

A strength-based approach for students with disabilities served under IDEA and Section 504, and a complement to each student's IEP or 504 plan, not a replacement. Grounded in decades of Schoolwide Enrichment Model research at the University of Connecticut. Powered by Renzulli Learning.

Strengths First, Alongside the Supports Already in Place

Special education rightly focuses on meeting a student's needs, and an IEP or 504 plan is built to do exactly that. But a plan focused only on what a student cannot yet do can miss what they can do. A strength-based approach begins with the student's strengths, interests, and talents. A student with dyslexia may be a gifted storyteller; a student with ADHD, an inventive problem-solver. When a school develops those strengths, engagement rises, and with it the momentum that makes the harder work possible. Renzulli Learning adds that layer while the IEP or 504 supports continue to address the student's needs.

Identify Strengths, Develop Talent, Support Needs

Step	What Happens
See the strength	The Renzulli Profiler surfaces interests, learning styles, and expression styles in 20+ languages, revealing talents a deficit evaluation misses.
Engage through interest	40,000+ curated enrichment activities connect students to what they love, so learning starts from strength, not remediation.
Develop talent	Project-Based Learning and the Enrichment Triad move students to Type III creative work, where students with disabilities often excel.
Build needed skills	Strengths become the vehicle for academic skills, self-regulation, and executive function, the areas an IEP often targets, now built through what engages the student.
Document the whole student	The Total Talent Portfolio records strengths, growth, and best work, a strengths-based picture that complements the goals and data in the IEP.

A Complement to the IEP, Not a Replacement

We are direct about the platform's role, because families and educators deserve clarity:

Question	Answer
What it is	A strength-based enrichment and talent development platform that engages students with disabilities through their interests, develops their talents, and documents growth, alongside their existing supports.
What it is not	Not a special education intervention, a therapy, or a substitute for the individualized services, accommodations, and supports in a student's IEP or 504 plan.
How they work together	The IEP or 504 plan addresses the student's needs. Renzulli Learning adds the strength-based engagement and talent development that a deficit-focused plan does not.

One Approach, Across Disability Categories

Category	How the Approach Applies
Specific Learning Disabilities	Dyslexia, dysgraphia, or dyscalculia often coexist with strong reasoning, creativity, or verbal ability; the platform surfaces and channels those strengths.
Autism Spectrum Disorder	Deep, focused interests become the entry point to engagement and learning.
ADHD	Interest is the most powerful lever for attention; matching learning to genuine interests, with choice, turns engagement into a strength.
Speech, Language & Other Needs	Expression-style options let students show what they know in the way that fits them; the Profiler works in 20+ languages.

The Research Behind the Approach

Reis, Eckert, Gubbins et al. (2005), *The Schoolwide Enrichment Model Reading Study*, University of Connecticut: a cluster-randomized study that included a school with a large group of students with special needs found significant gains in reading comprehension, fluency, and attitude. Reis, Schader, Milne & Stephens (2003), *Music & Minds*, Exceptional Children: a talent development approach with young adults with Williams syndrome. Baum, Renzulli & Hebert (1995): interest-based creative productivity reversed underachievement. Reis & Peters (2021): four-decade SEM synthesis documenting effective use with learning-disabled and diverse populations. See renzullilearning.com/en/research.

Note: the strongest direct evidence is the SEM-R study, which included a school with many special-needs students. Renzulli Learning complements a student's IEP or 504 plan; the level of support is determined by each student's individual profile and services.

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