



Collaborating with parents and caregivers



Effective communication and collaboration between home and school can play an important role in the academic, behavioural, emotional, and social development of children. Parents and caregivers can provide valuable knowledge and experience that enables teaching and support staff to best support children in their ongoing learning. This information sheet can be used to help educators work with parents and caregivers to identify a child's needs and engage meaningfully with parents and caregivers.

Below are some examples of common strengths and challenges that parents and caregivers may have observed. It may be helpful to review the list to determine if any of the strengths and challenges apply. Please note, these are just examples and each child might display some, all, or none of the below characteristics.

Strengths

Friendly, affectionate, and loyal

Great at storytelling, very engaging in conversation

Musical, enjoys playing instruments, singing or dancing

Excels at sports and other athletic activities

Good with animals and younger children

Artistic

Generous, compassion, and kind

Hard working, determined, and persistent

Optimistic and motivated

Challenges

Needs to be retaught the same thing multiple times, has remembered or done something many times but forgets on another given day (e.g., remembers to hold your hand or look for cars before crossing the road some days, but not others)

Easily distracted, has difficulty focusing and maintaining attention

Difficulty with physical skills (for their age), such as riding a bike or using cutlery

Can be overwhelmed by certain noises, lights, touch, textures, or other sensory experiences (e.g., going to the supermarket can be overwhelming due to the noise and fluorescent lights)

Trouble following more than one instruction at a time or can repeat instructions but has trouble understanding what to do

Impulsive, poor common sense, struggles to understand consequences (e.g., discipline strategies like time-out are ineffective because they do not understand or forget why they are there)

Experiences tantrums or meltdowns, appears "young for their age"

Difficulty making or keeping friends

Difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, wakes early

The below section can be used record the strengths and challenges a child is experiencing in the school environment. These may be similar to the examples in the above table or they may manifest themselves differently. The strengths column can also be used to record a child’s areas of interest and engagement (e.g., painting and drawing, playing basketball).

Strengths	Challenges

If a child is experiencing difficulties or problems at school it can be very useful for educators to understand how parents and caregivers manage challenges at home. Consistency between support strategies at home and in the school environment can be a crucial element in a child’s success.

Please complete the table below with any strategies parents and caregivers use at home that help complete tasks or achieve goals. It might be useful to consider how a child’s strengths or interests listed above can be incorporated into strategies or solutions to respond to challenges.

Challenge	Strategy or Solution
EXAMPLE: Has trouble following more than one instruction	EXAMPLE: We break instructions into small sections. For example, we avoid saying “brush your teeth, go to the toilet, put your pyjamas on”. We give one instruction at a time and make sure they do it, before moving onto the next step. We also have a poster that shows the steps in pictures.
EXAMPLE: Has difficulty learning or following rules	EXAMPLE: She enjoys playing soccer, and this has been really useful in helping to learn the rules and cooperate with other children.
EXAMPLE: Has trouble falling or staying asleep	EXAMPLE: We set a regular bedtime routine, and avoid overstimulating activities before bedtime such as playing with siblings.

Challenge	Strategy or Solution

Below is a free-text box for parents to record any other strategies or adjustments they think would be useful to support their child in the classroom. These may be physical adjustments to the classroom such as providing calm breakaway spaces, or adjustments to teaching strategies themselves such as using visual aids to accompany verbal instructions.

References

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