

I am making this submission in order to raise awareness of the needs of gifted and twice-exceptional students. I work in private practice with such children and am an invited academic researcher in this area. The lack of teacher training, including in undergraduate and postgraduate programs, provided to educators given these children make up 10% of the student population is deeply troubling. The academic, and often social and emotional needs, of these students is different to that of their chronological peers. Underestimating and/or not training teachers to meet these needs results in many myths about how to provide for them and the level of differentiation that is required in the classroom. My private practice continually sees young people who have been damaged by educators who have a lack of knowledge in this area and, through no fault of their own, hold incorrect assumptions about the required educational accommodations to ensure student well-being. These concerns are not only academic in nature but also relate to social and emotional factors. The consequences of such a lack of awareness can result in anxiety, depression, school refusal, dropping out of school completely, self-harm and suicidal ideation. This is particularly the case if the child is gifted but has a learning difficulty, including a neurodevelopmental disorder. This is such an area of concern that my books have been closed for almost a year due to the demand for services. I am also the co-founder of an NFP that provides teacher training and advocates for these students at a systemic level. While I hate the term 'gifted', these kids are often some of the most at risk students in our schools, especially if they are from low SES backgrounds.

Thank you,