

How Parents and Teachers Can Find Real Strengths

1

Compare different ways of responding.



Try reading, listening, speaking, drawing, demonstrating, or building. Big differences between formats can show where support is needed—and where the learner has a stronger route.

2

Look for patterns over time.



One clever answer does not define a strength. Notice abilities that appear across tasks and settings—such as seeing patterns, storytelling, recalling facts, designing, or explaining how things work.

3

Ask the learner.



Ask: “What helps you understand?”
“How would you show what you know?”
“What felt easiest?” Their answers add useful evidence alongside careful observation.

4

Remove the reading barrier when checking other knowledge.



If the goal is science understanding, read the question aloud or allow an oral answer. Measure reading separately so decoding is not mistaken for thinking.

5

Use strengths as an entry point.



A student who loves building can build a model before reading and writing about it.

6

Name strengths precisely.



Instead of “You are smart,” say: “You noticed how those ideas connect,” or “Your model shows the order clearly.” Specific feedback shows the learner what to use again.



THE GOAL

Use strengths to open the door to reading and writing—not to lower expectations or avoid the work.