

Characteristics of 2e Children©
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As with any comprehensive list of characteristics, these characteristics are not shared by all 2e children. It is difficult to place characteristics in “ability” and “dis/ability” or “strengths” and “weaknesses” categories, because oftentimes, what could be considered a weakness in one setting, might be considered a strength in another. For example, debating with an adult about the morality of personal choices could be admired in a social setting and punished in a school setting. Or the ability to hyper focus on intellectual pursuits could be a strength at school, but a weakness at home when parents need chores done. While it is difficult to codify individual characteristics, this list could be useful in providing a framework for identifying 2e individuals.

Intellectual.

- highly curious, divergent thinker
- intellectually advanced
- creative problem solvers
- insatiable need for information/learning
- learns “systems” to a high degree of competency
- can see obscure connections not easily seen by others
- advanced creativity
- strong metacognitive (thinking about their thinking) skills
- unique insight into complex issues
- has different, often unusual perspectives
- likes to explore wide ranging, often esoteric, subjects
- can rapidly accelerate learning to high levels of expertise
- advanced, wicked, often bizarre sense of humor
- extraordinary perceptions and/or abilities in one or more areas
- autodidactic (ability to successfully teach one’s self)
- responds well to academic flexibility and self-directed learning
- may seem introverted, spends a lot of time daydreaming/thinking
- long attention span when working in areas of high interest
- passionate about areas of interest, fully focused and invested
- persistent
- demonstrated superior spatial skills
- enjoys codes, puzzles, games of strategy
- good at developing compensatory strategies
- may have difficulty with auditory instructions/learning
- advanced reader, can read and understand highly complex material
- superior vocabulary
- unusual imagination
- very motivated to achieve mastery, may abandon subject due to perfectionism/unrealistic expectations

- hyper-focus, often to the exclusion of all else
- likes to see big picture first and then fill in details, dismissive of details in quest for big picture
- asynchronous intellectual development
- often have learning dis/abilities
- dislikes linear learning or rote practice
- overreaction to timed tests
- slower processing speed than displayed by typical children
- tendency to over think questions; may take a long time to answer a question

Physical.

- issues with food, multiple food aversions, need for eating rituals
- problems with digestion, gut health, food allergies
- sensory processing issues
- likes to handle items, may have oral fixation
- can be hypersensitive to touch, often do not like to be touched; conversely, they may be hyposensitive to touch, and seek rough physical interaction
- extremely sensitive to stimuli
- unusual sleep cycles, difficulty sleeping, less need for sleep
- trouble controlling body movements, awkward, clumsy
- poor fine motor skills
- trouble with modulating voice levels
- difficulty sitting still, standing in line, walking with group
- difficulty with personal hygiene and managing personal care
- may not be aware of physical sensations or needs (forget to eat, drink, sleep, go to bathroom)
- even if appearing chaotic or messy, needs underlying system of order and routine
- may have weak muscle tone, poor gross motor skills, or asynchronous physical development

Emotional.

- empathetic
- deeply connect to those they love
- often mature beyond their years
- intense feelings, may be confused by their emotions
- asynchronous emotional development
- overwhelmed by other's emotions and emotional intensity
- very sensitive, easily wounded emotionally
- may have existential sorrow/depression
- perfectionist
- compulsive, obsessive
- impulsive

- have issues with anxiety, phobias
- unrealistic expectations of themselves
- low self-esteem, feel like an imposter
- emotional response out of sync with what is typical
- rigid about rules and fairness, struggle with gray areas, inflexibility
- may need time to prepare for changes to routine, surprises may be difficult for them to manage
- arrogant, or may appear arrogant
- bored, frustrated, feel held back by traditional pacing and learning practices
- less interested in typical external motivators and reward systems
- falls apart under pressure
- has trouble understanding facial expressions and body language

Social.

- often feel lonely, out of sync with others
- asynchronous social development
- concern for social justice
- has a mature understanding of world problems and social injustice
- cares deeply about the future of the world
- questions status quo, comes up with creative alternatives
- often outwits adults
- sensitive to patronizing or hypocritical behavior, may confront adults in authority on their own behavior
- may not follow rules for rules sake; may challenge underlying logic/illogic of rules, even if punished for doing so
- may have trouble with authority; can be oppositional and argumentative
- may want to be the center of attention in some instances; conversely, may have high social anxiety in other instances
- comments and actions are out of sync with what others are doing
- may have extremes with imaginative play: difficulty understanding imaginative play, or obsessively engage in imaginative play throughout childhood
- may struggle to express themselves verbally
- gullible, socially awkward, often bullied
- gets along with adults, as well as with much younger/much older children
- behavioral issues often resolve when intellectually or creatively satisfied
- love to challenge themselves and/or others
- often misunderstood, ostracized
- confused by social protocol