

QUICK-COPY CHEAT SHEET:

50+ Student Strengths for IEPs



Academic Strengths

Strength	Ready-to-Use Phrase
Reading comprehension	Demonstrates strong reading comprehension and enjoys independent reading
Decoding	Decodes unfamiliar words easily using phonics strategies
Retelling	Summarizes and retells stories with key details included
Written expression	Expresses ideas clearly and organizes thoughts before writing
Creative writing	Enjoys creative writing and generates original story ideas
Number sense	Understands number patterns and relationships
Problem-solving	Shows strong problem-solving skills in math tasks
Hands-on learning	Engages well with hands-on math activities and manipulatives
Pattern recognition	Quickly recognizes patterns and sequences
Inquiry	Asks insightful questions during science and class discussions
Verbal explanation	Explains concepts clearly to peers
Listening comprehension	Comprehends well when listening to audiobooks or read-alouds

Communication and Language Strengths

Strength	Ready-to-Use Phrase
Vocabulary	Uses age-appropriate vocabulary across settings
Initiating conversation	Initiates conversation with peers and adults
Clarifying questions	Asks clarifying questions when confused
AAC/gestures	Communicates effectively using gestures, signs, or AAC
Repair strategies	Repairs communication breakdowns by rephrasing when not understood
Following directions	Follows multi-step directions independently
Sequencing	Retells events and stories in sequential order
Context clues	Uses context clues to determine the meaning of unfamiliar words
Conversational turn-taking	Maintains appropriate eye contact and turn-taking in conversation
Self-advocacy	Advocates for communication needs (e.g., asks for repetition or more time)

Functional and Executive Functioning Strengths

Strength	Ready-to-Use Phrase
Organization	Keeps track of assignments and materials independently
Routines	Follows classroom routines with minimal support
Independence	Completes tasks with minimal prompting
Transitions	Transitions between activities smoothly
Planning tools	Uses a planner or checklist independently
Help-seeking	Asks for help when needed
Adaptability	Adjusts well to changes in schedule or routine
Time management	Manages time effectively during independent work

Social-Emotional Strengths

Strength	Ready-to-Use Phrase
Empathy	Shows empathy and concern for classmates
Kindness	Demonstrates kindness toward peers
Resilience	Recovers quickly from setbacks and stays motivated
Collaboration	Works well with peers in group activities
Leadership	Shows leadership in group settings
Self-regulation	Uses coping strategies to manage emotions effectively
Self-awareness	Shows awareness of personal strengths and areas of need
Friendship skills	Builds and maintains friendships with peers
Patience	Shows patience with peers and adults

Personal Interests and Talents

Strength	Ready-to-Use Phrase
Artistic ability	Shows strong artistic ability and enjoys drawing or design
Music	Shows musical talent or strong interest in music
Curiosity	Demonstrates curiosity about how things work
Building/construction play	Enjoys building and construction-based play
Physical skills	Shows strong physical or athletic ability
Focused interests	Shows deep knowledge and passion for a specific topic
Helpfulness	Enjoys helping others and volunteering for classroom tasks
Humor	Uses humor appropriately to connect with others
Artistic ability	Shows strong artistic ability and enjoys drawing or design