are unique individuals with varied and multifaceted traits:

- Some of them demonstrate mastery in multiple domain areas; others excel in a single domain area.
- Some of them have highly developed social skills; others have limited social skills.
- Some of them are highly sensitive and suffer terribly from an unkind act or thoughtless remark; others are less affected.
- Some of them are perfectionists; others are quite comfortable taking risks and making mistakes.
- Some of them are extremely intense and appear to be hyperactive at times; others are not.
- Some of them excel in their classes; others do not.
- Some of them are both highly intelligent and learning disabled.
- Many are highly verbal, highly mathematical, highly musical, highly athletic, highly inventive, and many excel in other areas.

### Characteristics

#### Q. What are some of the characteristics of profoundly intelligent children?

While profoundly intelligent children are a diverse group of unique individuals, some of the characteristics they share in common are:

- An extreme need for constant mental stimulation.
- An ability to learn and process complex information rapidly.
- A need to explore subjects in surprising depth, to understand the why and how as well as the what.
- An insatiable curiosity; endless questions and inquiries about how things work.
- A need for precision in thinking and expression. A student who answers questions with that depends... is your first clue of extreme intelligence.
- An ability to focus intently on a subject of interest for long periods of time.
- An inability to concentrate on a task that is not intellectually challenging, such as those that involve repetition or that present material in bite size pieces.
- A propensity toward underachievement, particularly in females and adolescents who want to fit in with their classmates.

### How Many

#### Q. How many profoundly intelligent young people are there?

