

Advocating for Your 2e Student

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What does it mean to have a child who is Twice Exceptional (2e)? The [Colorado Department of Education](#) defines 2e students as gifted students with learning disabilities. This combination can present differently in everyone and can be recognized by a wide gap in 2 or more skill areas, for example: strong single academic interests but challenges with sensory, emotional, or social management. As parents with children who fall under the 2e umbrella, advocating for your child(ren) can be challenging because this learner-type is complex and not wholly or universally understood. What a 2e learner needs to be successful can be complicated, can change as a child ages, and all students are unique in what resources work best for them to thrive in and beyond the classroom.

All these authors have children of varied ages, grades, and schools, and are identified as 2e learners in Jeffco Public Schools. Similarly, their test scores, grades, or daily behaviors do not always portray their full capabilities for social or learning engagement. For example, a 2e learner may score high in testing on reading comprehension but find writing full sentences extremely difficult without significant help in organization and planning. In another example, a child may excel in an academic subject of interest, but due to sensory regulation, may have difficulty staying focused in a busy classroom. Both case examples demonstrate a common 2e presentation: a wide difference between cognition and perceived ability. If this is additionally compounded with fine motor challenges such as handwriting, speech impediment for communication difficulty, or sensory sensitivity to sound, smell, or touch, the traditional model of general education can be difficult for 2e children to fully access what they are required to learn.

When extra accommodations seem necessary, such as a quiet test environment, providing sentence starters, more time on tests, or assistive technology, working with your child's teacher to implement a [504](#) or an [IEP](#) can be a crucial step in improved communication between home and school. This will provide a wider picture of what your child needs to be best supported. Reach out to your child's teacher to initiate the conversation around what is possible in building up supportive resources for how your child learns best and what can benefit your child to be more evenly supported. If a 504 and/or an IEP is something that could help, request a referral meeting to start the process for possible eligibility. Specialized services can be considered to build a holistic support team and provide resources for your 2e learner.

Alternatively, you may have an advanced learner that is already being supported by an IEP and/or 504 but is not benefiting from formal district identification as Gifted and Talented (GT). If, due to challenges such as those previously mentioned, and your child does not fall within the GT parameters that the district sets on testing such as CogAT, MAP, CMAS, etc., but may have been noted by other resources (therapists, teachers, etc.), they still may qualify for a district GT designation through a body of evidence for a GT referral. A caregiver may want to consider either applying for [GT Identification](#), to start the process of being identified by the district to qualify for an [Advanced Learning](#)

[Plan](#) (ALP), or to apply to a [GT Center School](#). These two separate pieces of the puzzle, 504/IEP and ALP, when brought together, can be the difference a 2e learner needs to feel both supported and challenged in positive ways by their school environment.

As parents of 2e learners, we understand the challenges and the need for support in helping your child thrive. Jeffco Public Schools provides more information regarding [Twice Exceptional Students](#) with helpful resources and contacts within the GT and Special Education Departments. JAGC is another great resource to provide parent support if you have any questions in helping advocate for your child. These authors understand the complexity and beauty of 2e learners and navigating the best path for their child's educational journey. We hope this article will help make this process easier for you in helping your students thrive!