

Assessments

It's often confusing to parents if, when, where, and why they should have their child tested for giftedness.

While gifted professionals agree that test scores should not be the sole source of identifying high-ability learners, the fact is that tests and assessments are still administered in some districts, schools, and gifted programs in order to clarify the educational needs of students or if a learning discrepancy is suspected.

Public school districts with gifted programs often use subject-specific, standardized achievement (such as PARCC, NWEA MAP, SAT, MAT, ITBS, SRA), or group ability (CoGAT) tests to identify students that qualify for gifted programming. Districts administer tests as part of the school calendar and establish test score benchmarks to qualify for specific gifted programs.

When a school district has no gifted program or has elected not to test your child, you may wonder if you should have your child tested independently. Before testing, you might first explore other options— such as regrouping, subject-based acceleration, or grade-based acceleration—with your school or district.

QUESTIONS PARENTS MOST OFTEN ASK

Why should I have my child tested?

Ask yourself the following questions before deciding to have your child tested:

- Are there indicators—such as academic performance, social-emotional characteristics, or certain behaviors—that makes me suspect my child is gifted?
- Is my child not thriving or unhappy in his current learning environment?
- Is my child applying to a gifted and talented enrichment program, camp, online course, or independent gifted school where test results are required for admission?
- Does my child demonstrate giftedness, but it's not recognized because I suspect other factors (such as a learning disability, ADHD, or anxiety, for example) may be getting in the way?

If the answer is “yes,” to any of the above questions, you might want to pursue having your child tested privately.



FOOD FOR THOUGHT

» Tests and assessments provide specific data points measuring certain skills, but are not always an accurate reflection of an individual's full capabilities, nor do they automatically guarantee placement in gifted programs.

» Tests should not serve as the sole criteria for identifying gifted children; the best programs use both objective and subjective measures for determining giftedness.

» Subjective measures include talent inventories, parent, teacher, and student questionnaires, portfolio reviews, journals, and student performances.



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Which test(s) should I have my child take?

Reflect on the goals for testing your child and how the results will be used. If the test results are part of an application or admissions process, check first with the organization to see which tests they require and/or accept. It is important to align an ability test or subtest to the type of gifted and talented program your child is interested in.

Most often, an IQ test will be sufficient to establish baseline information. Students from low-income or culturally and linguistically different backgrounds may take a non-verbal test, such as the Naglieri Nonverbal Ability Test or the Test of Nonverbal Intelligence, in order to overcome cultural nuances and to provide an equitable and fair assessment.

Consulting with an educational or clinical psychologist will help determine the most appropriate test and whether you need a more extensive suite of assessments for your child.

When should I get my child tested?

Researchers generally agree that it's difficult to make accurate IQ determinations at an early age. Unless required for admission to a specific school or program, it's typically not recommended that children under the age of 6 be tested. For younger children, alternate measures of high ability include characteristics checklists, parent/teacher surveys and interviews, observations, and portfolios.

How do I get my child tested?

Private testing is administered by licensed psychologists with expertise in gifted and talented children. Lists or referrals are often available from independent gifted schools, gifted programs, state gifted associations, psychology associations, and/or local gifted parent groups.

FOR MORE INFO

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