

4 Habits of Effective Inclusive Educators

ACT AS A TEACHER AND AS A LEARNER

Ask questions like, “What can I learn from this student? What is this student trying to show me? What are some gifts this student brings to the classroom?”

WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE

When possible, focus on strengths. Instead of saying, “He can’t even sit for 10 minutes,” it may be more helpful to say, “He can sit for 7 minutes.”

PRESUME COMPETENCE

Believe that students are capable and complex. Scout for students’ talents and create situations that highlight the abilities of your diverse learners.

SEEK BENEFITS FOR ALL

Often we ask the question, “What do students without disabilities learn in an inclusive school?” And it’s the wrong question. What do *all* students get out of diversity in their schooling environment?



BROOKES

From the “**You’re Going to Love This Kid!**”
Professional Development Package, by Paula Kluth, Ph.D.

5

Ways to Create an Inclusive School Culture



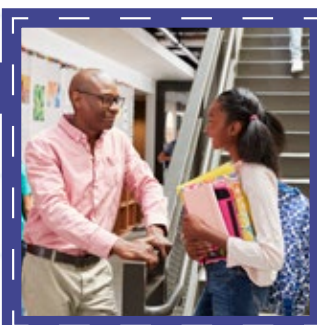
Hold informal **brown-bag lunches** with staff, students, and parents. Talk about inclusion goals and ideas.



Invite parents and community members to **visit classrooms**, help with projects, and serve as resources.



Use **suggestion boxes** or **electronic bulletin boards**, and implement suggestions from all stakeholder groups in the school.



Give students and teachers opportunities to **connect**. Tell stories. Play games. Use community-building exercises.



Make time for **school celebrations**, both small and large.

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8 Ways to Get Learning “Off the Page”

1 Provide opportunities for partner and small-group learning



5 Have students work with objects, models, and artifacts instead of worksheets, notebooks, and pencils

2 Incorporate learning games and activities



6 Create or use materials that require or allow for movement (e.g., interactive whiteboards)

3 Allow students to glue, attach, draw, sculpt, or design instead of write

7 Put interactive materials on the classroom floor, on the walls, or up and down the hallways

4 Visit web sites, engage in WebQuests, and explore new technologies



8 Use drama and role play



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4 Ways to Provide Social Support for Students with Autism

BUILD RELATIONSHIPS THROUGH ACTIVITIES

Some students who find conversation and typical ways of socializing a challenge are amazingly adept when an interaction occurs in relation to a favorite interest. If a student loves running, invite her to join the cross country team. If she likes pets, start a club for animal lovers.

ROLE PLAY

Role plays can be used to practice a specific situation (e.g., singing in a concert, ordering lunch) or to improve certain skills (e.g., greeting people, entering and staying in a conversation).

SHARE SOCIAL SECRETS

Some students report that they often feel as if everyone else knows the social “secrets” necessary for success (e.g., how to make friends, how to work in a group, how to talk appropriately to teachers) and they do not. For these reasons, it can be very helpful to explicitly share these secrets with students. Sharing social secrets is important even for students who do not speak or have reliable communication, so be sure to provide information about social situations to every student.

SET FRIENDSHIP-FOCUSED IEP GOALS

Friendships and social connection can also be focal points of the individualized education program (IEP). Write goals that create the necessary conditions for friendships to flourish, and make sure that supports and services are geared toward relationship building and academic growth. Each can be achieved without sacrificing the other!



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10 ways to help students deal with auditory discomfort



Encourage self-advocacy. Tell students to let you know if they're experiencing auditory sensitivity.



Move the student. Once a disturbing sound has been discovered, helping the student can be as simple as relocating her desk to another part of the room.



Whisper. Use a soft voice, especially when the student seems upset or doesn't appear to understand what you are trying to communicate.



Reduce classroom noise. Installing carpeting remnants can help reduce echoes and noise. Some teachers also cut tennis balls in half and place them on the bottoms of chair or desk legs.



Change the sound. If a student cringes when he hears clapping, students could develop a quieter gesture of appreciation for presentations, celebrations, and assemblies.



Prepare the student for the sound. If cheerleaders are going to perform during a pep rally, cue the student to "get ready," have her plug her ears, or allow her to sit far away from the performance.



Prevent challenges. Look for ways to avoid exposing the person to loud noises. You might have a student with autism leave the room when a balloon must be popped during an experiment.



Beware of the munchies. It may be difficult for some students to tolerate the loud crunch of foods such as tortilla chips or popcorn. Some students can't eat these foods or endure listening to others eat them.



Turn on the tunes. In noisy or chaotic environments, allow students to listen to soft music using their digital audio player or play soft music for all students.



Equip the person. Allow the student to wear earplugs or headphones for certain environments or activities.



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The Comfortable Classroom Checklist

Students on the spectrum will be the most prepared to learn in places where they can relax, focus, and feel secure. In order to create environments most conducive to learning for students with autism and their peers without disabilities, teachers may need to consider the sounds, smells, lighting, temperature, and seating options in the classrooms.

Student's name: _____

SOUNDS

This student needs the following:

- ☐ A desk away from noisy spaces
- ☐ A classroom with "reduced noise adaptations" (e.g., tennis balls on bottoms of chairs): _____
- ☐ Adaptations for noisy classroom rituals and/or routines (e.g., needs peers to "clap" using American Sign Language): _____
- ☐ To be verbally warned about upcoming loud noises
- ☐ To be excused from particularly noisy lessons (e.g., certain science experiments)
- ☐ Use of earplugs or headphones at certain times of the day: _____
 - ☐ Independent work
 - ☐ Group work/active learning
 - ☐ Transitions
 - ☐ Other
- ☐ Music/iPod for some activities: _____
 - ☐ Independent work
 - ☐ Group work/active learning
 - ☐ Transitions
 - ☐ Other

SMELLS

This student needs the following:

- ☐ Staff to limit use of scented personal care products
- ☐ A desk away from any strong smells in the classroom (e.g., away from the class pet, away from chemicals in the science room)
- ☐ To sit near the door of certain classrooms (e.g., art, family and consumer education): _____
- ☐ Access to a small personal fan
- ☐ Scent-related objects, materials, and/or items that help to calm, energize, or comfort the individual (e.g., scented oil or paper, lotion): _____
- ☐ Materials (e.g., markers, erasers) that are unscented

LIGHTING

This student needs the following:

- ☐ Opportunities to request seating in a darker part of the room
- ☐ A desk as far away from fluorescent lighting as possible

- ☐ A classroom that has incandescent instead of fluorescent bulbs or use of a lamp with an incandescent bulb
- ☐ A classroom that has and can use natural light as much as possible
- ☐ A classroom with upward-projecting rather than downward-projecting lighting
- ☐ Use of sunglasses at certain times of the day
- ☐ Use of a baseball cap or visor at certain times of the day
- ☐ Colored overlays or nonwhite paper (to avoid glare under fluorescent lights)
- ☐ Use of headphones or ear plugs (to avoid sound of fluorescent lights)

TEMPERATURE

This student needs the following:

- ☐ To keep a bottle of ice water at his desk
- ☐ To use a personal fan
- ☐ To sit near/away from the registers
- ☐ To sit near/away from the windows
- ☐ To keep a sweatshirt/hoodie at his desk

SEATING

This student needs the following:

- ☐ Option to sit on the floor at times
- ☐ Option to stand at times (behind a lectern if needed)
- ☐ Option to pace in a designated part of the room at times
- ☐ Seat cushion or balance cushion on his desk chair
- ☐ Fidget objects in or on his or her desk (e.g., koosh ball, paper clips, drinking straw)
- ☐ Study carrel to sit behind
- ☐ Seating options that may include the following:
 - ☐ Rocking chair
 - ☐ Beanbag chair
 - ☐ Lawn chair
 - ☐ Reading pillow (cushions with arms that prop the user upright)
 - ☐ Floor/exercise mats
 - ☐ Floor pillows
 - ☐ Couch or loveseat or large upholstered footstool (if available)
 - ☐ Exercise ball
 - ☐ Other _____