

Educational Advocacy  Consulting

Carol Dimas, M.S.Ed.
Director

**THE TWICE EXCEPTIONAL CHILD IN THE
AGE OF VIRTUAL SCHOOL**

THE DILEMMA:

- ▶ Twice exceptional children may fall into one of these categories:
 - Formally identified as gifted but not having an identified disability—giftedness masks disability
 - Formally identified as having a disability but not gifted—disability masks giftedness
 - Not formally identified as gifted or disabled—components mask one another—giftedness and the disability not readily apparent.

WE NEED TO ENSURE THAT TWICE EXCEPTIONAL CHILDREN ARE ACCURATELY IDENTIFIED!

- ▶ In July of 2016 the Office of Civil Rights which oversees among other things, discrimination based on a disability, confirmed that:
 - ▶ "A school district may erroneously believe the related aids and services in an IEP or Section 504 Plan are optional, or unnecessary because the student is academically gifted, or that the student must specifically request these aids and services on an as needed basis. A gifted student may still need specific and explicit instruction on how to reliably record homework assignments, organize information into class notes, start a multi-stage project, write more efficiently, or respond to challenges to his or her attention or concentration in day to day activities."

SOME IMPORTANT CHARACTERISTICS OF 2E STUDENTS

- Can struggle with processing
- Show high verbal but struggle with written language
- Reading problems such as Dyslexia
- Strong observation skills but weak memory
- Attention and focus can be difficult but then they can hyper focus on areas of interest
- Strong questioning which can be misperceived as disrespect
- Can be highly critical of their own performance

WHAT DOES THE U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION SAY ABOUT 2E?

- ▶ <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/041715osepmemo15-082q2015.pdf>
- ▶ <https://www2.ed.gov/policy/speced/guid/idea/memosdcltrs/122013delisletwiceexceptional4q2013.pdf>

WHAT SUPPORTS DO OUR 2E STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES REQUIRE?

- ▶ Provide access to text to speech and speech to text
- ▶ Minimize repetitive work
- ▶ Provide alternative challenging activities - alternate means to demonstrate mastery
- ▶ Preferential seating (can mean different things for different students)
- ▶ Allow listening to music for independent work
- ▶ Provide access to copies of class notes - preferable digitally
- ▶ Frequent check for understanding (don't ask IF they understand - ask WHAT they understand)

SUPPORTS FOR LEARNING DISABILITIES CONT.

- ▶ Extended time for assignments and assessments
- ▶ Chunk multi-step assignments with interim check ins
- ▶ Allow for flexible seating - including standing
- ▶ Allow access to breaks, both in and out of the classroom
- ▶ No penalty for spelling

ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH EMOTIONAL OR BEHAVIORAL CHALLENGES

- ▶ Avoid power struggles with student
- ▶ Give wait time to process
- ▶ Give choices and alternatives
- ▶ Use specific, targeted praise
- ▶ Use planned ignoring and behavior shaping techniques
- ▶ Provide fidgets, alternative seating options, movement, etc.
- ▶ Provide clear expectations (do not assume that the student knows this)
- ▶ Pre-planned cooperative learning groups
- ▶ Provide opportunities for mentoring others

WHAT IS YOUR SCHOOL DISTRICT'S RESPONSIBILITY DURING REMOTE LEARNING?

- ▶ What obligations do districts have to provide a free and appropriate public education (FAPE) during remote learning?
 - ▶ "Schools and school districts are obligated to address the unique needs of students eligible for special education through remote learning. Schools and school districts must continue to afford students with FAPE. School districts must provide a FAPE consistent with the need to protect the health and safety of students with disabilities and those individuals providing education, specialized instruction, and related services to students, according to ED. "

WHAT FLEXIBILITY DOES FEDERAL LAW ALLOW?

- ▶ “During this national emergency, schools may not be able to provide all services in the same manner they are typically provided, and that it is intending to “offer flexibility where possible.” ED emphasizes that the determination of how FAPE is to be provided may need to be different in this time of unprecedented national emergency.”

IS MY CHILD ELIGIBLE FOR COMPENSATORY SERVICES?

- ▶ ED's guidance states, "Where, due to the global emergency and resulting closures of schools, there has been an inevitable delay in providing services - or even making decisions about how to provide services - Individualized Education Program (IEP) teams must make an individualized determination whether and to what extent compensatory services may be needed when schools resume normal operations." Schools and school districts should keep detailed documentation of all educational opportunities provided to students during the statewide mandatory suspension of in-person instruction.

YOU HAVE TO BE THE RECORD KEEPER!

- ▶ Each and every day, keep track of the following:
 - ▶ *What was the assignment?*
 - ▶ *How long did it take?*
 - ▶ *Did they need a break?*
 - ▶ *How much clarification and check for understanding did you have to do?*
 - ▶ *What was the result? (percentage correct, accuracy of assignment, did it have to be redone?)*
 - ▶ *Signs of frustration: meltdowns, anger, shut down, etc.*

WHAT HAPPENS WHEN FACE TO FACE LEARNING RETURNS?

- ▶ Request data as soon as they return: progress monitoring, testing, etc.
- ▶ Send a detailed email as to how your student is doing:
 - ▶ What has the effect of the *stay at home* order been on emotional regulation?
 - ▶ Have you seen regression either academically, functionally, emotionally?
 - ▶ Are they showing any signs of school anxiety or refusal?

SUPPORTS STUDENTS MAY NEED FOR THE TRANSITION:

- ▶ Amended day or attendance to schedule
- ▶ Assurance from teachers that there will be review
- ▶ Sample problems with step by step for math
- ▶ Clear break down of assignments with interim check-ins
- ▶ Ability to cut off homework (with no penalty) if signs of anxiety and/or frustration appear
- ▶ Consideration for any testing for gifted programming

MAKE SURE YOU ARE MAKING THE MOST OF TECHNOLOGY

- ▶ If your student isn't already signed up for Learning Ally, ask your school to get you the code. (It's free to schools during remote learning.)
- ▶ Explore apps for writing, executive functioning and math.
- ▶ Make sure they are using their chrome books for more than just watching someone - you want interaction.

MY MESSAGE TO STUDENTS:

- ▶ Find ways to make a difference.
- ▶ Investigate your interests.
- ▶ Be kind to your family.
- ▶ Learn something new.
- ▶ Incorporate movement in your learning
- ▶ Help your parent make a schedule and stick to it.
- ▶ Share your feelings - you are not alone.

DON'T LET THIS BE A HUMPTY DUMPTY STORY!

