

2e Fact Sheet

What is 2e/Twice Exceptional?

2e students...

- Have **exceptional talents** but experience **learning disabilities** such as autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, dyslexia, etc.
- **Develop asynchronously** – for example a 4th grader may:
 - Do math at a 7th grade level
 - Write at a 2nd grade level
 - Socialize at a 1st grade level
 - Reason at a 12th grade level
- Have **deep passions and strengths** and shine in those areas, but are sometimes seen as lazy or obstinate outside of their interests.

2e Matters Because...

- Even if they perform at grade level, 2e students are **overtaxed** using their gifts to compensate for their disability, or **underperform** if their disability masks their gifts.
- Developmental asynchrony often results in **anxiety and depression**; students may feel deficient despite having incredible intellectual strengths.
- When combined with sensory overstimulation and impulse control issues, children may experience **behavioral challenges** in the classroom.
- With **proper support**, 2e students can reach their potential, become **shining stars** in their classrooms, and amazing future contributors to society.

2e Internal Experience

Misunderstood
Teased
Different
Undervalued
Lonely
Anxious
Depressed
Not Good Enough
Pressured
Over/Understimulated
Pretending to be "Normal"



What You See

Escaping a task, often by reading
Pacing/fidgeting/doodling
Looking away/distracted/running away
Acting impulsively/acting out
Trying to self regulate
Blurting out answers
Wandering by themselves
Shutting Down

Top Tips For Working With 2e Kids

- **Let Their Strengths Shine.** Ask children and parents to identify strengths and interests, then build on these to unlock their potential.
- **Be Curious and Empathetic.** There is always a logic to frustrating behavior. 2e kids don't intend to give teachers a hard time, rather they are having a hard time.
- **Adjust Level to Asynchronous Development.** Even though 2e children are bright, they cannot master every subject at the same level or pace.
- **Collaborate with their Team.** Ask parents, previous teachers, and their psychologists, behaviorists, etc. to learn what works.

Success Stories



Dan Aykroyd, Award Winning Actor
Autism Spectrum Disorder



Whoopi Goldberg, Academy Award Winning Actor
Dyslexia



Richard Branson, Founder of Virgin Group
ADHD

2e Fact Sheet *Cont'd*

2e Challenges and Solutions

We asked parents of 2e children to brainstorm common challenges their children face and suggested solutions they have found that work to address those challenges. Parents know that a teacher's job is incredibly challenging and that asking an educator to embark on the journey of supporting 2e kids is not a small task - the good news is that these solutions can help ALL kids! And remember - you are not alone! Partner with the parents, special ed team, counselors/psychologists, behaviorists and others to understand behaviors, implement a plan and establish routines.

| Challenge | Solution |
|---|---|
| Student lacks motivation | Relate strengths and interests to the work; differentiate material |
| Can't sit still | Address underlying reason - anxiety, sensory, helps focus; allow movement breaks or other non-distracting way to address this need |
| Sensory overload, withdrawal | Offer sensory breaks, headphones for noise cancelling, quiet workspot, take a walk outside, work in resource room |
| Meltdowns | Pick and choose battles to focus on most needed work; offer sensory breaks, headphones, quiet workspot; contact district behaviorist |
| Child won't start / takes too long to complete work | Provide accommodations for weakness: keyboarding, dictation, extra time, fewer problems, quiet space, verbal brainstorm with teacher taking notes, joint storytelling, graphic organizers |
| Fear of failure | Address any perfectionism - 2e kids can be their own harshest critics |
| Organization / executive function challenges | Designate a place for each item (e.g., binder, folder, with color code), use a calendar, encourage to do lists; strategically pair peers |
| Lack of understanding / acceptance by peers | Modulate teacher reaction to behavior so it doesn't stand out; connect kids with quirky interests; encourage inclusion to minimize bullying |
| Bored in a subject / subject too easy | Differentiate - set faster pace, avoid rote repetitive work, require fewer problems, provide puzzles/ creative projects/ complex problems |
| Finishes work early and becomes bored | Designate a book, journal, doodling, or special project |
| Difficulty with group work | Pair with supportive peers, assign clear roles, create group work skills checklist (e.g. share one idea, listen to one idea) |
| Social challenges | Create friendship circles, explicit social skills classes and groups |
| Low self esteem | Celebrate their accomplishments, give them chances to shine and lead in their areas of strength |
| Traditional assessments don't display child's full capabilities | Allow for a variety of ways to show mastery - written, spoken, video, comic book, etc. as long as they show they are mastering the key points |