Chapter 9

Gifted Child

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Definitions of Giftedness

A gifted child is one who demonstrates abilities or potential significantly above average in one or more areas, such as intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership capacities. Giftedness does not simply mean doing well in school; rather, it refers to exceptional natural abilities that place a child in the top range of performance compared to peers.

Different organizations define giftedness in slightly different ways. The U.S. Department of Education describes gifted children as those who perform or show the potential to perform at high levels of accomplishment when compared with others of the same age and environment. Giftedness may be shown in areas such as:

- Intellectual and academic ability.
- Creativity and originality.
- Leadership skills.

- Talent in art, music, or athletics.

Diagnosing the Gifted: Signs of Giftedness

Identifying gifted children is important so that schools can provide appropriate challenges and opportunities. Giftedness is usually diagnosed through teacher observations, parental reports, and standardized tests of intelligence, creativity, or achievement.

Common signs of giftedness include:

- Learning new information very quickly.
- Advanced vocabulary and early reading ability.
- Strong memory and attention to detail.
- Asking deep or complex questions.
- Unusual curiosity and creativity.
- Preference for older companions or independent work.
- Intense focus on topics of interest.

Not all gifted children show all signs, and some may also have learning or behavioral difficulties - this is known as being "twice-exceptional" (gifted and having a disability).

Needs and Challenges of Gifted Children

Although gifted children have exceptional abilities, they may face unique challenges:

- **Underachievement**: Some gifted students may become bored with routine classroom work and fail to reach their potential.
- **Social difficulties**: They may feel different from peers and struggle to fit in.
- **Perfectionism**: Many gifted children set extremely high standards for themselves, leading to frustration or anxiety.

- **Uneven development**: A child may be advanced in thinking but immature emotionally or socially.

Educational Support for Gifted Students

Schools and teachers can support gifted children by providing learning opportunities that match their abilities:

1. **Acceleration**: Moving the student ahead in subjects where they excel or early entrance to school or grade-skipping in some cases.
2. **Enrichment**: Providing advanced projects, research opportunities, or creative activities beyond the regular curriculum.
3. **Differentiated Instruction**: Adapting lessons to include more complex tasks and higher-order thinking activities.
4. **Special Programs and Competitions**: Science fairs, math contests, arts programs, or leadership workshops.
5. **Social and Emotional Support**: Counseling to help with stress, perfectionism, or social integration.

Practical Examples

- A gifted student in mathematics may be given challenging problem-solving tasks beyond the grade level.
- A child with exceptional artistic talent may participate in specialized art classes while still attending regular school.
- A gifted reader may work on independent research projects or advanced novels while classmates work at grade level.

Key Terms

English Term	Meaning in Arabic
Gifted Child	الطفل الموهوب
Enrichment Program	برنامج الإثراء

English Term	Meaning in Arabic
Acceleration	التسريع
Twice-Exceptional	استثنائي مزدوج

Questions and Answers

Q1: What is a gifted child?

A1: A child who shows abilities or potential significantly above average in intellectual, creative, artistic, or leadership areas.

Q2: How do gifted children differ from high achievers?

A2: High achievers succeed through effort and discipline, while gifted children show exceptional natural abilities that may not always be reflected in grades.

Q3: Give three common signs of giftedness.

A3: Advanced vocabulary, quick learning, and strong memory.

Q4: What does the term "twice-exceptional" mean?

A4: A child who is gifted but also has a learning disability or other special need.

Q5: What are some challenges gifted children may face?

A5: Underachievement, social difficulties, perfectionism, and uneven development.

Q6: How can schools meet the needs of gifted students?

A6: Through acceleration, enrichment, differentiated instruction, and special programs.

Q7: What is acceleration in gifted education?

A7: Allowing students to advance faster in subjects or grades to match their abilities.

Q8: Why do some gifted students feel socially isolated?

A8: Because their interests and abilities may differ from those of their peers.

Q9: How can enrichment programs help gifted children?

A9: By providing advanced and creative learning opportunities beyond the standard curriculum.

Q10: What role does counseling play in supporting gifted students?

A10: It helps them manage stress, perfectionism, and social integration.

Q11: Give an example of differentiated instruction for a gifted student.

A11: Assigning research projects or problem-solving tasks that go beyond the regular curriculum.