



High Abilities

An evidence-based guide

Understand, identify and support the development of potential without myths or oversimplifications.

Gifted Hub

Version 1.0 · July 2026





GIFTED HUB

Guide to High Abilities

Understanding, identifying and supporting potential through scientific evidence

Gifted Hub

en

Contents

	Introduction to High Intellectual Abilities	.....
	What Are High Intellectual Abilities?	.....
	Myths and Misconceptions About High Abilities	.....
	How High Abilities Are Identified	.....
	Childhood and Adolescence	.....
	Emotions and Perfectionism	.....
	Twice-Exceptionality	.....
	High Abilities in Adults	.....
	School and Family	.....
	Resources and Next Steps	.....

01

Introduction to High Intellectual Abilities

Introduces high abilities as a diverse, multidimensional phenomenon shaped by potential, performance, context and opportunities for development.



Talking about **high intellectual abilities** requires starting with a simple warning: we are not dealing with a single, closed label valid for any situation. The specialized literature does not offer a universally accepted definition. Some models have relied more on intelligence measured through tests; others incorporate performance, potential, creativity, motivation, educational context, or talent development in specific areas (Ziegler & Heller, 2000; Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024).

This guide starts from a prudent idea: high abilities should not be understood as an improvised diagnosis based on striking behavior, nor as a guarantee of success, nor as an automatic explanation for any difficulty. They can help to better understand certain needs, learning rhythms, strengths, and possible supports, but always within a broad and contextualized assessment.

It is also necessary to clarify from the outset that the term is used in different ways depending on the country, educational stage, theoretical framework, and purpose of identification. In some texts, expressions such as giftedness, talent, precocity, students with outstanding aptitudes, or giftedness appear. Not all mean exactly the same thing, and the literature recognizes that terminology is not always used uniformly (Molina García, 2014; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012; Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024).

A Broad Concept, Not a Single Box

For a long time, a significant part of the debate focused on the intelligence quotient. That data can be relevant in some assessment processes, but specialized works agree that, in isolation, it is not enough to describe the complexity of high abilities (Giudice, 2024; Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024).

The literature often describes an evolution from more psychometric models focused on scores toward more dynamic and multidimensional approaches. In these approaches, high ability can be related to cognitive aptitudes, creativity, task commitment, motivation, opportunities, family and school context, personal development, and specific performance domains (Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012).

This does not mean that all models say the same thing. Ziegler and Heller warn that a scientifically useful conception should not be limited to saying that a person performs well “because they are gifted” and that we know they are gifted “because they perform well.” For these authors, this way of reasoning can be circular if the processes, conditions, and factors involved are not explained (Ziegler & Heller, 2000).

A practical way to read the concept is to distinguish between three levels that are often mixed:

Level	What it can contribute	What it should not imply on its own
Ability or potential	Signs of rapid learning, advanced reasoning, or ease in certain domains	That the person will excel at everything
Observable performance	Evidence of achievements, products, or results in a given context	That all potential is identified
Talent development	Sustained progress in an area with practice, support, and opportunities	That the outcome is guaranteed

This distinction is useful because it avoids two common oversimplifications. The first is thinking that potential always translates into visible performance. The second is believing that high ability only exists when there are already excellent grades, awards, or extraordinary results. Different studies emphasize that performance can depend on personal, school, and social factors, and that elevated ability can be expressed in different ways depending on the context (Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024; Kerr, 1991).

Heterogeneity: There Is No Single Profile

People with high abilities do not form a uniform group. Some may excel in general academic learning; others in specific areas; others show uneven profiles, with very strong points and more ordinary or even vulnerable aspects. Research sometimes differentiates between giftedness, simple talent, complex talent, academic talent, artistic talent, precocity, or other categories, although these distinctions depend on the model used (Molina García, 2014; Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024).

That is why it is preferable to avoid phrases like “if they have high abilities, they will be good at everything.” The texts analyzed do not support that idea. A student may reason with great depth on certain topics and, at the same time, have difficulties with organization, writing, adapting to the classroom pace, or interest in repetitive tasks. Another person may show verbal, mathematical, musical, spatial, or interpersonal talent without that implying general superiority in any activity (Kerr, 1991; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012).

Heterogeneity also affects the emotional and social level. Some people may have good adjustment and satisfying relationships; others may experience boredom, pressure, a sense of difference, or lack of adequate educational response. The cited authors insist on not turning any of these possibilities into a general rule (Giudice, 2024; Molina García, 2014; Kerr, 1991).

At this point it is important to be especially careful. Saying that some people with high abilities may need support does not mean that high abilities are a problem. Similarly, recognizing that many may be well-adjusted does not deny that real needs exist. The most prudent conclusion is that adjustment depends on the interaction between personal characteristics, environment, opportunities, expectations, and educational response.

Between Evidence, Models, and Opinions

In this field, empirical evidence, theoretical models, educational guidelines, and authors’ opinions coexist. Not everything carries the same weight. Part of the literature offers broad conceptual frameworks; another focuses on stereotypes, intervention proposals, or specific educational debates.

Therefore, throughout this guide we will try to distinguish between what several references agree on, what comes from a specific model, and what should be read as a hypothesis or position of certain authors.

There are points where broad agreement does appear:

- There is no single closed definition of high abilities (Ziegler & Heller, 2000; Giudice, 2024; Chung, 2023; Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024).
- The intelligence quotient can provide information, but does not exhaust the phenomenon (Giudice, 2024; Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012).
- The group is heterogeneous and can include very different profiles (Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024).
- Educational needs do not disappear because of the existence of elevated ability (Kerr, 1991; Molina García, 2014; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

There are also open debates. Ziegler and Heller, for example, review the discussion about whether talent should be understood as something innate, as a result of learning and practice, or as a complex combination of factors. Their position does not reduce exceptional performance to a single cause: they propose analyzing each domain and each case with empirical support, without assuming that everything comes from a fixed “gift” or that everything can be explained only by training (Ziegler & Heller, 2000).

Myths Better Left Out from the Start

Myths are attractive because they simplify. But in this topic they can generate two unhelpful effects: making real needs invisible or turning difference into a caricature. The reviewed documentation questions both the idealization and the pathologization of high abilities (Giudice, 2024; Molina García, 2014; Kerr, 1991; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

One of the most widespread myths is that students with high abilities “do not need help.” This idea appears discussed in different references: elevated ability does not guarantee that the person will find the right challenge on their own, organize their learning well, fit into the curriculum, or receive sufficient guidance (Kerr, 1991; Molina García, 2014; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012). Help, in this context, does not mean overprotecting or labeling, but better adjusting learning and support opportunities.

Another common myth is thinking that there will always be excellent school performance. The consulted material qualifies that idea. High performance can facilitate detection, but should not be the only criterion for understanding the phenomenon. There can also be less visible abilities, low motivation in repetitive tasks, lack of challenge, inadequate contexts, or specific talents that are not reflected in usual grades (Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Molina García, 2014).

There is also the opposite myth: imagining people with high abilities as necessarily maladjusted, fragile, or socially awkward. Chung analyzes how the media can represent characters with high abilities through stereotypes of harmony or disharmony, but the source itself warns that its study deals with media representations, not how people really are (Chung, 2023). Giudice also recommends avoiding the single image of advantage without costs or, conversely, the idea of inevitable suffering (Giudice, 2024).

A more prudent formulation would be this: there can be important strengths and also support needs, but not all appear in all people or with the same intensity. Context matters.

What a Popular Guide Is For

A popular guide does not replace a professional assessment or allow diagnosing anyone. Its function is to offer language, organize ideas, and reduce confusion. In the case of high abilities, this means helping to look beyond isolated signs: a very complex question, early reading, frequent boredom, or a high grade can be interesting data, but they are not enough on their own to conclude anything.

It also means recognizing the limits of available information. Some references used here are educational guidance books; others are theoretical chapters, studies on stereotypes, or documents situated in specific national contexts. When a work comes from a specific framework, it should not be automatically transferred to any educational or family system.

The approach of this chapter can be summarized in an attitude: observe carefully, avoid hasty labels, and seek contextualized explanations. High abilities are better understood when analyzed together with learning history, opportunities, interests, well-being, educational response, and the specific characteristics of each person.

Sources Used

The following references have been used from files `knowledge/definicion.md` and `knowledge/mitos.md`, as appropriate in each section.

- Arocas Sanchis, E., & Vera Lluch, G. (2012). *High Intellectual Abilities. Curricular Enrichment Programs*. CEPE.
- Barrera-Algarín, E., López Meneses, E., & Sarasola Sánchez-Serrano, J. L. (Coords.). (2024). *High Abilities and Education: An Approach from Research*. Dykinson.
- Chung, D. (2023). *Portrayal of gifted stereotypes in Disney Channel media: Harmony or disharmony?* *Journal of Student Research*, 12(3), 1-16.
- Giudice, A. (2024). *Brief introduction of giftedness in adults*. Preprint. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.16087.48804>.
- Kerr, B. (1991). *A handbook for counseling the gifted and talented*. American Association for Counseling and Development.
- Molina García, L. (2014). *Curricular Adaptations for Students with High Abilities from Tutoring*. IC Editorial.
- Valadez Sierra, M. D., Betancourt Morejón, J., & Zavala Berbena, M. A. (Eds.). (2012). *Gifted and Talented Students: Identification, Assessment, and Intervention. A Perspective for Teachers* (2nd ed.). Editorial El Manual Moderno.
- Ziegler, A., & Heller, K. A. (2000). *Conceptions of Giftedness from a Meta-Theoretical Perspective*. Incomplete APA reference in knowledge file.

02

What Are High Intellectual Abilities?

Explains high abilities as elevated and diverse potential requiring broad, contextualised assessment rather than reliance on IQ alone.



Discussing **intellectual giftedness** requires caution. The literature does not offer a single definition accepted by all authors. Some approaches rely more on intelligence measured by tests; others incorporate creativity, motivation, task commitment, performance, educational context, talent development, or specific domains of expertise (Ziegler & Heller, 2000; Giudice, 2024; Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024).

This lack of consensus does not mean the concept is useless. Rather, it means it must be used with precision. In educational and psychological fields, high abilities are often used to understand learning profiles, support needs, strengths, and potential educational responses. They should not be used as a quick label, an automatic explanation for any difficulty, or a promise of success.

This chapter adopts a starting idea: high abilities can refer to **high potential** in one or more domains, but this potential is not always expressed in the same way, does not guarantee excellent performance in all areas, and does not replace a professional evaluation.

A Broad and Debated Concept

For a long time, a significant part of the debate revolved around the intelligence quotient. In psychometric or research contexts, an IQ around 130 has frequently been used as a cutoff point to refer to very superior intellectual ability (Giudice, 2024; Simoës-Perlant, 2024; Molina García, 2014). However, this same line of work and other educational approaches warn that an isolated score is not enough to describe the complexity of high abilities (Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024; Kerr, 1991).

Specialized literature often describes an evolution from models more focused on intelligence measurement to more dynamic and multidimensional approaches. In these approaches, high ability can be related to cognitive aptitudes, creativity, motivation, opportunities, family and school context, practice, personality, or talent development in specific areas (Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

This does not mean that all models say the same thing. Renzulli, for example, is cited for his emphasis on the interaction between above-average ability, creativity, and task commitment. Gagné differentiates between giftedness or natural abilities and talent developed through learning, practice, and favorable conditions. Other models broaden the view to different types of ability, although their acceptance and use vary according to the theoretical framework (Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

That is why it can be more useful to understand high abilities as a **broad construct**: a way of organizing information about potential, learning, performance, context, and needs, always from a specific model and with clear limits.

Potential, Performance, and Talent Are Not the Same

One of the most common confusions is treating three ideas that are important to separate as equivalent: potential, performance, and developed talent. The analyzed texts show that some authors define high abilities as potential, while others link them more to observable performance or the development of talent in specific domains (Ziegler & Heller, 2000; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012; Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024).

The distinction matters because a person can show ease of learning or advanced reasoning without it always translating into excellent grades. And high academic performance, taken in isolation, is not enough to conclude that high ability exists.

Concept	What it describes	What not to assume
Potential	Possibility of learning, reasoning, or creating at a high level in one or more areas	That it will always manifest as visible success
Performance	Observable results in tasks, tests, productions, or school context	That it fully explains the person's ability
Developed Talent	Advanced competence in a specific domain, usually with practice and opportunities	That it exists in the same way in all areas

Ziegler and Heller warn of a significant theoretical risk: using the label “gifted” as a circular explanation. Saying that someone performs well “because they are gifted” and concluding that they are gifted “because they perform well” does not clarify what psychological processes, learning, opportunities, or conditions have intervened (Ziegler & Heller, 2000). Their critique does not deny that relevant differences exist between people; what it questions is that a label replaces an explanation.

Gagné’s model, cited in several references, helps to understand this difference: natural abilities can facilitate outstanding competencies, but talent usually requires personal and environmental mediators, such as practice, motivation, support, and opportunities (Valadez Sierra et al., 2012; Molina García, 2014). It is an influential theoretical hypothesis, not a mechanical rule.

There is No Single Profile of High Ability

The literature agrees that individuals with high abilities form a **heterogeneous** group (Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024; Kerr, 1991). Some may excel in verbal reasoning, others in mathematics, music, spatial thinking, creativity, leadership, academic learning, or artistic areas. Others may show a more general profile, with broad strengths, but even in those cases, it should not be assumed that everything will function at the same level.

Certain documents differentiate between giftedness, simple talent, complex talent, academic talent, artistic talent, precocity, or prodigy, although they acknowledge that the terminology is not always used uniformly (Molina García, 2014; Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012). In the Mexican context, for example, the expression “outstanding aptitudes” appears, which can include intellectual, creative, socio-affective, artistic, or motor fields, always in relation to the social and educational reference group (Valadez Sierra et al., 2012). In other contexts, there is more talk of giftedness, high ability, or students with high abilities.

This terminological diversity requires caution. An administrative definition, a research definition, and an educational definition may have different objectives: selecting a sample, accessing a school program, or guiding support measures.

A simple example can clarify this. A child who learns to read very early may be showing a relevant sign, but that isolated sign is not enough to conclude anything. An adolescent with great mathematical ability may not show the same level in writing or planning. The consulted authors

insist that a striking characteristic must be interpreted within a broader profile (Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Kerr, 1991).

The Role of IQ: Useful, but Limited

The intelligence quotient remains a relevant measure in many identification processes, especially when standardized tests administered by professionals are used. Some research uses clear quantitative criteria to define its sample (Simoës-Perlant, 2024). This can be appropriate for certain studies, as it allows for precise delimitation of who is being researched.

The problem arises when this restricted definition is transferred to all possible uses of the concept. Simoës-Perlant, for example, deliberately distinguishes between children with high IQ and broader definitions of giftedness, precisely so as not to generalize beyond her selection criterion (Simoës-Perlant, 2024).

The reviewed educational approaches generally agree on a cautious idea: intelligence tests can provide valuable information, but they should be interpreted along with observation, performance, creativity, interests, learning style, family and school context, motivation, and socio-emotional development (Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012; Kerr, 1991).

Furthermore, a global score can hide uneven profiles. Therefore, different studies recommend not reducing the understanding of the person to a single number (Kerr, 1991; Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024).

Identifying is Not Labeling

The literature on identification insists that the process should have a clear educational or psychoeducational purpose. Identifying should not mean placing a label and closing the conversation, but rather better understanding what a person needs to learn, participate, and develop (Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

The reviewed proposals recommend combining formal tests, teacher observation, family information, school productions, interests, performance, learning style, creativity, and context analysis (Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Kerr, 1991). This multidimensional vision seeks to reduce two risks: identifying only those who fit the stereotype of good performance and excluding those with less visible profiles.

Potential biases are also warned against. Identification based solely on academic performance, teacher nomination, or very rigid cutoff points can exclude students from disadvantaged backgrounds, cultural minorities, or profiles with associated difficulties (Giudice, 2024; Kerr, 1991; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012). This warning does not imply that any suspicion is sufficient, but rather that procedures must be careful and contextualized.

In early childhood, some authors recommend special caution. It may be more prudent to speak of precocity, indications, or probability rather than a definitive conclusion, because some profiles consolidate, change, or express themselves differently with maturation (Molina García, 2014; Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024).

Professional Assessment and Clinical Diagnosis

In public communication, it is necessary to clearly distinguish three levels: detection, educational identification, and clinical diagnosis. Detection can begin with observations from family or teachers. Educational or psycho-pedagogical identification usually requires a broader assessment, aimed at understanding needs and planning responses. Clinical diagnosis belongs to another framework and must be carried out by qualified personnel when there are doubts about disorders or difficulties in mental health, neurodevelopment, or learning (Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

High abilities should not be presented as an illness or a medical diagnosis in themselves. Some publications use the word “diagnosis” in an educational or psycho-pedagogical sense, but several working notes recommend, for a public guide, speaking more precisely of identification, professional assessment, or psycho-pedagogical evaluation (Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024; Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012).

It is also important to avoid clinical inferences from general traits. Intense interests, sensitivity, boredom, creativity, rapid learning, or uneven development can appear in very different profiles. They do not, by themselves, allow concluding that a person has high abilities or another condition. When there are relevant doubts, the prudent option is to consult professionals with appropriate training and tools (Giudice, 2024; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

A Prudent Way to Understand the Concept

A reasonable public definition should include several nuances. High abilities can involve high potential or advanced performance in one or more domains. They can be expressed generally or specifically. Their identification depends on the theoretical model, the instruments used, and the context (Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

This definition is not intended to close the debate. Rather, it helps to avoid frequent reductions: high abilities are not simply equivalent to “getting good grades,” “having a high IQ,” “being creative,” or “learning quickly.” Each of these ideas can provide information, but none is sufficient on its own.

The useful question is not just “does he or she have high abilities?”, as if it were a rigid box. In many educational contexts, it is more fruitful to ask what strengths are observed, what needs arise, in what areas the person excels, and what educational response would make sense.

Sources Used

- Arocas Sanchis, E., & Vera Lluch, G. (2012). *Intellectual Giftedness*. CEPE.
- Barrera-Algarín, E., López Meneses, E., & Sarasola Sánchez-Serrano, J. L. (Coords.). (2024). *High Abilities and Education*. Dykinson.
- Giudice, A. (2024). *Brief introduction of giftedness in adults*. Preprint.
- Kerr, B. (1991). *A handbook for counseling the gifted and talented*. American Association for Counseling and Development.
- Molina García, L. (2014). *Curricular Adaptations for Students with High Abilities*. IC Editorial.
- Simoës-Perlant, A. (2024). *Assessment of children's fears: Impact of cognitive level*.
- Valadez Sierra, M. D., Betancourt Morejón, J., & Zavala Berbena, M. A. (Eds.). (2012). *Gifted and Talented Students*. Editorial El Manual Moderno.
- Ziegler, A., & Heller, K. A. (2000). *Conceptions of Giftedness from a Meta-Theoretical Perspective*. Incomplete APA reference.

03

Myths and Misconceptions About High Abilities

Reviews common myths and explains why high abilities do not automatically imply success, suffering or a single personal profile.



Talking about high intellectual abilities usually awakens very different expectations. For some people, the expression evokes academic success, mental quickness, and ease of learning. For others, it suggests isolation, suffering, or adaptation problems. The literature invites us to distrust both extremes: high ability cannot be understood as an automatic advantage in any context, nor is it appropriate to present it as an inevitable cause of distress (Molina García, 2014; Giudice, 2024; Neihart, 1999).

A significant part of the myths stems from a prior difficulty: **there is no single, universally accepted definition** of high abilities. Some models focus more on intelligence measured through testing; others incorporate creativity, motivation, task commitment, opportunities, educational context, talent development, or specific domains (Ziegler & Heller, 2000; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012; González-Víllora & Pastor-Vicedo, 2024). Therefore, different people may use the same label to refer to non-identical realities.

This chapter does not offer identification criteria nor does it replace a professional assessment. Its purpose is more modest: to separate some common beliefs from what available references allow us to state with caution.

Why myths are convincing

Myths about high abilities rarely appear out of nowhere. They usually start from partial observations: there are students who learn quickly, people who stand out in one area, students who get bored with repetitive tasks, or children with interests that are unusual for their age. The problem arises when those observations become general rules.

Specialized literature describes people with high abilities as a **heterogeneous** group. Not all stand out in the same areas, not all have the same emotional profile, not all respond the same way to the school environment, and not all develop their potential in the same way (Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Conklin, 2015; González-Víllora & Pastor-Vicedo, 2024).

Cultural representations also play a role. Some studies point out that the media can present stereotypes: the socially awkward genius, the brilliant but isolated girl, the student who doesn't need help, or the exceptional person destined for success (Chung, 2023; González-Víllora & Pastor-Vicedo, 2024). These images do not necessarily describe reality; they show what ideas circulate socially and can condition the perspective of families, teachers, and students.

Common beliefs and more cautious interpretations

The following table summarizes some common misconceptions. It is not intended to close the debate, but rather to show why it is better to approach the subject with nuance.

Simplified belief	More cautious interpretation based on the literature
“If they have high abilities, they will stand out in everything.”	Uneven profiles may exist: clear strengths in some areas, specific interests, variable performance, or concrete talents (Conklin, 2015; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).
“IQ explains everything.”	IQ can provide relevant information, but it does not exhaust the complexity of the phenomenon nor does it replace the analysis of context, motivation, creativity, or talent development (Giudice, 2024; Ziegler & Heller, 2000; González-Víllora & Pastor-Vicedo, 2024).
“They don’t need support; they’ll manage.”	Students with high abilities may need educational adjustments, guidance, or support, depending on their profile and circumstances (Kerr, 1991; Tomlinson, 2004; Molina García, 2014).
“High abilities imply emotional problems.”	Available evidence does not support a general and automatic relationship. Some people may have difficulties, but it should not be simply attributed to high ability (Neihart, 1999; Doobay et al., 2014; Simoës-Perlant, 2024).
“If they don’t get good grades, they can’t have high abilities.”	Visible performance can facilitate detection, but potential, developed talent, and grades are not the same thing (Ziegler & Heller, 2000; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012).
“Talent is a fixed gift.”	Some models recognize relevant individual differences, but they usually place them within processes of learning, practice, opportunities, motivation, and context (Ziegler & Heller, 2000; Shavinina & Ferrari, 2004; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

The myth of perfect performance

One of the most persistent ideas is that a person with high abilities should get good results in everything. This belief may seem logical from the outside: if someone has high ability, performance is expected to always be high. However, the works consulted do not support that equivalence in a general way.

Performance depends on many factors: the specific area, interest, type of teaching, level of challenge, motivation, opportunities, and possible associated difficulties. Some educational approaches insist that students with high abilities do not form a uniform block and that there can be significant differences between subjects and support needs (Molina García, 2014; Conklin, 2015; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012).

This confusion can have practical consequences. If every student with high abilities is expected to be brilliant, autonomous, and consistent, those who do not fit that profile may go unnoticed. A student with a great facility for reasoning may show low performance if the curriculum does not offer a challenge or if there are other difficulties that interfere. This does not mean that any low performance indicates high abilities; it means that grades, taken in isolation, should not close the conversation.

IQ: important, but not enough

Another common myth consists of reducing high abilities to a number. The intelligence quotient has had a relevant historical role and continues to be useful information in many assessment processes. Some references mention the traditional use of cut-off points, such as an IQ of 130, but warn that interpreting a numerical boundary rigidly can be problematic (Giudice, 2024).

The disagreement is not over whether tests can provide information; they often do. The question is what is done with it. The literature describes different conceptualizations of high abilities: as potential, performance, developed talent, or a combination of cognitive abilities, creativity, motivation, and context (Ziegler & Heller, 2000; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012; González-Víllora & Pastor-Vicedo, 2024).

Ziegler and Heller raise a useful warning: it is not recommended to use the label of “gifted” as a circular explanation. Saying that someone performs well “because they are gifted” and concluding that they are gifted “because they perform well” does not explain what abilities, learning, supports, or opportunities are involved (Ziegler & Heller, 2000).

Potential does not mean a promise of success

Different authors separate ability, potential, performance, and developed talent. This distinction helps dismantle two opposite myths: the idea that whoever has high abilities will necessarily go far, and the idea that one can only speak of high abilities when exceptional achievement already exists.

Gagné’s model, included in the reviewed materials, differentiates between giftedness or natural abilities and talent developed through systematic learning, practice, motivation, and environmental conditions (Valadez Sierra et al., 2012). This perspective does not deny that initial differences exist between people, but it avoids presenting talent as something that unfolds on its own.

In informative terms, it could be said that potential opens up possibilities, but does not guarantee a specific trajectory. An environment with adjusted expectations, learning opportunities, and sufficient challenge can favor development. Even so, research does not allow for promised results: neither a specific intervention ensures success, nor does the lack of visible success completely rule out the existence of high abilities.

“They don’t need help”: a myth with real effects

The idea that students with high abilities can manage on their own is questioned in different references. Kerr points out that high-ability students should not be assumed to be self-sufficient in academic, personal, or vocational guidance (Kerr, 1991). Molina García and Tomlinson, from educational approaches, also maintain that it may be necessary to adjust or differentiate the curriculum when ordinary learning does not offer sufficient challenge (Molina García, 2014; Tomlinson, 2004).

This does not mean that every student with high abilities needs the same response. Educational attention depends on the profile, context, area of strength, age, and how the school experience is being lived. The need for support should not be interpreted as fragility, but as a matter of adjustment between the person and the environment.

The debate on equity also deserves nuance. Tomlinson addresses the tension between offering specific opportunities and avoiding exclusionary practices. From this perspective, differentiated attention is justified by educational needs, not by a supposed personal superiority (Tomlinson, 2004).

Emotion, adjustment, and the risk of pathologizing

A classic myth presents people with high abilities as inevitably lonely, anxious, or maladjusted. Another, in the opposite direction, imagines them as always resilient, mature, and well-adjusted. The cited studies recommend avoiding both extremes.

Neihart, in a review of psychological well-being, questions whether high intellectual ability generally implies more depression, anxiety, suicide, or adjustment problems. The author also does not state that it guarantees well-being: results seem to depend on the type and degree of ability, educational adjustment, and personal characteristics (Neihart, 1999). Doobay and colleagues add another nuance: high ability does not exclude the presence of autism or other clinical or adaptive needs (Doobay et al., 2014).

Simoës-Perlant, when studying childhood fears, also finds no support for a global statement that children with high IQ have more intense fears than those with typical IQ in the analyzed sample. The author leaves open the possibility of differences in forms of expression, but warns against generalizations (Simoës-Perlant, 2024).

The cautious idea would be this: there may be people with high abilities who need emotional, social, or clinical support, but that need should not be deduced solely from the label. And, conversely, high intellectual ability should not be used to deny real difficulties.

Creativity, talent, and specific domains

Another common confusion consists of treating high abilities as if they were a single thing. The literature distinguishes between general intellectual ability, academic talent, creativity, artistic talent, mathematical talent, verbal talent, or other domains (Valadez Sierra et al., 2012; Neihart, 1999). This distinction matters because a person can show a notable strength in one area and not in others.

Creativity deserves additional caution. Some conceptions of high abilities include it as a relevant component, while others treat it as a specific domain. Treffinger takes an intermediate position: creativity is not impossible to evaluate, but neither can it be reduced to a single score without a clear definition of the construct (Treffinger, 2004).

Therefore, it is better to avoid phrases like “if they have high abilities, they will be creative” or “if they are creative, they have high abilities.” There may be a relationship in some models and profiles, but the reviewed texts do not justify turning that relationship into a universal rule.

A less comfortable, but more useful perspective

Dismantling myths does not consist of replacing one caricature with another. If the idea of the “genius who succeeds alone” is abandoned, there is no need to move to the image of the person condemned to suffering. A more useful perspective combines several cautions: recognizing heterogeneity, distinguishing potential and performance, attending to context, not denying possible support needs, and avoiding clinical inferences from isolated traits (Molina García, 2014; Ziegler & Heller, 2000; González-Víllora & Pastor-Vicedo, 2024).

Sources used

- Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch (2012), *Altas capacidades intelectuales*.
 - Chung (2023), *Portrayal of Gifted Stereotypes in Disney Channel Media*.
 - Conklin (2015), *Differentiating the Curriculum for Gifted Learners*.
 - Doobay et al. (2014), *Cognitive, Adaptive, and Psychosocial Differences...*
 - Giudice (2024), *Brief Introduction of Giftedness in Adults*.
 - González-Víllora & Pastor-Vicedo (2024), *Más allá de las notas*.
 - Kerr (1991), *A Handbook for Counseling the Gifted and Talented*.
 - Molina García (2014), *Adaptaciones curriculares para el alumnado con altas capacidades*.
 - Neihart (1999), *The Impact of Giftedness on Psychological Well-Being*.
 - Shavinina & Ferrari (2004), *Beyond Knowledge*.
 - Simoës-Perlant (2024), *Assessment of Children's Fears*.
 - Tomlinson (2004), *Differentiation for Gifted and Talented Students*.
 - Treffinger (2004), *Creativity and Giftedness*.
 - Valadez Sierra et al. (2012), *Alumnos superdotados y talentosos*.
 - Ziegler & Heller (2000), *Conceptions of Giftedness from a Meta-Theoretical Perspective*.
- Incomplete APA reference in the knowledge file.

04

How High Abilities Are Identified

Describes identification based on multiple sources, professional assessment and contextual analysis rather than a single score.



Identifying high abilities should not be understood as quickly labeling based on a striking behavior or an isolated score. In the reviewed materials, it appears more as a **process of gathering and interpreting information** aimed at understanding educational needs, strengths, difficulties, and responses tailored to a specific context (Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

Identification is not always carried out in the same way. It depends on the theoretical model, the criteria of the educational system, the available instruments, and the objective of the evaluation. Some conceptions have historically relied on intelligence tests; others incorporate specific aptitudes, creativity, motivation, performance, context, talent development, or specific domains (Giudice, 2024; Ziegler & Heller, 2000; Pfeiffer, 2015).

This chapter does not offer a procedure for a family, teacher, or adult to “diagnose” themselves. It summarizes how identification is typically approached in educational and psycho-pedagogical literature, and what limitations the sources indicate.

Detecting is not the same as evaluating

In everyday language, words like detect, identify, evaluate, or diagnose are often used interchangeably. The reviewed sources show that they do not always mean the same thing. In the Spanish school context, several works prefer to speak of **detection**, **identification**, or **psycho-pedagogical evaluation**, because the main objective is not clinical, but educational: to adjust the response and guide decisions (Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012).

Term	What it usually implies	Main caution
Initial detection	Observe signs, gather feedback from family or teachers, review performance, interests, or productions.	It can initiate an assessment, but it is not enough to conclude high abilities.
Educational identification	Integrate various sources to decide if there are specific needs and what measures should be considered.	Depends on the model, criteria, and school context.
Psycho-pedagogical evaluation	Broader professional process: abilities, learning, family and school context, socio-emotional development, and needs.	Must be carried out by qualified personnel and result in useful guidance.
Clinical diagnosis	Medical or psychological assessment of disorders or clinical conditions when appropriate.	Does not automatically equate to educational identification of high abilities.

This distinction helps avoid two errors: treating any sign of precocity, curiosity, or high performance as definitive proof, or thinking that if there is no formal label, there can be no real educational needs. Between an initial impression and a professional conclusion, there is a journey that must be undertaken with caution.

Why a single test is not enough

The intelligence quotient has played an important historical role in the identification of high abilities. Several sources acknowledge that intelligence tests can provide relevant information, especially when they are well-chosen, applied, and interpreted (Kerr, 1991; Molina García, 2014; Pfeiffer, 2015). Specific cut-off points also appear in some frameworks or studies, such as an IQ equal to or greater than 130, high percentiles, or specific thresholds for educational programs (Molina García, 2014; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012; Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024).

The nuance is crucial: these cut-off points belong to specific models, research, or institutional procedures. They do not constitute a universal definition. Ziegler and Heller warn that reducing identification to a numerical threshold can be conceptually weak if it is not explained what psychological processes, performance domains, or needs are being evaluated (Ziegler & Heller, 2000).

Psychometric tests also have limitations. Their results can be affected by measurement error, language, culture, familiarity with the format, anxiety, administration conditions, or uneven cognitive profiles (Kerr, 1991; Pfeiffer, 2015; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012). A global score can hide internal strengths and weaknesses: for example, a very high verbal reasoning profile can coexist with a more modest processing speed (Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024; Kerr, 1991).

What information is usually collected

When sources advocate for multidimensional identification, they are not saying that data should be accumulated without criteria. The idea is to combine information that allows for a better understanding of the person's profile and context. Several sources of information are repeatedly mentioned in the reviewed texts (Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012; Pfeiffer, 2015):

- Standardized tests of intelligence, aptitudes, performance, or creativity, when relevant.
- Teacher observation in the classroom, especially if it is systematic and not limited to general impressions.
- Family information on development, interests, learning pace, out-of-school behavior, and previous experiences.
- Student productions: works, projects, questions, original solutions, or performance in challenging tasks.
- Learning style, motivation, persistent interests, and school, family, and social context.

This combination does not eliminate all errors, but it can reduce the risk of hasty decisions. Arocas Sanchis and Vera Lluch differentiate between formal, informal, and mixed procedures; the latter attempt to integrate tests, observation, nominations, family reports, and productions to obtain a less narrow picture (Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012).

The role of teachers and family

Teachers can detect relevant signs because they observe students for many hours and in shared learning situations. They can notice the speed in understanding relationships, the depth of some questions, the ease of transferring learning, creativity in open tasks, boredom with repetitive activities, or the quality of certain school products (Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012).

But this observation has limits. Some research and reviews warn that teacher nominations can be influenced by expectations, stereotypes, classroom behavior, visible performance, or familiarity with a certain profile of a “brilliant” student (*THE SOCIAL, COGNITIVE AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF POTENTIALLY GIFTED CHILDREN*, 2023; *Examining the Relationship Between Gifted Behavior Rating Scores and Student Academic Performance*, 2024). A student with high ability and low performance, with attention difficulties, with little oral participation, or from a less privileged background may go more unnoticed.

The family provides another kind of information: early development, intense interests, unusual questions, autonomous learning, or differences between what happens at home and what appears at school. These observations can be valuable, but they do not replace a professional evaluation. Freeman emphasizes the importance of contrasting family and school impressions with objective measures and careful individual assessment (Freeman, 2010).

The prudent conclusion is not to distrust families or teachers, but to **integrate their observations into a broader process**.

Typical phases of an identification process

There is no single protocol applicable to all educational systems. Even so, several sources describe phased processes. Molina García proposes a sequence that includes application, information analysis, evaluation, psycho-pedagogical report, communication to family and educational team, educational response, and follow-up (Molina García, 2014). Valadez Sierra and collaborators distinguish phases such as search or screening, verification, more detailed identification, and placement or educational response (Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

In popular terms, the process usually involves five steps:

1. Indications or an educational need appear: very high performance, rapid learning, mismatch with classroom pace, outstanding creativity, or unexpected low performance.
2. Initial information is collected from the classroom, family, school history, and productions.
3. If appropriate, qualified professionals apply instruments suitable for the evaluation’s objective.
4. Data are interpreted jointly, avoiding a single score deciding the entire process.
5. Educational guidance and follow-up measures are proposed on a case-by-case basis.

The last phase is essential. Identifying without considering the response can result in just a label. Several sources insist that the purpose of identification is to guide educational decisions and support development, not to classify for classification’s sake (Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

Early ages: special caution

Early detection can be useful if it helps adjust the environment and prevents a child from spending years without sufficient challenge. Barrera-Algarín and collaborators collected follow-up data in an early identification model and noted that a significant portion of identified students maintained indicators of high ability years later, although the specific profile could change (Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024).

At the same time, sources urge caution. In early ages, it may be more appropriate to speak of **precocity**, indicators, or probability, because development is not linear, and some profiles consolidate, modify, or express themselves differently with maturation (Molina García, 2014;

Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024). False positives and false negatives can also appear: children who initially seem to fit but then do not maintain the same profile, or children with potential who are not detected by the procedure used.

This caution does not mean passively waiting. It means reviewing, monitoring, and adjusting the educational response without turning an early assessment into a permanent judgment.

Biases and students who may go unnoticed

A common concern in the sources is that certain procedures primarily identify students who already resemble the expected model: good performance, adapted behavior, verbal fluency, families with resources to request evaluation, or centers with more experience. The exclusive use of IQ, teacher nominations, or school performance can exclude minority students, those from low socioeconomic backgrounds, those with dual exceptionality, those with low performance, or those with less visible talents in the ordinary classroom (Giudice, 2024; Kerr, 1991; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

Broad screening systems, multiple sources, and the review of special cases are proposed precisely to reduce these exclusions, although the sources do not claim to eliminate them completely (Valadez Sierra et al., 2012; Heller et al., 2005). More dynamic and contextualized procedures are also mentioned, such as portfolios, observation in enrichment activities, dynamic assessment, and case studies, especially when seeking to recognize potential that does not appear in brief tests or usual school tasks (Borland & Wright, 1994; *Identifying Gifted Potential*, 2024).

What an identification can and cannot say

A well-designed evaluation can provide useful information: cognitive strengths, talent areas, learning style, interests, need for challenge, school barriers, and guidance for intervention. It can also help families and schools better understand certain behaviors, as long as the label does not become a total explanation of the person (Molina García, 2014; Kerr, 1991; Giudice, 2024).

What it cannot do is promise a trajectory. Identifying high abilities does not guarantee academic success, emotional well-being, exceptional creativity, or future performance. Nor does it alone explain every difficulty. If problems with anxiety, attention, learning, behavior, or adaptation appear, sources recommend assessing them with appropriate professionals and without automatically attributing them to high ability (Giudice, 2024; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012; Pfeiffer, 2015).

Sources used

- Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch (2012), *High intellectual abilities. Curriculum enrichment programs* .
- Barrera-Algarín et al. (2024), *High abilities and education: an approach from research*.
- Borland & Wright (1994), *Identifying Young, Potentially Gifted, Economically Disadvantaged Students*.
- Freeman (2010), *Gifted Children: A Guide for Parents and Professionals*.
- Giudice (2024), *Brief Introduction of Giftedness in Adults*.
- Heller et al. (2005), *The Munich Model of Giftedness Designed to Identify and Promote Gifted Students*.
- Kerr (1991), *A Handbook for Counseling the Gifted and Talented*.
- Molina García (2014), *Curricular adaptations for students with high abilities from tutoring*.
- Pfeiffer (2015), *Essentials of Gifted Assessment*.
- Valadez Sierra et al. (2012), *Gifted and talented students: identification, evaluation, and intervention*.
- Ziegler & Heller (2000), *Conceptions of Giftedness from a Meta-Theoretical Perspective*. Incomplete APA reference in knowledge file.
- *Examining the Relationship Between Gifted Behavior Rating Scores and Student Academic Performance* (2024). Full bibliographic data not available in notes used.
- *Identifying Gifted Potential* (2024). Full bibliographic data not available in notes used.
- *THE SOCIAL, COGNITIVE AND SOCIO-DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF POTENTIALLY GIFTED CHILDREN* (2023). Full bibliographic data not available in notes used.

05

Childhood and Adolescence

Explores development during childhood and adolescence and the importance of adapting the environment to intellectual potential.



Talking about high abilities in childhood and adolescence requires special caution. In these stages, abilities are still developing, the environment carries a lot of weight, and developmental rhythms can be very uneven. A child may reason with great depth on a topic while simultaneously needing the same emotional support as other children their age. An adolescent might show talent in a specific area and not stand out in every subject. These combinations are not anecdotal exceptions: various sources insist that potential, performance, motivation, context, and personal development are not the same thing (Ziegler & Heller, 2000; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

This chapter does not offer diagnostic criteria. Its goal is to help understand which aspects usually appear in the literature on childhood and adolescence, which signs deserve observation, and which conclusions should be avoided.

Childhood: observing without labeling too quickly

At early ages, signs may appear that catch the attention of families or teachers: rapid learning, advanced language, remarkable memory, unusual questions for their age, intense interest in certain topics, sustained curiosity, or an ease in connecting ideas (Molina García, 2014; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012). Some sources also describe cases of early reading, precocious interest in numbers or letters, or learning that stays ahead of the ordinary curriculum (Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024).

However, these signs alone are not enough to state that a child has high abilities. Early reading, for example, can be an indicator that invites more detailed observation, but it is not a sufficient criterion. The study collected by Barrera-Algarín et al. on early reading acquisition comes from records of a specialized center, so its results cannot be generalized to the entire child population without caution (Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024).

A useful way to read these signs is to distinguish between observations and conclusions:

What can be observed	What should not be automatically concluded
Learns certain content quickly.	That they will perform well in all areas.
Asks complex or very persistent questions.	That they need an immediate label.
Reads early or shows early interest in letters and numbers.	That early reading confirms high abilities.
Gets bored with very repetitive tasks.	That all school boredom is due to high ability.
Has intense or unusual interests for their age.	That this interest is, by itself, diagnostic proof.

Childhood can also show **uneven development**. Some sources speak of asynchrony or gaps between areas: advancement in reasoning or language, but emotional, social, or motor development closer to chronological age (Giudice, 2024; Molina García, 2014; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012). This idea helps

avoid two frequent errors: treating the child as if they were older in all aspects or, at the opposite extreme, ignoring their cognitive needs because they still have age-appropriate reactions.

The school as a context for adjustment

School does not create high abilities on its own, but it can favor or limit the expression of potential. The reviewed sources agree that the educational response should go beyond identification: observing needs, adapting rhythms, offering depth, and reviewing if the measures are working (Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

One idea appears repeatedly: supporting students with high abilities does not consist of simply giving them more exercises. Enrichment is better understood as a proposal with greater complexity, openness, depth, or connection to real interests, not as an accumulation of repetitive tasks (Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Molina García, 2014). Curricular compacting, research projects, flexible groupings, open activities, or in-depth study can be useful in certain cases, provided they respond to specific needs and not to a general label (Molina García, 2014; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

Acceleration or grade-skipping is also described as a possible measure for some students, especially when the gap between learning pace and the ordinary curriculum is very pronounced. But the sources that consider it insist that it should not be applied automatically: it is advisable to assess emotional maturity, social adaptation, family support, school context, and subsequent follow-up (Molina García, 2014; Sánchez Escobedo & Díaz Herrera, 2012).

In practical terms, educational decisions tend to be more solid when they combine several perspectives:

- classroom observation and actual performance;
- information from the family about interests, developmental history, and behavior outside of school;
- psycho-pedagogical evaluation when appropriate;
- periodic review of the applied measure;
- attention to well-being, not just grades.

This last idea is important. High ability does not necessarily imply high school performance. Some sources point out that underperformance, demotivation, or disconnection can appear when the environment does not offer enough challenge, although this should not be interpreted as an inevitable consequence or as a diagnostic sign in itself (Kerr, 1991; Giudice, 2024; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

Emotion, fear of failure, and well-being

In the popularization of high abilities, it is easy to fall into two extremes: presenting these children and adolescents as especially fragile or, conversely, assuming that their intellectual capacity protects them from any difficulty. The reviewed sources do not justify either of those two simplifications.

Some authors describe emotional intensity, perfectionism, sensitivity, or performance pressure in some students with high abilities (Giudice, 2024; Kerr, 1991). But it is also warned that not all present social or emotional difficulties and that many differences depend on context, personality, educational response, and other concurrent conditions (Giudice, 2024; Doobay et al., 2014).

An example of nuance is offered by Simoës-Perlant's study on childhood fears. In a sample of children aged 5 to 12, no significant global differences were found in the average intensity of fears

between the high IQ group and the typical IQ group. A specific result did appear: within the high IQ group, children aged 9 to 12 showed more fear of failure and criticism than those aged 5 to 8. The author interprets this with caution and relates it to possible developmental changes near adolescence, not as a general conclusion about all children with high IQ (Simoës-Perlant, 2024).

The central idea is simple: distress should be addressed for what it is, not used as proof of high abilities. If intense anxiety, isolation, persistent suffering, behavioral problems, or adaptive difficulties appear, the appropriate thing is to assess the situation individually and with qualified professionals. High ability, if it exists, would be one part of the profile, not a total explanation.

Adolescence: identity, belonging, and decisions

Adolescence adds its own changes: greater weight of the peer group, identity construction, choice of academic paths, external expectations, and social comparison. Some sources point out that young people identified as gifted can experience the label in different ways: embracing it, hiding it, distancing themselves from it, or feeling pressure from what others expect (Chung, 2023; Kerr, 1991). This is not a universal reaction, but a possibility described in studies and reviews.

At this stage, the tension between standing out and belonging can become more visible. Molina García notes, based on cited authors and research, that some girls with high abilities might reduce the visible expression of their capacity during adolescence due to social pressure, gender stereotypes, or a desire for acceptance. The source itself advises not to generalize: not all female adolescents will hide their abilities, nor will all experience adaptation difficulties (Molina García, 2014).

Academic and vocational guidance takes on a special role here. Some adolescents with high ability may have many interests and open options; others may show clear talent in one domain, such as mathematics, music, science, writing, arts, or leadership. The literature on talent development often emphasizes that high-level performance requires opportunities, practice, expert support, and sustained motivation, not just initial capacity (Shavinina & Ferrari, 2004; Ziegler & Heller, 2000).

Therefore, guidance should not mean pushing toward the most prestigious option or turning every decision into a test of excellence. Prudent guidance helps explore interests, values, work rhythms, well-being, real possibilities, and the young person's own goals (Kerr, 1991). In secondary school, several sources recommend proposals that combine challenge, depth, autonomy, and support, with measures that can be reviewed according to the student's evolution (Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

Family: support without overloading

The family is usually an especially valuable source of information because it observes interests, questions, emotions, play, learning habits, and changes that might not appear the same way in the classroom (Molina García, 2014; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012). But that information must be integrated with other sources; it is not advisable to turn family observation into a diagnosis, nor to discard it for being subjective.

The reviewed sources recommend family-school collaboration based on communication, specific agreements, and shared responsibility (Molina García, 2014; Barrera-Algarín et al., 2024). This is especially important when there are adaptations, enrichment, acceleration, motivational difficulties, or concerns about well-being.

Family support can take many different forms: listening, facilitating opportunities, setting reasonable limits, taking care of rest, accompanying interests, normalizing mistakes, and preventing the entire family life from revolving around the label. Several sources warn of the risk of unrealistic expectations, both by excess and by default: expecting the child to stand out in everything can generate pressure; minimizing their needs can leave them without challenge or support (Molina García, 2014; Kerr, 1991; Giudice, 2024).

A prudent guideline would be this: **take needs seriously without turning capacity into a total identity**. The child or adolescent may need intellectual stimulation, but also limits, play, friendship, rest, progressive autonomy, and permission to make mistakes.

When there are complex profiles

Some high abilities coexist with learning difficulties, autism, ADHD, or other conditions. Available sources mention this with special caution: high ability does not eliminate the possibility of needing adaptive, social, or emotional support (Giudice, 2024; Doobay et al., 2014).

The study by Doobay and colleagues, focused on young people with high ability with and without autism, found that families and teachers reported more adaptive and psychosocial difficulties in the group with autism, although self-reports from the young people themselves did not always show the same difference. This discrepancy between informants reinforces the advisability of gathering several perspectives before assessing needs (Doobay et al., 2014).

In practice, this invites us to avoid simple phrases like “if they are capable, they don’t need help” or “if they have difficulties, they can’t have high abilities.” Both ideas are too rigid. A minor’s profile can include notable strengths and, at the same time, specific support needs.

An evolutionary perspective

Childhood and adolescence are not a waiting room until adult life. They are stages with their own value, in which potential can be expressed, hidden, change form, or need different conditions. Dynamic models remind us that talent development depends on the interaction between personal abilities, learning, motivation, opportunities, family, school, and peer group (Ziegler & Heller, 2000).

That is why perhaps the most useful question is not “what are children with high abilities like?”, but “what does this child or this adolescent need, at this moment, with this profile and in this context?”. That formulation does not diagnose, does not promise results, and avoids turning a category into a complete explanation. It also allows for something more practical: adjusting the educational and family response without losing sight of the person’s global development.

06

Emotions and Perfectionism

Examines links between high abilities, emotional intensity, anxiety and perfectionism without treating them as universal traits.



Discussing emotions in gifted individuals requires moving beyond two overly simplistic views. One portrays gifted individuals as especially vulnerable, intense, or difficult to support. The other assumes that higher intellectual ability should translate into almost automatic emotional well-adjustment. The reviewed sources do not clearly support either of these extremes.

Specialized literature presents an old debate between two perspectives: the so-called harmony hypothesis, which associates giftedness with good social and emotional adjustment, and the disharmony hypothesis, which links it to more socio-emotional difficulties. Chung analyzes these two perspectives as frameworks also present in the media, but warns that they do not fully describe the reality of gifted individuals (Chung, 2023). This caution is useful: the same label can coexist with very different trajectories.

This chapter does not offer a clinical interpretation of anxiety, perfectionism, or emotional intensity. The objective is more modest: to organize some frequent ideas from the sources, distinguish between possible traits and problems requiring assessment, and prevent discomfort from becoming a sole explanation.

Emotional Intensity Does Not Mean Disorder

Several sources mention that some gifted individuals may experience emotions with particular intensity, sensitivity, or depth. This includes moral concern, idealism, empathy, a sense of justice, heightened emotional response, or a strong connection to other people, animals, or world problems (Giudice, 2024; Molina García, 2014). In some texts, this description is linked to Dabrowski's concept of **emotional overexcitability** (Giudice, 2024).

The nuance is important. That a source describes emotional intensity does not mean that all gifted individuals exhibit it, nor that this intensity is in itself a disorder. Giudice points out that the general theory of positive disintegration, from which part of this vocabulary originates, has limited empirical support (Giudice, 2024). Molina García also includes emotional intensity as a characteristic described by several authors, but insists that the emotional area should be considered alongside the cognitive and social, not as an automatic consequence of giftedness (Molina García, 2014).

An intense emotion can be a source of engagement, creativity, commitment, or sensitivity towards others. It can also generate conflict if the environment does not understand it, if it is interpreted as an exaggeration, or if the person does not find appropriate ways to regulate it. The difference is not only in the emotion itself, but in its duration, its intensity, the context in which it appears, and the degree to which it interferes with daily life.

Perfectionism: Between Useful Demands and Blockage

Perfectionism appears in several sources as a possible concern for some gifted individuals, especially when combined with external expectations, fear of error, or pressure to perform (Giudice, 2024; Kerr, 1991; Molina García, 2014). It is not presented as a universal trait or an identification criterion.

The word can also mean different things. In a broad sense, it can refer to the pursuit of quality, the desire for improvement, or perseverance in a task. Molina García describes a positive dimension when this demand drives improvement and dedication (Molina García, 2014). Chung even uses the term “adaptive perfectionism” within an analysis of media representations, although in his study it

functions as an operational code for scenes of adaptation to obstacles, not as a complete psychological theory (Chung, 2023).

In another sense, perfectionism can become rigid. Kerr relates it to very high standards, excessive concern for details, dependence on external evaluation, and difficulty accepting reasonably good results (Kerr, 1991). Giudice also notes the relationship between excessively high standards, fear of making mistakes, anxiety, and possible burnout in certain cases (Giudice, 2024).

Anxiety: Possibility, Not Destiny

Anxiety appears in the sources as a possible difficulty, especially in contexts of pressure, misunderstanding, mismatch between needs and environment, difficult decisions, fear of failure, or constant evaluation (Giudice, 2024; Kerr, 1991; Molina García, 2014). However, none of the sources used allow us to state that giftedness generally causes anxiety.

Giudice cites studies on trait anxiety, emotional dysregulation, and profiles referred for giftedness, but warns that some of this evidence comes from clinical or referred samples, which limits generalization (Giudice, 2024). Molina García mentions anxiety as a socio-affective variable that can be assessed in some cases, along with motivation, self-esteem, adaptation, and personality traits, without presenting it as a defining characteristic (Molina García, 2014). Kerr relates it to academic stress, high expectations, school transitions, test anxiety, and performance in specific areas such as music (Kerr, 1991).

This cautious reading allows the issue to be framed more usefully. It is not about asking whether gifted individuals “are anxious,” but about observing when a specific person is subjected to a combination of demands, expectations, and lack of support that can foster tension or blockage.

The Role of the Environment: Expectations, Challenge, and Support

One idea runs through several sources: emotional difficulties should not be separated from the academic, social, and family context (Kerr, 1991; Molina García, 2014; Giudice, 2024). Sometimes discomfort is better understood by looking at the interaction between the person and their environment: learning pace, type of tasks, peer relationships, family expectations, classroom style, previous experiences of success or failure, and real possibilities for support.

This does not mean blaming the school or the family. It means recognizing that well-being does not depend solely on internal traits. A fast-learning student may get bored with very repetitive tasks; another may feel pressured if every achievement becomes a new benchmark; an adult may experience burnout if they maintain impossible standards for years. In each case, the same initial trait can have different effects depending on the context.

Kerr notes that many gifted individuals are well-adjusted, although some may experience difficulties related to boredom, isolation, expectations, or lack of challenge (Kerr, 1991). Molina García insists that the educational response must address psychological and social needs, not just intellectual ones (Molina García, 2014). Giudice warns that the belief that gifted individuals always adjust well can invisibilize real difficulties (Giudice, 2024).

Therefore, a sensible response usually combines challenge and care. Challenge without support can increase pressure. Support without challenge may fall short if the person needs depth, autonomy, or

complexity. The issue is not always to lower demands, but to make them more appropriate, understandable, and humane.

Supporting Without Labeling Emotion

In daily life, supporting these experiences requires a delicate balance. If a girl avoids submitting assignments because they never seem good enough, she may need help to finish, review, and accept a possible outcome. If an adolescent is anxious before a test, it may be useful to explore what meaning they attribute to that test. If an adult describes themselves as intense or sensitive, it is advisable to listen without immediately assuming that this is a problem.

These guidelines do not promise results. They serve to shift the focus from the label to specific needs. Perfectionism, anxiety, or emotional intensity can be part of the experience of some gifted individuals, but they do not define the person or allow for their identification.

Perhaps the most cautious formulation is this: **giftedness can coexist with an intense emotional life, with perfectionism, or with anxiety, but the relationship between these elements depends on the person, the context, and other variables.** Some sources agree on pointing out risks of pressure, expectations, and maladjustment; they also agree on warning against generalizations (Giudice, 2024; Kerr, 1991; Molina García, 2014). This double caution best protects rigorous dissemination: taking discomfort seriously without turning it into destiny.

Sources Used

- Chung, D. (2023). *Portrayal of Gifted Stereotypes in Disney Channel Media: Harmony or Disharmony?* Journal of Student Research, 12(3), 1-16.
- Giudice, A. (2024). *Brief introduction of giftedness in adults*. Preprint. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.16087.48804>
- Kerr, B. (1991). *A Handbook for Counseling the Gifted and Talented*. American Association for Counseling and Development.
- Molina García, L. (2014). *Curricular adaptations for gifted students from tutoring*. IC Editorial.

07

Twice-Exceptionality

Explains the coexistence of high abilities and specific difficulties, addressing strengths and support needs at the same time.



The term **twice-exceptionality** is used to describe profiles where high abilities coexist with a difficulty, disability, neurodevelopmental disorder, or other need affecting learning, communication, attention, regulation, or daily functioning. It is not a single clinical diagnosis. It is a way of naming a complex combination: a person may show very prominent strengths and, at the same time, require specific support in particular areas (Pfeiffer, 2015; Lovecky, 2004; Giudice, 2024).

This idea is important because it breaks a still-frequent assumption: thinking that high ability should protect against difficulties. The reviewed sources agree on a basic point: a learning, attention, or communication difficulty does not rule out high ability, and high ability alone does not eliminate a real difficulty (Distin, 2006; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012; Sternberg et al., 2011).

This chapter does not aim to help diagnose ADHD, autism, dyslexia, or high abilities. Its objective is to explain why these profiles can go unnoticed, what precautions should be taken, and why the educational response should not focus only on “what is wrong” or only on “what stands out.”

When one part of the profile hides the other

Twice-exceptionality is often difficult to identify because strengths and difficulties can **mask** each other. Some sources describe three common situations: high ability compensating for a difficulty, difficulty obscuring potential, or both dimensions remaining largely invisible, making the person seem simply “normal,” inconsistent, or unmotivated (Pfeiffer, 2015; Phillipson et al., 2013; Distin, 2006).

A student with high verbal reasoning may use their general comprehension to compensate for reading problems for a time. Another may have complex ideas but produce poor written work due to difficulties with writing, planning, or speed. A child with a great capacity to learn may maintain good results in Primary school at the cost of much effort, and begin to show more difficulties when organizational demands increase. These examples do not prove anything on their own, but they help to understand why visible performance can be misleading.

Several sources warn against two simplistic interpretations. The first would be to think: “if they have high abilities, they don’t need support.” The second would be to conclude: “if they have difficulties, then they cannot have high ability.” Both leave out a part of the profile (Lovecky, 2004; Sternberg et al., 2011; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

If only one looks at...	Main risk	More cautious interpretation
High performance	Invisibilizing difficulties with attention, reading, writing, communication, or regulation.	Ask how much effort it takes to sustain that performance and in what contexts barriers appear.
The difficulty	Overlooking reasoning, creativity, deep interests, or rapid learning.	Also explore strengths, talent domains, and opportunities for challenge.
An overall score	Hiding profiles that are very uneven across areas.	Interpret the data set with qualified professionals.
External behavior	Confusing different causes: boredom, anxiety, ADHD, autism, dyslexia, or other factors.	Observe context, duration, interference, and trajectory.

Uneven profiles, not contradictions

In twice-exceptionality, internal differences can be wide. Lovecky describes children with high reasoning and difficulties in attention, writing, organization, social skills, or emotional regulation. She also notes that these profiles can show greater asynchrony: thinking with great complexity in one area and, at the same time, needing help with daily tasks that seem simple from the outside (Lovecky, 2004).

Sternberg, Jarvin, and Grigorenko address the combination of high ability and learning difficulties from a contextual perspective: what is considered a strength, weakness, or disability also depends on the demands of the educational environment and the skills that environment values (Sternberg et al., 2011). This idea does not deny difficulties, but it reminds us that the problem does not reside solely in the person. A school heavily reliant on fast written tasks can make a writing difficulty more visible; an assessment with a high verbal load may not accurately capture certain profiles; a classroom with little flexibility can amplify attention or communication problems.

The most appropriate response usually requires two simultaneous movements: **developing strengths** and **supporting vulnerable areas**. The consulted sources insist that intervention should not be limited to correcting deficits, because that can impoverish talent development. But it would also not be enough to offer enrichment or acceleration if difficulties affecting daily life are ignored (Lovecky, 2004; Distin, 2006; Pfeiffer, 2015).

ADHD and High Abilities: External Similarity is Not Equivalence

ADHD appears in several sources as one of the profiles that can coexist with high abilities, but also as a frequent source of confusion. Some behaviors may seem similar from the outside: moving a lot, talking excessively, interrupting, getting distracted by repetitive tasks, abandoning projects, or resisting rules that are not understood. However, the sources do not maintain that high ability and ADHD are the same (Pfeiffer, 2015; Bourse & Ricart, 2014; Giudice, 2024).

Part of the literature warns that boredom, lack of challenge, or an ill-fitting curriculum can produce behaviors that resemble inattention. Other authors highlight the opposite risk: that ADHD goes undetected because high ability allows for compensation for some school demands for years (Lovecky, 2004; Pfeiffer, 2015; Ambrose & Sternberg, 2016).

The study by Gomez and colleagues compared children with ADHD with and without high ability, and children without ADHD. In that sample, the groups with ADHD clearly differed from the groups without ADHD; furthermore, the group with high ability and ADHD did not show exactly the same pattern as the group with ADHD without high ability. The authors interpret that ADHD can be a valid diagnosis in children with high ability, although they recommend caution and more research before establishing differentiated criteria for this group (Gomez et al., 2019).

In popular terms, the caution would be this: neither restlessness nor distraction is enough to speak of ADHD; nor should it be ruled out just because there is good reasoning, creativity, or high performance in some areas. The assessment must consider the persistence of difficulties, their presence in different contexts, functional interference, and developmental history, always by competent professionals (Lovecky, 2004; Pfeiffer, 2015; Williams, 2024).

Autism and High Abilities: Distinguishing Without Rigid Separation

Autism also appears in sources as a possible form of twice-exceptionality, though with important nuances. Some older works use the category “Asperger’s syndrome,” specific to previous diagnostic classifications. When using these sources, it is important to remember that part of the vocabulary comes from its era and should not be transferred without context (Lovecky, 2004; Distin, 2006; Costis, 2016).

The reviewed sources point to possible areas of difficulty in social communication, reciprocity, flexibility, interpretation of social cues, sensory sensitivity, or adaptive functioning. At the same time, they describe possible strengths: memory, specialized knowledge, honesty, deep interests, or advanced learning in specific domains. These are not universal traits or sufficient to identify autism, but they help to understand why some profiles can be very uneven (Lovecky, 2004; Costis, 2016).

Doobay and colleagues compared highly able youth with autism to highly able youth without a psychological diagnosis. In their sample, they found no significant differences in total IQ, but they did observe average differences in processing speed, adaptive skills, and adult-reported psychosocial functioning. The largest adaptive differences appeared in socialization. The authors themselves emphasize individual variability and the need for more studies on intervention (Doobay et al., 2014).

Freeman provides an additional caution: some highly able individuals may have social difficulties without that necessarily equating to autism. At the same time, the possibility that a person has both conditions should not be denied. The question is not to decide by intuition whether someone “seems autistic” or “seems gifted,” but to rigorously assess communication, flexibility, adaptive functioning, developmental history, and real needs (Freeman, 2010; Costis, 2016).

Dyslexia and other learning difficulties

Dyslexia is mentioned in several sources as a specific difficulty that can coexist with high abilities. The most repeated point is that advanced reasoning does not necessarily eliminate difficulties in reading, writing, or spelling. Similarly, a literacy difficulty does not allow one to conclude low intellectual ability (Valadez Sierra et al., 2012; Distin, 2006; Freeman, 2010).

This profile can go especially unnoticed if the school relies heavily on written performance. A student may have complex ideas, good oral comprehension, or advanced mathematical thinking, but obtain poor results when the task requires reading quickly, writing precisely, or organizing what they know in writing. Lovecky collects examples of students with high abilities, ADHD, and dyslexia, and notes that supports such as dictation, computers, or other ways of expressing thought can help to better show what the person understands (Lovecky, 2004).

Some sources describe possible visual, spatial, or creative strengths in certain students with dyslexia, but this point should be treated with caution. Not every person with dyslexia will have these strengths, nor does every visual strength indicate dyslexia. The useful idea is more modest: it is advisable to look at the complete profile, not just the mistakes, reading slowness, or written presentation (Bourse & Ricart, 2014; Farrall et al., 2007).

Assessing and Supporting Without Reducing to Labels

Twice-exceptionality requires particularly careful assessment. Sources insist on using multiple sources of information: appropriate tests, school history, observation, reports from family and teachers, productions, daily functioning, and context. They also warn that an overall score can hide important internal differences, and that some tests can be affected by difficulties in attention, language, reading, processing speed, or communication (Pfeiffer, 2015; Sternberg et al., 2011; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

In educational practice, the question should not be only “what label do they have,” but what they need to learn and participate better. Some measures can address the difficulty: executive function support, anticipation, structure, explicit strategy teaching, adjustments in reading or writing, visual aids, adequate time, or alternative ways of demonstrating knowledge. Others must nurture the development of strengths: enrichment, depth, complex projects, acceleration when appropriate, mentorship, or access to more advanced content. The sources do not promise that a specific combination will work in all cases; they recommend adjusting the response to the individual profile (Lovecky, 2004; Distin, 2006; Pfeiffer, 2015).

It is also important to be careful with language. A child is not “just ADHD,” “just autistic,” “just dyslexic,” or “just highly able.” Labels can open doors to support and understanding, but they can also narrow the perspective if they become the complete explanation of the person. Twice-exceptionality precisely invites us to maintain a dual perspective: recognizing real abilities without denying real difficulties.

Perhaps the most prudent criterion is this: when there are large discrepancies between what a person seems to understand, what they manage to express, how they learn, and how they function in different contexts, it is worth looking in more detail. Not to multiply labels, but to prevent one part of the profile from erasing the other.

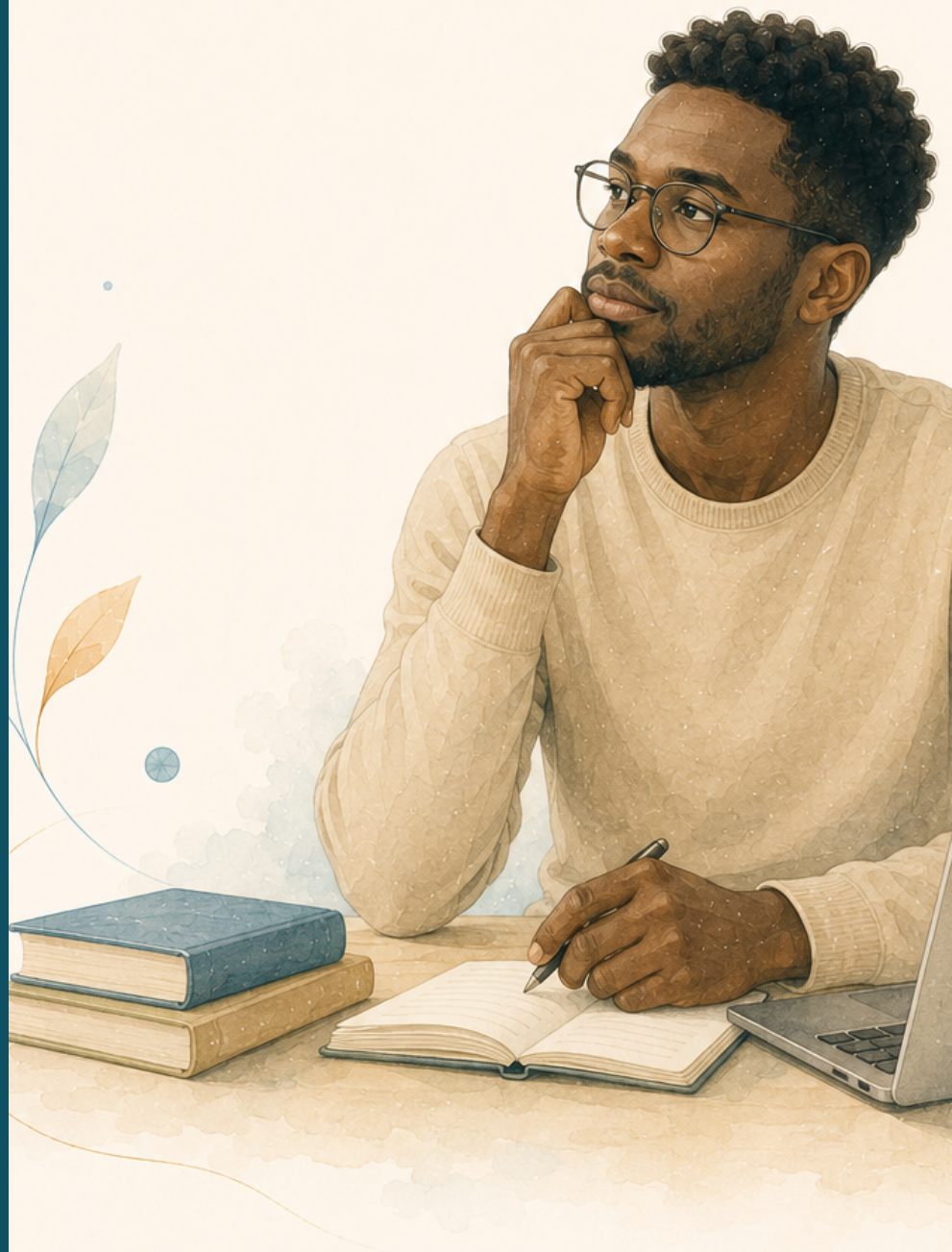
Sources used

- Ambrose, D., & Sternberg, R. J. (Eds.). (2016). *Giftedness and talent in the 21st century: Adapting to the turbulence of globalization*. Sense Publishers.
- Bourse, P., & Ricart, D. (2014). *Brilliant Children, Outstanding Students: A Manual for Parents and Teachers on Students with High Intellectual and Creative Potential*. Bonum.
- Costis, P. A. (2016). *Seeing the paradigm: Education professionals' advocacy for the gifted student with autism spectrum disorder* \[Doctoral dissertation, The College of William and Mary in Virginia\]. ProQuest LLC.
- Distin, K. (Ed.). (2006). *Gifted children: A guide for parents and professionals*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Doobay, A. F., Foley-Nicpon, M., Ali, S. R., & Assouline, S. G. (2014). Cognitive, adaptive, and psychosocial differences between high ability youth with and without autism spectrum disorder. *Journal of Autism and Developmental Disorders*, 44, 2026-2040. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-014-2082-1>
- Farrall, J., Matison, A., Minchin, M., & Stewart, W. (2007). *Raising your gifted and talented child: The joys and the challenges*. Gifted and Talented Children's Association of South Australia.
- Freeman, J. (2010). *Gifted lives: What happens when gifted children grow up?* Routledge.
- Giudice, A. (2024). *Brief introduction of giftedness in adults*. Preprint. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.16087.48804>
- Gomez, R., Stavropoulos, V., Vance, A., & Griffiths, M. D. (2019). *Gifted children with ADHD: How are they different from non-gifted children with ADHD?* International Journal of Mental Health and Addiction. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11469-019-00125-x>
- Lovecky, D. V. (2004). *Different minds: Gifted children with ADHD, Asperger Syndrome, and other learning deficits*. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.
- Pfeiffer, S. I. (2015). *Essentials of gifted assessment*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Phillipson, S. N., Stoeger, H., & Ziegler, A. (Eds.). (2013). *Exceptionality in East Asia: Explorations in the actiotope model of giftedness*. Routledge.
- Sternberg, R. J., Jarvin, L., & Grigorenko, E. L. (2011). *Explorations in giftedness*. Cambridge University Press.
- Valadez Sierra, M. D., Betancourt Morejón, J., & Zavala Berbena, M. A. (Eds.). (2012). *Gifted and Talented Students: Identification, Assessment, and Intervention. A Perspective for Teachers* (2nd ed.). Editorial El Manual Moderno.
- Williams, J. (2024). *Raising their voices: Lived experiences of gifted women with ADHD* \[Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver\]. ProQuest Dissertations & Theses.

8

High Abilities in Adults

Considers how high abilities may appear in adulthood and why they require broad, contextualised understanding.



Talking about high abilities in adulthood means shifting the focus. For years, much of the research and intervention has been organised around school: identification, curriculum adaptation, enrichment, acceleration, or peer relationships. That approach makes sense, but it leaves an open question: what happens when the person enters university, work, a relationship, or parenting.

The sources reviewed agree on an initial caution: the adult experience is less studied than childhood and adolescence, and it cannot be simply inferred from school performance or an IQ score (Giudice, 2024; Freeman, 2010; Kerr, 1991). Some adults develop visible trajectories; others lead discreet lives—satisfying or difficult.

This chapter is not intended to help anyone self-diagnose. Its aim is to organise common issues in adult life: late recognition, work, relationships, emotional wellbeing, and talent development.

High ability doesn't disappear as you grow up

A simple idea, but one that is sometimes forgotten, is that high abilities are not just a school matter. Adults retain their history, interests, ways of learning, and need for complexity, even though how those abilities are expressed can change a lot over time.

In a follow-up of life trajectories, Freeman shows that childhood talent does not linearly predict adult success, fame, or wellbeing. In adult life, work, finances, health, family, opportunities, personality, and also chance all play a role (Freeman, 2010). Other models of talent development insist on a similar idea: initial potential can turn into competence, expertise, or contribution, but that process requires learning, practice, support, context, and motivation; it is not guaranteed (Pfeiffer, 2015; Heller et al., 2005; Sternberg et al., 2011).

This distinction helps avoid two mistakes: assuming that an adult with high abilities should have reached a brilliant position, or denying their high abilities if they don't have a prestigious career, publications, awards, or high income. Some theoretical conceptions place a lot of weight on adult achievement or eminence, but it's not advisable to reduce high ability to social recognition (Ziegler & Heller, 2000; Sternberg et al., 2011).

Recognising yourself late: relief, doubts, and rereading your own story

Some people reach adulthood without having been identified. Others were labelled as children, but received a limited message: “you're smart”, “you can do anything”, “you don't need help”. In both cases, adulthood can bring a review of one's own path. Giudice notes that the subjective experience of gifted adults is understudied, but points to the possibility that some people have learned to hide difficulties or adapt to environments that don't fit their needs (Giudice, 2024).

This rereading can bring relief: certain experiences of boredom, intensity, feeling different, or frustration with meaningless tasks take on a new frame. It can also raise doubts. Not everyone feels comfortable with a label that may oversimplify a complex life.

In recent qualitative studies on gifted adult women with ADHD, several participants reinterpret their education, career, relationships, and self-concept as they better understand the interaction between strengths and difficulties (Williams, 2024). It is a valuable but limited source: the sample is small

and selected. It does not allow generalisation, although it shows that, in some cases, naming a combination of abilities and difficulties can reduce guilt and support better-fitting strategies.

Work, studies, and multipotentiality

Academic and professional life is often one of the areas where the gap between potential and real trajectory is most noticeable. Kerr describes **multipotentiality** as the possibility of having several areas of competence or interest. It can be an advantage, because it opens up paths; but it can also complicate choice, prolong indecision, or create the feeling of always leaving something out (Kerr, 1991).

Not all people with high abilities are multipotential. Some have a strong and stable interest in a specific domain from very early on. Others change areas several times, combine disciplines, or need jobs with autonomy, continuous learning, and meaning. Lin, in a dissertation on gifted adults engaged in social entrepreneurship, describes trajectories where values, creativity, frustration with traditional structures, and a search for social impact are linked to career decisions (Lin, 2024). The nuance is essential: it is not a representative sample of all gifted adults.

In adult work life, high ability can show up in different ways:

- rapid learning in new areas;
- a tendency to connect ideas from different fields;
- discomfort with repetitive or poorly justified tasks;
- a need for intellectual autonomy;
- interest in complex problems;
- difficulty choosing when there are too many attractive options.

These possibilities are neither universal traits nor diagnostic. They can have very different effects depending on the context. A flexible environment can turn curiosity and depth into valuable contributions; a rigid or unclear one can increase wear and tear. Sources on adult talent development insist that excellence and professional satisfaction do not depend only on ability: practice, mentoring, resources, and recognition within the field also matter (Heller et al., 2005; Phillipson et al., 2013; Sternberg et al., 2011).

University or advanced training can be, for some people, a better fit than earlier school stages. But it's also not worth idealising them: young adulthood can also demand organisation, self-regulation, and decision-making.

Relationships, partnership, and feeling different

Adult life shifts the question from “how do they relate to their classmates” to more varied bonds: friendships, partner relationships, teamwork, family, or communities of interest. The available sources do not support the idea that gifted adults necessarily have worse relationships. A study with Mensa adults in committed relationships found no significant differences in partner quality or satisfaction compared to a comparison group, although it did observe some average differences in attachment and conflict management (Dijkstra et al., 2017).

That result should be read with caution. The sample comes from Mensa, includes heterosexual adults in committed relationships, and does not represent all forms of high ability or all forms of relationship. Even so, it helps dismantle a caricature: high ability neither condemns someone to loneliness nor guarantees special relational skills.

What does appear in several sources is the importance of fit between the person and their environment. Some adults look for deep conversations, shared interests, or spaces where they don't have to hide their curiosity. Others may need periods of solitude to regain energy or think calmly. These descriptions often come from clinical observations, testimonies, or popular texts, so it's best to treat them as possibilities, not as a fixed profile (Giudice, 2024).

Emotional wellbeing: neither invulnerability nor a destiny of suffering

In adults, as in childhood, it's worth avoiding two extremes. One would be imagining that high ability protects against emotional problems. The other is presenting it as an almost inevitable source of anxiety, isolation, or distress. The sources reviewed do not support either extreme.

Giudice describes possible experiences of intensity, sensitivity, perfectionism, moral concern, anxiety, or burnout in some adults, but acknowledges that specific research is lacking and that many claims come from models, studies at other stages, or particular samples (Giudice, 2024). Kerr notes that many people with high ability are well adjusted, although some may experience difficulties related to expectations, boredom, isolation, or lack of challenge (Kerr, 1991). Molina García stresses that high ability does not in itself imply emotional instability and that social and emotional aspects should be considered alongside cognitive ones (Molina García, 2014).

Anxiety deserves a specific mention. It can appear in contexts of pressure, evaluation, complex decisions, fear of failure, or a mismatch between needs and environment, but it should not be presented as a necessary consequence of high abilities (Giudice, 2024; Kerr, 1991). A classic review on psychological wellbeing warns that evidence on creatively eminent adults and mood disorders cannot simply be applied to all people with high intellectual ability (Neihart, 1999).

A cautious formulation would be this: **high abilities can coexist with wellbeing, with distress, or with both at different times in life**. When there is intense, persistent, or disabling suffering, the explanation should not stop at "it's because of high abilities". There may be anxiety, depression, ADHD, autism, work-related difficulties, grief, financial stress, or other factors that require assessment and professional support.

Twice-exceptionality in adults

In some adults, high abilities coexist with ADHD, autism, learning difficulties, or other needs. Specific research on adult twice-exceptionality is limited, but some sources note that certain difficulties may have been masked for years by high reasoning, creativity, or compensatory ability (Ambrose & Sternberg, 2016; Williams, 2024).

This can lead to uneven trajectories: strong performance on complex tasks, but difficulty sustaining routines; brilliant ideas, but problems meeting deadlines; high understanding, but exhaustion from compensating. These are not proof of anything on their own. They are a reminder that an adult can have real strengths and, at the same time, need real support.

A broader adult perspective

The study of high abilities in adults needs more research: more diverse samples, more longitudinal studies, more attention to women, unidentified adults, older people, ordinary workplace contexts,

relationships, mental health, and twice-exceptionality. Many available sources focus on childhood, university, high-achieving samples, Mensa, or people with exceptional achievements.

That's why a general-audience guide should keep a sober stance. Adult high ability is neither a promise of success nor a sentence to maladjustment. It can be a relevant dimension of identity, learning, work, relationships, and wellbeing, but always intertwined with personal history, opportunities, health, culture, finances, and decisions.

Understanding it better is not about looking for a label that explains everything. It's about looking at adult life more precisely: what abilities are there, what contexts support them, what difficulties need attention, and what supports can make life more liveable without reducing the person to their performance.

Sources used

- Ambrose, D., & Sternberg, R. J. (Eds.). (2016). *Giftedness and talent in the 21st century: Adapting to the turbulence of globalization*. Sense Publishers.
- Dijkstra, P., Barelds, D. P. H., Ronner, S., & Nauta, A. P. (2017). Intimate relationships of the intellectually gifted: Attachment style, conflict style, and relationship satisfaction among members of the Mensa Society. *Marriage & Family Review*, 53(3), 262-280.
- Freeman, J. (2010). *Gifted lives: What happens when gifted children grow up?* Routledge.
- Giudice, A. (2024). *Brief introduction of giftedness in adults*. Preprint. <https://doi.org/10.13140/RG.2.2.16087.48804>
- Heller, K. A., Perleth, C., & Lim, T. K. (2005). The Munich model of giftedness designed to identify and promote gifted students. In R. J. Sternberg & J. E. Davidson (Eds.), *Conceptions of giftedness* (2nd ed.). Cambridge University Press.
- Kerr, B. (1991). *A handbook for counseling the gifted and talented*. American Association for Counseling and Development.
- Lin, J. (2024). *Collective case study career critique of social entrepreneurs who are gifted adults* \[Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver\].
- Molina García, L. (2014). *Curriculum adaptations for high-ability students through tutoring*. IC Editorial.
- Neihart, M. (1999). The impact of giftedness on psychological well-being: What does the empirical literature say? *Roeper Review*, 25, 10-17.
- Pfeiffer, S. I. (2015). *Essentials of gifted assessment*. John Wiley & Sons.
- Phillipson, S. N., Stoeger, H., & Ziegler, A. (Eds.). (2013). *Exceptionality in East Asia: Explorations in the actiotope model of giftedness*. Routledge.
- Sternberg, R. J., Jarvin, L., & Grigorenko, E. L. (2011). *Explorations in giftedness*. Cambridge University Press.
- Williams, J. (2024). *Raising their voices: Lived experiences of gifted women with ADHD* \[Doctoral dissertation, University of Denver\].
- Ziegler, A., & Heller, K. A. (2000). *Conceptions of giftedness from a meta-theoretical perspective*.

9

School and Family

Shows how cooperation between school and family can provide suitable challenge, support and opportunities for each learner.



School and family alone do not explain high abilities, but they are part of the environment where an ability can find opportunities, limits, recognition, or misunderstandings. Several reviewed sources agree on this idea: the development of talent depends on the interaction between personal characteristics, educational opportunities, social support, motivation, interests, and context (Ziegler & Heller, 2000; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012; Shavinina & Ferrari, 2004).

It's worth starting with a simple precaution: **neither family nor teachers should bear the task of diagnosing**. They can observe, provide information, and participate in educational decisions, but formal identification and support planning require a comprehensive, contextualized evaluation carried out by competent professionals. The sources emphasize that family and school observations are valuable, although they must be contrasted with other data (Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Lovecky, 2004; Doobay et al., 2014).

In practice, many doubts arise in an intermediate zone: a student who finishes quickly and gets bored, a girl who asks complex questions but avoids written tasks, a teenager who performs below expectations, a family that perceives a lot of intensity at home, and a school that only sees correct grades. These cases require looking at what is happening, when it is happening, what that person needs, and what responses are realistic in their context.

School as a place of challenge, not just performance

A common confusion is to equate high abilities with good grades. The reviewed sources are cautious with this equivalence. Some historical models have given much weight to academic performance, but other approaches incorporate creativity, motivation, specific domains, social context, and learning opportunities (Ziegler & Heller, 2000). Therefore, a good academic record can be a clue, but it doesn't exhaust the topic; and irregular performance does not, by itself, rule out high ability.

School plays an important role because it organizes a large part of learning opportunities. When the curriculum is too repetitive, slow, or unchallenging for a particular student, some sources describe possible effects such as boredom, demotivation, frustration, or underperformance. These are not automatic consequences, nor do they appear equally in all cases, but they are risks that should be observed (Molina García, 2014; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012; Pié Balaguer et al., 2014).

The educational response should not consist of giving "more of the same." Several sources agree that adding repetitive exercises when the student has already mastered the content is usually a poor measure. Useful differentiation aims more at adjusting depth, pace, complexity, autonomy, learning products, and research opportunities (Tomlinson, 2004; Conklin, 2015; Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012).

This does not mean that everything should be personalized to the maximum every day, which is unrealistic in many classrooms. It does imply that the school should ask what the student already knows, what they need to practice, what they can explore in more depth, what support they require, and how the effectiveness of the measure will be evaluated.

Educational measures: choose according to need, not label

Sources usually organize the school response into several modalities: ordinary classroom measures, enrichment, curriculum compacting, flexible grouping, mentoring, curricular adaptation, and, in

some cases, acceleration or grade skipping. There is no single valid path for all students with high abilities (Kerr, 1991; Molina García, 2014; Tomlinson, 2004).

Measure	What it can provide	Main cautions
Differentiation in the classroom	Adjust tasks, questions, materials, products, and pace without necessarily separating the student from their group.	Requires planning and prior evaluation; “extra” activities are not enough (Tomlinson, 2004; Conklin, 2015).
Curriculum compacting	Reduce work already mastered and free up time for new or more complex learning.	Must be based on evidence of mastery, not on the impression that they “learn fast” (Conklin, 2015; Pié Balaguer et al., 2014).
Enrichment	Deepen, research, create products, connect areas, and broaden interests.	Should not be a meaningless added task or an occasional reward (Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).
Flexible grouping	Facilitate work with peers of similar interests, level, or pace at specific times.	Rigid or permanent grouping can raise social and organizational concerns (Valadez Sierra et al., 2012; Tomlinson, 2004).
Acceleration or grade skipping	Allow advancement in grade, subject, or level when there is a clear mismatch.	Usually considered an exceptional measure; academic, social, and emotional aspects should be evaluated (Molina García, 2014; Pié Balaguer et al., 2014).

Enrichment appears in several sources as an option compatible with an inclusive school, because it can adapt learning without necessarily isolating the student. It can include projects, open-ended problems, guided research, creative production, advanced reading, critical use of sources, or mentoring (Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Treffinger, 2004; Kim et al., 2013).

Acceleration, on the other hand, generates more debate. Some sources defend it when it is well indicated and evaluated, while others emphasize the need for caution. The disagreement is usually not about whether it can help in certain cases, but when, how, and with what support to apply it. Presenting it as a universal solution would be as imprudent as always ruling it out (Kerr, 1991; Molina García, 2014; Pié Balaguer et al., 2014).

Creativity, autonomy, and psychological safety for thinking

School does not only transmit content. It can also open or close spaces for creativity. Some sources indicate that the classroom better fosters creative thinking when it offers psychological safety, room to explore, feedback, opportunities for revision, and problems with a certain degree of openness (Kim et al., 2013; Treffinger, 2004). This is not equivalent to letting students “do whatever they want.” School creativity needs structure, objectives, and guidance.

Reviewed studies on creativity warn against two simplifications. The first is to reserve creative activities only for students identified with high abilities. Some processes, such as formulating questions, generating alternatives, or revising an idea, can benefit diverse students (Treffinger, 2004). The second is to think that any striking activity develops creativity. Without connection to objectives, content, and evaluation, a task can be entertaining but not very formative.

Technology deserves similar caution: it can expand resources and facilitate pathways, but its value depends on pedagogical design. There is not enough basis to affirm that a digital tool, by itself, improves the educational response for students with high abilities (Kontostavlou & Driga, 2023).

When there are strengths and difficulties at the same time

An important part of the school response is not to be misled by uneven profiles. Some sources on twice-exceptionality remind us that a student can reason at a high level and, at the same time, have difficulties with writing, planning, attention, flexibility, social interaction, or emotional regulation (Lovecky, 2004; Doobay et al., 2014).

In these cases, lowering the intellectual challenge does not always solve the problem. Sometimes the student needs richer content and, at the same time, explicit support: breaking down tasks, using visual aids, allowing alternative ways to demonstrate learning, or adjusting writing demands. The central idea is to address **strengths and needs**, not to choose only one of the two (Lovecky, 2004).

It is also important not to hastily interpret apathy, disruptive behavior, or underperformance. These can be related to a lack of challenge, but also to anxiety, executive difficulties, learning problems, complex social experiences, or other factors. The sources do not authorize converting isolated behavior into a diagnostic sign (Lovecky, 2004; Simoës-Perlant, 2024).

The family: observe, support, and don't carry the whole burden

The family often provides information that the school doesn't always see: persistent interests, questions, readings, games, sensitivity, reactions to frustration, learning rhythms, hobbies, personal projects, or mood changes. Several sources consider this information especially useful in early ages and during identification processes (Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch, 2012; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012; Molina García, 2014).

But family observation is not equivalent to diagnosis. A family may know their child very well and still need to contrast that information with school data, tests, interviews, and professional judgment. Similarly, the school may observe academic functioning and not capture all the intensity, curiosity, or difficulty that appears at home. Integrating perspectives is usually more reliable than reading from a single context (Doobay et al., 2014; Lovecky, 2004).

Family support should also not become constant pressure. Some sources warn that overly rigid expectations can increase the experience of demand in some children and adolescents, although they do not present the family as the sole cause of problems (Giudice, 2024; Chung, 2023; Kerr, 1991). The prudent recommendation would be to maintain realistic expectations, value effort, ensure rest, and not demand excellence in everything.

At home, support can mean many things: listening to interests, facilitating reasonable resources, maintaining habits, setting boundaries, teaching how to tolerate mistakes, and maintaining a daily life that does not revolve entirely around the label. Some sources insist on this idea of balance:

stimulating without overloading, recognizing without idealizing, accompanying without turning every interest into an obligation to perform (Giró, 2017; Pié Balaguer et al., 2014; Treffinger, 2004).

Family-school collaboration: concrete agreements

Collaboration works best when it focuses on observable and reviewable objectives. “Needs more challenge” is an understandable complaint, but too general. It can be transformed into more useful questions: what content do they already master, what tasks do they find repetitive, what support do they require, how will progress be measured, and when will the measure be reviewed.

The reviewed sources recommend coordination among family, teachers, and guidance counselors, especially for planning and monitoring educational measures (Molina García, 2014; Pié Balaguer et al., 2014; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012). This coordination does not require all parties to think alike from the beginning. It requires sharing information, avoiding global accusations, and distinguishing observed facts, interpretations, and hypotheses.

A simple guideline can help:

- **Observable facts:** “They finish calculation tasks in a few minutes and then disengage.”
- **Hypothesis:** “Perhaps they already master part of the content and need compacting or more in-depth activities.”
- **Concrete measure:** “For four weeks, prior mastery will be checked and, if appropriate, part of the repetition will be replaced by more complex problems.”
- **Review:** “Family and tutor will review motivation, quality of work, and perceived workload.”

This way of working does not guarantee results, but it reduces the risk of decisions based solely on impressions. It also prevents the conversation from being limited to “the child is bored” or “the family demands too much,” two explanations that are rarely sufficient on their own.

Limits of what we know

The available sources consistently support the need for an adjusted educational response, the importance of family-school collaboration, and the advisability of avoiding both a lack of challenge and over-demand. They also agree that measures should be individualized and reviewed.

There are, however, important limitations. Some sources are practical manuals or theoretical chapters; others come from national contexts different from Spanish; some research is qualitative, narrative, or based on perceptions. Furthermore, the consulted notes do not allow verifying the current regulatory validity of all legal guidelines mentioned in previous works. This chapter should not be read as a legal or clinical guide, but as a popular science synthesis.

Perhaps the most prudent idea is this: school and family can greatly facilitate things when they observe carefully, adjust expectations, share information, and offer proportionate opportunities. They do not need to turn every difference into an alarm or every ability into an obligation to excel. Above all, they need to look at the whole child or adolescent: their learning, their well-being, their relationships, their interests, and their limits.

Sources used

Arocas Sanchis & Vera Lluch (2012); Chung (2023); Conklin (2015); Doobay et al. (2014); Giudice (2024); Giró (2017); Kerr (1991); Kim et al. (2013); Kontostavlou & Driga (2023); Lovecky (2004); Molina García (2014); Pié Balaguer et al. (2014); Shavinina & Ferrari (2004); Simoës-Perlant (2024); Tomlinson (2004); Treffinger (2004); Valadez Sierra et al. (2012); Ziegler & Heller (2000).

Chapters

- [Introduction](#)
- [What are high abilities](#)
- [Myths and misconceptions](#)
- [How they are identified](#)
- [Childhood and adolescence](#)
- [Emotions and perfectionism](#)
- [Twice-Exceptionality](#)
- [High abilities in adults](#)
- [School and Family](#)
- [Resources and Next Steps](#)

10

Resources and Next Steps

Provides reliable resources and practical guidance for continued learning and seeking professional support when needed.



Reaching the end of a guide on high abilities doesn't mean having to make decisions quickly. In many cases, the most sensible step is to organize the information, distinguish real needs from external expectations, and seek support that fits the person and their context. The reviewed sources agree on a basic idea: resources can be useful when they respond to specific objectives, adapt to the individual profile, and are reviewed over time; they don't work as universal recipes (Molina García, 2014; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012; González-Víllora & Pastor-Vicedo, 2024).

It's also worth starting with a warning. A good portion of books and manuals on high abilities include lists of associations, websites, programs, centers, and materials. They can provide guidance, but many belong to a specific country and date. Several sources warn that their contact details, links, or programs could change after publication, so they shouldn't be assumed current without updated verification (Distin, 2006; Gosfield, 2008; Bourse & Ricart, 2014; Navan, 2009). This chapter doesn't offer a closed catalog, but rather criteria for choosing, comparing, and using resources with caution.

Before Searching: Defining What Help Is Needed

The word "resource" can refer to many things: a psychoeducational assessment, a classroom adaptation, an enrichment program, a mentorship, a family association, a digital tool, a peer group, career guidance, or psychological support. Mixing everything together can lead to confusing decisions.

A practical way to start is to formulate the need in observable terms:

- "Needs more challenge in mathematics and gets bored with repetitive exercises."
- "Has many interests but struggles to organize long projects."
- "The family doesn't know how to talk with the school."
- "There are doubts about possible twice-exceptionality."
- "A teenager wants guidance on studies, interests, and professional future."
- "An adult seeks to understand their trajectory without turning everything into a label."

The sources insist that the response should be adjusted to age, interests, needs, school context, and prior assessment when necessary (Molina García, 2014; Conklin, 2015; Pié Balaguer et al., 2014). This doesn't mean medicalizing any difficulty or turning high ability into an explanation for everything; it means avoiding automatic solutions.

Assessment Resources: Useful, but Not for Home Use

Tests, scales, portfolios, and observations can provide valuable information, especially when used within a comprehensive process. Pfeiffer describes different cognitive instruments, achievement tests, teacher scales, creativity measures, portfolios, and nominations, but emphasizes that selection depends on the purpose, the adopted model of high ability, the available program, and the student's profile (Pfeiffer, 2015). Other works also include creativity tests, reasoning, achievement, observation, and domain-specific products, with the same caution: they are not interchangeable or sufficient on their own (Renzulli, 2004; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012).

For a family or teacher, the next step shouldn't be to "administer a test" on their own, but to ask what information is missing and who is qualified to obtain it. Some tools are designed for professionals

and require technical interpretation; using them without training can generate false certainties or poorly adjusted educational decisions (Pfeiffer, 2015; Heller, 1991).

If the question is...	It may help to...	It's best to avoid...
Does a school adaptation need to be made?	Psychoeducational assessment, teacher observation, work review, and coordination with guidance.	Basing the decision solely on an isolated score.
Is there talent in a specific domain?	Work samples, portfolios, products, auditions, or specific tasks, depending on the area.	Using a general test as the only measure of artistic, linguistic, or creative talent.
Are there coexisting difficulties?	Individual assessment by qualified professionals and educational coordination.	Attributing everything to high abilities or ruling them out due to the presence of difficulties.
Is a program working?	Clear objectives, monitoring, observable indicators, and periodic review.	Confusing satisfaction, prestige, or intensity with effectiveness.

Educational Resources: More Depth, Not More Quantity

The most frequently cited educational measures include enrichment, curriculum compacting, differentiation, projects, flexible grouping, mentorships, partial or subject-based acceleration, research work, workshops, extension corners, learning contracts, and open activities (Molina García, 2014; Tomlinson, 2004; Brody, 2004; Conklin, 2015). Several sources agree that the objective shouldn't be to keep students busy with more worksheets, but to offer tasks with greater complexity, autonomy, depth, or connection to real interests (Conklin, 2015; Pié Balaguer et al., 2014; Klimecká, 2024).

Enrichment can include interdisciplinary projects, research, problem-solving, creativity, advanced reading, technology, work with experts, or shared final products. Some structured proposals are presented as ways to offer intellectual challenge and deeper experiences, although the authors themselves usually call for more research and adaptation to context (Treffinger, 2004; Elballah et al., 2024; González-Víllora & Pastor-Vicedo, 2024).

Acceleration requires separate mention. The sources describe it as a set of possible measures, not as a single grade skip: it can be by subject, by pace, by early access to content, or by compacting what has already been mastered (Brody, 2004; Valadez Sierra et al., 2012). It may be appropriate in some cases, but should be carefully assessed: actual academic level, maturity, well-being, student opinion, teacher coordination, and subsequent follow-up (Molina García, 2014; Borland, 2003).

Family, School, and Coordination

An isolated resource rarely suffices if the people involved don't talk to each other. Different sources emphasize the importance of coordinating family, teachers, guidance, specialized teams, and, when appropriate, external resources (Pié Balaguer et al., 2014; Eren et al., 2018; Zanetti et al., 2024). This

coordination should specify what has been observed, what will be attempted, for how long, who will do it, and how it will be reviewed.

The Individual Attention Plan, or equivalent documents depending on the educational system, can be useful if it includes observable goals, strategies, timeline, responsibilities, and evaluation. The source attributed to Borland within the reviewed compilation insists that programs and supports should be evaluated, not just applied by intuition or tradition (Borland, 2003).

Families may also need information and support. Some recent studies suggest that informational sessions for mothers and fathers could help reduce myths and better communicate the possible academic and socioemotional effects of educational measures, although they don't prove that these sessions produce improvements on their own (Jung & Lee, 2024). Other works remind us that many families seek to feel understood and talk with professionals who know the daily experience of raising a child with high ability, not just receive guidelines focused on achievement (Peebles et al., 2023).

External Resources and Activities Outside the Classroom

Museums, workshops, music, theater, sports, science, robotics, languages, chess, recreational mathematics, writing, volunteering, or participation in projects can be valuable resources if they connect with real interests and don't saturate family life (Molina García, 2014; Giró, 2017). Several sources mention extracurricular programs, summer courses, mentorships, contact with professionals, and peer communities as development opportunities, especially when school cannot offer sufficient depth in a specific area (Ambrose & Sternberg, 2016; Shavinina & Ferrari, 2004; Vialle, 2007).

The nuance is important: more activities doesn't necessarily mean better support. Freeman warns that resources must consider emotional maturity, well-being, personal interests, and a balanced childhood (Freeman, 2010). Inequality of access must also be kept in mind: some families have more time, money, information, or cultural capital to find opportunities; others depend more on the school and administrations offering clear and accessible resources (Mazzoli Smith & Campbell, 2012; Borland & Wright, 1994).

Technology: Tool, Not Solution

Digital technologies frequently appear as support: virtual classrooms, wikis, forums, digital storytelling, robotics, games, portfolios, metacognition tools, mobile learning, and collaborative resources (Kontostavlou & Driga, 2023; Kim et al., 2013). They can facilitate flexible access, creative production, research, communication with peers, and project monitoring.

But technology doesn't guarantee enrichment. A digital task can be repetitive, superficial, or poorly adjusted, just like a paper task. The reviewed sources call for selecting tools according to educational objectives, age, context, and needs, and acknowledge that not all technological resources have been specifically studied with students with high abilities (Kontostavlou & Driga, 2023). If technology is used, it's worth asking: does it allow better thinking, research, creation, collaboration, or self-regulation?

When There Is Twice-Exceptionality or Distress

In profiles with high ability and autism, ADHD, learning difficulties, or other needs, the sources recommend simultaneously addressing strengths and areas of difficulty. Doobay and colleagues propose combining talent development opportunities with interventions and adaptations when

necessary, although they acknowledge that specific research is lacking on what works best for young people with high ability and autism (Doobay et al., 2014). Other works on twice-exceptionality insist on improving professional training and avoiding rigid or stereotyped descriptions (Lovecky, 2004; Williams, 2024).

If there is intense anxiety, persistent suffering, severe isolation, behavior problems that overwhelm the classroom, or significant family conflicts, informational resources don't replace consultation with qualified professionals. Some sources mention bibliotherapy, support groups, or psychological guidance, but warn that anecdotal assessment doesn't equal solid evidence (Kerr, 1991; Pfeiffer, n.d.).

Adults with High Abilities: Possible Next Steps

In adults, resources may have a different tone: self-knowledge, trajectory review, career guidance, peer community, mentorship, practical training, emotional support, or spaces to develop projects. Giudice points out the need for academic, social, emotional, family, and guidance support also in adults, although the text doesn't offer a practical catalog or evaluate specific resources (Giudice, 2024). Lin, in a thesis focused on social entrepreneurs with high abilities, describes the usefulness of collaborative networks, feedback, business training, and like-minded communities, but the conclusions come from specific cases and shouldn't be generalized without caution (Lin, 2024).

At university, some sources recommend reviewing the academic climate, offering mentorships, facilitating mental health resources, and opening spaces to talk about perfectionism or impostor phenomenon. These proposals are based on studies and prior literature, but are not a universally validated intervention (Lee et al., 2021; Gholamipour et al., 2023). For many adults, the first useful resource may be less spectacular: finding reliable information, talking with professionals who don't reduce everything to a label, and building environments where there is challenge, rest, meaning, and connections.

How to Assess a Resource Before Using It

Before enrolling in a program, requesting a school measure, buying materials, or following an internet recommendation, it's worth reviewing some criteria:

- **Purpose:** what specific need it aims to address.
- **Suitability:** for what age, profile, context, and area it is designed.
- **Evidence:** whether there is evaluation, documented experience, or only author opinion.
- **Professionals:** who applies it and with what training.
- **Follow-up:** how it will be reviewed whether it's helping or not.
- **Cost and access:** time, money, travel, family burden, and possible inequalities.
- **Well-being:** whether it adds challenge without turning life into a permanent race.

The reviewed literature allows for a cautious recommendation: choose resources with intention, not by accumulation. If several sources agree on something, it's that high ability doesn't develop just by having potential or by multiplying activities. What matters is support, quality of teaching, materials, mentors, opportunities, family context, coordination, and well-being (Freeman, 2010; Phillipson et al., 2013; Ambrose & Sternberg, 2016).

The next step, therefore, is not to look for "the best resource" in the abstract, but to formulate a specific question and check it with reliable people and sources. Sometimes the answer will be a curricular adaptation. Other times, a mentorship, a project, an assessment, a break, a conversation

with the school, career guidance, or emotional support. The label can open a door, but what really matters is what is built afterward.