

TIPS FOR WORKING WITH KIDS WITH DISABILITIES (AND WITHOUT)

- Learn as much as you can about the child and his/her disability.
- Encourage children to see their strengths as well as their weaknesses. Help them to see that they can reach their goals.
- Make good eye contact when giving instructions. Ask the child to look at you.
- Give instructions/rules in small, sequential steps.
- Demonstrate each portion of the activity.
- Make sure your rules/expectations are understood. Ask the child to explain the rules back to you.
- Plan games and activities in which everyone can participate. Make adaptations if necessary.
- Allow for breaks in a long task, or alternate activities.
- Be supportive, keep a positive attitude, get involved and most of all, be enthusiastic.
- Praise good behaviors and the smallest steps and attempts, but do not provide unwarranted praise.
- Warn children when the activity is about to end.
- Repetition - structure - flexibility - consistency - follow through.
- Encourage independence when possible. Remember to let them know that they can ask for help.

SPECIFIC TECHNIQUES FOR INCLUSION

- Expectations and attitudes play a major role in successful inclusion. Think Positive!
- Inclusion aide is seen as just another staff in the program and interacts with all the children.
- All staff interacts with the child with a disability.
- Focus on the similarities that all the participants share and encourage equality, rather than stressing the differences.
- Encourage teamwork among the group and helping others when needed.
- Believe you can communicate. It may not be easy at first, but keep trying.
- Honor each person with unconditional positive regard.
- Remember that it's ok to ask most questions in a polite manner regarding a person's disability.
- Do not generalize. Each person is unique and will have a different degree, type and response to a specific disability.
- Ask to help the child first. Only when it is a safety issue should you give unwanted help.
- Be yourself, use humor, and have fun with the child.

EXAMPLES OF EASY PROGRAM ADAPTATIONS

Program Adaptations can be easier than you think by simply working with your team, not being afraid to do whatever works within your available resources and being creative.

Participant likes to run off

Keep doors closed, put a stop sign on the door, hang a bell from the door, use orange cones to make boundaries more visible, verbally cue, gesture, or loud noise to redirect or gain child's attention.

Participant has boundary or space issues

Identify child's area by: making tape on carpet square or floor, name tags, place mats, assigned seating or spot in line, constant verbal prompting, cue cards that say, "Hands to self," or "Sit Up," "Stand Still."

Participant has difficulty with transitions

Picture schedules, picture book, start transitioning early - before group, three verbal pre-warnings, flashing lights, buzzers or bells, rewards for good transitions, positive praise for successful completion of task, use others as good examples, and utilize a transition partner/peer.

Participant has difficulty completing a task/activity

Use an egg timer or a sand timer, stop and go baskets or signs, "first this, then that" language, refer back to picture schedule, cue cards that say "Stop, Think and Listen," homemade clocks, reward attempt or completion with preferred activity that child enjoys.

Participant appears to be over-anxious and yells or blurts out

Popsicle stick stop sign, finger to the lips, keep finger up, verbally saying, "Wait, it's not your turn." Use planned ignoring, hand on shoulder, rubbing their back, position your body closer to them, and constant redirection for the rest of the play group.