Explanation of Behaviors
Categorized in the
Kingore Observation Inventory (KOI), 2nd ed.
Grades K through 3

ADVANCED LANGUAGE

Uses multisyllabic words unassumingly; descriptive

Gifted children who demonstrate advanced language are frequently noticed for their large vocabularies and unexpected use of multisyllabic words. For example, a child in second grade wrote a creative story about a rock music group which she names "Igneous". Because of their larger vocabularies, gifted primary children may also be unusually descriptive and use more adjectives than their age mates.

Asks questions about words (in print or oral language)

"What does that word mean?" "Why did you use that word?" Be especially aware of prereading four to six-year-old children who ask about the print on flaps, signs, and other words when an adult is reading a book to them.

Uses similes, metaphors, or analogies; rich imagery

These children incorporate more colorful language to express a point, such as a child who commented about all the pullout programs in school: "Our school is like a hotel; people are checking in and out of here all day!"

Modifies language for less mature children

These children interpret and respond to the level of readiness of their audience. They may change the pitch of their voice as some adults do to talk with young children. Also, when talking to their less experienced peers, they may use less sophisticated words and shorter sentences.

Displays verbal skills when teaching others, handling conflicts, or influencing the behavior of others

These children become a mediator among friends. At times, they may referee disputes among classmates and try to help one child understand the viewpoint of another.

Expresses similarities and differences

These children may respond more readily, insightfully, and complexly when asked to compare seemingly unrelated objects, such as: "How is a pencil like a person?"

Uses the specific language of a discipline

Because of their larger vocabularies, these children integrate more specific science, social studies, and math terminology. If interested in writing, they are word collectors who particularly seek more interesting adjectives and verbs to use in their writing.

ANALYTICAL THINKING

Demonstrates complex and abstract thinking

Gifted children who demonstrate advanced degrees of analytical thinking connect relationships that other children do not understand. They may form associations across time and disciplines as they study a topic.

Analyzes classroom tasks and instructional techniques

Primary gifted children like solving problems, such as figuring out how to improvise with common materials and objects. They may exhibit less trial-and-error behavior because they analyze the task before they begin.

Observes intensely; is unusually attentive to details in their environment

These children are highly observant and analyze what they see. Thus, they often get more out of a story, film, or field trip, and they are likely to retain information about what they observe.

Takes apart and reassembles ideas, objects, or experiences

"Let's take it apart and see what's wrong." These students frequently want to see what is inside an object and how it all works. They may display skills working new or different manipulatives because they analyze relationships as they handle parts of wholes.

Analyzes cause and effect, consequences, or alternatives

Unprompted, a student might comment: "That happened because…" or question: "What might happen if…"

Creates songs, stories, or riddles related to the learning experiences

Primary gifted children apply their learning through creative oral or written extensions of what they have learned. For example, they adapt a song share in class by creating new words to fit the tune.

Organizes collections or ideas in unique ways

Many primary gifted children are collectors or organizers. They organize collections or data in unexpected or even insightful ways. They also like to organize other students: "You be the post office guy, and come to get my letter."

MEANING MOTIVATION

Is philosophical; pursues issues atypical of agemates

Young gifted children who exhibit advanced meaning motivation startle adults with their philosophical interests and questions, such as a kindergartener who said to her teacher: "If I only had my eyes and my brain, I would still be me because I could see things and think about them."

Asks penetrating, intellectual questions; intense need to understand

These children ask unexpected, intellectual questions. They question and want to talk about things an adult does not expect them to even know. Their questions stem from their independent thinking and need for explanations.

Is curious; innovatively experiments

Most children ask questions pertaining to permissions, details, and functions. Gifted children ask questions motivated by intellectual curiosity rather than simple information gathering. They want to understand the reason or motivation behind an occurrence.

Remembers!

These children amaze adults with what they remember. They continue analyzing an issue until it makes sense, and then, they remember it longer.

Displays an unexpected depth of knowledge in one or more areas; an "expert"

Gifted children typically compile numerous details regarding subjects of interest. They may even clarify the answer of an adult or another student who uses less precise information, such as: "It's actually 365 ¼ days because…"These children become absorbed in one kind of knowledge or one area of specialization, and they may surprise adults with the depth of their information and concept mastery.

Demonstrates intense task commitment and energy when pursuing interests; persistent

When excited about what they are doing or learning, these students exceed the amount of time adults typically expect primary children to stay on task. Their stimulated minds keep their bodies going.

Wants to do things independently

They prefer to go ahead with a project with a minimum of direct teaching. "I can do it." "Wait, Don't tell me. Let me figure it out."

Synthesizes meaning through words, graphics, structures, or movement

These students employ pictures, constructions, role playing, and verbalization to explain their meaningful interpretations.

PERSPECTIVE

Interprets another's point of view

Gifted children who demonstrate advanced perspective more readily understand another's viewpoint. They interpret what influences or motivates others. They may try to explain other viewpoints to peers or adults, such as: "What he meant was…"

Demonstrates complex dimension or perspective in language, art, or problem solving

The natural, artistic expressions of these students may reveal objects drawn from an unusual angle, such as a bird's eye view of a dog. Their conversations are filled with "but what about…" as they pursue the multiple perspectives of an issue. They frequently approach problems from atypical points of view.

Creates and interprets more complex shapes, patterns, or graphics than agemates

These children create amazing patterns with blocks, doodles, clay, tangrams, or graphics. Especially notice if their pattern is symmetrical or indicates more sophisticated planning.

Demonstrates that directionality is relative to position

These students understand that concept of left and right from multiple perspectives. When modeling the Hockey Pokey song, a first grader told the teacher: "You're doing it all wrong, but that's okay. The reason you're doing it wrong is because you're in front of us."

Adds interesting components to enhance products

More than just draw or construct to complete a project, these students add embellishments that enhance the total effect of the product.

SENSE OF HUMOR

Says or does something indicating a sense of humor beyond agemates

Gifted children who demonstrate advanced degrees of humor love to use it. When a story with layers of humor is read aloud, these children laugh at incidents and puns that peers do not understand.

Catches an adult's subtle or sophisticated humor

A gifted child frequently understands adults' jokes. One teacher commented about a boy who knew the other children did not understand her humor. So, each time she said something funny that went over the heads of the others, he just winked at her.

Uses figurative language for humorous effect

These children understand humorous language such as in The King Who Rained or the Amerlia Bedelia books, and they make up new examples.

Understands and responds to the use of puns and riddles

Gifted students often comprehend the multiple meanings of a word and thus understand puns. They love to tell all kinds of silly jokes and frequently ask: "Do you get it?"

Develops a humorous idea to the extreme; "flights of fantasy"

To some adults, these students' humor may seem absurd, too silly, or go on too long.

SENSITIVITY

Exhibits intense concern for human issues

Gifted children who exhibit an intense degree of sensitivity seem to develop a concern for human needs and rights before their agemates. After seeing homeless people asleep on the street, a primary child asked his mother, "What is our family doing about this?"

Acts spontaneously to help someone in need

Many gifted children are highly aware of others' needs. They may help another person without being asked.

Shows nonverbal awareness of another's needs and feelings

A young gifted child's face may reveal empathy for a character in a read-aloud story or for a peer in the classroom.

Expresses empathy through words or art

A second grader noted to a visitor: "Everyone expects Lisa to win so she's under more pressure than other kids." These children are capable of great empathy and insight into a situation.

Displays a strong sense of fairness and justice

These children insist that things must be fair. They exhibit an early interest in adult ethical issues such as prejudice and life's inequities. They often act against group pressures to follow through on what they perceive as right.

Expresses high expectations of self and others; high-strung

Gifted children may set high expectations for themselves and those significant to them. This is a negative behavior when it causes the child to shy away from new tasks or challenges in order to remain in control and always do well, i.e., perfectionistic behaviors.

Senses discord or dissatisfaction

Gifted children may be so attuned to the feelings and motivations of others that they intervene to counter a potential problem before help is requested. They exhibit a superior ability to interpret nonverbal clues.

Overracts at times

The intense sensitivity of these children leads them to overact, or seem to overreact, when perceived human needs are not met. Their reaction may seem excessive as they go on and on about an issue.

ACCELERATED LEARNING

Requires minimum repetition for mastery

Because many young gifted children need little repetition to master material, their learning accelerates. They are able to assimilate larger amounts of information and complex material more easily than average learners. They often master a new skill with unusual speed.

Increases rate of learning after introduction and exposure

Primary gifted children may exhibit substantial growth spurts in academic areas such as reading and math once learning begins.

Categorizes by multiple, often less-obvious, attributes

Attribute listing and categorization are significant areas in which gifted students stand out. Especially note the degree of complexity of the attributes when a child simultaneously categorizes by more than one attribute, e.g., "These polygons are thin, red hexagons."

Reads and interprets consecutive passages at an advanced level

Once these children make the reading connection, they usually move quickly into above-grade-level material. They are analytical and can relate more subtle inferences as they comprehend.

Demonstrates an unexpected mastery of complex science or math concepts

Math is an interesting area for gifted potentials to emerge because math talents are less influenced by cultural or language differences. A bilingual kindergartner asked his teacher: "Tell me about the numbers that come before zero. I know they call them 'negative'."

Applies mathematical operations with sophisticated mastery

These children more readily understand and explain the relationships of math operations. They enjoy manipulating multiple ways to work problems while classmates may only be ready to work on one operation such as addition or subtraction.

Creates advanced products

These students develop products that surprise adults with their complexity or concept density. Although the content is advanced, the product appearance may be either advanced or more simple, depending upon the strengths of the child.

Accesses data with ease using an unexpected variety of tools

Young gifted students are intrigued with reference materials at an earlier age and with more intensity than typical for their peers. They impress adults with the ease at which they use technology to access data.

Kingore, B. (2001). The Kingore Observation Inventory (KOI). 2nd ed. Austin: Professional Associates Publishing.