

Characteristics of Twice-Exceptional Children

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The following list should be viewed as characteristics which are *typical* of many children who are gifted and who also have a disability, rather than characteristics which *all* such children possess. These twice-exceptional children do not form a simple, homogeneous group; they are a highly diverse group of learners.

Indicators of Cognitive/Affective Strengths

- Have a wide range of interests that are not related to school topics or learning.
- Have a specific talent or consuming interest area for which they have an exceptional memory and knowledge.
- Are interested in the "big picture" rather than small details.
- Are extremely curious and questioning.
- Possess high levels of problem-solving and reasoning skills.
- Have penetrating insights.
- Are capable of setting up situations to their own advantage often as a coping method.
- Are extremely creative in their approach to tasks and as a technique to compensate for their disability.
- Have an unusual imagination.
- Are humorous often in "bizarre" ways.
- Have advanced ideas and opinions which they are uninhibited in expressing.
- Have a superior vocabulary.
- Have very high energy levels.

Indicators of Cognitive/Affective Problems

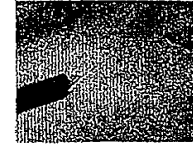
- Have discrepant verbal and performance abilities.
- Have deficient or extremely uneven academic skills which cause them to lack academic initiative, appear academically unmotivated, avoid school tasks, and frequently fail to complete assignments.
- Are extremely frustrated by school.
- Have auditory and/or visual processing problems which may cause them to respond slowly, to work slowly, and to appear to think slowly.
- Have problems with long-term and/or short-term memory.
- Have motorical difficulties exhibited by clumsiness, poor handwriting, or problems completing paper-and-pencil tasks.
- Lack organizational skills and study skills; often appearing to be extremely "messy."
- Are unable to think in a linear fashion; have difficulty following directions.
- Are easily frustrated; give up quickly on tasks; are afraid to risk being wrong or making mistakes.
- Have difficulty explaining or expressing ideas, "getting-to-the-point," and/or expressing feelings.
- Blame others for their problems while believing that their successes are only due to "luck."
- Are distractible; unable to maintain attention for long periods of time.
- Are unable to control impulses.
- Have poor social skills; demonstrate antisocial behaviors.
- Are highly sensitive to criticism.

Indicators of Low Self-Esteem

One of the most common characteristics of these children is low self-esteem. They frequently "disguise" this low self-esteem through the use of any or all of the following behaviors:

- Anger
- Self-criticism
- Crying
- Disruptive behaviors
- Clowning behaviors
- Denial of problems
- Withdrawal
- Daydreaming and fantasy
- Apathetic behaviors

Characteristics of Twice Exceptional Students



Strengths	Weaknesses
Possess outstanding gifts or talents	Disability makes academic achievement difficult
Skilled at abstract thinking, problem solving, and mathematical reasoning	Difficulty with activities that require rote memorization and sequencing
Highly creative	Suffer from low self-esteem
Enjoy a wide range of interests	Easily frustrated and distracted
Curiosity	Problems with phonics and spelling
Sophisticated sense of humour	Poor handwriting
Good visual memory	Poor organizational skills
Ability to grasp metaphors and analogies	Perform poorly on timed tests
Advanced vocabulary	May demonstrate overall school failure
Exceptional ability in geometry, science, arts, and music	Many do not enjoy school, but enjoy learning outside the school environment
Good listening comprehension	Perfectionists
Advanced analytic skills	Fail to complete assignments

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