

EXTRA PERCEPTION RELATED TO SENSITIVITY

Some gifted children may show signs of high or extra perception that can relate to the sensitivity issues as well. Some children may be:

- Highly perceptive to stimuli (sounds, sights, smells, touches, tastes, movements, words, patterns, numbers, physical phenomena, people)
- Highly perceptive to colors and what “matches”
- Highly perceptive to musical notes and precision
- Superlatively sensitive to the shades of meanings, the sounds of words, order of words (Howard Gardner quote)
- Profoundly sensitive to small differences

HIGH INVOLVEMENT RELATED TO SENSITIVITY

Sensitive children may “irritate” the less sensitive and have an unusual preoccupation with interests, tasks, materials, and questions. Gifted children may:

- Dream repetitively of treasured problems, pictures, patterns, or concerns
- Obsess with the intricacy or beauty of phenomena at hand
- Hear tones in his/her head
- Dream of proofs, verses, art
- Perceive greater levels of complexity in the world

“The less a person understands his own feelings, the more he will fall prey to them. The less a person understands the feelings, the responses, and behavior of others, the more likely he will interact inappropriately with them and therefore fail to secure his proper place within the larger community.”

Howard Gardner

THE SENSITIVE CHILD

*Identifying signs of extreme
sensitivity in your child*

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Ways to support your sensitive child

Content from:

- ❖ **You Know Your Child Is Gifted When... A Beginner's Guide to Life on the Bright Side by Judy Galbraith**
- ❖ **When Gifted Kids Don't Have All the Answers by Jim Delisle and Judy Galbraith**

Compiled by Pat Gerber

A SENSITIVE CHILD MAY:

- Have empathy (understanding and awareness of other people's feelings, thoughts, and experiences) at an early age
- Have a social conscience at an early age
- Quickly pick up on other people's emotions
- Be aware of problems that others don't notice
- Worry about the world, other people, and/or the environment
- Enjoy and respond to beauty
- Be very curious about the meaning of life and death
- Have an emotional connection to animals (some gifted children are strict vegetarians, even if their families aren't)
- Act more emotional than other children his/her age
- Cry, anger, and/or excite easily
- Ask many questions about pain, suffering, and/or violence
- Respond emotionally to photographs, paintings, and/or sculptures
- Respond emotionally to music
- Share his/her feelings and moods through one or more of the arts – music, drawing, painting, sculpture, dance, singing

GOOD THINGS

- ❑ They're careful with other people's feelings because they know how it feels to be hurt.
- ❑ They might be especially kind and good-natured.
- ❑ They might stick up for friends who are being bullied or teased.
- ❑ They place high value on helping others.
- ❑ They're responsive and expressive.

NOT-SO-GOOD THINGS

- They take things personally.
- They worry about things that are too much for them to handle.
- They carry the weight of the world on their shoulders and may become fearful, anxious, sad, even depressed.
- They have trouble handling criticism or rejection.
- Other people's strong emotions make them very upset.
- They might be extremely picky about what they eat and wear.
- They may be quick to judge others.
- They may be highly moralistic.

Ways to Help Your Sensitive Child

- Acknowledge and respect your child's feelings. Let him/ her show him/her feelings in whatever way seems right to him/her.
- Talk about feelings openly and honestly. Share your own feelings when appropriate.
- Help your child develop a feelings vocabulary. Teach him/her words he/she can use to describe all kinds of emotions. The more precisely he/ she can talk about his/her feelings, the better.
- If your child feels deeply about the pain, suffering, and plight of others, take this opportunity to do service as a family. You might work at a food bank, visit shut-ins, or volunteer at a children's shelter.
- Since your child's strong feelings might embarrass him/her in public, teach him/her simple ways to gain control of his/her emotions. NOTE: Let your child know that he/she shouldn't "hide" emotions, just "put them away" for later.