



# Approach to working with children higher potentials in development

(potentially gifted children)

*An approach that encourages a child to think deeper, explain more clearly, and learn to manage their own energy and ideas – without the pressure to constantly be ahead of others.*

## 1. What do we mean by giftedness (higher potentials in development)

– How does the school understand giftedness and why doesn't it view it as a fixed label?

Giftedness is a developmental potential that may or may not be realized. Whether it will develop depends on the environment, incentives, and the quality of support the child receives. The approach to working with children with higher potential at Prizma is not based on acceleration, but on thoughtful development.

We distinguish two developmental phases of giftedness.

**Potential talent** is most often observed in childhood. It refers to the abilities and predispositions that allow a child to progress in certain areas faster, deeper, or differently than most peers. This does not mean that the child has already achieved exceptional results, but that he or she shows the capacity for such development.

**Productive talent** is manifested in concrete achievements – in an area in which the child demonstrates above-average performance compared to peers during schooling.

At school, we create conditions in which potential is developed systematically and thoughtfully, all the way to concrete achievements. Through a clear structure, a challenge that matches the level of understanding, and stable emotional support, abilities gain direction and become sustainable.

When a child knows what he is doing, why he is doing it, and what a completed task looks like, he feels secure. Clear goals, a predictable pace of work, and understandable expectations give the child security and a structure in which he can focus on thinking, connecting, and deepening his knowledge. Energy is then not wasted, but channeled.



Challenges that match the child's level of understanding, along with stable emotional support, help abilities mature. Creativity then does not remain just ideas, but gradually transforms into knowledge, skill, and responsible action. Giftedness is thus not a race or acceleration of content, but a stable and sustainable development.

When potential is not adequately challenged, a child may develop a habit of working below their abilities or lose intrinsic motivation. That is why a thoughtful and structured approach is an important part of responsible work with gifted children.

In addition to general intellectual giftedness and academic abilities, a child may be gifted in other areas - art and creativity, psychomotor skills, leadership, spatial orientation, interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities.

That is why working with children with higher potential at Prizma is based on three principles:

1. Depth instead of acceleration
2. Independence with clear boundaries
3. Emotional security and stability

*The development of giftedness requires depth of understanding and quality of challenge.*

A child in Prizma does not have to constantly prove that he or she "knows more." He or she can be curious, intense, withdrawn, or very energetic, while still receiving a clear framework and stable support.

Our goal is **quality educational outcome based on real understanding**, and we adapt the path to it to the child's developmental capabilities and way of thinking. We do not compare the child to others –**We encourage him to develop his potential, progress through responsibility and perseverance, and maintain the joy of learning as a lasting motivation.**

## 2. How do we recognize the needs of a gifted child?

**– On what basis and how does the school monitor the child's strengths, interests and developmental needs?**

We monitor development continuously. The approach is adapted to the child's developmental stage.

Potential giftedness is most often first identified by classroom teachers through daily monitoring of students' work, interests, and behavior. Professional associates are also involved in the process, using various assessment tools and methods to comprehensively assess a child's abilities and needs.

Gifted students are not necessarily those with the best grades or those who are always calm and in line with expectations. Giftedness can be manifested through depth of interest, originality of thinking, speed of connecting ideas, or a pronounced sensitivity to certain areas. At the same

time, individual behaviors in themselves are not indicators of giftedness. The assessment is based on a broader developmental picture:

- long-term pedagogical observation
- analysis of thinking and approach to tasks
- monitoring the depth and sustainability of interest
- conversations with students and parents
- expert team consultations

We are aware that giftedness can also be present with learning or behavioral difficulties. That is why we base the assessment on a holistic developmental picture, not just on achievement. If potential giftedness is assessed, the school talks to the parents and, if necessary, recommends a professional psychological assessment for a more detailed insight.

### 3. Individualization and differentiation in practice

#### – How are lessons and assignments adapted to the gifted child in everyday work?

Children with higher potential, because of their specific strengths and ways of thinking, need an approach that is aligned with their pace, level of understanding, and depth of interest.

Working with students includes:

#### **Differentiation of tasks and levels of processing**

- adjusting the complexity and method of solving tasks
- various learning methods (group work, workshops, projects, thematic modules)

#### **Deepening the content**

- research tasks
- project work
- connecting learning to real-life situations

#### **Development of thinking**

- encouraging critical and creative thinking
- argumentation
- asking questions independently

This approach is, at its core, the pedagogical standard for all children at Prizma. For children with higher potential, the difference is in the level of demand, depth, and continuity of the challenges.

We increase the level of challenge gradually, while monitoring the workload and motivation of the students.

For students who show a strong interest or progress in a particular area **we develop projects tailored to their interests, with mentoring support**. The student then, with the guidance of a teacher or mentor, deepens the chosen topic, asks research questions, plans work steps, and presents the results. This directs and shapes interest into a structured learning process, and the potential is given a clear developmental direction.



In a time when the solution is often just a click away, it is especially important for gifted students to learn **distinguish a quick answer from real understanding** (ability to check sources, explain and apply). We emphasize explaining, checking solutions and the quality of questions. We encourage students to analyze, compare, argue and connect different sources of information.

### Prizma tools in practice

The enriched curriculum of the Prizma Elementary School enables deeper exploration of topics, the application of different working methods, and the practical application of what has been learned in real-life situations, thus encouraging learning with understanding. The curriculum systematically connects the material with other subjects and life contexts.

Since the program is designed for all students, its level of depth and complexity is also suitable for students with higher potential. Gifted students therefore receive the necessary intellectual challenge already in the regular school program, without being separated from the group, with the possibility of additional adjustment of the intensity and depth of work through work in smaller groups or an individual approach.

In other words, the standard of work at Prizma was initially set in a way that enables the development of higher potentials, not as an addition to the program, but as an integral part of it.

- through **MathLab, ScienceLab and TechnoLab** understanding is deepened through problem-based and research tasks
- through **Class and School Forum** argumentation and public expression are developed
- through **Cooperative models** (Reading/Math/Project Buddies) teaches collaborative leadership and sharing of responsibility
- through **Emotional compass** The child learns to manage emotions, cope with challenges and set goals that are demanding but achievable.

When a student shows a willingness for an additional challenge, we include them in problem-solving or competitive activities (e.g., Mat League, Klokán, school competitions in various fields, depending on the child's interest). Participation is an incentive, not an obligation. The emphasis is on the learning experience and strategy, not on the result, because the goal is to make the process of preparing for the competition fun for children.

### An example of a practical approach to a gifted child

#### 1. Same content, but higher level of thinking

As the class solves the task, we encourage the gifted child to take their thinking a step further. With a basic understanding of the content, we ask questions such as:

- Does this rule always apply? In what situations does it not apply?
- Can you compare the two solutions and assess which one is more effective?
- What would change if we changed one condition?
- Can you design your own task using the same principle?

Thus, potential is developed through depth and complexity, not through the amount of content.

#### 2. Emphasis on explanation, not solution

The student reflects:

- how he came to the solution



- what was challenging for him
- where he had to change strategy

This is especially important for a child who comes up with answers quickly but is just learning to slow down and structure their thinking.

### **3. Long-term motivation**

If a child solves something easily, we do not increase the number of tasks. The task is deepened, requiring application in a new situation or connection to another area. This preserves motivation and emotional balance.

### **4. Working with energy and initiative**

Gifted children often have lots of ideas and want to participate. We teach them how to turn initiative into collaborative leadership – leadership that includes others, respects them, and builds a shared outcome.

## **4. Protection from overload and excessive expectations**

### **– How does the school maintain a balance between fostering potential and emotional safety?**

High potential students are often conscientious and set high goals for themselves. This trait is valuable because it encourages them to work hard and persevere. At the same time, it is important for them to learn to accept how **Progress does not mean perfection, but a process.**

That is why we consciously build a healthy relationship with success and mistakes at school. We teach children that mistakes are an integral part of learning, that effort is more important than immediate results, and that challenges serve development, not proof. In regular conversations, we monitor how the student experiences the demands and their own progress, and, when necessary, we adjust the pace and scope of work.

We are aware that the development of a gifted child is not always uniform – intellectual maturity may precede emotional or social maturity, which requires a thoughtful and balanced approach.

*Developing potential goes hand in hand with maintaining emotional security, self-confidence and the joy of learning. The goal is stable and long-term growth, not instant perfect results.*

## **5. Socio-emotional development of a gifted child**

### **– How does the school support the establishment of positive relationships among peers?**

Higher potential students sometimes think differently, ask more questions, or have more intense interests than their peers. This can enrich the group, but it can also lead to misunderstandings or feelings of not belonging.

That is why we systematically develop social skills and a culture of respect for diversity at school. We teach children:

- how to clearly express your opinion, but also hear others'
- how to collaborate in a team and share responsibility
- how to adapt communication to different interlocutors
- how to respect different interests and pace of thinking

In some activities, we connect students of different ages through joint projects and thematic meetings. Gifted children sometimes find it easier to find intellectual or interest-based interlocutors in older or younger classes. Such cooperation enables natural learning through modeling, develops responsibility and empathy, and broadens the circle of belonging within the school. Older students learn to lead and explain, and younger students receive a role model and additional encouragement for development.

We pay special attention to establishing friendships. Gifted children sometimes have a harder time finding peers with whom they share similar interests or ways of thinking. For example, a child who is intensely interested in space or programming may not always immediately find someone to talk to about that topic. Through work in smaller groups, project assignments, and thoughtful team formation, we create opportunities for students to find common ground, develop mutual understanding, and build stable relationships.

The goal is for the child to feel a sense of belonging, while maintaining their individuality. We monitor development not only through academic achievement, but also through the way the child cooperates, resolves disagreements, and feels comfortable in the classroom.

## **6. How the professional and teaching team monitors gifted children**

### **- How does the approach change from 1st to 8th grade?**

We monitor the development of gifted students continuously, through everyday learning situations, with an emphasis on depth of thinking, independence, creativity and emotional maturity. We view potential as an ability that is shaped through work, responsibility and gradual maturation.

#### **Grades 1–4**

- development of clear and structured explanation of thinking
- deepening understanding and connecting content
- encouraging creative ideas while learning how to develop and complete them
- building work habits and perseverance

During this period, the child learns how to turn his thoughts into clear conclusions. We encourage creative ideas, but we also teach them to elaborate, check, and complete them. This builds the foundation for responsible and systematic work.

#### **5th–6th grade**

- independent planning and organization of more complex tasks
- turning ideas into feasible projects



- energy and expectation management
- accepting open and more demanding tasks

The student gradually takes on greater responsibility for his or her own work. He or she learns how to turn an idea into a plan, a plan into implementation, and implementation into a concrete result.

### **7th–8th grade**

- setting long-term goals in accordance with interests and abilities
- analytical and argumentative thinking
- independent design and implementation of projects
- directing potential through mentoring and preparation for further education

In the final grades, the emphasis is on maturity of thought and responsibility. The student connects creativity with organization, discipline, and realistic results.

*We do not measure potential by the quantity of ideas, but by the student's ability to develop and bring them to completion.*

## **7. The role of parents and cooperation with the school**

The development of a gifted child requires coordination between school and family. We regularly share observations about the child's progress, interests, motivation, and emotional experience of the demands. We convey information through concrete examples of work, thinking, and relationships in the group.

Equally important to us is feedback from parents. Parents help us understand their child's interests outside of school, changes in motivation, possible overload, or new developmental needs, for example, when they notice a deepening interest or that the child is showing signs of fatigue or overload at home. Such exchange allows us to adjust our approach in a timely and thoughtful manner.

Together we plan further support – whether it's deepening interests, developing work habits, or maintaining emotional balance. The school retains professional responsibility for assessing the level of demands and forms of work, so that the challenges remain developmentally appropriate and aligned with long-term goals.

A gifted child thrives best when he feels consistency between school and family, when expectations are clear, and support is coordinated.

*Giftedness is potential.*

*Deep thinking, emotional stability, and responsibility are built systematically and consistently – day after day.*