

TEN TIPS FOR TEACHERS TO SUPPORT GESTALT LANGUAGE PROCESSORS IN THE CLASSROOM



Gestalt language processing is **not a disorder**; rather, it is a natural cognitive-linguistic learning style where a person learns language in whole phrases or “chunks” (gestalts) rather than one single word at a time, often communicating through echolalia or scripting before breaking those phrases down later.



1

ACCEPT AND VALUE ALL COMMUNICATION

Honor all forms of communication—gestalts, echolalia, scripts, gestures, AAC, behavior, and words. They all have meaning.

6

SUPPORT FLEXIBILITY

Gently expand gestalt phrases in meaningful ways and model alternatives without pressure. Over time, this helps build flexibility in language use.

2

CREATE A LANGUAGE-RICH ENVIRONMENT

Narrate your day, label naturally, and use rich, varied language in routines, play, reading, and transitions.

7

TEACH FUNCTIONS THROUGH NATURAL OPPORTUNITIES

Focus on why we communicate (request, comment, protest, share, ask for help). Model phrases that match the function in real-life situations.

3

FOLLOW THEIR LEAD

Join in their interests and play. This builds connection, engagement, and more opportunities for meaningful communication.

8

VISUALS AND ROUTINES ARE POWERFUL

Use visual supports, schedules, and first-then boards to support understanding and predictability throughout the day.

4

MODEL, MODEL, MODEL

Model phrases slightly above what your student uses. Keep it natural, enthusiastic, and relevant to their interests.

9

BE PATIENT—PROCESSING TAKES TIME

Gestalt processors need time to take in, process, and figure out how to use language in ways that feel safe and meaningful to them.

5

VALIDATE AND RECAST

Acknowledge what they said, then expand or add just a little. This shows the connection between their message and new language.

10

COLLABORATE AND CELEBRATE PROGRESS

Partner with families and speech-language pathologists. Celebrate all forms of progress—every step forward counts!



DISCLAIMER

These are general tips to support children who process language gestaltly. Every child is unique, with individual strengths, challenges, and preferences. Please consult with a speech-language pathologist for personalized strategies that best support your student's communication needs.

