

8 THINGS I WISH MY SCHOOL KNEW ABOUT ME

A NOTE FOR TEACHERS AND OTHER SCHOOL STAFF

I live with an invisible, brain-based condition that makes seemingly easy cognitive tasks difficult for me. Here are some of the most common challenges I experience each day:



1

I **need more time** than my classmates — as much as 10 additional seconds — to process what's happening around me. I might appear to be disinterested or distracted, when in reality I haven't had enough time to process.

2

I want to do the right thing, but I can **only hold one (maybe two) directions in my head** at one time. A key aspect of my brain-based difference is that remembering does not come easily to me.



3

I will **need to be re-taught or reminded** about the simplest rules and routines — likely, many more times than my classmates. My brain is better at holding on to information with repetition.



4

I will have **on and off days during the school year**. We all have on and off days, but my "off" days can be really challenging. Things I knew a few days earlier might now escape me, or be "unfindable" in my brain.





5

Sometimes **my brain gets stuck**. I might ask the same question over and over. I might be extra chatty, talking in circles. I might get “stuck” in a behavioral loop, where I keep doing the same thing over and over, despite being asked to stop.

6

One thing that’s very challenging for me, because of the way my brain works, is **getting started or engaged in a task**. It might seem like I don’t want to do the work, or I’m disinterested, when in reality I don’t know where or how to start.



7

Because my brain works differently, it is **really hard for me to calm down by myself**. If I’m sent into the hallway or into another room, where I’m all alone and told to “calm down,” it’s hard, if not impossible, for me to do this on my own. Co-regulation is key.



8

Lastly, I truly **would do well if I could**. My brain has to work harder — and differently — than many of my classmates just to survive my day. I run out of brain fuel quickly. I don’t want to be in trouble all the time, **I just want to be like everyone else**.



FULL BLOG POST: go.eileendevine.com/schoolandme

brain first
P A R E N T I N G

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