

July 2013

4. CURRICULUM

PROVIDING FOR THE GIFTED LEARNER IN A SYSTEM FOR INCLUSIVE EDUCATION

1. Background: The plight of the gifted learner

Gifted education in South Africa has received minimal attention since 1994. The current state of gifted education in South Africa is perceived as “not encouraging”, “dismal” and “the plight of the gifted learner seldom mentioned” (Kokot, 1998, 1999 in Van der Westhuizen & Maree, 2006:204). When an education system is in jeopardy it will not be a priority to make special provision for a relatively small group of learners who are deemed gifted.

Democratic governments often have reservations about special programmes that meet the needs of only a few – particularly when those programmes expand the gifts of the already talented individuals” (Wollam in Winstanley, 2006:26). Given South Africa’s troubled history, conceptions of giftedness that result in singling out a group of learners with advanced abilities may be seen as exacerbating still existing inequalities and providing for a minority who are already perceived as privileged due to their unique gifts (Taylor & Kokot, 2000). Moreover, this group of learners is often stereotyped as an elite group due to special education provisioning during the apartheid dispensation (Kokot, 2005). The closure of the centres for the gifted in South Africa after 1994 was widely regarded as detrimental to the nurturing of the gifted child. The reality is that inclusive education is about the inclusion of all learners, including gifted learners, within the mainstream school setting (Van der Westhuizen & Maree, 2006). The focus has thus moved from separate and specialised education for learners who are gifted to inclusive education with all learners being educated in mainstream schools and classrooms (Kokot, 2005). Indications are that this shift in approach is impacting negatively on the gifted learner as teachers are spending more time on the learners who require more attention just to be able to keep pace with the rest and in so doing are neglecting the gifted learner. The gifted learner is disadvantaged.

2. The gifted learner

2.1 Traits in Young Gifted Children (Taken from: Gifts for Learning - *Traits and Characteristics of Gifted Children*)

- a. Need less sleep, even as infants?
- b. As infants, may get fussy if set facing one direction for too long
- c. Frequently reach 'milestones' such as walking and first speech earlier than average
- d. May speak late, but then speak in complete sentences
- e. Strong desire to explore, investigate, and master the environment (opens up cabinets, takes things apart)
- f. Toys and games mastered early, then discarded
- g. Very active (but activity with a purpose, not to be confused with ADHD)
- h. Can distinguish between reality and fantasy (questions about Santa or the tooth fairy come very early!

2.2 Characteristics

- a. Very observant , noticing details other children of the same age would miss, including non-verbal cues
- b. Great intellectual curiosity, wanting to know everything about everything -- objects, ideas, situations, or events.
- c. Absorb information rapidly - often described as being like sponges
- d. Excellent memory - often have a large storehouse of information about a variety of topics, which they can recall quickly
- e. Long attention span compared to other same-age children
- f. Excellent reasoning and problem solving skills
- g. Intense interests

- h. Unusual and/or vivid imagination
- i. Learn quickly and with less practice and repetition
- j. Usually intrinsically motivated to learn (star charts and stickers don't work well to motivate them)
- k. Enjoy learning new things, seeking information for its own sake as much as for its usefulness
- l. Enjoy intellectual activity, thriving on intellectual challenge (can get bored with slow instructional pace and repetition)
- m. Interested in philosophical and social issues -- for example, the nature of the universe, the problem of suffering in the world, environmental issues
- n. Very sensitive, emotionally and even physically -- can become upset easily, even over seemingly minor issues (like the feeling of seams in socks), but can be moved almost to tears by the beauty of a sunset or a song. They may also want to quit eating meat out of sympathy for animals.
- o. Concerned about fairness and injustice -- very aware of rights and wrongs
- p. Energetic, sometimes needing less sleep than other same-age children (sometimes high energy level is confused with ADHD)
- q. Asynchronous development (physical, intellectual, emotional, and social development are very uneven -- i.e. a 6 year old child may be like a 10 year old intellectually, an 8 year old socially, and a 6 year old emotionally.)
- r. Well-developed sense of humour
- s. Perfectionistic

2.3 Cognitive Traits

- a. Have well-developed powers of abstraction, conceptualization, and synthesis, (Can understand and handle abstract concepts at younger ages than other children)
- b. Easily see cause-effect relationships
- c. Quickly see similarities, differences, and anomalies
- d. Can see relationships among seemingly unrelated objects, ideas, or facts
- e. Readily grasp underlying principles and can often make valid generalizations about events, people, or objects
- f. Often attack complicated material by separating it into components and analyzing it systematically
- g. Fluent thinking, generating possibilities, consequences, or related ideas
- h. Flexible thinking, using many different alternatives and approaches to problem solving
- i. Elaborate thinking, producing new steps, ideas, responses, or other embellishments to a basic idea, situation, or problems
- j. Original thinking, seeking new, unusual, or unconventional associations and combinations among items of information
- k. Sceptical, critical, and evaluative, making them quick to spot inconsistencies

2.4 Behaviours

- a. May learn to read early, often before age 5 (whenever they do learn to read, they learn quickly)
- b. Will read rapidly and widely, after learning to read
- c. Large and sophisticated vocabulary - enjoys using new and unusual words
- d. Asks "what if" questions, showing ability to construct hypotheses
- e. Relate well to parents, teachers and other adults (often prefer company of older children and adults over same-age peers)
- f. Display intellectual playfulness, which shows up in a desire to fantasize and imagine
- g. Prefer books and magazines meant for older children (many prefer non-fiction to fiction, including biographies, but like mysteries and detective stories)

2.5 Relationship with other learners

According to Shirley Kokot, a person who has achieved success with gifted children, a distinction must be drawn between gifted children and clever children: "A 'clever' child is not necessarily a gifted child, nor is an 'above average' child necessarily gifted. Clever and above-average children succeed academically in schools designed for the average. Gifted children don't fit well into 'average' schools." (Shirley J. Kokot: *Help – Our Child is Gifted, Guidelines for parents of gifted children*, 1999).

3. Needs of gifted learners

In view of the above it is clear that an attempt to provide for the needs of gifted learners in a school situation should be aimed at providing for the following:

3.1 The expanded interest field of the gifted learner

The needs of gifted learners are not limited to performance in the academic field. The aim of education should be to expand the learner's interest field and gifted learners are exceptionally susceptible to exposure to additional interest fields.

According to Kokot, a child can be gifted in various ways - generally intellectually gifted, gifted in a specific area (e.g.: language/ maths), creative in the artistic sense (either in the performing or fine arts), creative in terms of innovative thinking ability, or gifted as leader or a sportsperson.

3.2 The need to build the learner's self-confidence

Rather than focussing purely on the improvement of academic performance or specialisation in subject fields, the emphasis should also be placed on the development of a positive self-image and self-confidence. Gifted learners are emotionally sensitive and can benefit substantially from support in this regard. They also tend to be sensitive about matters such as fairness and rights and wrongs. Furthermore, gifted learners often exhibit asynchronous development which means that they function with regard to certain aspects at much higher levels than expected for learners of their age.

3.3 The need to fantasise and philosophise

Gifted learners thrive on intellectual activities. However, intellectual activities are not limited to matters such as problem solving, hypothesising and making projections. They also include philosophising, thinking and talking about themselves as human being.

3.4 Gifted learners must be allowed to be sceptical, critical and evaluative

A gifted learner will not accept something dished up by the teacher if it does not make sense to him/her. They should therefore always feel welcome to ask questions or to challenge the teacher on what he/she has said. This is one of the reasons why only teachers who are masters in the field which they are teaching should be allowed to teach gifted learners.

3.5 Enrichment must never be done at the expense of the basics

Gifted learners need to have order and tidiness in their minds. This means that they need to have clear knowledge frameworks which they can use when reasoning something. The mastering of Language rules and arithmetic tables therefore remains crucially important.

3.6 Learning as an Intellectually stimulating and challenging experience

One of the biggest dangers concerning gifted learners is that they could become bored in the classroom – and this happens very quickly. Keeping them intellectually occupied is one of the biggest challenges facing a teacher who has to teach a heterogenous group.

3.7 Quiet environment, opportunity to work independently

Gifted learners prefer to work on their own and undisturbed in a quiet environment. They engage the topic intensively and do not like to be disturbed in their attempt to conquer an obstacle.

3.8 A well-structured and stable environment

Gifted learners need space and flexibility in order to perform to their best ability, e.g. a flexible timetable. However, such space and flexibility must be provided within a stable and well structured environment. They must for instance be allowed to work at their own pace whenever possible, but within a well-structured timetable which means that if they arrive at the place of learning they will be able to start work immediately and if they require specific equipment such equipment will be available. They do not want to prepare for a test and then be told that the test has been postponed, or work on an assignment in terms of a scheduled submission date and then be told that the date has been postponed.

3.9 Opportunities to investigate and explore

With the minimum required knowledge framework in place in their minds (Point e above), gifted learners want to be given the opportunity to investigate and explore possibilities on their own.

3.10 Opportunities to work with data (interpretation, predictions, conclusions)

Working with data and being allowed to do predictions and interpretations and to reach conclusions creates the opportunity to engage at the highest cognitive level and this is what gifted learners thrive on. Data based work can also contribute towards the learner getting used to be thinking in terms of probabilities, an open way of thinking with no definite answers.

3.11 Small classes, maximum 18 learners per class

A small class enables the teacher to allow time for learner initiated interaction, e.g. the learners asking question or challenging the teacher on what he/she is presenting as factually correct, etc. It also allows the teacher to show interest in the learners' ideas and to ask probing questions which force the learner to have to maintain him-/herself – a most exciting challenge for the gifted learner!

3.12 Strong leadership

Gifted learners need strong leadership by a person who they respect. Decisiveness on the part of the teacher is important but it must be based on consistency, fairness and empathy.

3.13 Only the best teachers

Most of the points made above imply that only the best teachers should be allowed to teach gifted children. Being a subject specialist does not mean that the person is a good teacher. Teaching skills, the ability to maintain order and discipline and a genuine commitment towards the wellbeing and interests of the gifted learner are equally important.

4. The ideal situation for the gifted learner

Judging by the list in Par 3 it would appear as if the ideal situation for gifted learners would be to separate them from other less gifted children and to make sure that an environment is created in which they can thrive as gifted learners (by using the aspects listed in Par.3 as criteria).

The question, however, is whether such an approach is feasible or even desirable when practical considerations are taken into account.

5. Inclusive education and the inclusive school

The Salamanca Statement which was signed in 1994 by South African representatives at a ground-breaking conference in Spain shifted the focus for inclusion to the mainstream school and classroom. **The mainstream school in future had to become the site for transformation to accommodate the diverse learning abilities and needs of all learners.** Inclusive education thus simply means opening up schools so that schools become accessible for all learners. "In the final analysis, policy and practice in inclusive education require a focus on an enabling and nurturing environment that supports the learner, rather than on a learner who must fit into an exclusionary environment" (Peters et al., 2005 in Oswald, 2010:1).

Making the mainstream school the site for inclusive education does not mean mainstreaming, however, as the comparison below shows.

Mainstreaming	Inclusion
Mainstreaming is about getting learners to “fit into” a particular kind of system or integrating them into the existing system.	Inclusion is about recognising and respecting the differences among all learners and building on the similarities.
Mainstreaming is about giving some learners extra support so that they can “fit in” or be integrated into the “normal” classroom routine. Learners are assessed by specialists who diagnose and prescribe technical interventions, such as the placement of learners in programmes.	Inclusion is about supporting all educators and the system as a whole, so that the full range of learning needs can be met. The focus is on teaching and learning actions with the emphasis on the development of good teaching strategies that will be of benefit to all learners.
Mainstreaming and integration focus on changes that need to take place in learners so that they can “fit in”. Here the focus is on the learner.	Inclusion focuses on overcoming barriers in the system that prevent it from meeting the full range of learning needs. The focus is on adaption and support systems available in the classroom.

Inclusive education in theory would appear to be the ideal approach to education. However, in practice it often results in the gifted learner being disadvantaged as it would appear to be the case in South African schools. A way needs to be found in which to change the situation.

6. Providing for the gifted learner in a system for inclusive education

6.1 Establishing a separate school

Establishing a separate school for gifted learners might be a possibility in the independent school sector. However, in the case of the public school sector such an approach would be impossible as national policy determines that the principles of inclusive education must be adhered to which means that all public schools are regarded as inclusive schools and must be managed accordingly.

6.2 Addressing the challenge within the inclusive school

6.2.1 A classroom focussed approach

a. Separate classes

Large schools would logistically speaking probably be able to group learners in terms of their academic performance and put the above average performers together in one class. However, as explained earlier, it would still be difficult to cater for the gifted learner in such classes as most of the learners would be clever or above average and not gifted.

It would be extremely difficult to create classes with only gifted learners and even if this were to prove possible there could be important implications and possible consequences that would have to be taken into account. These include the following:

- Discontent and tension among the parents
Parents whose children are not included in the classes for gifted learners might perceive the selection process as unfair and disadvantaging their children. Questions might also be asked about the fact that parents contribute on an equal basis to the school fund, but that some learners benefit more than others.
- Discontent and tension between the parent community and the educators
- The education authorities might accuse the school of using resources to the benefit of only an elite group of learners.

b. Mixed (inclusive) classes

A mixed class approach would in terms of inclusive education policy, which is the case in South Africa, be the preferred approach. In such a full-inclusion classroom, gifted learners stay in the classroom with learners of all abilities and the classroom instruction is differentiated, allowing the gifted learners to receive instruction at their level while still interacting with their peers (Erika Phyll- *Teaching gifted learners in full-inclusion classrooms*: March, 2013). However, as explained earlier with reference to the list of needs in Par 3, it is from a gifted learner perspective the most difficult one to make work and one which very few teachers achieve real success with.

The following guidelines relating to this option might prove useful for teachers but it should be noted that they actually reflect a clever learner or at most intellectually gifted focus rather than a gifted-in-a-broader-sense focus:

i. Strategies for teaching gifted learners

- The teacher familiarising him-/herself with the characteristics of intellectually gifted learners
Not all gifted learners in the classroom will be identified and even those who are may not always appear to be gifted. As such, it is important for the teacher not to allow him-/herself to be distracted by false stereotypes. Gifted learners come from all ethnic groups, they are both boys and girls, they live in both rural and urban areas and they aren't always 90%+. Learners who are intellectually gifted demonstrate many characteristics, including: a precocious ability to think abstractly, an extreme need for constant mental stimulation; an ability to learn and process complex information very rapidly; and a need to explore subjects in depth. Learners who demonstrate these characteristics learn differently. Thus, they have unique academic needs.
- Doing away with the concept "normal"
For a teacher to be efficient, one of the best things to do is to let go of the idea of "normal." A teacher should offer all learners the opportunity to grow from where they are, not from where the teacher thinks they should be. A learner will not be harmed by being offered opportunities to complete work that is more advanced. Research consistently shows that curriculum based on development and ability is far more effective than curriculum based on age. And, research indicates that giftedness occurs along a continuum. The teacher will likely encounter learners who are moderately gifted, highly gifted and, perhaps even a few who are profoundly gifted. Strategies that work for one group of gifted learners will not necessarily work for all gifted learners. The teacher should not be afraid to think outside the box.
- Conducting informal assessments
Meeting the needs of gifted learners does not need to be an all-consuming task. One of the easiest ways to better understand how to provide challenging material is to conduct informal whole class assessments on a regular basis, even before starting the new theme/unit.
- Re-familiarisation with Piaget & Bloom
When it comes to teaching gifted children, it is recommended that the teacher take a few moments to review the work of Jean Piaget and Benjamin Bloom. Jean Piaget offers a helpful description of developmental stages as they relate to learning. Gifted learners are often in his "formal operations" stage when their peers are still in his "pre-operational" or "concrete operations" stages. When a child is developmentally advanced he/she has different learning abilities and needs. This is where Bloom's Taxonomy can be a particularly useful. Learners in the "formal operations" developmental stage need learning experiences at the upper end of Bloom's Taxonomy. Essentially all assignments should offer the learner the opportunity to utilize higher level thinking skills like analysis, synthesis and evaluation, as defined by Bloom.
- Involving parents as resource locators
Parents of gifted children are often active advocates for their children. If the teacher is not prepared for this, it can be a bit unnerving. The good news is that what they want most is to be heard and to encounter someone who is willing to think differently. Generally, if the teacher is willing to collaborate with them, rather than resist them, the two parties will be able to work together to ensure that the learner's needs are met. For example, if they wanted their child to have more challenging experiences in maths, the teacher would then enlist their help in finding more challenging options.
- Exploring acceleration
Another option is to allow learners to attend classes with other learners who are at the same developmental level, rather than with their age peers. If a 9 year old can demonstrate that he is ready to learn algebra, why should he be forced to take grade 4 maths just because he is 9 years old? Same goes for a language, or natural science, or social science or any other area of the curriculum.

ii. Blunders to be guarded against

- Asking the gifted learners to serve as tutors for learners who are struggling
Gifted children think and learn differently than other learners. Asking them to serve as tutors can be a frustrating experience for all parties involved.

- Giving the gifted learners more work when they finish early
It is common practice to give learners more work if they complete their assignments early. This is counterintuitive as learners finishing the work early might mean that the work is too easy for them and therefore not challenging anymore.
- Only allowing gifted learners to move ahead when they complete the work assignments with 100% accuracy
It is important to remember that gifted learners think and learn differently and can be extremely rebellious. No one -- not adults, not children and especially not gifted children -- likes to be bored! Gifted learners, due to their ability to reason, will purposely choose not to do something merely because they "must" do it, particularly if it seems pointless to them. They would rather spend their time thinking or reading than completing worksheets that are too easy. A teacher who is truly interested in doing what is best for the learner will focus on their strengths and not on their shortcomings. They should be offered opportunities that are consistent with their abilities – they should be taken forward from where they are.
- Reasoning that by merely allowing the learners to do more advanced work in terms of the school curriculum is the answer to providing in the learners' needs
The focus should rather be to create opportunities for the learners to apply what they have learned in a broader field. If more knowledge and understanding is required they should be guided to research the relevant topics.

6.2.2 A broader than classroom approach

A school might want to consider the possibility of introducing programmes for gifted learners in addition to the inclusive classroom. Such an approach can benefit the gifted learner as it makes provision for the unlocking of the gifted learner's potential in more than only the academic curriculum field. Again, however, the introduction of such programmes requires careful planning in order to avoid unwanted implications and consequences.

a. Approach based on identification and invitation

An approach that might sound attractive to school managements is to introduce additional subject focused programmes, to identify learners who are regarded as being gifted and to invite them to participate. However, such an approach has two major weaknesses. Firstly, it can generate the same consequences as separate gifted learner class approach discussed under 6.2.1(a), something every school principal will want to avoid. Secondly, the focus will once again tend to be on academic performance in terms of the school curriculum.

The latter weakness can be addressed by introducing more verified programmes comprising not only subject related academic courses but other activities such as chess, music, research projects, small business ventures, etc.

b. Approach based on open invitation

This option differs from the previous one in that the learners are not identified by the school and then invited to participate but that all the learners are invited to participate. The result of such an approach could be that too many learners want to participate, many or most of them not really gifted. However, the initial number will quickly decrease as the learners themselves realise that the programme is not for them. In other word an automatic selection process without the danger of parents becoming antagonised or learners envying and undermining one another.

It is possible to provide curriculum differentiation within the regular classroom setting. Time and resource requirements can be managed once the educator has acquired the relevant planning and facilitation skills. Over the years many capable educators in our South African schools have demonstrated that this can be achieved. However, in terms of the list of needs in Par 4.3 above, it is doubtful whether these educators can claim that they have managed to satisfy the needs of gifted learners. Their achievement might mean that they have managed to enable the clever learner to perform very well in terms of the curriculum requirements but whether they have managed to enable the gifted learners to unlock their full potential across a wide range of possible fields as stated in Par.3 is a different question.

6.3 Conclusion: A model for addressing the needs of gifted learners in an inclusive school

The following model is recommended to school managements who want to ensure that the needs of the gifted learners in their school are provided for. The model is in line with the policy on inclusive education which informs the approach to school education in South Africa but also complies with the requirements for effective education for gifted learners as identified by people who have acquired knowledge and understanding of the gifted learner through experience.

The model comprises two components:

- a. **Differentiated teaching** in the inclusive classroom and
- b. An **additional extracurricular programme** comprising an academic subject based component and a number of other activities, **open to all learners who wish to participate**.

The model is underpinned by *five* parameters:

- a. All public schools in South Africa must be managed as inclusive schools.
- b. A child can be gifted in a variety of fields, not only academic performance.
- c. It is possible to provide to at least a certain degree for some of the needs of the gifted learner in an inclusive classroom if the teacher is committed towards and able to implement a differentiated approach to the teaching-learning process.
- d. Additional opportunities in the academic and other fields need to be provided for the gifted learner to indulge in.
- e. All learners in the school must be given the opportunity and feel welcome to participate in any gifted learner activities provided by the school.

In conclusion it must be emphasised that whichever model or approach is chosen by the management team, the parents of learners who are to benefit from the initiative must be expected to contribute towards the course financially.

4 July 2013

PS NOTE FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL PRINCIPALS:

Attached document might assist parents of pre-school children to notice signs of giftedness in their children and to act in the child's best interest by creating appropriate opportunities for optimal development.

Developmental Milestones - Three Months to Five Years

By [Carol Bainbridge](http://giftedkids.about.com), (Website: <http://giftedkids.about.com>)

Sometimes it's not enough to define what something is; we also need to explain what it's not. This is certainly true of gifted children. It's just not always enough to explain what it means to be a gifted child; we also need to explain what a gifted child is not. In other words, parents of gifted children need to be aware of the developmental milestones of average children to understand the advanced development of their gifted children.

Here is a list of some basic developmental milestones from ages three months to five years. Although most children will reach these milestones at approximately the time noted, there is considerable variation, with some children reaching them a little earlier and some children reaching them a little later. Gifted children, however, tend to reach several milestones weeks, months, and even years earlier than average children.

Three Months:

- Lifts and turns head from side to side when lying on stomach
- Grasps rattle when placed in hand
- Smiles when smiled at
- Follows moving object or person with eyes
- Turns head toward bright colors and lights and toward the sound of a human voice
- Makes cooing and gurgling sounds
- Reacts to peek-a-boo games

Six Months:

- Holds head steady when sitting (with some help)
- Reaches for and grasps objects
- Helps hold bottle during feeding
- Explores by mouthing and banging objects
- Pulls up to sitting position if hands are grasped
- Opens mouth for spoon
- Babbles and makes sing-song sounds
- Knows familiar faces

Twelve Months:

- Drinks from cup with help
- Grasps small objects with thumb and forefinger
- Puts small blocks in and out of a container
- Sits unsupported
- Crawls on hands and knees
- Pulls self up to stand
- Takes steps while holding on to furniture
- Stands alone momentarily
- Walks with one hand held
- Moves body to music
- Begins to use objects, like a comb, correctly
- Babbles, but with inflection, which sounds like talking
- Says first word
- Responds to another's distress by showing distress/crying
- Understands simple commands

Eighteen Months:

- Turns pages in a book
- Stacks two blocks
- Walks without help
- Scribbles with crayons
- Identifies object in a picture book
- Begins to sort by shapes and colors
- Follows simple, one-step directions
- Says 8-10 words others can understand
- Repeats words heard in conversation
- Looks at person speaking to him or her
- Uses "hi," "bye," and "please" when reminded
- Asks for something by pointing or using one word
- Acts out familiar activity in play (i.e. pretending to eat)
- Recognizes self in mirror or pictures

Two Years:

- Drinks from a straw
- Feeds self with spoon
- Builds tower with 3-4 blocks
- Opens cabinets, drawers, boxes
- Walks upstairs with help
- Likes to take things apart
- Explores surroundings
- Begins to make believe play
- Can and will follow directions
- Enjoys looking at the same books over and over
- Has vocabulary of several hundred words
- Uses 2-3 word sentences
- Comforts a distressed friend of parent
- Refers to self by name and uses "me" and "mine"
- Points to eyes, ears, or nose when asked

Three Years:

- Builds tower of 4-5 blocks
- Walks up steps, alternating feet
- Turns pages in a book one at a time
- Pays attention for about three minutes
- Remembers what happened yesterday
- Knows some numbers, but not always in the right order
- Looks through a book alone
- Likes to be read to
- Counts 2-3 objects
- Follows simple one-step commands
- Uses 3-5 word sentences
- Asks short questions
- Names at least one color correctly
- Knows first and last name
- Recognizes & understands most common objects & pictures

Four Years Old:

- Starts copying letters
- Tries to write name
- Builds tower of 7-9 blocks
- Puts together simple 4-12 piece puzzle
- Walks downstairs using handrail and alternating feet
- Knows some basic colors
- Sorts by shape and color
- Counts up to 5 objects
- Follows three instructions given all at once
- Has large vocabulary
- Wants to know "why" and "how"
- Knows own age and name of hometown
- Asks direct questions
- Speaks well enough for strangers to understand
- Has large vocabulary
- Uses sentences of 5 or more words

Five Years Old:

- Uses knife and fork well
- Walks downstairs without a handrail, alternating feet
- Balances on one foot for five seconds
- Prints some letters
- Copies shapes and patterns
- Knows most basic colors
- Wants to know what words mean
- Recites own address and phone number
- Copies own name
- Identifies some letters of the alphabet
- Counts up to 10 objects
- Interested in cause and effect

- Uses 6 words in a sentence
- Uses "and," "but," and "then" to make longer sentences
- Invents make believe games with simple rules