Inclusion Solutions

A newsletter for educators who are doing amazing things!

Spring 2009 Edition

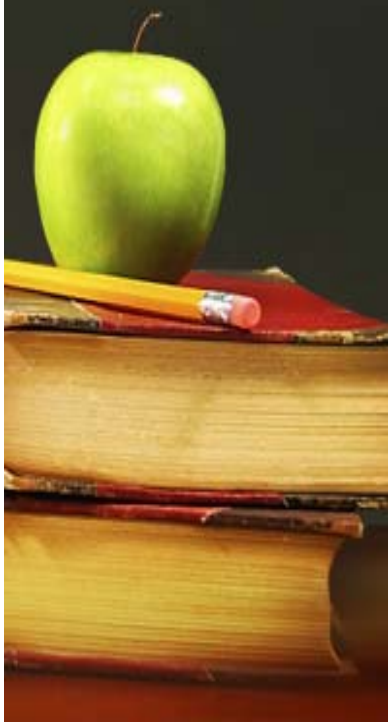
Upcoming DSG Trainings

Believing in Achieving Conference
Saturday, March 28th
8:00 AM-4:30 PM
$55 per person
Brochure at www.kcdsg.org

Practical Solutions For Challenging Behaviors
Thursday, April 19th
8:30 AM-11:30 AM
DSG Center

Developmental Disability Awareness Training for School Nurses
Tuesday, April 21st
8:30 AM-11:30 AM

For more information about these trainings please call the DSG at 913-384-4848



Setting the Stage for Friendships

Prior to beginning instruction in friendly behavior, educators are encouraged to attend to five elements of the classroom:

1. An inclusive classroom where students with disabilities are meaningfully included
2. Presence and pre-selection of cooperative use toys or materials which will increase the opportunities for social interaction
3. Examine all classroom routines and embed social interaction instruction and practice opportunities throughout the day.
4. Include social interaction goals and objectives in the IEP/IFSP.
5. Devote energy toward creating a classroom climate with an atmosphere of friendship.

Arrival	• Find a buddy to walk with from the bus to the class • Student is assigned to be the greeter and greets children by name as they arrive in the classroom
Circle Time	• Student passes out circle time props to each classmate. As the student progresses around the circle they say each student's name
Small Group	• Put students in charge of different materials needed for the small group project (i.e Tommy has the glue, Helen has the sequins, Haley has the paper) Students must find their peers and use their name to request materials
Outside	• Pre-select cooperative use toys for outside play (jump ropes, balls) • Organize peer play games such as tag, Red Rover, Duck, Duck, Goose
Story Time	• Select books with friendship themes • Pair students together to read back and forth to each other
Goodbye Circle	• Students pass a "compliment" bear around and say nice things to each other before dismissing • Have student pass out backpacks from cubbies to other students
Transitions	• Give as few prompts as possible to see if the student will follow his/her peers lead on moving to the next activity • Use a picture schedule whenever possible to indicate the days events • Provide the student with enough time to transition to the next activity and a job to do once the next activity starts

20 Ways to Adapt the Science Lab

Too often, students with disabilities, especially those with more moderate and significant disabilities, are excluded from the rich and complex experience of the science lab. This is unfortunate as many a science teacher would argue that if students are not engaged in hands-on science, then they are not really "doing" science. In other words, science is about learning ideas and concepts, studying vocabulary, and understanding theories, but it is also about observation, exploration, and discovery.

Another reason to give all students access to lab work is to pique their interest and enhance their learning. It is widely accepted that students who participate in labs and other hands-on science activities will remember the material better and be able to transfer the learning across situations and lessons. Students who have learning difficulties or differences often are more on task during hands-on activities because there are often a wider variety of ways to participate and the active and social nature of the science lab keeps students engaged and interested. Finally, lab work helps all students hone social and communication skills, making it ideal for learners with disabilities who may need help with asking and answering questions, taking turns in a conversation, or knowing how to enter a discussion

Having shared all of these benefits, many learners will need adaptations or modifications in order to be successful in a lab situation. Twenty ideas that can help you support diverse learners in your science classroom are offered here:

1. Be *explicit* about what you want students to know and do in each lesson and model what you want to see (e.g., language, behaviors, techniques, safety procedures) in the lab.

2. Post expected "lab behavior" on a poster or chart that is clear for all to see- emphasizing, of course, safety guidelines. Draw students attention to this information every time they work in the lab.

3. Organize your lab around big questions that all students can answer in some way. For instance, the question, "What is a rock?", can be answered on many different levels. One learner will be able to show or give an example of a rock while other learners will learn that it is "consolidated mineral matter".

4. Be sure to create very clear step-by-step directions for the lab. If needed, provide a checklist or even an illustrated checklist of steps.

5. Instead of pairing students alphabetically or randomly, think about individual needs to determine best partnerships. You might also give students a questionnaire to find out not who they want to work with but who they think they can work effectively with. Get suggestions from them but make the final decisions based on your observations. Some learners might have difficulty working with new or unfamiliar people. You may want to pair these students with a familiar peer.

6. Give different students different roles based on their strengths. For example, a student who is a strong writer might take notes for the group, while a student who enjoys public speaking might present the group's findings to the class. You can also assign roles based on student needs. For instance, an individual who needs more practice with social skills might be asked to serve as the group facilitator.

7. Some students may be better served by working across groups instead of within a group. For instance, if measurement is a skill you are focused on, you might have a learner go to each group to measure and pour liquids. If calculations are a target skill, perhaps an individual can help each group check and re-check their work.

8. If the experiment or lab requires procedures that are complicated or has directions that are easily misunderstood, be sure to clearly demonstrate these pieces in front of the students.

9. If reading the supporting materials will be a challenge for one or more learners, consider simplifying the directions, highlighting key words, or adding icons, tables, or photos to the text.

10. If you work with students who struggle with the writing requirements of labs, allow all or some to use portable word processors or to speak observations and findings into a tape recorder or digital voice recorder.

20 Ways to Adapt the Science Lab

11. Add additional roles or tasks for students who are working on individual goals that would not typically be addressed during lab. If a student is learning to use a new communication device, for instance, you might ask students to allow that individual to direct or, at least, introduce the activity with pre-programmed messages on their device.

12. Look for a range of materials that diverse learners can access to understand the key concepts or ideas being explored in the lab. For a lab on dissecting frogs, for instance, you might have a plastic model of a dissected frog, books on frogs, and an on-line virtual dissection available to learners who need extra support.

13. Provide more durable materials, if needed. Plastic beakers might be a better choice than glass ones for some learners, for instance.

14. When necessary, incorporate adapted materials such as talking thermometers and laboratory glassware with raised numbers.

15. Play with technology as a support for diverse learners. For example, digital cameras can help students record steps of an experiment.

16. For those who need repeated practice or extra materials for review, you might record experiments and give them to certain learners to view. Or you can post parts of your labs on a classroom website for all to see.

17. Reduce the writing component of the lab work. Instead of asking for the purpose, materials, procedure, and the conclusion, you might have some students responsible for writing only the conclusions. Or you might prepare a set of guided notes (a map or outline of the lab notes) for some learners; these students would only need to fill in the blanks where content is missing or finish diagrams or charts that have been partially completed.

18. Allow students to report their findings in a variety of ways. They might choose from writing a description, drawing a diagram, or explaining findings to a peer.

19. If a particular student needs supplemental activities or supports during the lab, he or she might spend some class time away from the lab gathering information that can be brought back to the whole group. For example, a student an interactive science website (gathering related information) or looking at photographs related to the lab.

20. To challenge some learners, ask them to design a new experiment or to extend their experiment.

Tips from DSG's Down Syndrome Specialists

- Present material verbally and visually
- Expect "No" as the first response
- Use visual cues/schedules whenever possible
- Students w/Down syndrome typically do not like to write with pencils; offer alternatives!
- Give student time to respond (wait 10 seconds)
- Let student with Down syndrome approach you and begin a dialogue
- DON'T over prompt. Fewer cues are better.
- Teach appropriate physical contact and boundaries using correct terms for body parts
- Tour bathrooms and talk about appropriate behavior in the bathroom
- Use similar terms at home and school
- Use short phrases
- Communication log should be positive
- Connect goals to "real world"
- Dynamo labels for worksheets
- Id tags for students for fieldtrips
- Cheat sheets for job applications
- Have an emergency response plan in place
- Keep in mind your use of humor!

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Good IEP Goals

Putting dreams or visions into words is part of the ongoing, long-term planning for a student with a disability, and serves as the basis for mapping out the journey n which the student, the family, and educators will embark. Having a vision helps plan next year's destination. Good IEP goals

- Are driven by child needs;
- Are mutually agreed on by the family and the school;
- Support activities that are valued and typical of others who are the same age as the child;
- Support school and community membership; and
- Facilitate movement toward the long-range goals set by the child and her family.

One way to frame appropriate IEP goal development is to ask the following questions:

- *What do students this age do in school, at home, and in the community?*
- *What does this student want and/or need to do?*
- *What can the student do now?*
- *What kinds of support will the student need?*
- *What sorts of accommodations will we need to make?*

Strengths & Strategies Pages

Strength & Strategies" pages are simply lists that provide positive and useful information about a single learner. One list contains a student's strengths, interests, gifts, and talents. The other list answers the question, "What works for this student?"; this list should contain strategies for motivating, supporting, encouraging, helping, teaching, and connecting with the learner.

"Strengths & Strategies" pages can be used anytime for any purpose. I often use them to begin IEP meetings. They can also be used as an attachment to a positive behavior plan or as a communication tool for teams who are transitioning a student from teacher to teacher or school to school.

The focus on positive language and abilities can prompt educators to think and talk about students in more proactive way. It can also help teachers make changes in their planning and in their daily practice. Specifically, educators may be able to use these forms to:

- Plan curriculum and instruction
- Create adaptations
- Develop IEP goals
- Design supports for challenging situations
- Enhance collaborative communication between families and schools

Visit Paula Kluth's website to learn more:
http://www.paulakluth.com/articles/strengthstrateg.html