Supporting the Needs of 2e Students

The term Twice-exceptional (2e) is commonly used to describe gifted/high-ability students who may struggle with challenges due to a physical or learning disability. These disorders can include ADHD, Dyslexia, Autism spectrum disorder, hearing, sight, or mobility issues. When left untreated can lead to low academic performance, social challenges, executive dysfunction, and/or fatigue.

2e students have great potential despite their disability and/or disorder. Areas of strength for 2e students include academic ability, creativity, performing or visual arts, and athleticism. Many experts place 2e students into three categories. The first being students who show high-ability but later exhibit signs of disability. Second, students who’ve been diagnosed with a disability and show intellect in certain domains. Lastly, highly intelligent students whose abilities go unnoticed due to their disability.

To begin the identification process parents can start working with their child at home. If they suspect their child is twice exceptional they should first observe their behaviors. Parents may detect differences in how their child plays, communicates, or responds in comparison to other children. Parents should also observe how their child responds to challenges and in what settings these struggles arise.

Parents can help students to self-advocate by helping them to celebrate their differences and educating them upon their disorder/disability. 2e students can struggle with anger, fear of failure, or low self-esteem. Parents can assist their children by listening, and validating their concerns, and teaching them coping skills. Getting your child assessed can also help to support twice exceptional students.

Parents should ensure that assessments are conducted by a specialist who has experience working with 2e children. These specialists are knowledgeable about the nuances associated with 2e children. They understand the importance in how assessments are administered and how results are interpreted. This understanding can help to build a trusting relationship and overall helps parents feel more at ease.

Parents can yield more positive results when they focus more on their child’s abilities and talents, while they attend to their disabilities. Students thrive when their school helps to address their deficits, but also helps to intellectually challenge them. When we focus on interventions regarding the students talents, we strengthen their ability to thrive socially and emotionally.

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Resources: