

DEAR TEACHER,

I, _____, really need your help to learn this year...

Motor planning difficulties

I have motor planning difficulties. I KNOW what I want to say; the words are in my head but often I'm not able to produce the words clearly. As one expert said, "The problem occurs when the brain tries to tell the muscles (of the tongue, lips, jaw, and palate) what to do. Somehow, that message gets scrambled. The child must figure out how to somehow unscramble the mixed messages his/her brain is sending to his/her muscles."

Did you know?

Children with motor planning difficulties, however, **DO** understand speech and language. Yet others might mistake and misjudge their unclear speech or quietness as a lack of intelligence. These children tend to experience a great sense of failure and frustration in their attempts to communicate. Some children grow even quieter; others may act out their frustration. These children need **YOUR** support.

Remember... I'm one SMART cookie!



Please expect as much from me as you do from the other kids, and don't single me out as "special"!

What can you do?

- ✓ Communicate frequently with the school board/SBRS SLP and determine if there are things that you can do in the classroom to help me communicate and practice speech.
- ✓ Try to create a tension-free and interesting "communication environment" for me. Encourage but don't insist I try to speak. Praise my attempts at speech, if only for effort.
- ✓ Please know that sometimes I might not respond or might respond, "I don't know" as a way to help myself get out of a difficult communication challenge.
- ✓ Be patient. Sometimes the fast pace of others can leave me out of the experience although I may be able to successfully participate if others just offer a bit more time and patience.
- ✓ Watch for and even create opportunities to help me make friends. A supportive and nurturing teacher can surely help me "break into" social communication/situations.
- ✓ I may need to communicate in alternative ways. Often **gestures, pictures (e.g., a communication book), or offering choices** can help me as a bridge to clear speech, helping you gain insight into my thoughts.

What helps me in the class you ask?

- ✓ Please help me participate in the classroom (give me a job that I can do so that I can be included in all activities).
- ✓ Sit me close to teachers and friends who are helpful.
- ✓ Say positive things about me in front of the other kids.
- ✓ I'm a visual learner—I learn how to say words by looking at your mouth and lips ... so get down to my level and model simple words for me.
- ✓ Don't be afraid to repeat the words ... ALOT. I need that and I like that.
- ✓ Remember, I'm still learning my 'motor plans' for my words. I have some words and signs/gestures that I use but they don't always come out when I NEED them to!!!