

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 Challenges

- 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 distractable; unable to maintain attention for long periods of time.
- Are unable to control impulses.
- Have poor social skills; demonstrate antisocial behaviors.

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