Parents of gifted children sometimes find that it is difficult to give their children the education they need. Many people think that having a gifted child means that there are not problems in school for the student. This is far from the truth. In fact, gifted children have as many problems in school as those children of average educational aptitude, or even those children who have learning disabilities. It is just that the gifted children have different problems.

One problem that gifted children have is that they may not learn all subjects equally well. It is commonly thought that a gifted child can easily learn any subject that they are presented. And for some students this is true. Because giftedness comes in many shapes and forms, some children may find math to be a simple subject, easily learning new facts, and needing little repetition or reinforcement to be able to answer problems. That same child might also voluntarily work more math problems that required, willingly exploring more math than is necessary to complete assignments. She might even explore math further, just because she considers it fun or entertaining. This child might have trouble in other aspects of her education. For example, she might struggle with spelling, or other language arts.

The level of giftedness varies between children. Just because a child is labeled as gifted does not mean that learning is effortless. Nor does it guarantee that there is not a cost somewhere else. Gifted children sometimes feel a great deal of pressure when parents or teachers expect them to do equally well in all subjects. Sometimes parents or teachers compound that pressure by telling the child something like, “You are so smart in science, you should be a doctor.” Just because a child may find science easy and
enjoyable does not mean that being a doctor is what they are interested in. Yet if a child is told every week, from an early age, that they should be a doctor, because they are so smart, then it becomes hard for them to break free of expectations.

In the classroom gifted children are sometimes less attention rather than more. In part, this is due to the fact that children who learn easily are thought to not need individualized instruction. Gifted students are often assigned as student helpers for children who do need more help. While this is great for the child who needs more help, it does not further the education of the gifted child. Giftedness is not just the ease of learning the materials presented but also the need or drive to attain more information. If that hunger for knowledge is not feed in the student then he may become bored or even angered. This can lead to behavioral problem.

The answer to solving the issues listed here regarding gifted children may not be as difficult as expected. Gifted children tend to be creative and energetic. They are curious and questioning. It is possible to teach to those strengths by offering individualized instructions. This may be difficult to achieve in a typical classroom, there are two ways to provide this. One alternative is smaller classes, where children can receive more individual attention. These smaller classes would also allow gifted children to explore their interests and delve deeper into subjects that they are good in, or have deeper understanding of. Another alternative to smaller class size is the home school environment, where the education of the gifted can be completely individualized.

Gifted children can be challenging to educate, but they deserve as much attention as other students. In a time when it is politically correct to celebrate exceptionalism, gifted students are sometimes not allowed to shine. They have strengths and weaknesses, and both should be considered when developing a curriculum. If we can provide these exceptional students of what they need today, society will reap the benefits of their creativity and ingenuity in the future.