# IQ scores

The term IQ stands for Intellectual Quotient, which refers to the actual IQ score achieved on the test. The IQ tests provide an indicator of a child’s Mental Age (MA) as compared to their Chronological *Age* (*CA*). For example, a child may have a chronological age of four years, but in their ability to reason logically and use language, and their depth of conceptual understanding, they may be functioning at the level of a typical six-year-old. This would mean that on those particular IQ measures they are assessed as having a mental age of six years.

The score is based on the measurement of mental age. The baseline is a score of 100, and a child whose mental age is assessed as being the same as their chronological age will have an IQ score of 100.

A four-year-old who is thinking like a six-year-old is performing at a level 50 per cent above their chronological age (two years being half of four), so their IQ score would be 150.

If they were thinking at a two-year-old level, their IQ score would be 50 per cent below their chronological age, and would be assessed as 50.

If the four-year-old were thinking at the level of an eight-year-old (twice their chronological age), their IQ score would be 200 (very rare!).

Most people score in the middle or average range, within 10-15 points of 100 (85-119). As scores go towards the higher or lower ranges, they become less frequent. A score of 120-130 or above is traditionally considered as being in the gifted range.

Instead of a number score the assessments may talk of a *percentile* rank, which indicates what percentage of the population could be expected to score at that level. For example, the assessment may talk of a child as being at the 98th percentile, which means that the child has scored above 98 per cent of the population, in other words, at a level achieved by only 2 per cent as children that age.

## Sub-test measures

Different IQ tests have different sub-tests, but generally they can be described as including measures of verbal comprehension and fluency, numerical reasoning, perceptual organisation, abstract and visual reasoning, and memory skills.

As has already been noted, the sub-test scores will provide important information about the spread and pattern of a child’s abilities, and can also aid in the identification of any learning or processing difficulties.

## More information

It is preferable that IQ testing of young children suspected of being gifted is carried out by a psychologist with both experience of young children and expertise in the area of giftedness. Gifted organisations and associations can often provide the names of psychologists who are experienced in assessing young gifted children.

Louise Porter provides a basic explanation of how IQ scores are calculated on page 5 of her gifted booklet (link below). However, if you would like further information about IQ tests, see the appendix in her 1999 book (*Gifted young children: A guide for teachers and parents*), where she discusses IQ tests in some detail, including information about sub-test measures.

For more information, see: [www.louiseporter.com.au/pdfs/gifted\_children\_booklet.pdf](http://www.louiseporter.com.au/pdfs/gifted_children_booklet.pdf)