

Ten Myths & Facts About Gifted Students and Gifted Education¹

Myth #1: Gifted kids have it made and will succeed in life no matter what. They don't need any special help in school or anywhere else.

Fact: Everyone needs encouragement and help to make the most of their abilities and succeed in life. In fact, research shows that 25% of gifted people are underachievers and quit trying because nothing they do leads to any measurable success or satisfaction.

Myth #2: Gifted kids love school, get high grades, and greet each new school day with enthusiasm.

Fact: Most schools are geared for average learners, not gifted learners, which can make it hard for gifted students to get excited about going. Some of the most talented students in the United States actually choose to drop out of school altogether.

Myth #3: Gifted students come from white middle- and upper-class families.

Fact: Children with gifts and talents are represented in all cultural, ethnic, and socioeconomic groups.

Myth #4: Gifted kids are good at everything they do.

Fact: Some gifted students are good at many things; others are exceptionally able at only a few things. Some gifted students are also learning disabled, which means that they might not be very good at schoolwork.

Myth #5: Teachers love to have gifted students in their classes.

Fact: Some teachers do, some don't. Some teachers may feel uncomfortable with gifted students and can get defensive when they suspect that these students know more than they do.

Myth #6: If gifted students are grouped together, they will become snobbish and elitist.

Fact: Some students will, some won't. What's especially pernicious about this myth is that some adults use it to rationalize decisions about not allowing gifted students to work or study together or not providing them with opportunities that meet their learning needs. Gifted students need to be able to work together to learn and communicate at as rapid and in-depth a pace as they are able.

Myth #7: All gifted students have trouble adjusting to school and forming relationships.

Fact: Some gifted students do, some don't – just like other students.

¹ Adapted from: Galbraith, M.A., and Jim Delisle. *The Gifted Kids' Survival Guide: A Teen Handbook*. MN: Free Spirit Publishing, 1996.

Myth #8: Gifted students don't know that they're "different" unless someone tells them.

Fact: Most gifted students don't need to be identified or labeled before they are aware that they're not quite like their age peers.

Myth #9: Gifted students must constantly be challenged and kept busy or they'll get lazy.

Fact: Some gifted students might get bored, but they won't necessarily get lazy – just like other students.

Myth #10: Gifted kids are equally mature in all areas – academic, physical, social, and emotional.

Fact: This might make things simpler, but it's not true or reasonable. In fact, research has found that gifted youngsters tend to be asynchronous in their development. They may be way above their age peers in cognitive development and highly sensitive for their age, but may lag behind in physical development and socially they prefer younger kids or adults as companions.