

Creating Strong Report Card Comments

Try to...	Try Not to...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain a focus on the child • Relate comments to the outcomes • Focus on what was learned/achieved • Use “parent friendly” language and maintain a focus on that audience – remind yourself of what you would like to read about your own child. • Give examples to help clarify the broad statements • Identify strengths, challenges • Connect next step(s) to the challenge(s) identified 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • List what was taught • Include comments about attendance, homework, behaviour, attitude (this information will be in the Learning Skills section) unless you feel it is a significant factor in achievement and requires comment • Use teacher jargon or vocabulary that would pose problems for parents, especially if it were to be translated • Over-emphasize the negative (challenges) • Mix speaking to parents and students interchangeably by inserting comments such as “Well done!” • State what has been or will be the focus for whole class instruction

Keep these questions in mind:

Will a parent reading these comments

- understand clearly how his/her child is doing in your class/subject?
- understand that his/her child has areas of strength?
- know what is being done to address any areas of weakness? (This might also include ways the child can take some responsibility for his/her improvement and/or ways the family can support.)
- be aware of your interest in his/her child as an individual learner?

Suggestion for a comment template:

Structure of a Comment	
Opening/Anchor sentence (optional)	State the level of overall achievement related to the subject area outcomes
State the strengths	What the evidence shows the student achieved/learned
Identify needs/challenges (if any) – areas to work on	What the evidence shows the student has not yet achieved/learned/mastered
Identify next steps	What is important going forward to address the student's challenges

A Selection of Sample Comments:

Student has shown noticeable progress this term in Math. He is developing greater persistence in tackling non-routine problems and is willing to try several approaches before asking for guidance. *Student's* Logo assignment was well done, with a careful design and accurate calculations. He demonstrates a good understanding of the relationship between fractions, decimals and percents and can convert easily between them. He needs more practice in placing and ordering fractions, decimals and percents on a number line, and so I will provide extra practice work for him until he is confident. *Student* should always ask for further explanation or clarification if he is unsure and come for extra help during the lunchtime help sessions offered.

Student has enjoyed our novel study this term. She shared valuable insights in our class discussion about the character's challenges and could make connections to other texts she had read. She demonstrated a sound understanding of the literary components through her creative presentation. *Student* is developing her voice in written pieces, but she needs to develop the use of sensory detail and vivid vocabulary to engage the reader more. *Student* is a strong and able communicator in group projects and discussions. Her self-reflection recognized the need to step back at times and allow others to share more; this is great awareness for future collaborations.

Useful Words and Phrases to Consider when Writing Report Card Comments

Strengths	Needs **	Suggestions
<p>able to construct, able to determine, able to extend, able to research, able to respond, able to support can accurately, can adapt, can consistently, can easily, can effectively, can explain, can identify, can solve, can successfully consistently makes continues to demonstrates a clear understanding demonstrates effective displays strong, Displays exceptional has achieved has a good grasp of has successfully has learned has very good insight improved tremendously is able to is capable of is developing is consistently able to is competent in is proficient at is skillful at is very good at often uses recognizes that recognizes the importance shows commitment skillfully uses successfully interprets understands how understands that uses a variety of</p>	<p>attempts to, makes attempts continues to need help with could profit by demonstrates a limited ability to does not always does not demonstrate encouragement with experiences difficulty with, Has difficulty with finds it difficult at times to , Has difficulty has not yet demonstrated the ability has not yet demonstrated understanding has trouble with is seldom able to is encouraged to is benefiting from practice with is learning to/that is receiving additional help with is working at it is important that lacks a clear understanding needs more opportunities to needs ongoing help with, needs ongoing assistance with, needs support needs to clarify needs to develop often lacks rarely uses, rarely able to requires adult support for requires more time seems to use few struggles to, struggles with tries to, makes attempts to unable to explain</p>	<p>can practice/apply at home by greater focus on is encouraged to is encouraged to be more is encouraged to seek is encouraged to strive to is not always willing to it is recommended that it is suggested that needs more time to develop needs to ask needs to be more open needs to consider needs to continue to needs to develop needs to expand on needs to improve, needs to refer to needs to review needs reinforcement in needs to spend more time on, should spend more time on needs time to needs to work on requires additional effort requires additional practice requires further understanding requires guided instruction should continue to should do further practice should take the time to should utilize options for should work towards would benefit from will have opportunities to</p>

** Be aware of IEP specifics here – For example, stating that they require more time to do a task when according to their IEP they are allowed more time would not be appropriate.

Source: "Creating Strong Report Card Comments: A Handbook for Jr/Sr High Teachers". Tri-County Regional School Board, Nova Scotia, Canada. April 2011.

<<http://www.tcrsb.ca/sis/staff/Report%20Card/Creating%20Strong%20Report%20Card%20Comments%20-%20A%20Handbook%20for%20Jr%20and%20Sr%20High%20Teachers.pdf>>