

**Summary**

Gifted children often need more support than others at home and in the classroom, but this does not necessarily mean that they need more structured activities. Sometimes it means they need more freedom and a little more guidance instead. The general needs of gifted children are explored below.

**Understanding and Acceptance**

Gifted children are each uniquely individual, though they share certain characteristics with other gifted children. People around them notice that they learn differently, act differently and react differently to other children in their peer group. Very often, gifted children are misunderstood and people may look for reasons as to why they don't fit and try to make them conform. It is very important that the people around a gifted child understands them and accepts them as they are.

The qualities and characteristics of gifted children need to be discussed between parents, family members, teachers and club leaders; so that there is an acceptance of what is normal for them. This understanding will lead to a much more fulfilling experience for the child, where their feelings of isolation will be lessened.

One of the most important things to understand about gifted children is that their social and emotional development can often be at odds with their intellectual development. This is sometimes termed 'asynchronous development'. For more information on this issue, see NAGC fact sheet P52 Social and Emotional Development Advice.

**Enrichment**

Gifted children often ask a lot of questions in many situations. They have a great thirst for knowledge and their questions should never be brushed aside. If they cannot be answered when they are asked, questions can be saved for later or another resource can be consulted. For example, if a child is asking whether acid can turn into a gas and the answer isn't obvious, they can ask someone who might know, look it up in a book or search on the internet to find out. If they want to know a lot about a particular subject, it is important that they learn where they can find more information about it, thereby building up a bank of resources to use in the future.

To satisfy their thirst for knowledge and preserve their enthusiasm for learning, gifted children will benefit from experiencing subjects they are learning about in a deeper way. This can be gained from reading different books about a subject, researching the topic on the internet, visiting an exhibition at the local museum or art gallery about the theme and discussing their ideas about it with others.

**Thinking Skills**

To be equipped to work at a higher level in the long term, gifted children need to experience higher-order thinking skills; analysis, synthesis (working with several sources of information to create something new) and evaluation. Other thinking skills that are important are creative thinking, critical thinking and problem solving.

In everyday life, these skills can be acquired in a variety of ways. For more information on encouraging these see our fact sheets P90 Creative Thinking Skills, P91 Critical Thinking Skills and P92 Higher-Order Thinking Skills and the links below. For more information on gifted children's needs in their education see P11 Needs of Gifted Children in Education.

It is important to encourage thinking skills as often as possible and to value the more complex working involved. Reflecting after the event on the skills used and the feelings of triumph and satisfaction gained will help the child to see their value and want to repeat the experience.

### Opportunity to Fail

Gifted children need to meet failure because, when they get everything right most of the time, the need to succeed can place excessive pressure on them; they may become intellectually idle and could fail to develop good learning strategies. Taking risks in a safe environment is essential to their continued development.

Some gifted children are prone to perfectionism, for them it is even more important that they are able to understand that not all failure is bad.

“Failure as a result of adventurous thinking is one of the ingredients of success at the highest level. The only people who never fail are those who do nothing or those who only do easy things, which does not ultimately help them or anybody else.” Teare 2004.

For more information see NAGC fact sheet P52 Perfectionism.

### Contact with Others like Them

Gifted children need to be with other people like them to prevent them feeling isolated and to help them feel normal. This, in turn, will help to raise their self-esteem and enable them to be comfortable about using their gifts.

Contact with other gifted children will also offer intellectual challenge through discussion, play and activities.

These are some of the reasons why the NAGC has a network of local branches run by parent volunteers. To find information about these branches, go to the Branches part of the website.

**Further Information** Books can be ordered from our website shop: [www.nagcbrtain.org.uk/shop.php](http://www.nagcbrtain.org.uk/shop.php)

NAGC Factsheets	<a href="http://www.nagcbrtain.org.uk/parents.php?id=92">www.nagcbrtain.org.uk/parents.php?id=92</a>
Mensa Website – Gifted Children Section	<a href="http://www.mensa.org.uk/cgi-bin/item.cgi?ap=1&amp;id=524">www.mensa.org.uk/cgi-bin/item.cgi?ap=1&amp;id=524</a>
About.Com Gifted Kids Area	<a href="http://giftedkids.about.com/">giftedkids.about.com/</a>
<i>Parents’ and Carers’ Guide for Able and Talented Children</i> by Barry Teare	Book providing advice on home – school partnership and extension activities in different subjects. Also gives advice about suitable fiction choices for advanced readers.
<i>The Survival Guide for Parents of Gifted Kids</i> by Sally Yahnke Walker	An easy to read text dealing with many different issues of gifted children.
<i>A Parent’s Guide to Gifted Children</i> by Webb, Gore, Amend and DeVries	Written by four authors with decades of experience with gifted children and their families, this book covers issues such as peer relations, sibling issues, motivation and underachievement and discipline issues.