



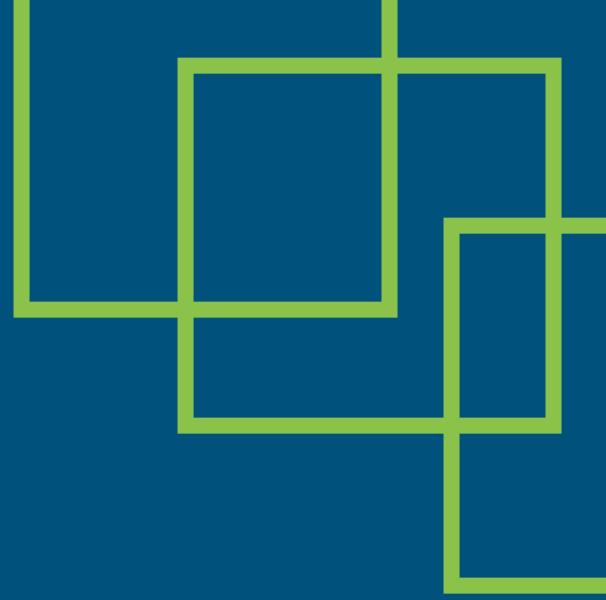
Can My GT Child Have Dyslexia Too?

Wendy Pennings



The Big Picture

- Hear the story of our journey
- Summarize what GT and Dyslexia independently are
- Discover what it looks like when both are present
 - Introduction to the terms “Twice Exceptional” and “Stealth Dyslexia”
- Consider how to advocate for your child
- Time for discussion and Q&A



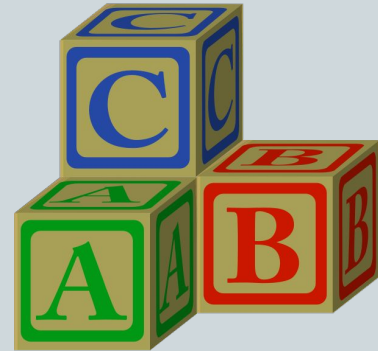
A little about me...



Wendy Pennings

Mom of 4 GT identified kids
President of the GT PAC
Identified as "Learning Disabled"

...and a little
about our story.

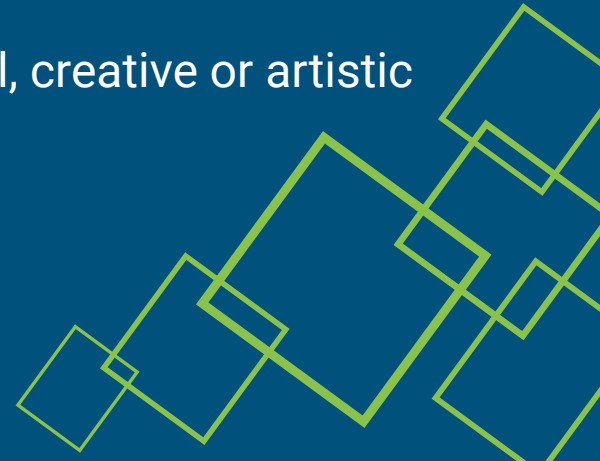


What does it mean to be Gifted/Talented?

The Texas Education Association (TEA) defines it like this:

A gifted/talented student is a child or youth who **performs at or shows the potential for performing at a remarkably high level of accomplishment** when compared to others of the same age, experience or environment and who

- Exhibits high-performance capability in an intellectual, creative or artistic area;
- Possesses an unusual capacity for leadership; or
- Excels in a specific academic field.



What is Dyslexia?

From Understood.org

[https://www.understood.org/
articles/en/what-is-dyslexia](https://www.understood.org/articles/en/what-is-dyslexia)

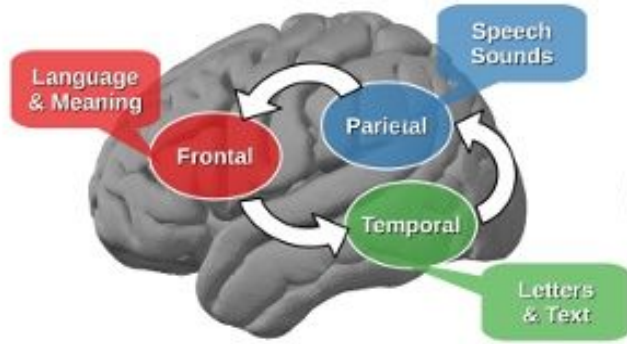
What is dyslexia?



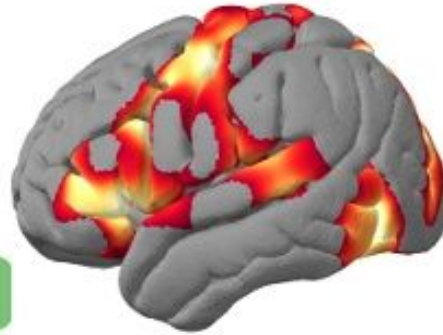
Can a GT student have dyslexia too?

Absolutely YES!

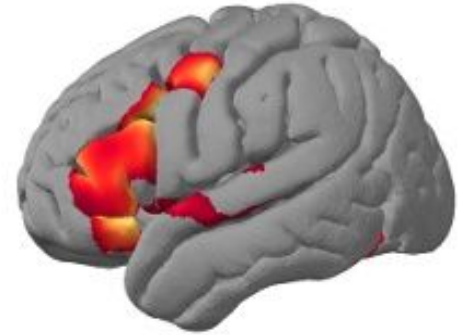
Brain activation when reading shown in fMRI images



**The Reading
Brain**



**Typical
Readers**

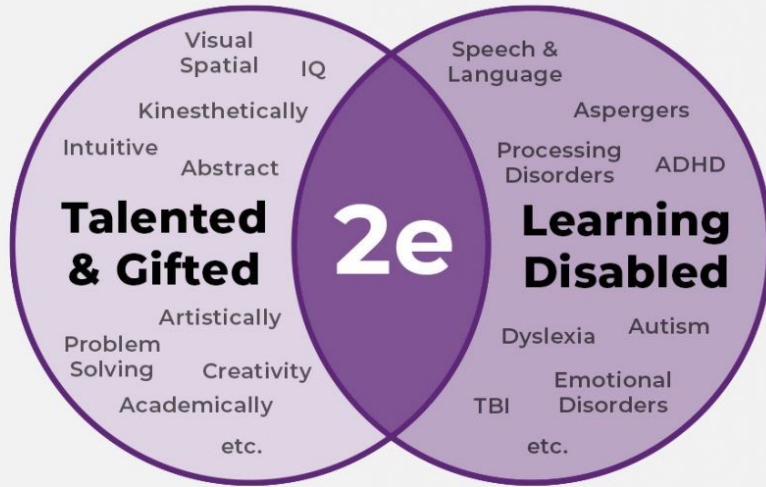


**Readers with
Dyslexia**

Research has shown this same pattern in people with dyslexia regardless of their IQ

A child with both
GT strengths
and
Dyslexia challenges
is an example of a
“Twice Exceptional”
(or 2e) student.

What is a 2e / Twice-Exceptional Student?



Seth's Definition: 2e or Twice Exceptional refers to a neurodiverse learner who has two or more "exceptionalities" that must be properly addressed in order to meet their atypical needs. Usually a gifted person with learning challenges.

Chart from
<https://sethperler.com/child-2e-twice-exceptional-ultimate-guide/>

This website is a great resource to learn more about 2e, including a helpful 15 minute video.

I recommend Kristin Kassaw's video from 2021 GT Parent Symposium "Parenting a Twice-Exceptional Learner"

<https://www.fortbendisid.com/Page/133019>

Drs. Brock and Fernet Eide are leading experts in the fields of dyslexia and brain-based learning.

“... reading difficulties are just one of the many neurologically-based manifestations of dyslexia. In fact, in our practice we often see children who are struggling academically due to difficulties that are clearly dyslexia-related, yet who show age-appropriate – and in many cases even superior – reading skills. Because of their apparently strong reading skills, most of these children have never been identified as dyslexic, or given the help they needed to overcome their academic difficulties.

This problem is especially common, we have found, among intellectually gifted children. The reason is that these children are able to use strong higher-order language skills to compensate for the low-level deficits in auditory and visual processing that cause the reading problems in dyslexia. As a result, they are able to read with relatively good comprehension. In fact, this situation is so common in our clinic that we have given it its own name: stealth dyslexia.”

Quote from <https://www.davidsongifted.org/gifted-blog/stealth-dyslexia/>

Stealth Dyslexic

“Stealth dyslexia” is a relatively recent term that describes students with above average reading abilities or gifted reading abilities who use coping strategies to hide their dyslexia. Since intellectually gifted kids are better able to mask their dyslexia by over compensating for their difficulties, they usually go undiagnosed.

Quoted from <https://www.qlmentoring.com/are-you-a-stealth-dyslexic>

Funika Hoeff is a psychiatrist and brain scientist at the University of California San Francisco and one of the world's top dyslexia researchers.

Hoeff not only found that a “Stealth Dyslexic’s” brain follows the same patterns as a typical dyslexic in fMRI images, but that there **was heightened activity in parts of the brain that help with executive function and problem solving, which helps them to overcompensate.**



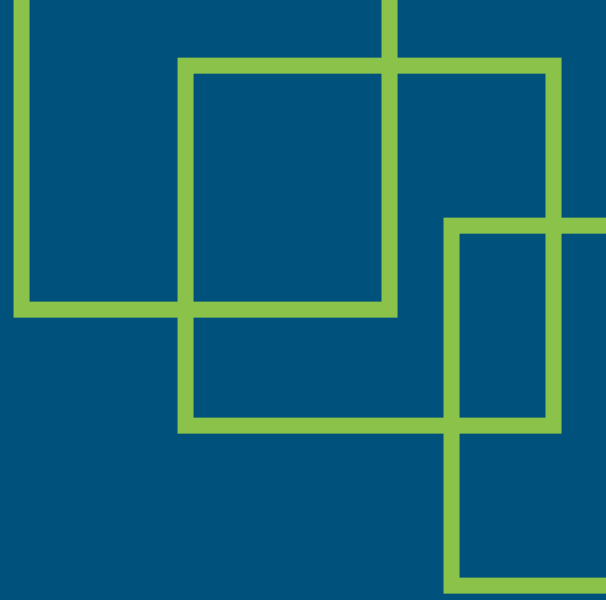
Common Characteristics for Stealth Dyslexics

- High verbal abilities and average academic performance
- Are a mystery because they are bright and are not performing to their perceived potential
- Poor handwriting (for example, randomly mix upper case and lower case letters when writing words)
- Poor spelling (for example, the student gets most of the spellings correct on the weekly spelling test they study carefully for, but forgets most words by Monday because of deficits in spelling words from memory)

Quoted from <https://www.qlmentoring.com/are-you-a-stealth-dyslexic>

Challenging skills for a Stealth Dyslexic

- Reading new (and especially long) words
- Reading out loud
- Silent reading speed and accuracy
- Spelling
- Writing (both mechanics and the speed and quantity of output)




Examples of Challenging Tasks

- Reading short passages (where they can't use context to guess the words they can't sound out—for example, questions and answers on multiple choice tests, or story problems in math)
- Reading passages on an unfamiliar topic (where they can't use their background knowledge to guess the words they can't sound out)
- Reading passages that contain many unfamiliar words or new terms (especially in the natural or social sciences, or subjects dealing with foreign cultures or languages)

Examples of Challenging Tasks

- Keeping up with lengthy reading or writing assignments
- Persistent difficulties with reading word-for-word, resulting in subtle word substitutions or skipping of words. For example, when reading out loud I tend to paraphrase rather than read word-for-word
- An enormous gap between oral expression and written expression. Students with stealth dyslexia tend to be very eloquent yet their written work does not reflect this eloquence
- Spelling errors in their written work that are far out of character when compared with the student' general language, working memory or attention skills

What clues I detected in my son...

- He looked at words as a whole instead of sounding them out.
 - He would pick words that fit in context that were incorrect. Ex- roof for floor
 - He was more successful when he had more context, whether from a familiar topic or from pictures.
 - On DRA tests, his “reading speed” was inconsistent of his other scores... even at the “intervention” level
 - There was a big gap between his verbal storytelling and his written, with syntax and word choice.
 - He really struggled with spelling.
 - There were reversals in his writing. Ex. “nito” for into and “eh” for he
 - He would skip words in the text, especially small words
- 

“For many students with stealth dyslexia, academic difficulties at school only become apparent when the workload becomes very heavy or complex and it is no longer possible to keep up just by increasing their effort. Often this may not be until high school or even university.”

Quoted from <https://www.qlmentoring.com/are-you-a-stealth-dyslexic>

We must advocate for our child.



I believe that **all students** have the right to not only *survive* in school, but **to thrive**.

For a GT student with dyslexia, ***thriving means*** removing as many barriers that prevents them from reaching full potential.



The conclusion

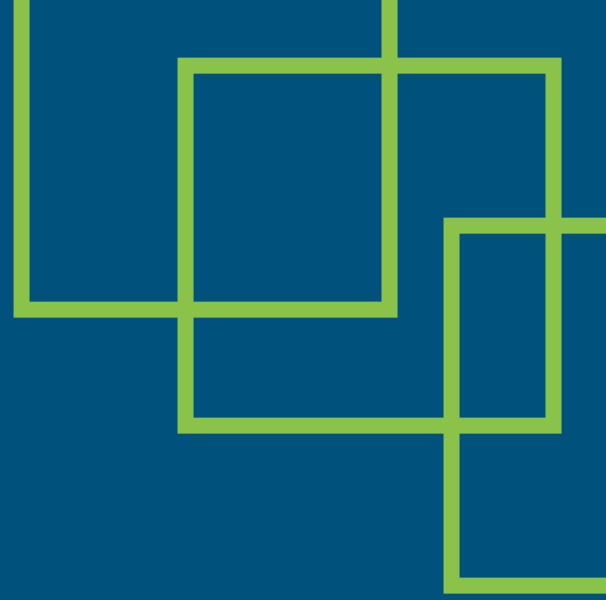
to our story



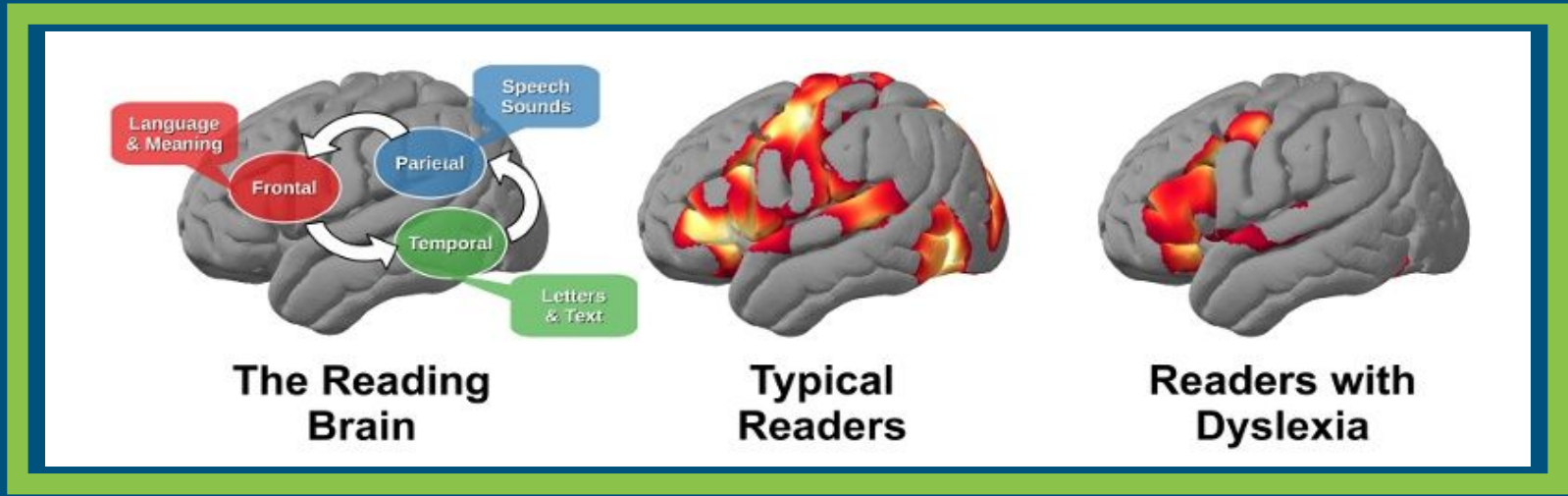
Advocating for your child

- Research for yourself
- Educate others
- Seek testing

- Feel free to contact me : wenpen76@gmail.com
- Check out <https://neurolearning.com/>



Dyslexia can be viewed as a superpower!





Discussion

and Q&A

