

Bright Child vs Highly Capable Child

If you ask the teacher who the highly capable kids are, they are likely to point out the ones that are *bright*. Bright kids are a joy to teach. They listen well, don't question the teacher, work hard and answer questions. They don't challenge the teacher's competence or stray off the curriculum.

Bright kids enjoy school and get challenged with the work that they are asked to do. They find the work neither too hard nor too easy.

The highly capable child on the other hand may be spending almost all of the school day thinking or doing something other than what the teacher wants. They find the constant repetition so boring that they often don't shine in the classroom. You might find the highly capable child daydreaming, looking out of the window, or reading a book instead of listening.

Highly Capable children often hate school and are not challenged at all by the work presented to them, and the concepts and ideas being taught are far below their intellectual prowess. The problems created are many and varied. Some may go underground and not perform, some may bully other kids, and some might annoy the teacher with wild and silly sounding ideas and suggestions and further annoy the teacher by doing very little work but demonstrating mastery of a subject when it comes to test time.

In general...

A Bright Child...

Knows the answer
Is interested
Is attentive
Has good ideas
Works hard
Answers the questions
Top group
Listens with interest
Learns with ease
6-8 repetitions for mastery
Understands ideas
Enjoys peers
Grasps the meaning
Completes assignments
Is receptive
Copies accurately
Enjoys school
Absorbs information.
Technician
Good memorizer
Is alert
Is pleased with own learning
Enjoys straight-forward and/or sequential presentation

A Highly Capable Child...

Asks the questions – sometimes deep probing questions of an abstract nature
Is highly curious
Is mentally and physically involved
Has wild, silly ideas
Plays around, yet tests well
Discusses in detail, elaborates
Beyond the group
Shows strong feelings and opinions
Already knows
1-2 repetitions for mastery
Constructs abstractions
Prefers adults or older children or seeks out other very bright or gifted peers
Draws inferences and opens up new questions.
Initiates projects
Is intense
Creates a new design
Enjoys learning - but may hate school
Manipulates information
Inventor - loves construction toys
Good guesser - draws on vast information store
Is keenly observant - seems to remember fine details
Is highly self-critical - can be perfectionistic to the point of tantrums when young
Thrives on complexity - needs the whole picture - requires a gestalt approach

So, is your child highly capable or bright? If many of the statements in the above table ring true for your child - and as a parent you will know, then you may want to find out the child's behavior in school and see if it is what you expect.