

GIFTED PROGRAM ASSESSMENT WORKSHEET

Is Your Child's Gifted Program Helping or Hurting?

Use this checklist to evaluate your child's gifted program. Circle YES or NO for each question, then tally your scores.

SECTION 1: Program Philosophy (Does it focus on growth or perfection?)

Question	Yes	No
Does the program celebrate mistakes as learning opportunities?	1	-1
Are students encouraged to try new things even if they might fail?	1	-1
Is creativity and exploration valued as much as grades?	1	-1
Do teachers talk about "growth mindset" and effort over "being the smartest"?	1	-1
Are students compared to themselves (progress) rather than to each other (ranking)?	1	-1

Section 1 Score: ____ / 5

SECTION 2: Your Child's Emotional Wellbeing

Question	Yes	No
Does your child seem excited about school most days?	1	-1
Can your child handle getting a B without a meltdown?	1	-1
Is your child sleeping well (no Sunday night anxiety, stress)?	1	-1
Does your child talk about friends in the program positively?	1	-1
Does your child feel comfortable asking for help when stuck?	1	-1
Is your child trying new activities/hobbies outside of academics?	1	-1
Does your child seem relaxed and happy at home?	1	-1

Section 2 Score: ____ / 7

SECTION 3: Warning Signs (Red Flags)

Question	Yes	No
Does your child have frequent stomachaches or headaches before school?	1	-2
Does your child cry over grades regularly?	1	-2
Has your child stopped doing things they used to love?	1	-2
Does your child say things like "I'm not smart enough" or "I'm stupid"?	1	-2
Is your child afraid to try new things because they might not be perfect at them?	1	-2
Does your child compare themselves negatively to peers constantly?	1	-2
Have you noticed perfectionist behaviors (erasing over and over, ripping up work)?	1	-2
Does your child have panic attacks or severe anxiety about school?	1	-2

Section 3 Score: ____ / 8

SECTION 4: Program Structure & Support

Question	Yes	No
Does the program include social-emotional learning/counseling?	1	-1
Are there mental health resources available to gifted students?	1	-1
Do teachers check in about stress levels, not just academic performance?	1	-1
Is there support for students who struggle with perfectionism?	1	-1
Are parents regularly updated on wellbeing (not just grades)?	1	-1

Section 4 Score: ____ / 5

SECTION 5: Diversity & Inclusion

Question	Yes	No
Does the program reflect the school's overall demographics?	1	-1
Does your child see themselves represented in the program (teachers/students)?	1	-1
Does your child feel like they belong?	1	-1
Are multiple identification methods used (not just one test)?	1	-1

Section 5 Score: ____ / 4

TOTAL SCORE: ____ / 29

WHAT YOUR SCORE MEANS:

20-29 Points: HEALTHY PROGRAM

Your child's gifted program appears to be well-designed and focused on growth. Continue monitoring your child's wellbeing, but this program seems to be working well.

Action Steps:

- Continue open communication with your child
- Celebrate effort and growth, not just achievement
- Monitor for any changes in wellbeing

10-19 Points: PROCEED WITH CAUTION

The program has some positive elements but also concerning signs. Pay close attention to your child's mental health and consider advocating for program changes.

Action Steps:

- Schedule a meeting with the gifted coordinator
- Ask specific questions about mental health support
- Implement stress-management routines at home
- Set a check-in date (3-6 months) to reassess

0-9 Points: SERIOUS CONCERNS

This program may be doing more harm than good. Your child's wellbeing should be the priority.

Action Steps:

- Schedule an immediate meeting with school administrators
- Consult with a child psychologist or counselor
- Seriously consider removing your child from the program
- Remember: No label is worth your child's mental health

Negative Score: PULL THEM OUT NOW

The program is actively harming your child. This is not a drill.

Action Steps:

- Remove your child from the program immediately
- Seek mental health support for your child
- Document everything for potential future advocacy
- Focus on healing and rebuilding your child's love of learning

CRITICAL REMINDERS:

- Trust your gut. You know your child better than any assessment.
- One bad score doesn't mean panic, but multiple concerning signs warrant action.
- It's okay to change your mind. Starting gifted doesn't mean staying forever.
- Your child's wellbeing > any program label.

NEED MORE HELP?

 Read the full blog post: School Advocacy 101: Part 2

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