

Fostering Independence In Students with Disabilities



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Executive Director



Goals for this presentation

- DREAM BIG!
- Presume competence
- Get out of the way
- Self regulation
- Think like an employer
- Work yourself out of a job



Possible Medical Issues

- Heart Defects
- Muscle Hypotonia
- Hearing or Vision Loss
- Thyroid dysfunction
- Celiac Disease/food allergies
- Precocious puberty
- Sensory integration disorder



Possible Medical Issues

- Tactile Sensitivity
- High pain tolerance
- Toilet Training Issues
- Stamina
- Sleep apnea
- Dual diagnosis of Autism




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Possible Communication Issues

- Receptive vs. Expressive language
- Hearing
- Short term memory
- Speech articulation
- Processing time
- Echolalia
- Generalization



- Inability to read social cues
- Stuttering
- Resorts to one word or guttural noises



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Communication Strategies

| Getting Started | Facial Expression | Tone of Voice | Body Language |
|---|--|--|---|
| Approach from the front and get attention before speaking | Establish and maintain eye contact | Speak slowly and clearly using short phrases | Avoid sudden movements and hand over hand |
| Smile and use familiar vocabulary | Be friendly, relaxed and use gestures or signs | Use an authoritative but gentle voice | Be open and relaxed with your stance |
| Identify yourself if not known to the person | Use humor and laughter whenever possible | Convey an easy going manner | Remain calm and confident |
| Remember to allow for processing time | Be patient and supportive | Don't put a lot of emotion into your voice | Wait it out whenever possible |
| Explain transitions and schedule changes | | | Give visual cues |



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Communication Strategies

- Nonsense kick starters
do blue elephants do math?
- It's time do XYZ! Let's do the first problem together and then you can do the rest on your own.
- Emphasize desired response
don't do this, do this instead
- Don't wait, solve problems in real time
- Teach don't test
- Provide consistent messaging by creating vocabulary lists or catch phrase that EVERYONE uses



Communication Strategies

- Demands and Interruptions
 - Necessary vs. Unnecessary Demands
 - Talking too fast and too much information
 - 10 seconds can change a life
 - Visual interruptions
- Fallouts of Needless Demands and Interruptions
 - Shut Down-Down syndrome drop
 - Aggressive or Uncooperative Behavior



IQ or EQ



IQ or EQ



- Take the emotion out
- Match the student's pace but try to increase stamina
- You know what you are supposed to do
- I'm here if you need help
- Be consistent in messaging



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How does your student view you?



- My friend?
- My personal assistant?
- My shadow?
- My boss?
- Supporting the way you would want to be supported?



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Potential Effects of Para Support



- Separation from classmates
- Interference with peers
- Feeling of being stigmatized
- Lack of teacher engagement
- Loss of personal control
- Provocation of behaviors



**Giangreco, Edelman, Luiselli and MacFarland (1997)

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Potential Effects of Excessive Parent Support

- Lack of independence
- Frustration and aggression
- Barrier to employment
- Problem solving skills are impaired
- Not able to self-regulate (food, schedule, leisure activities)
- Viewed as eternal children
- Lack of future planning



So Happy and Loving All the Time

- Full range of emotions
- Majority of behavior caused by others
- Treat me like any other person
- Viewed as eternal children
- Center of attention
- Avoid situations that cause issues



Default Coping strategies

- Stimming
- Elopement
- Aggression
- Avoidance behavior
- Class clown
- Mother hens



Coping strategies that work

- Visual schedules
- Meditation or brain breaks
- Processing time
- Talking through frustration
- Sensory activities
- Breaking down tasks into manageable increments



Zones of Regulation

- Zones of Regulation is a systematic, cognitive behavior approach used to teach self-regulation
- Categorizes different ways we feel and states of alertness we experience into four concrete zones.
- Students can identify their feelings/level of alertness, understand how their behavior impacts those around them, and learn what tools they can use to manage their feelings and states.



zonesofregulation.com



Self Regulation is Important

- Leads to independence
- Opens the doors to new relationships
- Provides opportunities for growth
- Helps people better understand challenges and limitations



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ij8sRkQV9ac>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EkwzaGAFxEU>



Zones of Regulation

The **Red Zone** is used to describe extremely heightened states of alertness and intense emotions. A person may be elated or experiencing anger, rage, explosive behavior, devastation, or terror when in the Red Zone.

The **Yellow Zone** is also used to describe a heightened state of alertness and elevated emotions; however, one has some control when they are in the Yellow Zone. A person may be experiencing stress, frustration, anxiety, excitement, silliness, the wiggles, or nervousness when in the Yellow Zone.

The **Green Zone** is used to describe a calm state of alertness. A person may be described as happy, focused, content, or ready to learn when in the Green Zone. This is the zone where optimal learning occurs.

The **Blue Zone** is used to describe low states of alertness and down feelings, such as when one feels sad, tired, sick, or bored.



Skill vs. Will



Teach skills
Provide structure
Visual supports
Pacing

Teach behavior
Coping strategies
Consequences
Wait it out when possible



Skill vs. Will

| | | | |
|--------------|------|---|---|
| | HIGH | MOTIVATE Tap into motivators Identify constraints Praise and endorse | DELEGATE Give additional responsibility Praise and endorse Collaborate on decisions |
| SKILL | LOW | DIRECT Teach and train Provide guidance Identify constraints Tap into motivators Praise and endorse | ADVISE Teach and train Provide guidance Praise and endorse |
| | | LOW | HIGH |



Skill vs. Will

High Will ↑

Low Will ↓

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>GUIDE</p> <p>Reduce risks, obstacles, constraints Provide tools, training, guidance, coaching, feedback up front Relax control as progress is shown</p> | <p>DELEGATE</p> <p>Provide freedom in job methodology Communicate trust and recognition Develop stretch goals, broaden responsibilities, treat as "partner"</p> |
| <p>DIRECT</p> <p>Provide clear briefing, identify motives, develop vision of success Structure "quick wins," train/coach patiently, supervise with frequent feedback and clear expectations</p> | <p>EXCITE</p> <p>Identify reason for low will Develop intrinsic motivation, incentives, value alignment Monitor and provide recognition to reinforce positive behaviors</p> |

Low Skill → High Skill

Low Skill, Low Will

- Find motivators for student
- Be clear regarding expectations
- Set clear rules, methods and deadlines
- Check for understanding
- Encourage student to do tasks he can do
- Structure tasks for quick wins
- Provide training or modifications as needed
- Provide frequent feedback
- Praise and reward for success (fade quickly)

High Skill, Low Will

- Accept early mistakes as coaching moments
- Structure tasks to minimize risks to student
- Provide frequent feedback
- Relax oversight as progress is shown
- You can do it messages
- Adjust pacing as needed
- Praise and reward success (fade quickly)

Low Skill, High Will



- Provide visual supports
- Show steps to get to final work product
- Discuss why the work is important
- Find motivators and utilize
- Reduce volume of work if helpful
- Adjust pacing as needed
- Praise and reward success (fade quickly)



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High Skill, Low Will



- Be clear about goals/outcomes
- Involve student in decision making
- Discuss importance of work
- Emphasize achievements
- Provide coaching through errors
- Encourage student to ask for help as needed
- Praise and reward success (fade quickly)



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Skill vs. Will



- Students don't test to their true capabilities
- Inconsistency in supervising adults creates confusion
- Will only work for certain people
- Working for rewards vs. intrinsic value of work
- Work is overwhelming/too hard
- Environment is fast paced



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You're overthinking it!

- Common behavior for age
- Typical kids do this
- Too much supervision
- Too many prompts/transitions
- Over verbalizing
- Separate is not equal



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You're under thinking it!

- You have to teach behavior
- Accommodations/modifications
- Scheduling
- Low expectations
- Judging a book by the cover



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Supporting vs. Punishing

- Supporting corrects misbehavior and instills self-discipline
- Punishment stops misbehavior by inflicting pain or penalty.
- Supporting focuses on future correct behavior,
- Punishment focuses on past incorrect behavior.
- Supporting demonstrates attitude of love/concern for the child—they remain calm and relaxed.



Punishment associated with punisher, not the behavior. (speeding ticket)



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Successful supervising adults

- Confident in their actions
- Feel no guilt over the disability
- Look into the future
- Allow student to try and fail
- Natural consequences
- Avoid power struggles
- Are process oriented vs goal oriented



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Successful supervising adults

- Are consistent in interactions
 - expectations
 - tone of voice
 - routines
- Are not guided by a clock
- Measure success by level of independence achieved by student
- BELIEVE IN THE STUDENT!!



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Help me stay on task



- Predictability
- Tasks uninterrupted
- Transition times for peers
- Prompts for unstructured time
- Reducing verbal demands
- Why is this important to me
- Unnecessary interruptions
- Visual schedules



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Help me stay on task

- Watch and wait
- Prompt hierarchy
- Backward chaining
- Ask facilitative questions (what comes next?)
- Use transition objects (headphones to noisy settings)
- Break big tasks down
- Don't interrupt with praise

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Range of Supports

| Type of Support | Definition | Example |
|------------------|---|---|
| Full Physical | Direct and physical assistance | Hand over hand assistance to write name |
| Partial Physical | Physical assistance for some part of activity | Connecting zipper and pulling 1 inch |
| Modeling | Demonstrate what to do | Para does an art project side by side student |
| Direct Oral | Verbal directions only | "Josh, please stand up." |
| Indirect Verbal | Verbal prompt to get student to think about what comes next | "Josh, what should you be doing now that math is over?" |
| Gestural | Physical movement to cue (head nod, thumbs up) | Para points to visual schedule on desk |
| Natural | No cue change from other students directions | Bell rings and teacher ask students to move to rug. |

** adapted from *Paraprofessionals' Guide to the Inclusive Classroom*

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Co-Supporting Structures

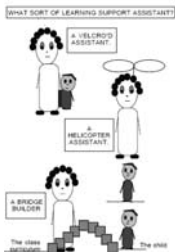
| If Teacher is Doing This: | Paraprofessional can be doing this: |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Lecturing | Model note taking, draw concepts on white board, write key topics down and review after lecture is over |
| Taking attendance | Collect and review homework |
| Giving directions | Write directions on board so students who need visual cues have them after they have been given |
| Providing large group instruction | Collect data on student behavior or engagement or make modifications for an upcoming lesson |
| Giving a test | Read the test to students who need accommodation |
| Gestural | Physical movement to cue (head nod, thumbs up) |
| Natural | No cue change from other students directions |

** adapted from *Paraprofessionals' Guide to the Inclusive Classroom*

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The Role of the Para Professional

- Encourage cooperative learning and involvement of peers as good role models
- Act as a bridge between student and the curriculum
- Provide feedback to the classroom teacher on the student's response to the curriculum
- Encourage development of age appropriate behavior
- Set high expectations and refuse to accept inappropriate behavior



Roles for Paraprofessionals

Lesson Planning

| Teacher | X | Collaborative Team | X | Paraprofessional | X |
|---|---|--|---|---|---|
| Develops lesson plans | | Discuss lesson plan before activities | | Assists in coordinating and managing activities | |
| Determines needed materials | | Discuss instructional strategies, grouping students and activities | | Obtains needed materials | |
| Aligns lesson with standards, IEP's and student needs | | Delineate who will prepare needed materials | | Assists with coordinating and managing activities | |

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Roles for Paraprofessionals


Instructional Accommodations and Curriculum Modifications

| Teacher | X | Collaborative Team | X | Paraprofessional | X |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| Include instructional accommodations and curricular modifications in design of lesson plan | | Discuss modifications and accommodations needed for students and how they will be implemented | | Prepare accommodations per teacher direction | |
| Monitor proper use of accommodations and modifications | | Delineate who will facilitate student instructional accommodations needed for lesson | | Facilitate and monitor instructional accommodations under teacher supervision | |
| | | | | Provide instructional supports per teacher determined curricular modifications | |

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Roles for Paraprofessionals

Instruction




| Teacher | X | Collaborative Team | X | Paraprofessional | X |
|---|---|---|---|--|---|
| Plan all instructional activities and student groupings | | Teacher gives directions to paras regarding activities, materials and student groupings related to lesson | | Reinforce and review initial teacher instruction as planned by teacher | |
| Deliver all initial instruction | | Discuss method for student progress data collection and plan for sharing findings and observations | | Provide struggling learners with prompts and cues related to teacher instruction | |
| | | | | Collect data on student progress as defined by teacher | |

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Roles for Paraprofessionals


Classroom Management





| Teacher | X | Collaborative Team | X | Paraprofessional | X |
|--|---|---|---|--|---|
| Define, teach and monitor classroom management plan | | Discuss class management plan and model supporting strategies | | Assist and reinforce class management plan | |
| Define, teach and monitor student specific behavior management plans | | Discuss student specific behavior management plan and model supporting strategies | | Assist and reinforce student specific behavior management plan | |
| | | | | Monitor plans with teacher direction | |

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Avoiding Learned Helplessness



- Students with Down syndrome are often presumed to need help in areas where they can actually be quite self sufficient.
- It is best to presume competence and provide supports only when the student requests assistance or proves it is needed.
- Are the supports you have in place transferrable to other settings?
 - Community outings
 - Employment situations
 - Post secondary education
- Are you training your student to be a productive member of society?
- Are you setting the student up to fail later in life by rescuing him/her now?

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Avoiding Learned Helplessness

Promotes Learned Helplessness

- Protecting student from taking risks
- Rescuing student from anticipated outcomes
- Overlooking errors
- Constant prompts
- Speaking for your student
- Giving inflated grades
- Permitting bad behavior
- Making excuses
- Interceding before they ask for help
- Inconsistency in discipline/expectations

Promotes Independence

- Setting clear limits on what is safe
- Discussing issues and creating solutions
- Giving clear directions/expect follow through
- Student encouraged to speak for self
- Teaching at a challenging level using learning strengths
- Using rubric scoring honestly
- Coaching student on errors
- Consistency in discipline/expectations
- Holding student accountable for actions
- Allowing student to fail in safe environment
- Teaching student to ask for help as needed



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Should we change things up?

- 3-6 week trials
- Staffing
 - Too dependent
 - Non-responsive
- Managing behaviors instead of teaching
- Lack of rapport
- Anticipating problems
- Peers



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How to Fade Support

- When is support truly necessary
 - 10 minutes at recess lineup
 - All day long
- Reduce cues
- Look for more natural supports
- Ensure materials student works on promote independence



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Reinforcement Schedule

- Prompt dependency
- Praise dependency
- Reward dependency

****intermittent reinforcement is the best way to shape behavior****



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Putting it all together!

- Prompt hierarchy
- Zones of regulation
- Structure/routines
- Consistent messaging
- Processing time
- Avoiding learned helplessness
- Teach don't test
- 15-20 repetitions in multiple settings



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Don't Limit Me!



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YOwDfnoek6E>



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Questions???



To learn more about supporting students with Down syndrome:

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