

Strength-Based Language Cheat Sheet

The way we describe our children matters. Strength-based language helps reframe concerns into opportunities for understanding and growth. This approach supports collaboration, reduces defensiveness, and affirms your child's potential.

Strength-Based Reframes for Common Concerns

Here are some common concerns we often hear and the building blocks that show how to turn a concern into a strength-based statement that highlights your child's abilities, names the support they need, and points toward a positive goal.

Concern: He has difficulty with transitions.

- **Strength (Anchor):** He thrives on predictability and consistency.
- **Goal:** Move between activities more smoothly.
- **Support Idea (Need):** In order to handle transitions, he may need advance notice, countdowns, or transition objects.

Together this becomes: *He thrives on predictability and consistency, and in order to move between activities more smoothly, he may need advance notice, countdowns, or transition objects.*

Concern: He rushes through his work.

Reframe: He approaches tasks with energy and enthusiasm, and with support in pacing and checking, he can build greater accuracy and confidence in his work.

Concern: She gets distracted easily.

Reframe: She notices many things in her environment and has a wide curiosity. With tools for focus and redirection, she can channel that curiosity productively.

Concern: He struggles to follow directions.

Reframe: He values independence and often wants to find his own way. Clear, step-by-step instructions and check-ins can help him stay on track while still honoring his initiative.

Concern: She is overly perfectionistic.

Reframe: She sets high standards for herself and cares deeply about her work. Gentle reminders and strategies for flexibility can help her take risks and keep learning joyful.

Concern: She talks out of turn.

Reframe: She is eager to share her ideas and contribute. With support in turn-taking and active listening, her enthusiasm can positively drive class discussions.

Concern: He has difficulty with transitions.

Reframe: He thrives on predictability and consistency. Advanced notice and clear routines can help him move between activities more smoothly.

Concern: She gets upset when corrected.

Reframe: She cares deeply about doing well and can be sensitive to feedback. Supportive language and strategies for reframing mistakes as part of learning will help her build resilience.

Concern: He avoids challenging tasks.

Reframe: He prefers to feel confident in his abilities and may hesitate when unsure. With encouragement and scaffolding, he can build persistence and celebrate growth.

Concern: She has trouble working in groups.

Reframe: She is independent and self-motivated. With guided collaboration and defined roles, she can learn to balance her strengths with teamwork skills.

Now you try it:

Concern:

Strength (Anchor):

Goal:

Support Idea (Need):

Together this becomes: