

Summary

This advice sheet is aimed at those who are new to Potential Plus UK and/or the topic of high learning potential who would like to start to know more about how to understand and support children and young people who show abilities ahead of the expectations for their developmental age in one or more areas.

Who is Potential Plus UK?

Potential Plus UK is a leading charity dedicated to supporting and advocating for the needs of high learning potential (HLP) and dual or multiple exceptional (DME) children and young people. Founded in 1967, Potential Plus UK is the operating name of National Association for Gifted Children and for over 50 years has provided a wide range of resources, guidance, and services to help meet the needs of HLP and DME children, young people and their families.

Potential Plus UK strives towards raising awareness and understanding of the complex personalities and needs HLP and DME children, enabling parents/carers and educators to provide effective support and understanding, as well as offering challenging and enriching experiences which support the child's overall development and ultimately empower HLP and DME children and young people.

What is High Learning Potential?

Potential Plus UK uses the term High Learning Potential to describe the children and young people we support, although this is in addition to other terms such as 'gifted', 'gifted and talented', 'more able' or 'most able'; as an organisation we believe that high learning potential more accurately represents those who we support and moves away from the historical associations linking giftedness solely to high IQ or academic achievements. We also believe that using HLP to describe the children and young people we support, enables our families to recognise that identification is the start of the journey. At both school and in the home, a HLP child needs personalised, distinct and proactive support to fully develop their abilities and reach their potential whilst also understanding their unique social and emotional needs.

What does Dual or Multiple Exceptional mean?

The term 'dual or multiple exceptional' refers to children and young people who have high learning potential and also have a learning difference, disability or mental health condition. Dual or multiple exceptional is the term used to describe this group of children in the UK. Twice Exceptional (2E) is commonly used in the USA and in some other countries.

Characteristics associated with High Learning Potential

All children are different, but it has been shown that many high learning potential children share common characteristics due to their advanced abilities. Below is a list of the most common characteristics of HLP children, based on research by Dr Linda Silverman who defines giftedness as showing signs of advanced development in one or more areas rather solely than achieving

highly in academic areas. HLP children will present with different combination of these, but it would be expected that they display many of these characteristics.

High Learning Potential Children:

- are able to learn quickly
- have a rich vocabulary
- have excellent memory skills
- have a long attention span
- are early or avid readers
- have a fascination with books before they can read
- show strong artistic, mechanical, spatial or athletic abilities
- show good problem-solving skills
- show ability with numbers
- show compassion
- are perfectionists
- are intense
- have advanced motor skill development
- may be very alert as infants
- may pull things apart to find out how they work
- may ask lots of questions
- have strong curiosity
- may be emotionally sensitive
- may have a high level of energy
- prefer interacting with older children or/ adults
- have an excellent sense of humour
- may seem to require less sleep or take longer to fall asleep than other children their age
- have a heightened awareness of justice and morality
- may develop food allergies
- seem to have judgement mature for age at times
- are highly creative
- are keen observers
- have a vivid imagination
- show early abstract thinking skills

Potential Plus UK understands that it can feel overwhelming to decide how best to educate, support, and care for high learning potential children. By learning more about the common characteristics of HLP and/or dual or multiple exceptional children, parents can feel more confident in helping their children thrive. If your child's traits are especially intense or affect their development, daily life, wellbeing, or mental health, they may be DME and could benefit from further understanding and support. We include references to DME to ensure children get the understanding and help they need as unique individuals.

How can Potential Plus UK support your family?

Potential Plus UK believe:

- A high learning potential child will show one or more areas of advanced development, and it is our role to support parents to understand and nurture these strengths.
- High learning potential children need personalised opportunities, challenge, resources and encouragement to fulfil their unique potential.
- High learning potential and dual or multiple exceptional children thrive on engaging learning which meets their individual needs.
- Identification of high learning potential is the beginning and not the end goal. Success, achievement and wellbeing are not determined by high learning potential alone.
- High learning potential children and young people require consistent and collaborative support to fully develop and thrive.
- Understanding and nurturing high learning potential children enables them to flourish in their chosen field; overlooking their potential can lead to them withdrawing, underachieving academically and ultimately losing their 'spark'.
- High learning potential and DME children have distinct social and emotional needs which must be recognised and supported alongside providing the right challenge for their intellectual abilities and potential.
- Supporting both the strengths and needs of DME children simultaneously is essential to their mental health, wellbeing and academic achievement.

Potential Plus UK strives towards raising awareness and understanding of the complex personalities and needs of HLP children and young people, enabling parents/carers and educators to provide effective support and understanding, as well as offering challenging and enriching experiences which support the child's overall development and ultimately empower HLP and DME children and young people.

Many of the staff and trustees at Potential Plus UK have lived experience of high learning potential and dual or multiple exceptionality. Their passion, knowledge and understanding ensures the development of highly effective support and enrichment programmes for our members. Through professional assessments, comprehensive reports, advice and consultation, and specialised resources Potential Plus UK empower parents to advocate for their child's social, emotional and learning needs.

Further Information

Potential Plus UK https://potentialplusuk.org/	Potential Plus UK is an independent membership charity established in 1967 who support HLP and DME children and young people and their families.
<i>A Parent's Guide to Gifted Children</i> edited by James T. Webb	Written by four authors with decades of experience with HLP children and their families, this book covers issues such as peer relations, sibling issues, motivation and underachievement and discipline issues.

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Potential Plus UK (operating name of National Association for Gifted Children)
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INTRODUCTION TO HIGH LEARNING POTENTIAL

ADVICE SHEET

<i>Understanding Your Gifted Child From the Inside Out</i> by James Delisle	This book looks at the social and emotional aspects of giftedness, including perfectionism, self-advocacy, underachievement, mindfulness, discusses the impact of technology on gifted kids' relationships and includes real-life accounts.
<i>Gifted Children</i> by Kate Distin	The authors give an insight into what is 'normal' for children with high learning potential, acknowledge the difficulties they experience, and offer pointers for parents on how to support them at home, in the interaction with siblings and other family members, and at school.
<i>Parenting Gifted Children: Advocacy for Excellence</i> by Bruce D. Wright and Elaine Wright	This book focuses on how parents can effectively advocate for their child's needs whilst also exploring the social and emotional aspects of raising a gifted child.
<i>Parenting Dual Exceptional Children: Supporting a Child who Has High Learning Potential and Special Educational Needs and Disabilities</i> by Denise Yates	A book looking at a strengths-based approach towards helping parents recognise and focus on their child's areas of potential and support them towards better attainment and self-esteem, whilst addressing areas of difficulty.
<i>Raising Twice Exceptional Children: A Handbook for Parents of Neurodivergent Gifted Kids</i> by Emily Kircher-Morris	A book helping parents to understand their child's profile, social-emotional needs and build self-regulation skills, goal setting and self-advocacy.