

Ten Tips for General Educators

Small gestures help students with disabilities participate, learn and succeed in the classroom.



Promote socialization.

Seat students with students! Adults sitting with students may inhibit peer interactions. Encourage paraeducators to sit off to the side or away from students.

Speak directly to students.



Resist temptations to talk through paraeducators. Direct greetings, questions and explanations to the student.



Greet students everyday.

Get to know your students. Saying hello to a student requires no prep time and helps the student feel like a member of the class.

Assume responsibility.



YOU are the teacher. Do not delegate this important role to others, even when other professionals accompany a student in the classroom.



Expect success.

Expect everyone to learn and participate in the classroom. Share this expectation with students and staff members. Remember that participation and learning occur on many levels. Adjust the demands of an activity or assignment to match student ability.

Ask content questions daily.



Continually monitor student participation and learning. Your observations provide useful insights and help the special education staff evaluate curriculum modifications, and individualize lessons.

Share your lessons and plans.



You are not alone. When you share your plans, the learning specialist can adapt or modify the content to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Vary instructional methods!



Make learning an active experience for ALL students. Create cooperative learning groups. Encourage partner learning. Provide students with a variety of resource materials, projects, workshop formats, and experiential activities. Have students demonstrate mastery in a variety of ways.

Share your ideas and feelings.



It's okay to express your fears and opinions. Phrase concerns in specific terms. Instead of saying "I don't think this student belongs here!" Try "How can I make this Shakespeare dialog meaningful for this student?"

Treat students equally.



Maintain behavior expectations and disciplinary methods for ALL students in the classroom. Share your expectations with other staff members and caregivers.