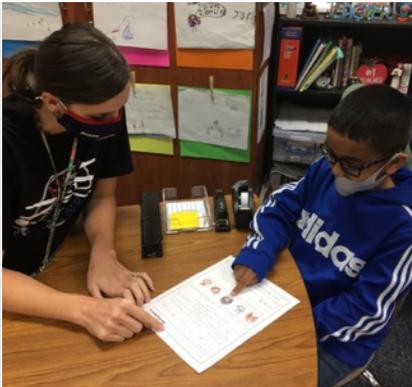


# PRAEDITUS

*Latin praeditus adj. 1 cl. meaning gifted*

A publication of Allen ISD Gifted and Talented Services



## Advocating for Yourself

According to the National Association for Gifted Children, “gifted learners who speak up for themselves are more apt to find opportunities and challenges to best fit their needs. While all people may benefit by self-advocating, it’s especially important for gifted learners whose needs go beyond the regular classroom.”

You can begin teaching your child how to advocate for themselves in both academic and social settings:

- Don't solve every problem that arises for your child.
- Help your child identify what's worth fighting for and how to do it.
- Teach that advocating is about knowing what you want, determining if your request is reasonable, planning a way to ask for what you need, and using evidence to support your request.
- Practice role-playing situations.
- Empower your child to approach adults directly to present their ideas or solutions.

Self advocacy is a skill that is useful throughout life... start early.

## Developing Critical Thinking for Future Success

In today’s educational system we try to teach “future-ready” skills or prepare students “for jobs that don’t exist yet.” One of the best ways to achieve these goals is to teach children to become critical thinkers.

When students think critically they effectively identify, analyze, and evaluate information or situations. In this process, they discover and present convincing reasons in support of their answers or thinking.

Many people believe that critical thinking is a natural phenomenon; however, much of our thinking, left to itself, is biased, distorted, partial, uninformed or even prejudiced. No one intentionally adds these undesirable elements to their thinking process but it just happens. Think about yourself for a minute... do you ever have irrational or undisciplined thoughts? Of course! Everyone is subject to episodes of undisciplined or irrational thought. For this reason, the development of critical thinking skills is a life-long endeavor.

Critical thinking must be systematically developed. Here are a few tips for working with your child that help build this skill.

- Ask probing, open ended questions
- Encourage creativity
- Help children make connections
- Use analogies
- Allow reflection time
- Use real-life problems
- Allow for thinking practice



The benefits of growing a critical thinker are tremendous. Critical thinkers:

- raise vital questions and problems, formulating them clearly and precisely;
- gather and assess information, using abstract ideas to interpret it effectively and to reach well-reasoned conclusions and solutions,
- think open-mindedly recognizing and assessing their assumptions, implications, and consequences; and
- communicate effectively with others in figuring out solutions to complex problems.

Make it a goal to improve both your own critical thinking skills and those of your child. It’s a worthwhile endeavor.

## Twice-Exceptional Students

Students who are gifted may also have a special need or disability— just as students with disabilities may also be gifted. Many people are not aware of this fact.

The term “twice-exceptional,” also referred to as “2e,” is used to describe gifted children who, in addition to having the traits of giftedness meet one of the federal or state eligibility criteria for having a disability. Some common examples of these disabilities include speech and language disorders, emotional/behavioral disorders, physical disabilities, autism spectrum, ADHD, or specific learning disabilities.

Because these children are gifted, there are two likely scenarios. First, the child’s disability is not identified until middle school or later, because the student may be able to mask or hide their learning deficits by using their talents to compensate. On the other hand, the disability may mask the child’s giftedness and the child never receives gifted services and the accompanying intellectual challenges that the child needs.

Twice-exceptional children are often highly creative, verbal, imaginative, curious, with strong problem-solving ability, and a wide range of interests or a single, all-consuming expertise.

At school, they often have difficulties because organization, participation, and long-term planning play a role in school success and these are not their strengths. Unidentified, this can result in inconsistent academic performance, frustration, difficulties with written expression, and labels such as lazy, unmotivated, and underachiever.

What should you do if you suspect your child is twice-exceptional? First, speak with your child’s teacher. If your child is already identified as gifted, there are options for testing to see if your child has an academic need for additional special services. Next, learn all you can about twice-exceptional children. Finally, be prepared to advocate for your 2e child. Lots of people misunderstand these children and this can lead to frustration, as well as emotional and behavioral issues. Your gifted teacher is available to help.



## New AIM Progress Report Coming Soon

In Allen ISD, gifted and talented students participating in AIM services receive a progress report at the end of the fall semester (2nd nine weeks) and spring semester (4th nine weeks) each school year. AIM students are evaluated on age-appropriate skills and challenging tasks that are being continually practiced and developed in the AIM classroom each week. Teachers strive to help students use personal gifts to foster critical thinking and problem solving skills, nurture creativity, develop strong work habits, collaborate and cooperate with peers, build confidence in leading/teaching others, and respectfully participate in class and group discussions.

After considering feedback from parents and teachers, as well as examining progress reports from other districts, we have revamped our district AIM progress reports. The new rubric format with five key categories will focus on creative thinking, problem solving skills, being a self-directed producer, collaboration skills, and self-discipline.

You will also notice a section on this new assessment focusing on a student goal, which will be chosen by each gifted learner. Students will monitor their progress toward this self-created goal throughout the semester and will evaluate themselves at the end of the school year. This individual goal will be set sometime before the end of the first semester, so parents will only see the reflection of this goal on the 4th nine weeks report card in May. In the coming years, it is our intention to set goals at the beginning of the school year, so student progress for the entire year is evident.

We are hoping this new version of assessment will be easy to understand and determine how your child is progressing in AIM services.

Students and parents are encouraged to view this document as an opportunity to track progress and development of gifted potential, success, and advancement over time.

**We'd love to hear from you! Share your challenges, questions, and success stories at [Praeditus Feedback](#)**