



## What Does Profoundly Gifted Mean?

Giftedness is a brain-based difference that contributes to our vibrant and neurodiverse world. But what is *profoundly* gifted? Those who are profoundly gifted score in the 99.9th percentile on IQ tests and have an exceptionally high level of intellectual prowess. These students score at least three standard deviations above the norm on the bell curve, so they are at the extreme end of the intelligence, or IQ, continuum. Please refer to "[IQ and Educational Needs](#)" for details about the bell curve and population statistics.

Profoundly gifted students are not necessarily gifted in all areas of learning. Like most people, profoundly intelligent students are unique individuals with varied and multifaceted talents and interests. Some demonstrate mastery in multiple areas while others excel in a single subject.

The National Association of Gifted Children (NAGC) developed a full [definition of giftedness \(PDF\)](#) that provides details on the various definitions and levels of giftedness. [This Hoagies Gifted article](#) also goes into more detail on the various types of profound or exceptional giftedness.

## What IQ is Considered Profoundly Gifted?

0.13% of the population is more than three standard deviations below the mean (IQ < 55), and 0.13% of the population is more than three standard deviations above the mean (IQ 145-160). Thus, 13 out of 10,000 individuals score above 145 and are considered profoundly gifted. See more on the Davidson Gifted Blog post, "[IQ and Educational Needs](#)" for what constitutes a profoundly gifted IQ score.

*"Studies of the profoundly gifted learners suggest that they differ significantly from highly gifted students as a result of differently wired neurons that allow more complex and efficient neural highways for transmitting information. They seem to have different value structures, which usually allow them to cope with the dissonance they find between their perception of life and that of the average person."* – Barbara Clark, in the article, [Helping Parents Understand their Profoundly Gifted Children](#)

## Developmental Differences in Profoundly Gifted Children

Profoundly gifted young children have specific developmental needs. Because of their often-asynchronous development, parents of gifted children often describe them as being "many ages at once." This is because the gifted child's intellectual development is proceeding at a much more rapid rate than physical or social or emotional development. Although this is perfectly normal for an extremely gifted child, it does present certain problems and challenges, especially in an age-segregated society.

Profoundly gifted students may literally be able to comprehend intellectually what they are not ready to deal with emotionally. They may be able to construct a complex story with plot and characterization that is more typical of a middle school student while they are only the age of four, but they still usually have the motor skills of a typical four-year-old and cannot write their story down. They may have perfectly age-appropriate reactions to events, but because of their large vocabularies and ability to think abstractly in some ways, they find that adults expect them to act older than they really are in all settings. Check out this article from the Davidson Institute on [frequently asked questions about extreme intelligence](#) for more on gifted developmental differences.

## Schools for Profoundly Gifted Children

In 2006, the Davidson Academy's [Reno campus](#) opened as the first free public school of its kind for profoundly gifted middle and high school students. Unlike traditional school settings, the Academy's classes group students by ability rather than age. In 2016, a fully accredited [online campus](#) was added to the Davidson Academy's offerings for the 2017-2018 academic year. To attend either option, students should score in the 99.9th percentile on accepted intelligence and/or achievement tests; perform at a required academic level; exhibit intellectual and academic achievement; demonstrate motivation, social and emotional maturity, and an overall readiness for a fast-paced educational environment.

At the [Davidson Academy](#), both options are centered on a rigorous [academic environment](#) where students thrive among their intellectual peers.