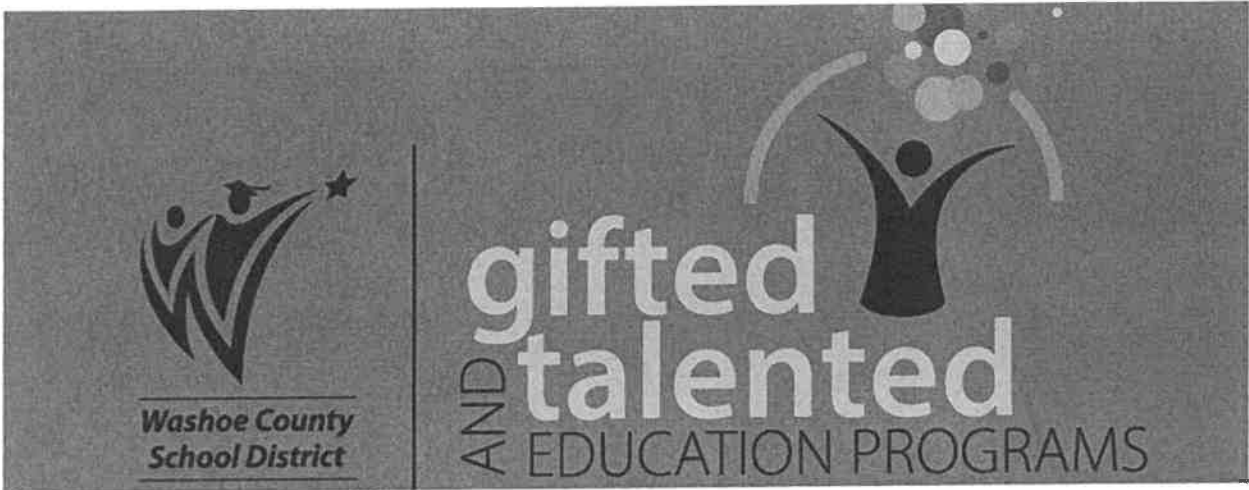




Parent Resource Book

6th Grade Swope Magnet

Welcome to Swope's GT Magnet Program!

Dear 6th Grade Families,

We are thrilled to welcome you and your child to Swope's GT Magnet Program and to begin this exciting 6th grade journey together!

Our team is here to partner with you in supporting your child's academic, social, and emotional growth. The transition from 5th to 6th grade can be a big one, and we want you to know, we're here to help every step of the way.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to us with any questions, concerns, or important family updates. If something's going on that could impact your child at school, we want to know so we can provide the right support. Communication is key, and we're committed to working together as a team.

We've also compiled this **Parent Resource Book** to help guide and support you during this school year. It includes tools, tips, and information designed to make the transition smoother and to empower you as partners in your child's education.

We can't wait to get to know your family and share a successful school year ahead!

Your partners in Education,

6th Grade Team

Mrs. Commons	nicole.common@washoeschools.net
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2026-2027 Balanced Calendar

July 2026							No School on Shaded Days
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	# of School Days = 0
				1	2	3	4
5	6	7	8	9	10	11	
12	13	14	15	16	17	18	
19	20	21	22	23	24	25	
26	27	28	29	30	31		

August 2026							No School on Shaded Days
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	# of School Days = 16
						1	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	August 4 - 6 - Teacher Professional Dev. Day
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	August 7 - Teacher Work Day
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	August 10 - First Day of School for Students
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
30	31						

September 2026							No School on Shaded Days
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	# of School Days = 21
			1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	September 7 - Labor Day
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	
27	28	29	30				

October 2026							No School on Shaded Days
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	# of School Days = 16
				1	2	3	October 5 - 9 - Fall Break
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	October 12 - Teacher Professional Dev. Day
11	12*	13	14	15	16	17	October 16 - End of Grading Period
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	October 23, 26-29 - Conference Week
25	26	27	28	29	30	31	October 30 - Nevada Day

November 2026							No School on Shaded Days
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	# of School Days = 17
1	2	3*	4	5	6	7	November 3 - Teacher Professional Dev. Day
8	9	10	11	12	13	14	November 11 - Veterans Day
15	16	17	18	19	20	21	
22	23	24	25	26	27	28	November 25 - 27 - Thanksgiving Break
29	30						

December 2026							No School on Shaded Days
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	# of School Days = 13
			1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	December 17 - End of Grading Period
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	December 18 - Teacher Work Day
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	December 21 - January 1 - Winter Break
27	28	29	30	31			

January 2027							No School on Shaded Days
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	# of School Days = 19
					1	2	December 21 - January 1 - Winter Break
3	4*	5	6	7	8	9	January 4 - Teacher Professional Dev. Day
10	11	12	13	14	15	16	
17	18	19	20	21	22	23	January 18 - Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
24	25	26	27	28	29	30	
31							

February 2027							No School on Shaded Days
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	# of School Days = 19
		1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	February 15 - President's Day
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	February 23 - College and Career Readiness Assessment for high schools only.
28							

March 2027							No School on Shaded Days
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	# of School Days = 15
		1	2	3	4	5	6
7	8	9	10	11	12	13	
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	March 12 - End of Grading Period
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	March 22 April 2 - Spring Break
28	29	30	31				

April 2027							No School on Shaded Days
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	# of School Days = 20
					1	2	3
4	5	6	7	8	9	10	March 22 April 2 - Spring Break
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	
18	19	20	21	22	23	24	
25	26	27	28	29	30		

May 2027							No School on Shaded Days
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	# of School Days = 20
						1	
2	3	4	5	6	7	8	
9	10	11	12	13	14	15	
16	17	18	19	20	21	22	
23	24	25	26	27	28	29	
30	31						May 31 - Memorial Day

June 2027							No School on Shaded Days
S	M	T	W	TH	F	S	# of School Days = 4
			1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12	June 4 - End of Grading Period
13	14	15	16	17	18	19	June 4 - Last Day of School
20	21	22	23	24	25	26	June 7, 8, 9 - Contingency Days
27	28	29	30				June 19 - Juneteenth

*October 12, 2026, November 3, 2026 and January 4, 2027 are non-student days used for professional development but counted as school days in session per NAC 387.140	Number of Days per Quarter	44	39	48	49	180
	Number of Days per Semester	83	97			180
	Contingency Days: June 7, 8, 9					

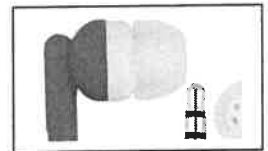
Teacher Work Days: August 4 - 7, 2026 & December 18, 2026
Teacher Professional Dev. Days: October 12, 2026, November 3, 2026 and January 4, 2027

Student Supply List
Swope 2026-2027
GT Magnet 6th Grade

All Students are responsible for providing the following supplies by the first day of school. With the gate donation of \$60.00 we can provide the rest of the supplies students will need. Please make checks out to WCSD GATE (see attached form)

- Binder for General Use- *Recommend Zipper Binder*

 - Make sure there are (7) folder pockets- one folder for each subject
- Wired earbuds (Must have auxiliary jack, not wireless or have ability to connect to Bluetooth) Make sure they are small and can fit in binder.
- Composition Notebooks (3) college ruled and (1) graph
- Pencil Pouch for Binder



Things to keep in Pencil Pouch and have available for every class:

- Pencils (A LOT) Please note, No mechanical pencils
- Post it notes
- Highlighter

Donated supplies are always appreciated:

- Kleenex
- Disinfecting wipes
- Pencils

*Please note that there may be additional fees throughout the year for activities or field trips. *

Thank you for all your support!

Mrs. Commons

Mrs. Matilainen

Mr. Nemes

Mrs. Vieyra

WCSD Gifted and Talented Middle School Magnet Program

Academic Integrity Policy

- At the beginning of each school year, students will receive direct instruction regarding Academic Integrity: what it entails and how to avoid this dangerous academic pitfall.
- Students will receive a handout that both they and their parents sign. Students and parents will also sign the WCSD GT Middle School Magnet Honor Code.

Academic Integrity is: honesty, trustworthiness, fairness, respect, responsibility and courage. Each students' own original and unique work will be presented with research citations and developed for each individual assignment with fidelity.

1st Offense: Goal is to re-teach the policy to both student and parent.

- Teacher/student conference to discuss and review academic integrity.
- Student informs parent of the offense.
- Teacher follows up with parent.
- At teacher discretion, a Behavior Minor event can be entered in Infinite Campus.
- Student must do the following:
 - Appropriate apology letter to both teacher and parent
 - Re-do the assignment within 5 school days for late/partial credit
 - Re-signs Academic Integrity Policy and Honor Code

2nd Offense: Goal is to enforce policy and re-teach to student and parent.

- Teacher/student conference to discuss and review academic integrity.
- Student informs parent.
- Teacher follows up with parent.
- At teacher discretion, a Behavior Minor event can be entered in Infinite Campus.
- Office referral for school discipline
- Student must do the following:
 - Appropriate apology letter to teacher, parent and administrator
 - Re-do the assignment within 5 school days for a maximum of half-credit
 - Re-signs Academic Integrity Policy and Honor Code
 - Meet requirements of school discipline, if applicable.

3rd (+) Offense(s): Goal is enforcement of policy and cessation of behavior.

- Teacher/student/parent/administrator conference to discuss continual disregard for both the academic integrity policy and the honor code. Participants will agree upon a plan of action.
- Behavior Major event entered in Infinite Campus at Administrator's discretion
- Student will NOT be allowed to re-do the assignment and will earn a zero.

*This policy is cumulative throughout all the student's classes for each individual school year.

*Depending on the severity and context of the circumstances, consequences for incidences can vary based on teacher and administration discretion.

WCSD Gifted and Talented Middle School Magnet Program

Plagiarism, Academic Integrity and Honor Code: Student and Parent Acknowledgement

Honor Code for Middle School Magnet Program

I affirm that I will uphold the highest principles of respect, honesty, and integrity in all my endeavors in scholarship, service, leadership and character within the WCSD Gifted and Talented Magnet Program. Additionally, I will promote an atmosphere of mutual respect within and beyond the classroom.

-Thanks to Gettysburg College for inspiration in writing this honor code.

I have read both the WCSD Gifted and Talented Middle School Magnet Program Academic Integrity Policy and Honor Code and agree to abide by them:

Student Name: _____

Student Signature: _____

I have read and discussed with my child both the WCSD Gifted and Talented Middle School Magnet Program Academic Integrity Policy and Honor Code and agree to ensure my child's compliance.

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Parent/Guardian Name: _____

Parent/Guardian Signature: _____

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the Homework Expectations for 6th Grade GT Magnet at Swope?

- Students in the 6th grade GT Magnet Program will be assigned regular homework.
- Please be mindful of your child's workload and help them manage their time effectively.
 - According to the WCSD Homework Policy, WCSD Homework Policy for a 6th Grade student is approximately: 45 minutes per night
 - In the GT Magnet Program at Swope Middle School, students will begin with 45 minutes of homework each night, with a gradual increase to 60 minutes and eventually up to 90 minutes per night: This progression is intentionally slow and developmentally appropriate to prepare students for the demands of 7th and 8th grade.

How does my child receive make-up work after an absence?

- If you miss class, there will be work waiting for you when you return. There are steps you can take in the meantime to catch up quickly and not be overwhelmed when you return. Be proactive and:
- Email your teachers for assignments or work that was introduced on the day(s) you were absent.
- Check CANVAS for each class. In many cases, teachers post work to the class CANVAS for you to access. You will need your Windows login to access your digital apps.
- If you are too sick to complete your work, focus on getting better. If you are feeling up to completing work, but not ready to return to school, we encourage you to get a head start on your work. Once you return, we follow the timelines in the policy for make-up work.
 - Policy for Make-Up Work For An Absence: Make-up work must be provided for any absence by the teacher, but it is **the student's responsibility to request the make-up work in advance or on the first day s/he returns to class**. Because it is impossible to make-up some in-class assignments, coursework of a similar nature may be given. It is the student's responsibility to turn in all make-up class work at the designated deadline. Failure to complete the make-up work within the designated deadline will result in no credit received for the make-up work. **Students will have the number of days absent plus one to complete missed make up work or concepts missed beginning on the day the teacher provides the missed assignments to the student.**

What if my child misses a day, for a preplanned vacation or longer weekend?

- We strongly recommend avoiding travel immediately before or after scheduled WCSC breaks. These periods are critical for academic success, as teachers are often concluding or introducing units during these times. Missing class during these transitions can significantly impact your child's learning and progress.

What if my child has a LATE assignment?

Late assignments will be subject to a 10% deduction per day, up to a maximum of five days late. Assignments submitted more than five days after the due date will not be accepted.

What can parents do at home to best support their child?

Parents play a vital role in their child's academic success. To provide meaningful support at home, we recommend the following:

- **Regularly review your child's planner** to stay informed about daily and weekly assignments.
- **Monitor assignments** for core subjects, including ELA, Math, Science, and Accelerated Challenges.
- **Encourage time management**, organization, and consistent study habits to help your child stay on track and meet deadlines.

Active parental engagement helps reinforce the importance of responsibility and academic accountability.

Period

[illegible]

Music/ Sports/ETC Absence Form

Date will be absent: _____

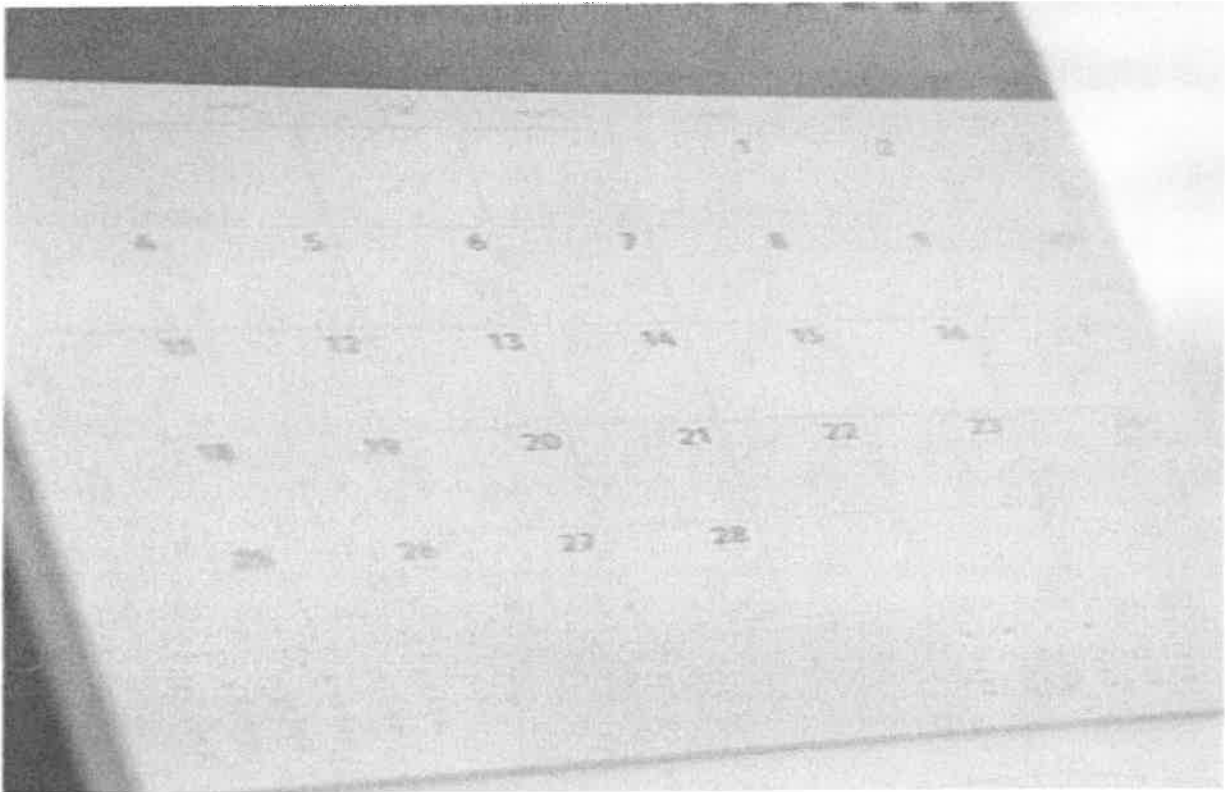
Student Name: _____

Parent Signature: _____

Students are responsible for checking in with each teacher's class they will be missing and finding out what assignments they will be missing.

Period	Teacher signature	Assignments that need to be done.
1 st		
2 nd		
3 rd		
4 th		
5 th		
6 th		
7 th		

Example After School Schedule:



- 2:00 School Dismissed
- 2:15 Relax have a snack
- **2:45 Start homework**
- 3:15 Take a break/ walk/ play with dog
 - **3:30 Continue homework**
- 4:00 Take a break -jumping jacks
 - **4:15 Continue homework**
 - 4:45 Done
- 5:00 Family time/ extra curriculars/ be a kid!

How to Get Infinite Campus Messages Sent to Your Email

I want to make sure you're getting all the important updates — including reminders about concerts, grades, attendance, and school events. To do that, please take a moment to **adjust your Infinite Campus settings** so that messages get pushed straight to your email inbox.

Step 1: Log into the Parent Portal



* Choose **Parent** and log in with your username and password.

Forgot your login? No problem — just call your school's front office and they can help reset it!

Step 2: Go to "Settings"

- * Once you're logged in, look in the **left-hand menu**.
- * Scroll down and click **"Settings"** (near the bottom).

Step 3: Choose "Contact Preferences"

- * Inside Settings, click **"Contact Preferences."**

- * This is where you manage how and where you get messages from the school.

Step 4: Turn on Email Notifications

- * Make sure your **email address is listed correctly.**
- * Under **“Message Preferences”**, check the boxes under **“Email”** for:
 - * Emergency
 - * Attendance
 - * Behavior
 - * General
 - * Grade
 - * Assignment
- * You can also update **phone call and text settings** here if you'd like!

Step 5: Click “Save”

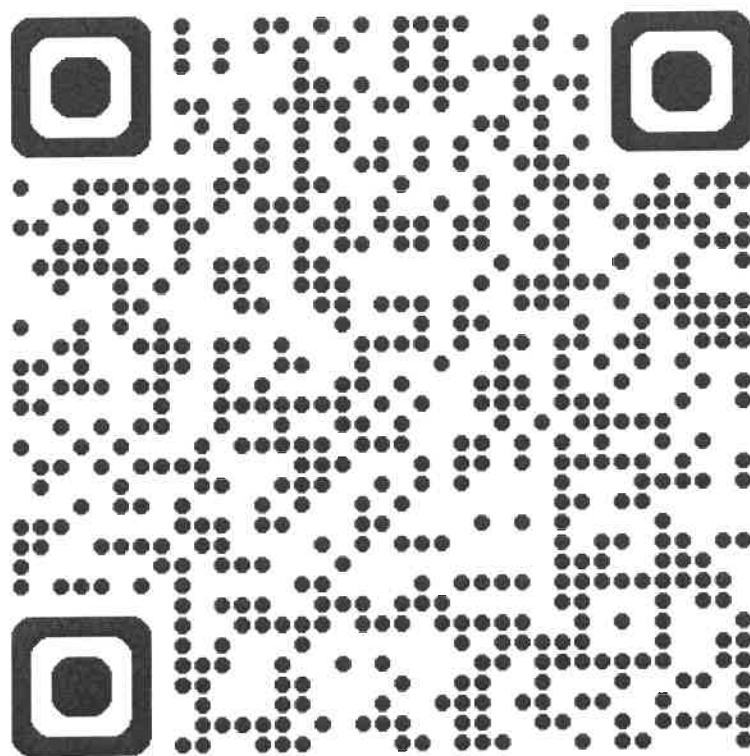
- * Don't forget to click the **Save** button at the bottom of the screen.

That's it! 🎉 You're now set up to receive messages right in your inbox, so you never miss an update from the school.

If you have any trouble or questions, feel free to reach out to the school office or email me and I'll help however I can.

Thanks so much for staying connected!

WCSD Volunteer Management System



Pease scan code or go to:

<https://www.washoeschools.net/directory/human-resources/volunteer-services>

and complete the form online if you would like to volunteer at school or on a field trip.

Thank you!

Period

[illegible]



April 15, 2016 by [bhershelman](#)

Executive Function Skills and Gifted Students

Dr. Rick Shade and Diana Caldeira

Introduction

How many of you have ever wondered . . . “He has an IQ of 137, but why can’t he get his assignments turned in on time?” Perhaps this sounds familiar . . . “She forgets how to continue an activity she has started, even though I explained all the steps to her.” Knowing what to do and when to do it, in essence, how we each navigate daily life is called Executive Function (EF).

All of us possess the skills of Executive Function. We take most of these skills for granted, however some of us may struggle to varying degrees with one or more. EF skills come into play in three broad areas: learning, behavior, and social situations. The definition we will use in this article is “Executive Function is a set of mental processes that help us connect past experiences with present action.” We use these learned skills to make plans, set goals, keep track of time, complete tasks, and much more.

So What Are These Executive Function Skills?

There are nine major EF skills:

1. Attention (Obtaining and Maintaining)
2. Inhibition & Impulse Control
3. Initiation & Persistence
4. Goal Setting & Prioritizing
5. Planning & Organization
6. Time Management
7. Flexible Thinking
8. Self-Regulation & Monitoring
9. Working Memory

Later we will provide a description, examples and some useful tips for each area.

So What's the Problem?

Many of us have some of these skills occurring simultaneously. For example, let's say you have a meeting with co-workers Wednesday morning. You prepare for this meeting physically and mentally. You have your materials gathered, you know how to get to the meeting, you arrive on time, you keep track of time during the meeting, you take notes, you follow meeting norms and communication protocols, and you leave knowing what you have to do prior to the next meeting.

To be able to successfully participate in the meeting described above, you also have a set of mental filters that help control the stream of events. Think of it as a funnel, allowing information and processes to flow smoothly into your brain. You have effective and efficient EF skills! However, if you (or a student) have some trouble with one or more of these skills, *the funnel may quickly become clogged!*

Pinpointing the Problem

Besides trying to determine which of the nine EF skills your child might be having the most difficulty with, you also have to take the next step and ask yourself these four important questions:

1. Does your child simply not understand what you are asking him to do? **TIP:** Ask him to repeat the instructions back to you.
2. Does he know what to do, but not how to do it?
3. Is he confused about the order of steps? **TIP:** Give a prompt such as "First, you need to do this."
4. Is the problem motivation? (Does he not care or see the value in doing the task).

Once you pinpoint the actual problem, you can begin to address it more effectively.

#1 – Attention (Obtaining and Maintaining)

You cannot communicate with or teach to anyone anything unless you first have their attention. Once you have it, your main job is to help the learner maintain it. The major challenge with this is knowing someone's "alertness level." As most of us know, this varies throughout the day. At times we are alert, dull, groggy, tired or sleepy. The goal is to have sustained attention in spite of fatigue, distractibility and boredom. However there are a number of distractions to focused attention. See if you can identify those distractions that interfere with your child's attention.

TIPS

- First pay attention to your child's "alertness level" by tracking it at home for several days. Notice patterns. When is she very alert and engaged? When is she tired or slow? When is she really sleepy?
- How much sleep is your child getting? Experts are now saying American adults and children get too little sleep.
- Children and adults can often fall to sleep sooner and sleep longer if they eliminate ALL electronic devices (Phone, computer, tablet, TV, etc.) at least one hour before bedtime. Play a board game or read a book instead.

#2 – Inhibition & Impulse Control

Inhibition and Impulse Control is the ability to stop and think before acting. How many times have you wished you had paused and thought for a moment before doing or saying something to a friend, boss or colleague?

Children often say or do things without using a cushion of time to reflect. They'll do whatever pleasurable thing comes along without considering their obligations or commitments. Children with this weakness often speed through schoolwork, sacrificing accuracy and completeness along the way.

TIPS

- When children develop an understanding of the difference between feelings and behaviors, it can help them control their impulses. A child who understands it is OK to feel mad, but not OK to hit, he can see that he has choices about how to deal with his feelings without reacting impulsively.
- Sometimes children behave impulsively because they don't listen to the directions. Before you've finished your sentence, they are up and moving without really hearing what you said. Teach your child to listen to the directions first by having them repeat back what they've heard before they take action.
- When children learn problem-solving skills, they'll learn how to think before they act. Teach your child how to develop several solutions to a problem and then analyze which solution is likely to have the best outcome. Then, instead of instinctively hitting a peer

who cuts in front of him in line, he can problem-solve several different ideas of how he can respond.

- Lack of frustration tolerance can be a big factor in impulse control. Teach your child how to manage his anger so he can calm himself down when he's upset. Time-out can be a great way for kids to learn how to calm themselves down, as long as it is used as a consequence and not a punishment.
- Developing clear rules can help children have a better understanding of what is expected of them. When kids know that there is no hitting allowed, they are less likely to hit. Make it clear what the consequences will be if the rules are broken and your child will be less likely to break the rules.
- Playing games provides a young child with a fun way to practice impulse control. Games such as Simon Says, Red Light Green Light, or Follow the Leader require impulse control.

#3 – Initiation & Persistence

Task Initiation is the ability to recognize when it is time to begin a task without procrastinating. Children weak in this skill have trouble starting homework or put off projects until the last minute. They are sometimes seen as lazy or unmotivated. Keep in mind that children like this may procrastinate because they don't know how to start. Some also have trouble planning and organizing. They can get overwhelmed by everything they have to do so they end up doing nothing at all. Task Initiation relies on planning to manage an awareness of time and is jump-started by an active working memory (discussed later).

Persistence is sticking to the task. Sometimes we have to explain to children the notion of hard work. Everyone gets to a point in a task when they get frustrated. This is the easy time to give up. We all need to learn ways to "push through" until the task is completed.

TIPS

- Praise children's efforts: "Look how hard you've been trying to put that puzzle together. You're almost finished." "You didn't give up until you got just the right color. You must be very proud."
- Help children identify successful strategies for problem-solving: "It really helps when you look for the very first letter of your name to find your cubby." "Let's repeat the directions together, so everyone will know what to do next."
- Offer praise that is specific and meaningful to what a child has actually done: "You really had to push hard to turn the pedals." "You all spoke in such a kind, gentle way when Jose hurt his foot." Avoid vague words like "Nice" and exaggerated praise, such as "You're the best painter in the whole world."

#4 – Goal Setting & Prioritizing

Categorizing activities is an important part of the prioritization process, as it provides a foundation on which students can build their schedules. Once tasks have been grouped according to importance, students can rely on their knowledge of time and task to allot the appropriate amount of time for each activity. Obligatory tasks should be accomplished first, followed by aspirational ones.

Obligation: These activities are time sensitive mandatory tasks, such as homework, jobs or chores. For some students, enrichment activities like soccer or violin practice may fall in to the obligation category.

Aspiration: These activities are enjoyable, interesting and important but not obligatory. These activities might include attending a friend's birthday party, going to a concert, or watching a favorite TV show.

Negotiation: These activities do not have immediate time constraints and are flexible (e.g. putting together a model robot). These activities are not as critical as obligatory or aspirational tasks.

TIPS

- Set realistic goals
- Begin with the end in mind (Backwards Planning)
- Prioritize long and short term tasks (day-to-day)
- Select most important information in notes
- Acknowledge deadlines (intrinsically set or imposed)

#5 – Planning & Organization

Planning is the ability to create steps to reach a goal. Children who have difficulty planning and setting priorities are easily overwhelmed by complicated, multi-part tasks. They can't independently impose structure and order on ideas. They have trouble thinking through the steps required to achieve a goal. They tend to underestimate a project's complexity and time requirements.

Organization is the ability to create and maintain systems to keep track of information or materials. Students need this skill for homework, studying, writing and especially for completing long-term projects.

TIPS

- Use file-sharing software like Drop Box to keep notes handy anywhere there's an internet connection.
- Smartphone APPS can serve as digital sticky notes or bulletin boards.
- Digital flashcards, available as APPS or on smartphones, may be helpful.

- Password manager software can keep track of passwords.

#6 – Time Management

Parents are an important part of the overall plan to improve time management skills. Their role is to model and monitor. Good models use time devices (clocks, watches, phones), appointment books, plan time aloud, post calendars with family schedules and have scheduled routines at home. Parents can also model time planning by thinking aloud as they plan their own activities. Make your child aware of how you schedule routine activities by saying, “I have to pick up your dad at 6:15 at the airport. It’s 4:30 now. It usually takes 45 minutes to get there. I’ll add on another 15 minutes for rush hour traffic. I think I’ll leave here at 5:15”

TIPS

- Set time limits for the overall activity.
- Set time limits for each step in the activity.
- Have students predict the time needed to complete task as a practice exercise.
- *Teach* the student how to use the planner! (No one is born knowing how to do this).
- Teachers and parents – check that students are using the planner and using it correctly!
- Look into using a phone APP or a digital calendar.

#7 – Flexible Thinking

Flexible Thinking is the ability to change strategies or revise plans when conditions change. Children who behave in ways that are inflexible have trouble when a familiar routine is disrupted or a task becomes complicated. They get frustrated when a first attempt to solve a problem isn’t successful. They are unable to see new ways to do familiar tasks or to make another choice when the first choice proves unworkable.

Flexible Thinking is so important for academic performance:

- Reading Comprehension – students go back and forth between themes and details and then sift and sort information.
- Written Language – students must learn to balance important concepts and main ideas with supporting details.
- Math Competency – students shift between word meanings, procedures and operations.
- Science and History – students use context clues to prioritize and focus on most relevant information.
- Foreign Language – students shift between their native and the new foreign language.
- Studying and test-taking – students must move back and forth between topics and problems presented in different formats.

TIPS

- Allow transition time when switching between rest and work.
- Teach several ways to approach a task or solve a problem. Then help your child shift approaches, especially if one approach appears not to be working.
- Stop your child and help him cope with unexpected changes to routines, schedules, homework and projects.

#8 – Self-Regulation & Monitoring

Self-Monitoring is the ability to monitor and evaluate your own performance. Children who are weak at monitoring themselves may not notice that they're not following directions until someone points this out. They tend to misjudge their own efforts and have trouble adjusting what they're doing based on feedback or cues. They are often completely surprised by a low grade on a test or project.

TIPS

- Teach your child how to make and use a checklist.
- Teach your child to talk through a task. Self-talk is often efficient and effective.
- Teach your child how to use a time log for different tasks.

#9 – Working Memory

Working memory is your brain's Post-it note! We often think of it as short-term memory. You may also think of it as mental juggling. As information comes in, you process it at the same time you are deciding whether or not to store it. Working Memory is the ability to hold information in your mind and use it to complete a task.

Working Memory usually occurs in two forms. Verbal (Auditory) Working Memory taps into our sound (hearing) system. Visual-Spatial Working Memory is a kind of visual sketchpad. We envision something in our "mind's eye." We use both when following multi-step directions.

To determine if your child has a problem with working memory, first watch for signs. Students with working memory problems could do the following:

- Abandon activities before completing them.
- Appear to be daydreaming often.
- Fail to complete assignments.
- Raise their hands to answer questions but forget what they wanted to say (This is typical for a 5-year-old, but not for an 11-year-old).
- Mix up material inappropriately – for example, combining two sentences.

- Forget how to continue an activity that they've started, even though you have explained the steps.

TIPS

- Allow the child to use a cell phone or tablet to take a picture of notes.
- Use a tape recorder or cell phone to record a conversation.
- Create checklists with pictures for younger children.
- Focus on a single goal or task to complete. Multitasking is not all it's cracked up to be!
- Reconsider video games. Some offer good practice for working memory.
- Play board games with your children. Benefits include wait time which aids working memory.

SUMMARY

Some educators are now recommending all children be taught EF skills and processes systematically starting in the elementary grades. One reason is that even in early elementary grades teachers are requiring students to complete long-term projects, as well as lengthy reading and writing ones.

It is critical that every child is taught these kinds of strategies. They impact all aspects of student work as they move up in grade levels. Even second grade students are expected to coordinate multiple sub-skills.

We must keep in mind that EF strategies are not a "one size fits all." For students to use EF strategies effectively, as a first step they must understand their own learning profile and their strengths and weaknesses as well as which strategies work for them.

Dealing with EF can lead children to experience a variety of problems in their friendships, peer relationships and other social interactions. Everyday tasks like sharing, taking turns, picking up on subtle social cues and staying attentive in class can be very difficult for kids who struggle with EF skills.

Perhaps most importantly, teachers and parents must continue to provide consistent and on-going encouragement and support. Children with social challenges may also have low self-esteem. Recognize even the smallest improvement in the student. Knowing you care and notice their progress can be very reassuring.

Do's and Don'ts for Motivating Your High-Ability Child

By Dr. Del Siegle and Dr. D. Betsy McCoach

At Parent Day during NAGC's 2016 Convention in Orlando, FL, scholars and parents Del Siegle and Betsy McCoach shared successful strategies and practices for motivating gifted children.

AVOID SABOTAGE

Be careful of—even inadvertently—sabotaging your children's perceptions about themselves, their peers, and their teachers.



Do

- Model a growth mindset.
- Let your child struggle a bit, but monitor to avoid total frustration.
- Present a united front with your partner.
- Show you value education and teachers.



Don't

- Use "est" words—best, brightest, prettiest, fastest.
- Swoop in, rescue, and provide unnecessary assistance—otherwise your child will never feel "challenge."
- Let your children play parents against one another.
- Criticize teachers in front of your children.

UNDERSTAND CAUSE & EFFECT

Gifted children need to understand that they control their own destinies: They succeed because they have the skills and put forth effort, and that failures may be attributed to lack of effort.



Do

- Help your child analyze success or failures. Example: "Did we study the right things?" "What was on the test that we didn't study?"
- Counsel your child to reflect on difficult situations and discuss ways to change the environment to fit her needs or how she can adjust her behavior to the existing environment.
- Help your child break down projects and map out tasks. Through planning, children can visualize a task come to fruition.
- Model curiosity and creativity about the world around you.



Don't

- Allow him to blame others for his lack of success. Example: "The teacher just doesn't like me."
- Intervene and solve problems for your child. Rather: Involve and engage her so she is part of the solution.
- Assume that because your child is gifted, he intuitively knows how to organize tasks or manage projects. Some students need help in this area.
- Ignore opportunities to demonstrate how to transform your child's curiosity into action. Rather: "Let's look your question up on the Internet."

FIND MEANINGFULNESS

Even at a very young age, gifted and talented students need to find meaning in their lives.

Do

- Support your child in exploring what is personally interesting to him.
- Recognize that children's motivation is linked to what they view as useful. When they value or enjoy an activity, they are intrinsically motivated.
- Help your child see beyond the immediate activity to long-term outcomes.
- Share your child's interests with the teacher or school, and find ways to incorporate those interests into school projects.
- Find peers or other role models with whom your child can relate.

Don't

- Force your child to pursue interests that you like or feel she should pursue because "all the kids are doing it."
- Overly focus on external rewards systems as the way to motivate your child.
- Set goals for your child that you value, but have little or no meaning to him.
- Be afraid to let the teacher know what your child cares about and interests her.
- Foster an environment of unhealthy perfectionism. Rather: Find examples of famous role models who struggled but persevered to success.

DISCUSS GIFTS AND ABILITIES

It's important that high-ability children understand that they have gifts and talents...but it's up to them to put forth effort, persevere, and accept challenges to grow.

Do

- Help your child see that no one is born a Ph.D. or Nobel Peace Prize winner—it takes effort to succeed.
- Find challenging opportunities to improve skills and develop talents.
- Encourage your child to take risks; share struggles and successes.
- Document your child's growth and review periodically to build confidence.

Don't

- Devalue the importance of working hard and putting forth effort.
- Overlook the fact that your child needs to learn basic study skills such as outlining, note taking, and identifying main points—even though she has a good memory and fast processing skills.
- Equate or imply that giftedness is tied to perfect performance.
- Forget to sit down with your child to review examples of previous work to provide a visual marker of his growth—to build self-confidence and higher self-efficacy.

LISTEN AND SUPPORT INTERESTS

Gifted children want their voices to be heard.

Do

- Listen to what your child has on her mind.
- Be an active, empathetic listener. Example: "So it sounds like you are feeling x..." "What I hear you say is..."
- When providing compliments, they must be genuine, specific, and earned. Example: "I like the colors you chose here." Or, "You are providing good supporting sentences for your topic sentence in your opening paragraph."

Don't

- Solve her problems for her—give her the space and time to talk it out and problem-solve independently, but with support.
- Be distracted, dismissive, or interruptive when he is trying to share his feelings or point of view.
- Compliment your child in a general way ("good job") or for underperforming or for unchallenging tasks.

Authors' Note

Del Siegle, Ph.D., is director of the National Center for Research on Gifted Education, and D. Betsy McCoach, Ph.D., is professor and program coordinator of the Measurement, Evaluation and Assessment program, both at the University of Connecticut. Betsy and Del are married, life partners, and parents of two young gifted and talented children. They have authored numerous books and papers on a multitude of topics, including *Motivating Gifted Students: The Practical Strategies Series in Gifted Education*, and were recently co-editors of *Gifted Child Quarterly*.

Executive Function Activities for Adolescents

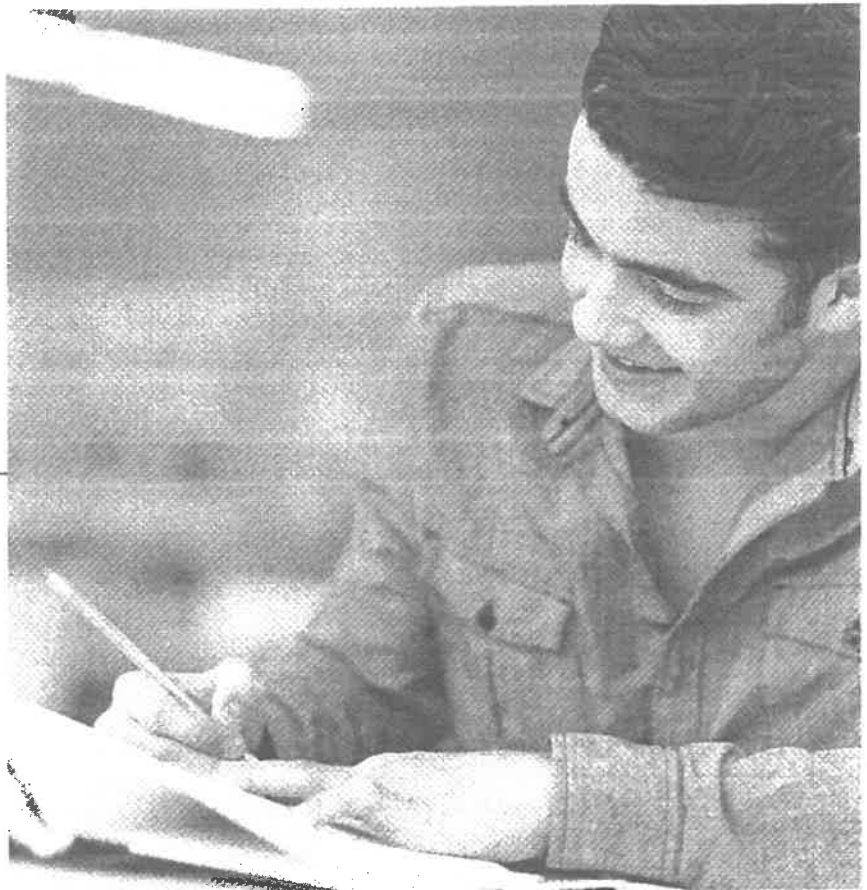
During adolescence, executive function skills are not yet at adult levels, but the demands placed on these skills often are. Teenagers need to communicate effectively in multiple contexts, manage their own school and extracurricular assignments, and successfully complete more abstract and complicated projects. Here are some suggestions for helping teens practice better self-regulation throughout the daily challenges they face.

Goal setting, planning and monitoring

Self-regulation is necessary in any goal-directed activity. Identifying goals, planning, monitoring progress, and adjusting behavior are important skills to practice.

■ To focus the planning process, encourage teens to identify something specific that they want to accomplish. Most important is that the goals are meaningful to the teen and not established by others. For some teens, planning the college application process may be self-motivating, but for others, planning a social event may be more important. Start with something fairly simple and achievable, such as getting a driver's license or saving money to buy a computer, before moving on to longer-term goals like buying a car or applying to colleges.

■ Help teens develop plans for steps to reach these goals. They should identify short- and long-term goals and think about what has to be done to achieve them. For example: If teens want their team to win the sports championship, what skills do they need to learn? How might they practice them? Identify some problems that might arise, and encourage the teen to plan ahead for them.



■ Taking on large social issues, such as homelessness, domestic violence, or bullying can be both appealing and overwhelming to teens. *DoSomething.org* and *Volunteer-Match.org* can help identify concrete actions.

■ Remind adolescents to periodically monitor their behavior and consider whether they are doing the things they planned and whether these plans are achieving the goals they identified. "Is this part of the plan? If not, why am I doing it? Has something changed?" Monitoring in this way can identify counter-productive habitual and impulsive actions and maintain focused attention and conscious control.

Tools for self-monitoring

■ Self-talk is a powerful way to bring thoughts and actions into consciousness. Examples include having teenagers talk themselves through the steps of a difficult activity or periodically pausing for a mental play-by-play narrative of what is happening. When occasions

arise that provoke strong negative emotions or feelings of failure, self-talk can help adolescents identify potentially problematic thinking and behavior patterns.

■ Encourage self-talk that focuses on growth. Help teens recognize that an experience—particularly a failure—can offer lessons, and need

continued

not be interpreted as a final judgment on one's abilities. For example, when a sports team loses a game, help a discouraged team member to consider what went wrong and what he or she might do to improve next time—rather than simply deciding the team lacks any skills. The same thinking can be helpful for school assignments. Carol S. Dweck, a professor at Stanford University who researches mindsets, has developed a website with more suggestions.

■ **Help adolescents be mindful of interruptions** (particularly from electronic communication such as email and cell phones). Multitasking may feel good, but there is strong evidence that it saps attention and impedes performance. If two (or more) tasks are competing for attention, discuss ways to prioritize and sequence.

■ **Understanding the motivations of others** can be challenging, particularly when people are driven by different perspectives. Encourage teens to identify their hypotheses about others' motivations and then consider alternatives. "Why do you think she bumped into you? Can you think of another explanation?" Teens who are not used to this kind of thinking may need you to model the process: "Could it be that she didn't see you?"

■ **Writing a personal journal** can foster self-reflection by providing teens a means with which to explore thoughts, feelings, actions, beliefs, and decisions. There are many ways to approach journaling, but all encourage self-awareness, reflection, and planning (see websites at end of this section).

Activities

There are many activities that teens may enjoy that draw on a range of self-regulation skills. The key is a focus on continual improvement and increasing challenge. Some examples follow, below:

■ **Sports** — The focused attention and skill development inherent in competitive sports draw on the ability to monitor one's own and others' actions, make quick decisions, and respond flexibly to play. Ongoing, challenging aerobic activity can also improve executive function.

■ **Yoga and meditation** — Activities that support a state of mindfulness, or a nonjudgmental awareness of moment-to-moment experiences, may help teens develop sustained attention, reduce stress, and promote less reactive, more reflective decision-making and behavior.

■ **Music** — Working memory, selective attention, cognitive flexibility, and inhibition are challenged while developing skills in playing a musical instrument, singing, or dancing—particularly when dealing with complicated pieces that involve multiple parts, sophisticated rhythms, and improvisation.

■ **Theater** — A performance is carefully choreographed and requires all participants, on stage and backstage, to remember their jobs, attend to their timing, and manage their behavior. For actors, learning the lines and actions of a role draw heavily on attention and working memory.

■ **Strategy games and logic puzzles** — Classic games like *chess*, as well as computer-based training programs like *Cogmed* and *Lumosity*, exercise aspects of working memory, planning,



and attention. Mensa, the high IQ society, holds a yearly competition testing new games and has an interesting list of strategy games.

■ **Computer games** can also be valuable, as long as time limits are established and observed. Games that require constant monitoring of the environment and fast reaction times challenge selective attention, monitoring, and inhibition. Moving through complicated imaginary worlds, such as those found in many computer games, also challenges working memory. Common Sense Media, a non-partisan media information source, provides some good reviews of popular games.

Study skills

In school, adolescents are expected to be increasingly independent and organized in their work. These expectations can place a large load on all aspects of executive function. Basic organization skills can be very helpful in this regard. The list below can serve as a guide for teens to use.

- Break a project down into manageable pieces.
- Identify reasonable plans (with timelines) for completing each piece. Be sure that all steps have been explicitly identified and ensure that the completion of each step is recognized and celebrated.
- Self-monitor while working. Set a timer to go off periodically as a reminder to check on whether one is paying attention and understanding. When you don't understand, what might be the problem? Are there words you don't know? Do you know what the directions are? Is there someone you can ask for help? Would looking back at your notes help? If you have stopped paying attention, what distracted you? What might you do to refocus? Identify key

times to self-monitor (e.g., before handing in an assignment, when leaving the house, etc.).

- Be aware of critical times for focused attention. Multitasking impedes learning. Identify ways to reduce distractions (e.g., turn off electronics, find a quiet room).
- Use memory supports for organizing tasks. Mnemonic devices can be powerful tools for remembering information. Developing the habit of writing things down also helps.
- Keep a calendar of project deadlines and steps along the way.
- After completing an assignment, reflect on what did and did not work well. Develop a list of things that have supported focused and sustained attention as well as good organization, memory and project completion. Think about ways to ensure that these supports are in place for other projects.
- Think about what was learned from assignments that were not completed well. Was this due to a lack of information, a need to improve certain skills, bad time management, etc.? What would you do differently next time?

Resources

Journaling with teens – some supports

- extension.missouri.edu/p/GH6150
- www.cedu.niu.edu/~shumow/lit/doc/journal-writing.pdf

Carol S. Dweck's work on mindsets

- mindsetonline.com/changeyourmindset/firststeps/index.html

Common Sense Media

- www.common sensemedia.org
- www.common sensemedia.org/game-reviews

List of winning games from American Mensa's Mind Games competitions

- mindgames.us.mensa.org/about/winning-games/

Other programs

- www.cogmed.com
- www.lumosity.com

Stress management suggestions

- www.mindinthemaking.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/PFL-school-age-stress-management.pdf

2e Fact Sheet

What is 2e/Twice Exceptional?

2e students...

- Have **exceptional talents** but experience **learning disabilities** such as autism spectrum disorder, ADHD, dyslexia, etc.
- **Develop asynchronously** – for example a 4th grader may:
 - Do math at a 7th grade level
 - Write at a 2nd grade level
 - Socialize at a 1st grade level
 - Reason at a 12th grade level
- Have **deep passions and strengths** and shine in those areas, but are sometimes seen as lazy or obstinate outside of their interests.

2e Matters Because...

- Even if they perform at grade level, 2e students are **overtaxed** using their gifts to compensate for their disability, or **underperform** if their disability masks their gifts.
- Developmental asynchrony often results in **anxiety and depression**; students may feel deficient despite having incredible intellectual strengths.
- When combined with sensory overstimulation and impulse control issues, children may experience **behavioral challenges** in the classroom.
- With **proper support**, 2e students can reach their potential, become **shining stars** in their classrooms, and amazing future contributors to society.

2e Internal Experience

Misunderstood
Teased
Different
Undervalued
Lonely
Anxious
Depressed
Not Good Enough
Pressured
Over/Understimulated
Pretending to be "Normal"



What You See

Escaping a task, often by reading
Pacing/fidgeting/doodling
Looking away/distracted/running away
Acting impulsively/acting out
Trying to self regulate
Blurting out answers
Wandering by themselves
Shutting Down

Top Tips For Working With 2e Kids

Let Their Strengths Shine. Ask children and parents to identify strengths and interests, then build on these to unlock their potential.

Be Curious and Empathetic. There is always a logic to frustrating behavior. 2e kids don't intend to give teachers a hard time, rather they are having a hard time.

Adjust Level to Asynchronous Development. Even though 2e children are bright, they cannot master every subject at the same level or pace.

Collaborate with their Team. Ask parents, previous teachers, and their psychologists, behaviorists, etc. to learn what works.

Success Stories



Dan Aykroyd, Award Winning Actor
Autism Spectrum Disorder



Whoopi Goldberg, Academy Award Winning Actor
Dyslexia



Richard Branson, Founder of Virgin Group
ADHD

2e Fact Sheet cont'd

2e Challenges and Solutions

We asked parents of 2e children to brainstorm common challenges their children face and suggested solutions they have found that work to address those challenges. Parents know that a teacher's job is incredibly challenging and that asking an educator to embark on the journey of supporting 2e kids is not a small task - the good news is that these solutions can help ALL kids! And remember - you are not alone! Partner with the parents, special ed team, counselors/psychologists, behaviorists and others to understand behaviors, implement a plan and establish routines.

Challenge	Solution
Student lacks motivation	Relate strengths and interests to the work; differentiate material
Can't sit still	Address underlying reason - anxiety, sensory, helps focus; allow movement breaks or other non-distracting way to address this need
Sensory overload, withdrawal	Offer sensory breaks, headphones for noise cancelling, quiet workspace, take a walk outside, work in resource room
Meltdowns	Pick and choose battles to focus on most needed work; offer sensory breaks, headphones, quiet workspace; contact district behaviorist
Child won't start / takes too long to complete work	Provide accommodations for weakness: keyboarding, dictation, extra time, fewer problems, quiet space, verbal brainstorm with teacher taking notes, joint storytelling, graphic organizers
Fear of failure	Address any perfectionism - 2e kids can be their own harshest critics
Organization / executive function challenges	Designate a place for each item (e.g., binder, folder, with color code), use a calendar, encourage to do lists; strategically pair peers
Lack of understanding / acceptance by peers	Modulate teacher reaction to behavior so it doesn't stand out; connect kids with quirky interests; encourage inclusion to minimize bullying
Bored in a subject / subject too easy	Differentiate - set faster pace, avoid rote repetitive work, require fewer problems, provide puzzles/creative projects/ complex problems
Finishes work early and becomes bored	Designate a book, journal, doodling, or special project
Difficulty with group work	Pair with supportive peers, assign clear roles, create group work skills checklist (e.g. share one idea, listen to one idea)
Social challenges	Create friendship circles, explicit social skills classes and groups
Low self esteem	Celebrate their accomplishments, give them chances to shine and lead in their areas of strength
Traditional assessments don't display child's full capabilities	Allow for a variety of ways to show mastery - written, spoken, video, comic book, etc. as long as they show they are mastering the key points



**SUMMIT
CENTER**

Helping Every Child Reach New Heights

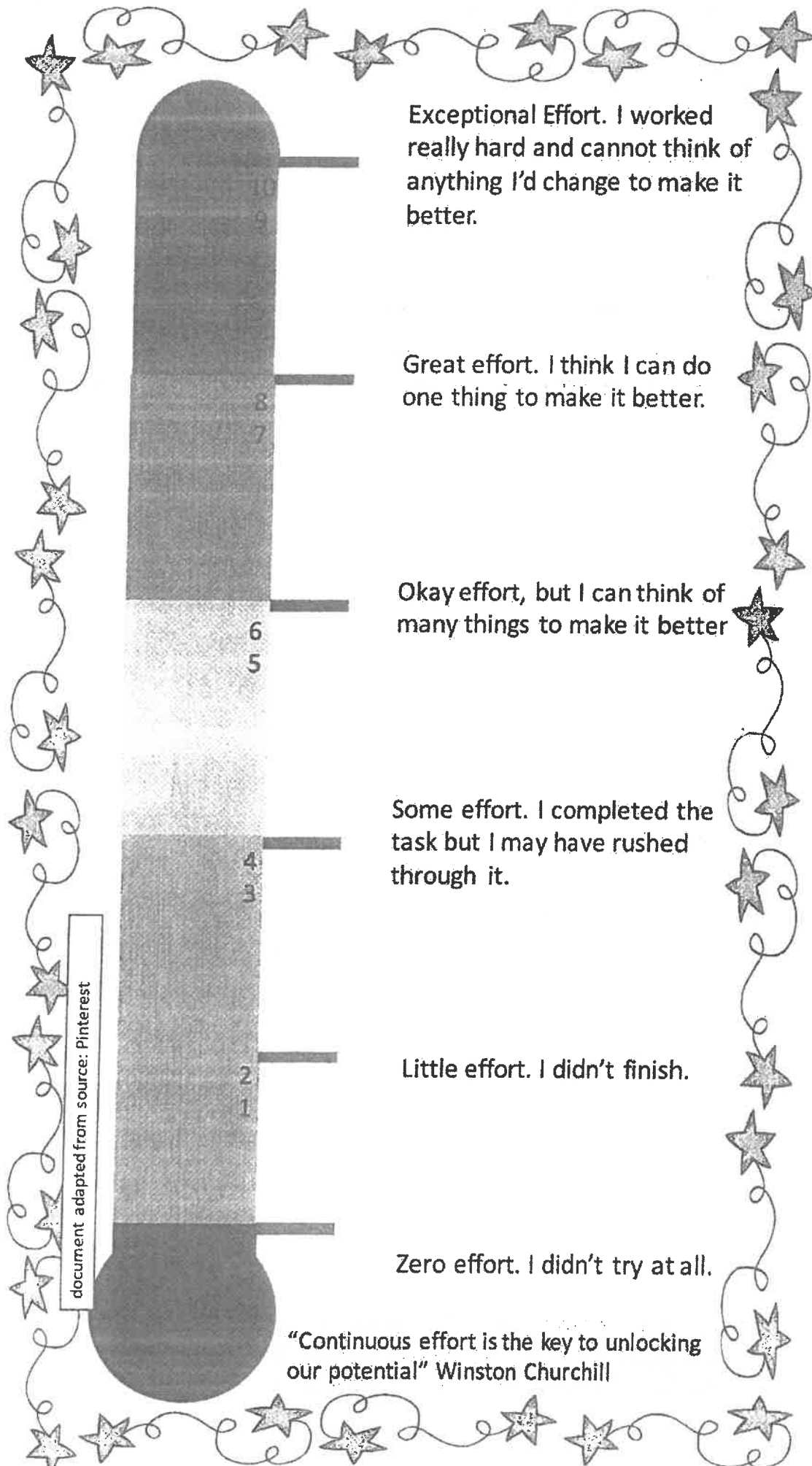
CHARACTERISTICS OF TWICE-EXCEPTIONAL STUDENTS

STRENGTHS	NEEDS
2E students are gifted learners who often display strengths in the following areas:	2E students often display needs in the following areas:
COGNITIVE	
✓ Verbal and/or visual spatial abilities ✓ Problem-solving and reasoning abilities ✓ Background information and vocabulary ✓ Making connections between events, ideas, and situations ✓ Grasping abstract concepts—they are often “whole-to-part” learners who see the big picture ✓ High-level thinking tasks with complexity ✓ Creativity and imagination—they often share interesting or “out-of the box” ideas ✓ Curiosity—they ask a lot of questions, at times challenging information or authority	✓ Memory—particularly rote or short-term memory ✓ Executive functioning—the ability to plan, initiate, organize, execute, and shift one’s own cognitive effort ✓ Processing speed—the ability to take in, process, and apply new information quickly ✓ Working memory—the ability to hold and use information in short term memory. ✓ Language—particularly word-retrieval, and organization of ideas. ✓ Auditory and sequential processing
MATHEMATICS	
✓ Displaying strong grasp of concepts ✓ Thinking logically and symbolically at high levels ✓ Coming up with new or alternative solutions to problems ✓ Relating math concepts to novel situations	✓ Computing ✓ Retaining and recalling math facts ✓ Processing sequentially (following algorithms, showing your work, explaining how you got your answer) ✓ Short quizzes along the way rather than lengthy assessments
READING	
✓ Listening comprehension (deeper meaning, making connections, inferential thinking, insights) ✓ Using high-level vocabulary and sharing vast background knowledge ✓ Applying shared inquiry (high-level discussion and questioning) ✓ Grasping themes and getting the main ideas	✓ Phonemic awareness and decoding (phonics) ✓ Oral reading fluency (pace and smoothness) ✓ Memory, recalling accurate/adequate details
WRITING	
✓ Being creative and showing originality of thought ✓ Coming up with content, ideas, information ✓ Elaborating verbally and providing unlimited description and detail ✓ Incorporating high-level vocabulary	✓ Representing ideas on paper ✓ Applying basic skills (handwriting, capitalization, punctuation and spelling) ✓ Organizing, sequencing, and elaborating on ideas (what is important, what is salient, what is first, what is next, etc.)

10 STRATEGIES FOR GETTING MOTIVATED

FOR STUDENTS

1. **MAKE A COMMITMENT:** Commit yourself by making a plan, writing it on the calendar and sharing your plan with another person.
2. **CALENDAR OR DAY BOOK:** Write tasks and activities down on a wall calendar or small day book. Carry your day book with you, and look at it frequently. Check things off when completed.
3. **THINK OF ALL THE RESOURCES AVAILABLE TO YOU:** Who and what might be able to help you to follow through with your plan or commitment? What creative ideas can you think of to get around obstacles? Ask for help if you need it.
4. **BE OPEN MINDED TO NEW IDEAS:** Recognize that trying to do things the same old way may not be working for you. Listen to how others are getting things done. Try the suggestions of others.
5. **VISUALIZE THE POSITIVE BENEFITS:** Think about all the positives you will get from following through with the task or activity. Imagine the sense of accomplishment you will feel later.
6. **ONE STEP AT A TIME:** Break activities down into manageable steps, to avoid feeling overwhelmed. It is easier to get started if you remind yourself it is okay to just do the first step.
7. **ACTION BEFORE INTEREST:** Remember that the feeling of being interested in an activity often sets in after starting the activity, not before. Get started on something no matter how you feel, and the interest will come. Try activities even if you initially feel tired, bored, nervous or uninterested.
8. **THE BUDDY SYSTEM:** It is often easier to get moving when you have the support of a friend with whom to face a challenge. Go to a new activity with a friend or supportive family member.
9. **KEEP YOUR EXPECTATIONS REALISTIC:** What are your expectations for yourself when trying something new? Keep them realistic. Do not aim for perfection. Expect to feel nervous. Expect to make mistakes. Expect it to feel difficult.
10. **DO THE FIVE TIMES TEST:** When joining a new activity, club or class do not make a decision about quitting until you have attended at least five times. It is not fair to judge the merits of something until you have given it a fair chance. That's five times!



Exceptional Effort. I worked really hard and cannot think of anything I'd change to make it better.

Great effort. I think I can do one thing to make it better.

Okay effort, but I can think of many things to make it better

Some effort. I completed the task but I may have rushed through it.

Little effort. I didn't finish.

Zero effort. I didn't try at all.

"Continuous effort is the key to unlocking our potential" Winston Churchill

Helpful Websites and Links

- National Association for Gifted Children is a great website for overall information, helpful tips, online programs or resources and much more.
 - <https://nagc.org/>
- Summit Center is another online tool kit for all users.
 - <https://summitcenter.us/resources/links/>
- The following two websites are articles to help support executive functions skills.
 - <https://childmind.org/topics/executive-functions/>
 - <https://www.understood.org/en/search-results?query=executive+functions>
- Davidson Institute's website is user friendly and easy to navigate. The resources are for students, family members and educators.
 - <https://www.davidsongifted.org/resource-library/gifted-resources-guides/>

Other helpful links:

- <https://summitcenter.us/resources/links/>
- <https://childmind.org/topics/executive-functions/>
- <https://www.understood.org/en/search-results?query=executive+functions>
- <https://www.davidsongifted.org/resource-library/gifted-resources-guides/>
- <https://www.coloradogifted.org/resources/helpful-links/>

Workbook at home:

- The Executive Functioning Workbook for Teens: Help for Unprepared, Late, and Scattered Teens by Sharon A. Hansen
 - https://www.amazon.com/Executive-Functioning-Workbook-Teens-Unprepared/dp/1608826562/ref=asc_df_1608826562/?tag=hvprod-20&linkCode=df0&hvadid=693271435353&hvpos=&hvnetw=g&hvrnd=4735958172234742415&hvpone=&hvptwo=&hvqmt=&hvdev=c&hvdvcmdl=&hvlocint=&hvlocphy=9030895&hvtargid=pla-426296038750&psc=1&mcid=ab9bacba6eb130c984a3a46e2aeb2d41&qad_source=1

Period

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with a black border. The paper is divided into four equal rectangular sections by a vertical line down the center and a horizontal line across the middle. Each section contains ten horizontal ruling lines, spaced evenly apart. There are no margins or additional markings on the page.

Period

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