

## The Other Side of Giftedness: Silent struggles and Classroom Realities

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### Abstract: -

When we think of gifted children, we often imagine smart kids who top their class and win medals. But there's another side to giftedness that people rarely see—the loneliness, pressure, boredom, and confusion these children quietly deal with. In this article we are going to see what giftedness really looks like, the signs to look out for, and the hidden struggles gifted children face both in school and at home. It also some shares ideas and techniques for how parents, teachers, and society can support these children better so they can truly shine in their own way.

### Introduction:

Giftedness doesn't just mean scoring high marks or excelling in academics. It's about a child who thinks deeply, feels intensely, and often sees the world in a different way. These children might be excellent in academics, art, music, leadership, or creative thinking. But sadly, many gifted kids suffer in silence because people expect them to be "perfect" all the time. They are misunderstood, bored in class, or feel lonely among peers. According to the U.S. Department of Education (1993) in its report "National Excellence: A Case for Developing America's Talent", gifted children are those

"who show high performance in areas such as

intelligence, creativity, art, or leadership."

These children often need special help to grow their skills fully. Giftedness can be of five main types:

- ⇒ **Intellectual** – Quick thinking, strong memory, and problem-solving.
- ⇒ **Academic** – Excellent in school subjects like maths or science.
- ⇒ **Creative** – New ideas, strong imagination, or innovation.
- ⇒ **Artistic** – Talents in drawing, music, dance, or theatre.
- ⇒ **Leadership** – Ability to lead, influence others, or organize well.

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## Identification of Giftedness

Giftedness in children can be identified by parents at home or by the teachers at school. Children who are gifted show their characteristics right from infancy and early childhood age, when they show some excellence in their developmental milestones, achieving earlier than the normal children. It is also observed that children having the special abilities display them right from the early childhood. Below are some of the commonly observed signs that can serve as a checklist to identify the gifted children:

- ✓ Learns faster than other children of the same age.
- ✓ Asks deep or unusual questions like “Why do people die?”
- ✓ Enjoys reading, music, or learning new things on their own.
- ✓ Gets emotional easily or is deeply sensitive.
- ✓ Finishes work quickly and gets bored waiting.
- ✓ Finds regular lessons too easy or slow.
- ✓ Asks questions that puzzle even teachers.
- ✓ Often daydreams or appears distracted—but has sharp insights.
- ✓ May act out or withdraw if misunderstood.
- ✓ Loves to read or learn about new topics.
- ✓ Thinks of smart or different ideas quickly.

- ✓ Speaks clearly and uses mature words early.
- ✓ Shows special talent in art, music, or stories.
- ✓ Solves problems in creative or new ways.
- ✓ Notices small details that others often miss.

## Challenges faced by gifted ones

### 1. Boredom from Repetition

Gifted children tend to learn quickly. But when they’re forced to sit through lessons they already understand, boredom takes over. According to a study done by Kanevsky, L. & Keighley, T. (2004), nearly 60% of gifted students reported feeling bored in school every day. This isn’t just restlessness—it leads to disengagement, underperformance, and frustration.

### 2. Not Always Top Scorers

Surprisingly, some gifted children don’t perform well in school. They might skip homework or struggle with organization. National Association for Gifted Children (NAGC), USA, 2012 estimates that about 20% of gifted students are underachievers. They don’t see the point of working hard when the tasks feel too easy or repetitive.

### 3. Overthinking Everything

Gifted children tend to analyse everything deeply, sometimes to the point of stress. A simple incident—like not understanding a classroom instruction—can

become a source of overthinking and anxiety. According to Neihart (2002) in *The Social and Emotional Development of Gifted Children*, this kind of cognitive intensity is common in gifted individuals and often leads to emotional exhaustion. Gifted minds can become overwhelmed due to constant mental processing.

#### **4. Misunderstood by Teachers**

Gifted children often ask deep, challenging questions or finish work early. But without proper training, teachers might see these kids as troublemakers or arrogant. According to Fordham Institute Report (2008), Washington D.C., USA only 1 in 4 teachers feel confident working with gifted students. This gap can cause these kids to feel neglected or mislabeled.

#### **5. Pressure to Always Be Perfect**

Many gifted children feel an internal or external push to be "the best" all the time. This can cause intense stress and anxiety. They may fear making mistakes or avoid difficult tasks just to maintain a perfect image. Over time, this can lead to mental health struggles like burnout or depression.

#### **6. Isolation in the Classroom**

Gifted children often feel isolated in the classroom because their thinking is ahead of their peers. They may finish work early or ask questions others don't understand, which makes it hard for them to connect with

classmates. This social gap can lead to loneliness and low self-esteem. Many gifted students struggle emotionally because they feel different and left out in school environments.

### **Problems Faced by Gifted children**

#### **1. Trouble Making Friends**

Gifted kids may talk about ideas or interests far beyond what their peers enjoy. While others might be discussing cartoons, they might be reading about the solar system or world politics. This makes it hard to connect with children their age, leading to loneliness or social isolation.

#### **2. Asynchronous Development**

Giftedness doesn't mean a child is advanced in every way. A child might solve math problems like a 15-year-old but still behave emotionally like a typical 10-year-old. This uneven growth—called asynchronous development—can be confusing for both the child and parents.

#### **3. Emotional Intensity**

Gifted children feel emotions more strongly than most. They may cry easily, react strongly to unfairness, or deeply connect with a cause—making everyday life overwhelming at times.

#### **4. Early Existential Worries**

Gifted children often think deeply about life's big questions: Why do people die? Why is the world unfair? What's the meaning of life? These questions can cause anxiety,

especially when they don't yet have the tools to process them. It's a heavy burden for a young child to carry alone.

## 5. Twice Exceptional (2e) Children

Some gifted kids also have learning disabilities like ADHD, dyslexia, or autism. These are called twice exceptional or 2e children. They might struggle with focus or reading, even while excelling in other areas. Because one strength hides the other's weakness, these children are often missed or misdiagnosed.

## 6. Lack of Understanding

Society often misinterprets giftedness. Teachers and parents might expect only good grades and obedience, without recognizing curiosity, boredom, or emotional depth. Gifted learners are frequently misunderstood by their peer group and teachers.

## Why It Matters

Gifted children are more than just high achievers—they're complex individuals with unique emotional and educational needs. Supporting gifted children truly matters because their talents are just seeds that need care to grow. Ignoring their struggles means we risk losing their potential. When their needs are ignored, they can become anxious, depressed, or completely lose interest in learning. Helping gifted kids is not a luxury—it's a responsibility. When we nurture their minds and hearts, we're not just helping

them—we're building a brighter future for everyone.

## What Can Be Done?

### For Parents:

- ☞ Listen to their feelings, not just marks.
- ☞ Let them question freely without fear.
- ☞ Give fun learning tools like puzzles, books, or playing kits.
- ☞ Focus on emotional health, not just marks.
- ☞ Connect them with mentors or peers who share their interests.
- ☞ Understand that being gifted doesn't mean being perfect.

### For Teachers:

- ☞ Offer advanced learning options or independent projects.
- ☞ Give harder or creative work if they finish early.
- ☞ Don't confuse boredom with laziness.

- ☞ Create space for deep conversations and critical thinking.
- ☞ Get basic training in gifted education strategies.
- ☞ Be kind to their emotions- gifted kids feel deeply.

### For Schools and other organizations:

- ☞ Include gifted education in teacher training programs.
- ☞ Provide enrichment programs and flexible learning paths.

- ☞ Recognize and support twice exceptional students with inclusive policies.
- ☞ Expand rural and low-income access to gifted programs.
- ☞ Train teachers to handle gifted students.
- ☞ Start talent clubs or enrichment programs.

## Some Gifted Personalities

### ☞ **Kautilya Pandit – The Google Boy** (Haryana)

Kautilya became famous at just 6 years old with his amazing memory and knowledge of world geography, politics, and space science. From Karnal, Haryana, this child prodigy could answer questions that puzzled adults, earning him the title “Google Boy of India.”

### ☞ **Lydian Nadhaswaram – The Musical Genius** (Tamil Nadu)

Lydian, from Chennai, is a piano prodigy who plays at lightning speed and even performs two different songs on each hand—at the same time! He won the global talent show The World’s Best and has composed music for films, showing how deep talent can go when it’s nurtured with discipline and love for art.

### ☞ **Edmund Thomas Clint – The Boy Who Painted Dreams** (Kerala)

Clint, from Kochi, lived only 7 years—but in that short time, he created over 25,000

paintings. From traditional Kerala art to imaginative sketches, his work displayed an emotional depth and creativity far beyond his age. He remains one of India’s most touching examples of giftedness in art.

### ☞ **Nihal Raj (Little Chef Kicha)– The Mini Masterchef** (Kerala)

Nihal Raj, also known as Kicha, began cooking at age 4 and rose to fame through his adorable YouTube videos. At just 6, he was invited to The Ellen DeGeneres Show in the U.S. His joy, confidence, and creativity in the kitchen prove that even everyday passions can be gifts waiting to bloom.

## Conclusion: Every Gift Needs Nurturing

Gifted children are more than just smart—they are deep thinkers, feelers, and dreamers. But many of them hide their struggles behind smiles and good marks. They need more than praise—they need people who truly understand them. If we listen to them, guide them, and give them the support they deserve, they can grow into kind, creative, and strong individuals. Let’s stop assuming gifted kids have it easy, expecting them to be perfect, and instead, help them be happy. Because every gifted child is a light—and all they need is a little care to shine bright.

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