

Tips to Challenge and Engage a Gifted Reader

www.kidsacademy.mobi

If you suspect your child is gifted, you might have noticed a few learning peculiarities about your child that is different from your other children or even your friend's. Perhaps your preschooler is intensely interested in subject areas that seem advanced or impressive for his age. Maybe your child seems to possess thinking skills that far outpace her biological age. Or maybe your child is picking up on sight words without you ever teaching them to him. Whatever it is you have noticed about your little learner, you might be wondering to yourself exactly when do kids learn to read? If this sounds a lot like you, you might be not be surprised to find out that the answer isn't as clear cut as it seems.



Watch on [YouTube](https://www.youtube.com)

The key to understanding giftedness is realizing that it is far more than just “being smart”. Of course, gifted children are very intelligent, but giftedness does not always mean that kids are advanced in all areas. For instance, a child might have advanced critical thinking skills, but lag behind in social and emotional skills. Similarly, a gifted child that loves and excels naturally in reading might not necessarily love completing math problems.

Since learning is asynchronous, it is important to tap into your child's interests, and lift up and promote a love for all subject areas. If your child seems to have advanced verbal and thinking skills, then this article is for you! Let's take a deeper look at how a parent can identify a gifted reader, and important strategies to use to foster your child's love for reading while advancing his or her skills!

Even gifted readers need to keep growing minds stimulated! [Spark your child's love for learning with our Talented and Gifted app. Now for a limited time, get an entire year of energizing games, videos, and worksheets for just \\$49.99!](#)

How Do I Know if My Child is a Gifted Reader?

First and foremost, a parent must ask the question: "[is my child gifted?](#)" While gifted learners do not exhibit traits in every academic or developmental area, if your child is gifted, chances are that the giftedness spans across several different skillsets. However, it is also possible for a child to be gifted, and not necessarily interested in an area that he or she is interested. To get a clear answer, nominate your child and have him or her tested at school, starting in kindergarten.



If you suspect your child is gifted before your child enters the classroom, look for some of the following characteristics:

- A high degree of alertness from infancy
- A sharp memory and attention to detail
- Complex thinking beginning from an early age
- A developed sense of humor that begins earlier than usual
- A vast range of interests or an intense focus on one subject or topic
- An attention span longer than many children of a similar age
- Highly sensitive or emotive, often preoccupied in one's own thoughts or daydreaming

If you think your child fits the bill in regards to some of the above traits, think about his or her vocabulary, grammar when speaking, and whether your child has seemingly self-taught themselves to read text. If you find your child has a keen interest in reading and learning new words from an early age, you might have a gifted reader on your hands! When this is the case, harness your child's intense interest in language and use it to fuel an early love for books! In this case, teaching kids to love reading is as simple as exposing them to a variety of texts!

Smart Strategies to Try with Gifted Readers

By now you might have determined that your child is a gifted reader, and the sky is the limit! However, to keep your child engaged might take some work for various reasons. For one, kids need to find books on topics they will enjoy to stay engaged in the reading. Additionally, all kids, even those who are gifted, are unique individuals and learn and react in different ways. Some kids may get bored reading for long periods of time, or they might need even more stimulation to keep interest in a book that is below their reading comprehension level, but above and beyond their maturity level.



It might seem like an artform just to discover what will spark your little reader's interest, but try the following to keep your gifted reader engaged and moving forward:

Don't worry too much about learning styles

You might have heard a lot about the importance of teaching kids using their preferred learning style. That is to say, if your child is a hands-on learner, to model lessons and teachable moments using hands-on activities. While this is great advice for teaching the vast majority of typical students, limiting most activities to those that your child is comfortable with will quickly make your gifted learner bored!

[Gifted kids love a good challenge](#). Because gifted readers can think outside of the box from an early age, it's important to push them outside their comfort zone to keep their minds stimulated. For instance, if your child loves creating book-related crafts, that's great! But use the strategy in moderation and instead try out an activity outside your child's comfort zone, like writing lyrics to an original song or rap that relates to the themes of the book he or she is reading.

Offer a menu of book ideas

It's important to offer a wide variety of book types to keep your little reader intrigued. Try to offer a selection that spans different genres and formats. While it's widely known that

most kids enjoy fiction books, suggest titles that pique your child's interest that are informational or nonfiction. For instance, kids who love learning about space and planets can read magazines or books on the topic, alongside fiction books that use the same topic as a setting.

Further, offer titles across print mediums. For instance, instead of only offering chapter books, encourage your child to explore alternate formats like graphic novels, age-appropriate comics, magazines, blogs, etc. When making suggestions to your child, make sure to offer them a choice instead of merely presenting a single idea. Categorize titles by topic, genre, and/or format, and allow your child to explore and make a choice. Don't be surprised if your child chooses to tackle several different texts at once, but be sure to help your child manage reading time and texts.

Connect reading to activities your child already loves

It might seem obvious to read about the topics your child is already interested in, as suggested above. However, you can take this idea one step further, and incorporate interests into the reading process itself. For instance, if your child loves solving problems or mysteries, help him or her dive into a book that allows readers to choose their own adventure. This offers a choice in the reading process itself, and allows kids to go back and make a second choice to re-read the book in a whole new light. If your child likes to write, extend this activity by allowing your child to make predictions and write an alternate ending before and after the reading is completed. This allows kids to utilize and put those creative thinking skills to work!

Another great example would be to introduce your child to how-to books that help your child complete projects that are interesting to him or her. The projects may include crafts, science projects, or kitchen tasks. Some kids may even be interested in books that explain how things work, and use those to propel an interest in building structures, like model cars, planes, trains, or more!

Plan extension activities and use higher level questioning before, during, and after reading

While many kids can easily get lost in a good book for hours on end, it's important not to let reading go without extension activities or questioning. Sometimes it's important to let a passion play out in the form of reading, but it's helpful to keep kids engaged by making connections to the reading, especially for kids who are skilled at reading, but aren't necessarily book worms.

First, plan extension activities with a text that allows your child to think creatively and analytically. If the text involves an outside subject like history or science, explore the topic using related activities to help your child make a personal connection from text to

life. Offer your child a choice of activities to extend thinking, and engage with your child and encourage their interest in the topic or subject.

Lastly, don't forget to use higher level questioning before, during, and after reading to spark cognitive thinking and teach your child to read closely for detail. We've already written about questioning strategies for readers. In short, be sure to ask prediction questions before reading, comprehension and probing questions throughout reading, and talk about thematic elements at the conclusion of a book. Read alongside your child, or make it more like a book club and read independently to discuss with your child as he or she gets lost in the book!

If your early learner seems to have sharp language skills long before kindergarten, you might have been wondering when do kids learn to read? The answer is simply this: whenever they're ready! However, if you're asking the aforementioned question, it's possible your child shows signs of giftedness, and there are certainly ways to extend learning and enrich your child's early education. Try the strategies above to get started, and even if your child is not gifted, many of the above techniques can be accommodated for any learner to help kids foster an early love for reading and learning!

