

The Understanding Element

To fully support students, we first need to know about them and understand where they are coming from. Do you know their strengths, what they are interested in and how they spend their time outside of school? Without some understanding of the student outside of the need we are supporting, we won't be able to select the right supports that will make the most impact.

This will also feed into The Relationships Element. In order to know where to start with building relationships and making a connection, we need to know about the student, their culture and values and what is important to them.

Toolkit



[Getting to Know Me tool](#) (primary/special school)



[Getting to Know Me tool](#) (post primary/special school)



[The Belonging in School resource](#) from Cambridge University



Create a [One Page Profile](#)

Practical Strategies

- Consider the student's communication style, how can it be included as part of a total communication approach in the classroom?
- Plan opportunities in the curriculum for specific 'Getting to Know You' activities
- Use a home/school communication tool
- Get to know students' strengths and interests and build them into lessons
- Find common ground – what do you have in common with your students?
- Take time to find out more about what you have learned from the 'Getting to Know Me' tool



[Bruce Perry: Building a Connected Classroom](#)



[Be a Mr Jensen](#)



[Engaging Pupils with SEMH and Other Behaviour Needs with Adele Bates](#)



[Inside I'm Hurting](#) by Louise Bomber



[Know Me to Teach Me](#) by Louise Bomber

NCSE TPL



[Autism and Co-occurring Additional Needs](#)



[Supporting the Transition from Primary to Post Primary](#)

[Social Narratives](#)

[Understanding Social Differences – A Neuroaffirmative Approach](#)

Students Say...

Try asking the following questions

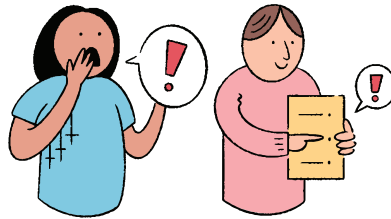
How do you find the classroom and learning?

Is there anything affecting/stressing you?

What makes it worse?

What might it look like if you are stressed?

Why did you choose this subject? What is your motivation?

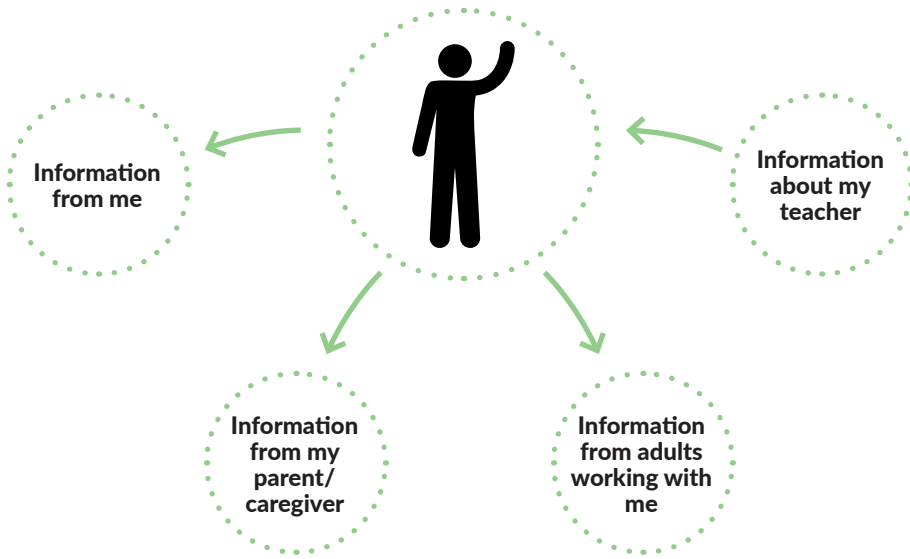


What coping mechanisms help you to support your wellbeing?

Reflective Questions

- What systems are in place so that staff can collaborate, gather and share information that is already known about the student?
- Have I taken time to reflect on what I find out about the student and to extend my learning where necessary?
- Do I need more teacher professional learning to understand the student's strengths and needs? Is there somebody on staff who has knowledge or expertise who can support me?
- Is the student's identity and culture represented and valued in the school community?

Getting to Know Me



Getting To Know Me

What do I really love?

What do I like about school?

What activities do I enjoy at school?

What do I like about break time?

What activities do I enjoy at home?

What do I like about yard?

What makes learning easier for me?

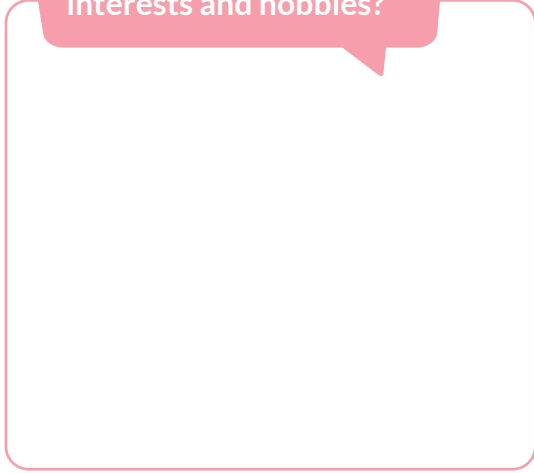
Something you should know about me...

I like to show what I have learned by...

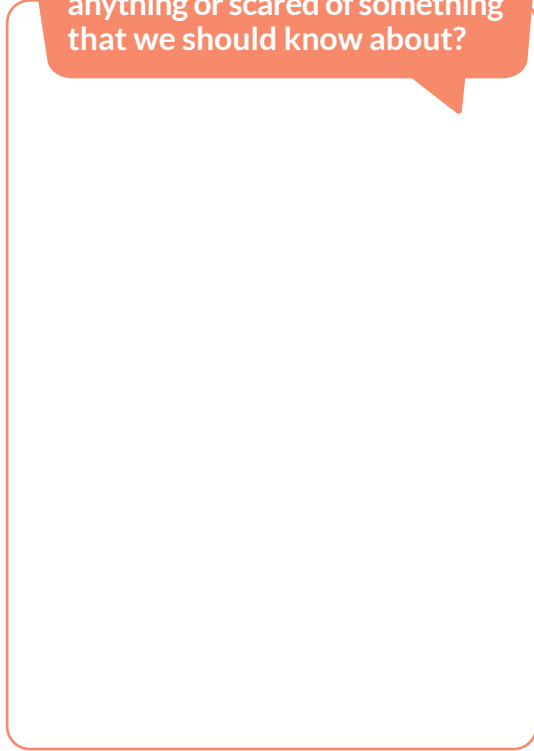
Getting To Know Me

Questions for Parents/Caregivers

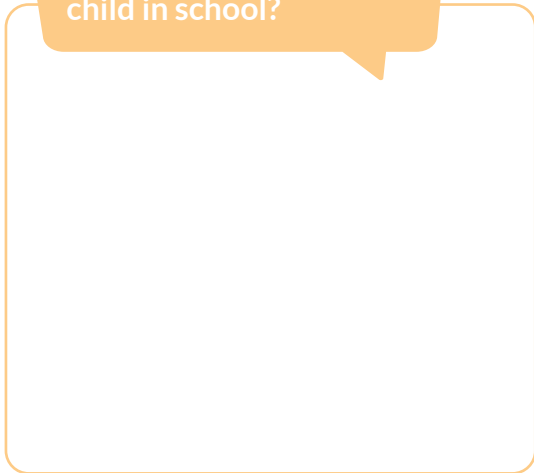
What are your child's interests and hobbies?



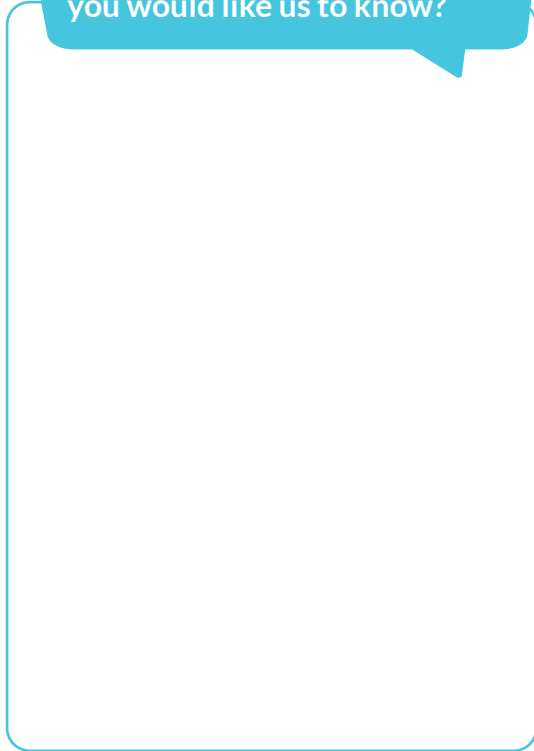
Is your child worried about anything or scared of something that we should know about?



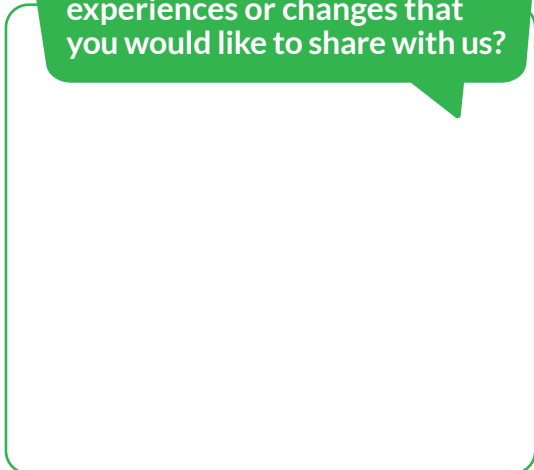
How can we support your child in school?



Is there any other information you would like us to know?



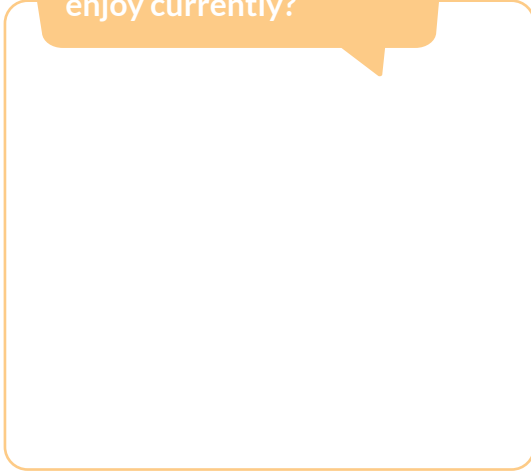
Have they had any life experiences or changes that you would like to share with us?



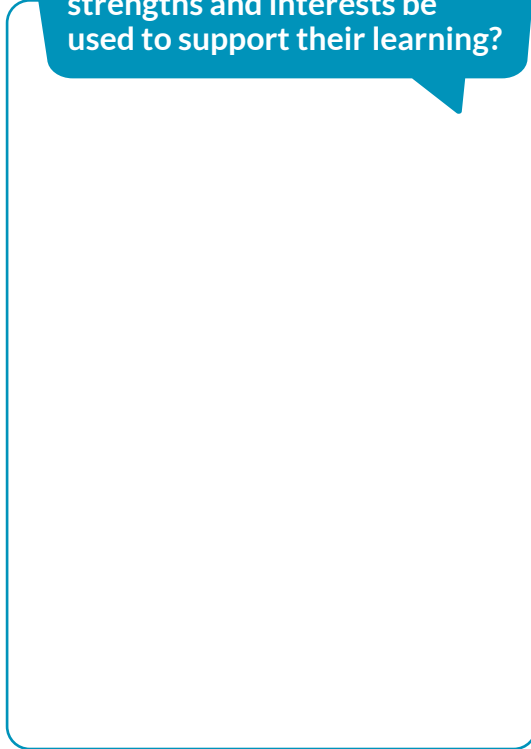
Getting To Know Me

Questions for Adults working with: _____


What does the student enjoy currently?



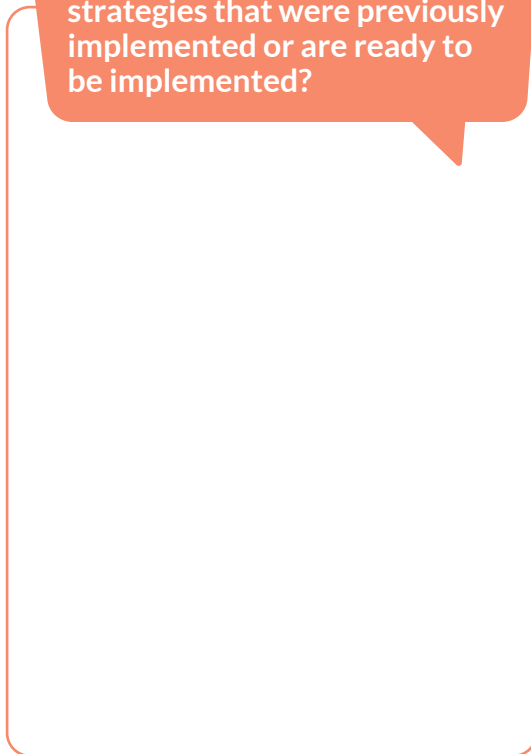
How can the student's strengths and interests be used to support their learning?



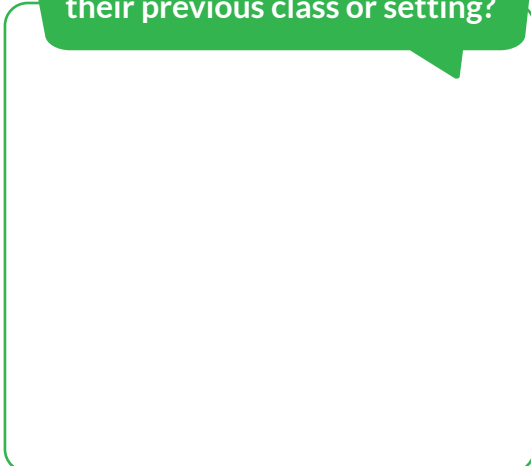
What's working well?



Are there any approaches or strategies that were previously implemented or are ready to be implemented?



What helped the student in their previous class or setting?



Getting To Know My Teacher

My teacher's name is:

What did you like about school?

If you could have any superpower, what would it be?

Do you like to play any games or sports?

What's the coolest place you've ever been to?

My teacher's favourites:

Colour: _____

Animal: _____

Food: _____

What's the most fun thing you like to do on the weekend?

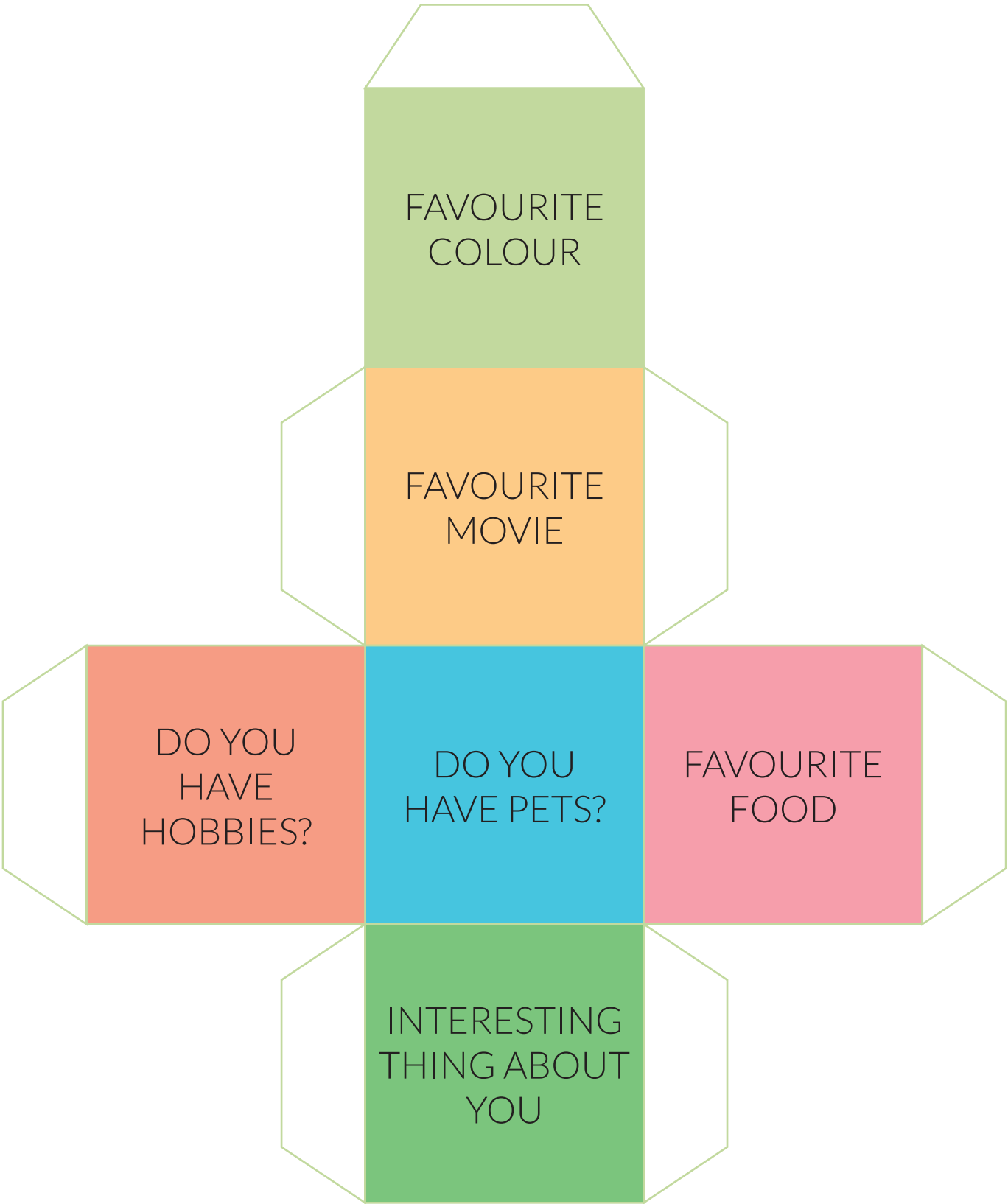
Do you have any pets?

Do you like TV or movies?

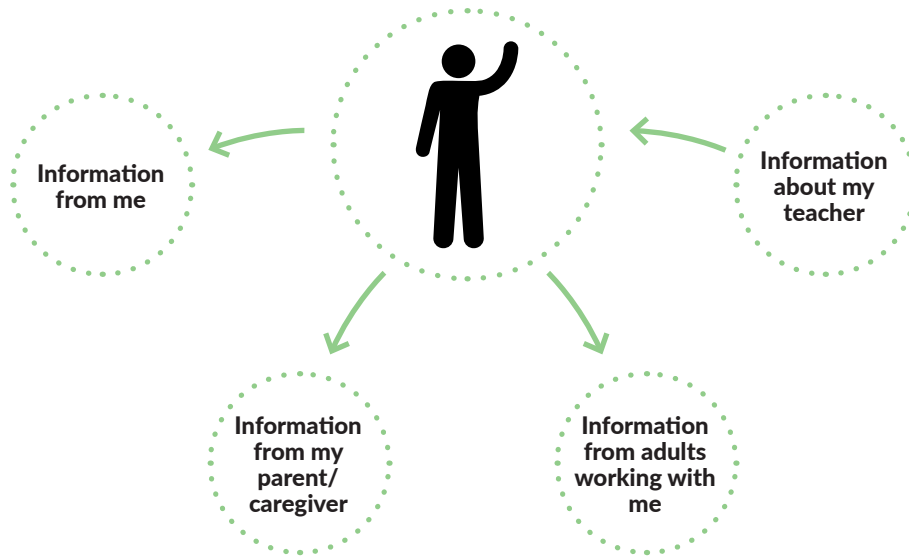
What is an interesting fact about you?

Getting To Know My Teacher

Dice Game



Getting to Know Me



Getting To Know Me

Things that I like (in school/outside school):

What are break times like for me?

My favourite part of the school day is:

What is class changeover like for me?

My favourite subjects are:

Who are the important people in my life?

What makes learning easier for me?

Something I would like you to know about me..

I prefer to show my learning by...

Getting To Know Me

Questions for Parents/Caregivers

What are your child's interests and hobbies?

Is your child anxious about anything that we should know about?

How can we support your child in school?

Have they had any life experiences or changes that you would like to share with us?

If your child experiences stress, is there anything that can make this worse that we should know about?

Is there any other information you would like us to know?

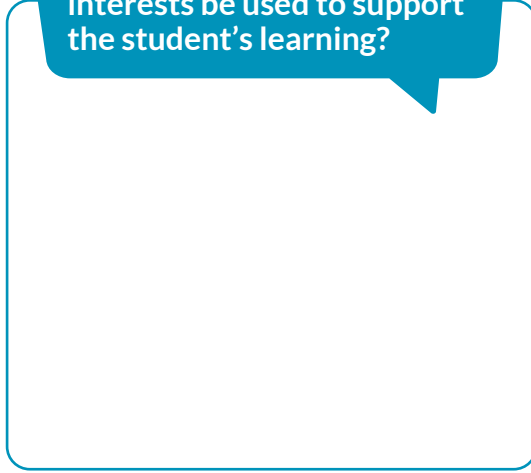
Getting To Know Me

Questions for Adults working with: _____

What are the student's strengths and interests?



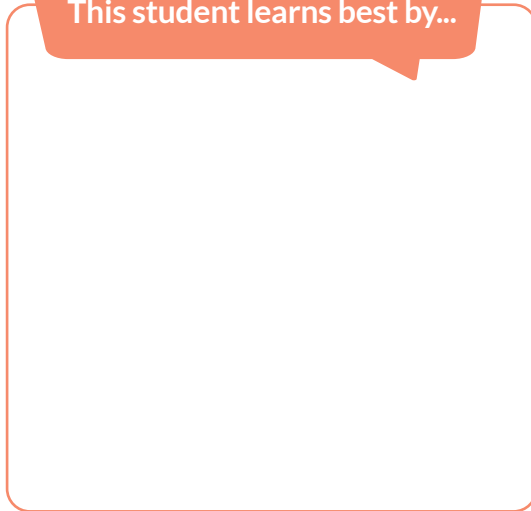
How can these strengths and interests be used to support the student's learning?



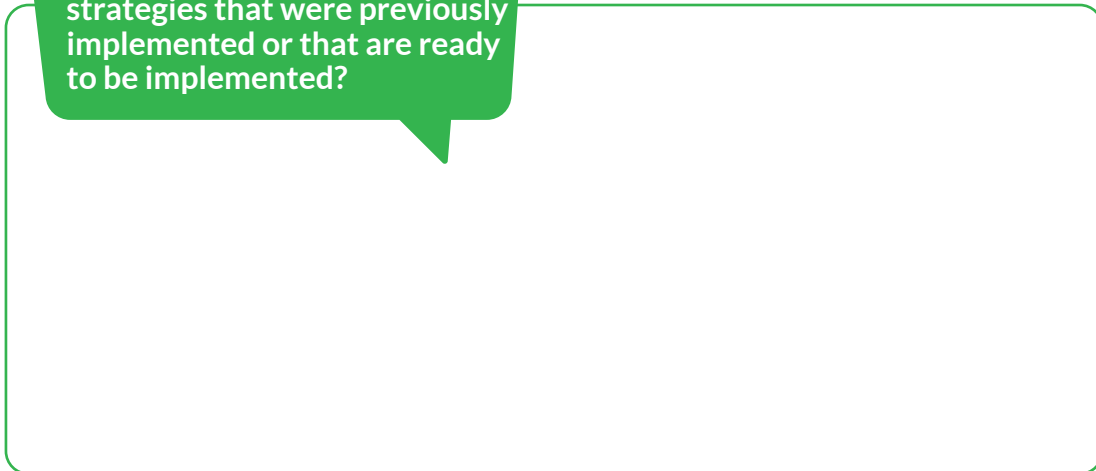
What has been working well for the student?



This student learns best by...



Are there any approaches or strategies that were previously implemented or that are ready to be implemented?



Getting To Know My Teacher

My teacher's name is:

What did you like about school?

What's a hobby you're really passionate about?

Is there a book or movie you think everyone should experience at least once?

If you could take a year off to travel, where would you go first?

My teacher's favourites:

Music: _____

TV Shows: _____

Take Out: _____

If you weren't teaching, what other job do you think you'd be doing?

What's the best meal you've ever had?

What's a hobby you're really passionate about?

Have you ever surprised yourself?