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Welcome
CTR 2025

Can they be gifted? How to support 2e

Courage to Risk 2025
Michelle E. Freddolino 01.24.2025

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Our objectives.

Students with IEPs or 504 Plans CAN also be gifted. These students need interventions and accommodations that not only support their disabilities, but they also need access to services that support their strengths and talent areas (or areas of giftedness).

What is gifted?
Learn to recognize the common characteristics of gifted students. Understand what you can do to assist with the identification of gifted students.

Who is 2e?
Build a common understanding about the "conflict" of a disabilities and giftedness to Identify students who may be 2e.

How do we support?
Identify students who may be 2e. Play and Mentor educators to support these students. Advocate for students to be identified for services, supports, and plans.

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What is gifted?

What comes to mind when you hear the word GIFTED?

Ohh, who's ready for some algebra?
A little Latin maybe some biology.

No way, we're tired of classes.

Don't give me excuses!

I'm gonna like this class!

High-achiever? Motivated? Perfect? Self-directed learner? Successful? Up for a challenge? Lead learner? Expert?

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What is gifted?

The Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA) defines "gifted" children as:

*Those persons between the ages of four and twenty-one whose aptitude or competence in abilities, talents, and potential for accomplishment in one or more domains are so exceptionally or developmentally advanced that they require special provisions to meet their educational programming needs. Gifted children are hereafter referred to as **gifted students**. Children under five who are gifted may also be provided with early childhood special educational services. Gifted students include gifted students with disabilities (i.e., twice exceptional) and students with exceptional abilities or potential from all socio-economic, ethnic, and cultural populations. Gifted students are capable of high performance, exceptional production, or exceptional learning behavior by virtue of any or a combination of these areas of giftedness: General or specific intellectual ability, specific academic aptitude, creative or productive thinking, leadership abilities, Visual Arts, Performing Arts, Musical or Psychomotor abilities 12.01(16)*

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What is gifted?

ECEA Areas of Gifted Identification: 12.01(16)(a-e)

General Intellectual Ability
Specific Academic Aptitudes

- Reading
- Writing
- Mathematics
- Science
- Social Studies
- World Languages

Specific Talent Aptitudes

- Creative or Productive Thinking
- Leadership
- Dance
- Music
- Performing Arts (theater, speech and debate)
- Visual Arts
- Psychomotor

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/identification>

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*"The truly creative mind in any field is no more than this:
A human creature born abnormally, inhumanly sensitive.
To him...a touch is a blow,
a sound is a noise,
a misfortune is a tragedy,
a joy is an ecstasy,
a friend is a lover,
a love is a god,
and failure is death.
Add to this cruelly delicate organism the overpowering
necessity to create, create, create - so that without the creating
of music or poetry or books or buildings or something of
meaning, his very breath is cut off from him. He must create,
must pour out creation. By some strange, unknown, inward
urgency he is not really alive unless he is creating."
Pearl S. Buck*

thelearninginlinewordpress.com

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What is gifted?

Giftedness is more than a student's score on an IQ test or on a series of academic tests. It involves every aspect of the person including cognition, personality, and social-emotional development.

Gifted folks are gifted all day, every day...24/7. It IS who they are!


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What is gifted?



Common Characteristics of Gifted Youth
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eoN2iRDK7zE> 3:40 minutes

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What is gifted?

Common characteristics of gifted youth:

Advanced thinking	Rapid learning
Strong verbal skills	Creative expression
Early development	Long attention span
High curiosity	Highly sensitive
Unusual memory	Wide range of interests
Imagination and storytelling	Unusual sense of humor

<https://gt.dpsk12.org/page/gifted-characteristics/>
https://www.researchgate.net/publication/308956718_A_Parent's_Guide_to_Gifted_Children

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What is gifted?

Why identification might be difficult...

Gifted kids are tricky.

- If their environment is not appropriately meeting their needs, their resulting behavior may lead to misdiagnosis or not being identified as gifted. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MJy5dcfoSsA>
- The gifted child's characteristics of intensity, sensitivity, impatience, and high motor activity can easily be mistaken for ADHD.
- The intensity, sensitivity, and idealism of gifted students often lead others to view them as "strong-willed" or Oppositional Defiant Disorder
- Their intellectualizing, sense of urgency, perfectionism, idealism, and intolerance for mistakes may be misunderstood to be signs of Obsessive-Compulsive Disorder.

<https://www.sengifted.org/post/misdiagnosis-and-dual-diagnosis-of-gifted-children>

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What is gifted?

From the work of Dr. George Betts, there are 6 types of gifted:

The **SUCCESSFUL** (90% of identified GT population) and **AUTONOMOUS LEARNER** will be successful in school as they can play the game, perform, and even seek out opportunities for growth.

However, for the **CHALLENGING** (divergently gifted), the **UNDERGROUND** (wants to hide abilities), the **DROPOUTS** (who are angry, ignored), and the **DOUBLE-LABELED** (2e), school success is often a difficult thing to obtain. <https://www.davidsongifted.org/giftedblog/profiles-of-the-gifted-and-talented/>

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Who is 2e?

Twice Exceptional (2e)
A gifted student who also has an IEP or 504.



A student with an IEP or 504 who is also gifted.

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/gt/about/>

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Who is 2e?

Exceptional Children's Educational Act (ECEA) defines "Twice-exceptional" as students who are:

- Identified as gifted according to state criteria in one or more of the categories of giftedness (cognitive, academic, creativity, leadership, psychomotor, or the arts)
- AND
- Identified with a disability according to federal/state criteria and the disability qualifies them for either an IEP or a 504 plan.

Specific Learning Disability (SLD), Serious Emotional Disability, Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), Orthopedic Impairment, Other Health Impaired (including ADD and ADHD), Multiple Disabilities, Traumatic Brain Injury, Hearing or Vision Impairment or Deaf-Blindness, Speech or Language Impairment

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Who is 2e?

Impairments* protected by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

*Not an all-inclusive list

- ADHD
- Dyslexia / Dysgraphia
- Autism
- Working Memory Challenges
- Processing Speed Deficits
- Executive Functioning Challenges
- Anxiety
- **or disabilities (not qualifying for an IEP)**

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Who is 2e?

By the numbers:

- For 2024-2025, there are approximately 67,703 identified gifted students in Colorado. This represents around 8.1% of the total K-12 student population.
<https://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolview/explorer/stateappshot>
- For 2024-2025, Colorado public schools are serving over 117,616 students with special education. This represents approximately 13.3% of the state's total student body. This does not include students with a 504 plan.
<https://www.cde.state.co.us/schoolview/explorer/stateappshot>

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Who is 2e?

So what.

"When these pieces of data are overlapped, it is reasonable to estimate that a comparable percentage (approximately 6 percent)* of the students served by IDEA may also be academically gifted. It is also reasonable to assume that every school has twice-exceptional students whose unique learning needs must be met."

The Twice-Exceptional Dilemma (2006)
National Education Association

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Who is 2e?

What is a 2e / Twice-Exceptional Student?

Talented & Gifted (left circle): Creativity, Problem Solving, Intellectual Ability, Leadership, Academic Achievement, etc.

Learning Disabled (right circle): Dyslexia, Attention Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder, etc.

2e (intersection): Specific Learning Disabilities, etc.

Seth's Definition: 2e or Twice Exceptional refers to a student who has both or more characteristics that must be properly addressed in order to meet their original needs. Usually a gifted person with learning challenges.

SethPreifer.com

Twice-exceptional students have two sets of conflicting traits, one related to their strengths and the other to their limitations, *usually related to learning differences.*

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Who is 2e?

Why identification might be difficult...

Because they possess the characteristics of gifted students and the characteristics of students with disabilities, this student's exceptionalities can obscure one another.

It is common for a student's giftedness to mask or compensate for any disability the student might have or vice versa.

<https://www.ode.state.co.us/gt/twice-exceptional>

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Who is 2e?

Student #1

Rory has significant strengths in math, yet that area of giftedness is overlooked because of the interventions for their identified dyslexia.

Although Rory is a 2e learner, they are not yet formally identified per the [Exceptional Children's Education Act \(ECEA\)](#) rule.

WHY?

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Who is 2e?

Student #2

CJ is a student identified as gifted in visual arts whose executive functioning needs go unnoticed.

Although CJ is a 2e learner, they are not yet formally identified per the [Exceptional Children's Education Act \(ECEA\)](#) rule.

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Who is 2e?

Student #3

Jo appears average; neither their strengths nor challenge areas are recognized or identified.

Although Jo is a 2e learner, they are not yet formally identified per the [Exceptional Children's Education Act \(ECEA\)](#) rule.

And you know WHY?

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Who is 2e?

Why identification might be difficult...

This difficulty in identifying and supporting 2e students can put them at risk of having their academic or social-emotional needs misunderstood or go unnoticed.

<https://www.cde.state.co.us/gr/twice-exceptional>

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Who is 2e?

Often, the cognitive strengths and cognitive or behavioral deficits are two sides of the same coin. For example, a lot of activity in the prefrontal cortex is generally associated with creativity and problem-solving ability. It is also associated with easy distractibility, lack of organization, and difficulty with self-control.

<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S1871187124000713>

- 2e students generally have little difficulty grasping concepts or generating ideas. Where they might falter is in getting their ideas and thoughts down on paper, writing legibly, doing calculations accurately, staying organized, or following instructions.

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Who is 2e?

Cognitive Characteristics of 2e Students

- Uneven standardized test scores
- Superior verbal and communication skills
- Visual learner with strong perceptual reasoning skills
- High level of reasoning and problem-solving abilities
- Conceptual thinker who comprehends the "big picture"
- Unable to think in a linear fashion
- Auditory processing deficits and difficulty following verbal instructions
- Slow processing speed and/or problems with fluency and automaticity
- High energy

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Who is 2e?

Academic Characteristics of 2e Students

- Demonstrates inconsistent or uneven academic skills
- Advanced ideas and opinions
- Wide range of interests
- Advanced vocabulary
- Penetrating insights
- Is unmotivated and lacks initiative
- Avoids school tasks & frequently fails to complete assignments
- Specific talent or consuming interest
- Hates drill and practice assignments
- Work can be extremely messy
- Difficulty expressing feelings or explaining ideas and concepts

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Who is 2e?

Interpersonal Characteristics of 2e Students

- Difficulty relating to peers, poor social skills, and/or antisocial behavior
- Capable of setting up situations to own disadvantage (self-sabotage)
- Isolated from peers; doesn't participate in school activities
- Target of peer bullying
- Cannot read social cues
- Lacks self-advocacy skills
- Disruptive or clowning behavior

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Who is 2e?

Intrapersonal Characteristics of 2e Students

- Highly sensitive to criticism
- Perfectionist who is afraid to risk making mistakes
- Denies problems and/or blames others for mistakes and problems
- Believes success is due to ability or "luck"
- Behaves impulsively
- Self-critical, has low self-esteem and self-efficacy
- High levels of anxiety and/or depression
- Easily frustrated, gives up quickly on tasks

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Who is 2e?

Identification = Body of Evidence

The identification process for 2e students involves multiple pathways in which information can be gathered from many sources since the 2e student's output doesn't always match their talents.

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How do we support?

Many 2e students are usually aware of their challenges, which can result in significant self-frustration, insecurity, a lack of motivation, and inconsistent academic performance.

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How do we support?

Why support 2e students...

Every student should be considered a valuable asset with the capacity to grow and reach their full potential in terms of skills, knowledge, and abilities

Despite being aware of their challenges, 2e students require assistance in understanding the reasons for their challenges and in learning strategies to address them.

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How do we support?

Body of Evidence:

- Review Universal Screening data, if any
- Utilize multiple sources, tools, and criteria
- Over time and across multiple settings and situations
- Team effort, include parents
- Look for potential
- Dig deeper to notice the "small nuances"

→ Talent Pool:
The purpose of a talent pool is to foster potential over time.

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How do we support?

When to dig deeper?

- Lack of coordination / fine motor difficulties
- Discrepant verbal and performance abilities
- Auditory and visual processing problems
- Memory concerns or problems in recalling information
- Distractibility
- Blaming others for own problems
- Difficulty with step-by-step directions
- Difficulty explaining or expressing ideas

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How do we support?

→ Talent Pool

A talent pool is defined as a group of students who demonstrate an advanced or exceptional ability in a particular area, but maybe do not meet the criteria for gifted identification at the moment.



Thanks to FAPE (Free and Appropriate Public Education), 2e students who have IEPs or 504 should receive a program that meets their specific needs.

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How do we support?

The Key to Identifying 2e Students

Focus on and observe the student's characteristics that demonstrate both a potential gift as well as a challenge.

- What high potential qualities might make identification difficult? *Remember Rory?*
- What behaviors or changes might indicate a need for further investigation? *Remember CJ?*

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How do we support?

Gifted students, especially twice-exceptional students, can have asynchronous (uneven) development, cognitive and/or academic relative strengths and weaknesses, or learning disabilities.

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How do we support?

Typical 12 year old:

Atypical 12 year old - Asynchronous Gifted Child
Example: Researching Greek Mythology and fighting over the front seat.
© by Stephanie Isavert

Asynchronous development is the discrepancy between cognitive, emotional, social, and physical development.

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How do we support?

Typical Development

Areas of Development

- Academic- Math
- Motor (fine or gross)
- Academic- Verbal
- Social
- Special talent
- Emotional

Asynchronous Development

Areas of Development

- Academic- Math
- Motor (fine or gross)
- Academic- Verbal
- Social
- Special talent
- Emotional

Asynchrony is the reason we must provide differentiated and personalized learning experiences that build upon individual strengths - Strengths-Based Programming.

How do you support asynchrony? It depends.

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How do we support?

Plans to Support Twice Exceptional Students

- An Advanced Learning Plan (ALP) supports an identified gifted learner.
- An Individualized Education Program (IEP) supports a student who qualifies for Special Education.
- A 504 Plan supports an impairment protected by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973.

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How do we support?

Best Practices for 2e Students

- Focus on the student's strengths
- Build relationships
- Nurture affective development
- Universally Designed Instruction (UDI)

<https://sitesed.cde.state.co.us/mod/book/tool/print/index.php?id=12222>
<https://www.cde.state.co.us/gift/twice-exceptional>
<https://www.davidsongifted.org/gifted-blog/strategies-for-supporting-twice-exceptional-students/>
<https://www.weareteachers.com/twice-exceptional-students/>

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How do we support?

1. Focus on the student's strengths

- Recognize their giftedness first, not their disability.
- Put more emphasis on developing their unique talents than remediating their deficiencies.
- Give 2e students some control, which can improve engagement, agency, and self-confidence.

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How do we support?

What Strength-Based is NOT:

- NOT a way to get students to work on their area of weaknesses
- NOT a way to get students to turn work in or otherwise overcome habits or poor behavior
- NOT a focus on remediation
- NOT in the service of the disability

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How do we support?

2. Build Relationships / Address social-emotional needs

- Twice-exceptional children, as with many gifted children, often feel they don't fit in. Finding true peers who share their curiosity, their deep interests, their breadth of knowledge, and their quirky sense of humor can be a challenge for gifted and 2e students.
- Equally as problematic is finding teachers, coaches, and other adults who understand the unique combination of extreme strengths and limitations typical of gifted and 2e students.

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How do we support?

3. Nurture affective development

Teach skills and provide counseling support:

- 2e students are often at risk for social emotional difficulties because their exceptional talents and learning problems grate against each other.
- These internal conflicts inhibit talent development and trigger fight or flight responses.
- Find the possible stressors → they can cause low self-esteem, anxiety, and depression.

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How do we support?

4. Universally Designed Instruction (UDI)

Leverage Interventions, Accommodations, & Modifications

- Equip students with what they need to be successful
 - Interventions add to learning.
 - Accommodations adjust how learning happens.
 - Modifications adjust what is learned.

RIGOR
Integrate Assistive Technology

- Most devices (iPhone, iPad, and Chromebook) come with assistive features that have changed the learning landscape for students with special needs.

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How do we support?

Factors Contributing to the Success of 2e Students:

- Relationship with a caring adult
- Emphasis on pursuing students' talents & interests in an authentic manner (i.e., as an end in itself)
- Access to learning in their strength area (a.k.a. strength-based programming)
- Integration of self-regulation and learning strategies
- Taking the time to really get to know the student (a.k.a. forming a relationship with a caring adult)

Reis, Neu, & McGuire, 1997; Baum & Owen, 2004

01	ACTIVITY	01
02	WHAT'S NEXT?	02

CTR 2025	01	WELCOME
CTR 2025	02	INTRO
CTR 2025	03	OBJECTIVES
CTR 2025	04	WHAT IS GIFTED?
CTR 2025	05	WHO IS 2e?
CTR 2025	06	HOW DO WE SUPPORT?
CTR 2025	07	ACTIVITY
CTR 2025	08	WHAT'S NEXT?

Activity

What would you say to a colleague that a student with an IEP or 504 should have access to gifted programming despite their IEP or 504?

- Why is this programming option important?
- What benefit would it bring to the 2e student?

CTR 2025	01	WELCOME
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CTR 2025	06	HOW DO WE SUPPORT?
CTR 2025	07	ACTIVITY
CTR 2025	08	WHAT'S NEXT?

What's Next?

It depends.

- IDENTIFY students who may be 2e and help them get formally identified.
- PLAN (and MENTOR educators) to support these students.
 - Strengths-Based Programming
- ADVOCATE for students to be identified for services, supports, and plans.

CTR 2025	01	WELCOME
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What's Next?

THANK YOU!

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