

Common Characteristics of **Complex Learners**

Complex Learners may have difficulties with social-emotional skills, speech-language skills, sensory-motor skills and cognitive skills that impact their lives in a number of ways. Here is what that may look like across a variety of settings.



SOCIAL LIFE

- Has difficulty making and keeping friends
- Experiences poor self-esteem/confidence
- Lacks self-awareness
- Misperceives others' words and interactions
- Responds to others in unexpected ways
- Has difficulty with reciprocal conversations
- Engages in parallel or imaginary play longer than expected for age
- Misses social cues
- Has limited interests and can get "stuck" on preferred topics
- Experiences social anxiety

ACADEMIC LIFE

- Uses inefficient strategies and approaches to schoolwork and/or demonstrates poor study skills and work habits
- Forgets previously learned concepts
- Does not make connections between old and new information
- Has lower than expected achievement
- Has poor self-concept as a student
- Demonstrates inconsistent academic performance
- Needs help initiating assignments
- Becomes frustrated easily
- Has difficulty following directions
- Has difficulty receiving and applying feedback



HOME LIFE



- Struggles to complete homework
- Resistant to going to school
- Avoids reading
- Forgets to do chores
- Loses belongings
- Seems driven by a motor
- Has delayed milestones (e.g., speaking, sitting, crawling, walking)
- Has heightened responses to their environment (e.g., tags on clothing, noise) or may act out due to holding it together all day
- Struggles with activities of daily living (e.g., personal hygiene, grooming, dressing, eating)
- Struggles with transitions and routines