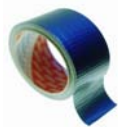


# Strategies for Educators



## Organizing the Physical Space

- Seat the student at the front of the class where there are fewer distractions.
- Make sure that the desk and chair fit the child, so that the child's feet touch the floor when sitting
- Reduce visual and auditory distractions in the classroom. (Remove hangings from the ceiling, organize bulletin boards and bookshelves so they are uncluttered, and close the door to reduce hallway noise). Paint the room in neutral colors.
- Design a "calm corner" (Use a rocking chair, blow up pool, beanbag chair, or large open cardboard box filled with pillows) to be used as a privilege, not a punishment.
- Help define students' physical boundaries by providing rug squares for activities in which children sit on the floor, hula hoops for walking or group, taping a line on the floor where students line up, and or taping a square around the student's desk and chair.
- Keep the lights low and your voice calm.
- Use headphones with low playing music to help students focus.



## Necessary Materials

Duct Tape

Hula Hoops

Blow Up Pool

Pillows

Bean Bag Chairs

Carpet Squares

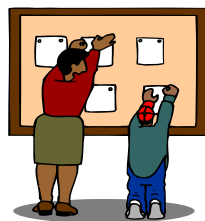
Colored Bins

Music Player Device with Headphones

## Reinforcing Routines and Assisting with Transitions



- Keep the classroom schedule the same all year, and use visuals to reinforce the schedule (hold up a book for reading time, show a picture of children playing for recess.)
- Post the schedule in an obvious place for all students and tape a copy to the desk or table where the child is sitting.
- Keep the seating assignment consistent all year long.
- Post the alphabet or any other information that students refer to frequently on the student's desk or inside the cover of the appropriate notebook.
- Remind Students about schedule or seating changes well in advance. Repeat the reminders several times. Send a notice home prior to a schedule change so that parents can reinforce the upcoming change.
- Use a consistent signal when a change in routine is about to happen (a soft bell, a tap on the board, a song, a raised hand).



### **Necessary Materials**

Schedules/Rules Posters

Pictures of Everyday events

Bells

## Making Learning Accommodations



- Institute simple assists like the use of a calculator, a manila folder placed upright in front of the student on the desk to block out distractions, and or a ruler on the page while reading to help the student keep his or her place.
- Before giving instructions, say the child's name and use eye contact and or touch to get his/her attention.
- To verify understanding, have the student explain instruction in his/her own words and demonstrate what they have learned.
- Provide a daily list of homework assignments with a check box next to each assignment.
- If possible, email the daily list of homework assignments to the parent.
- Allow the child to stand and work at the back of the room for part of the day.
- Alert the child before touching them.
- Encourage the student to tape record classroom lessons to review at home.



### **Necessary Materials**

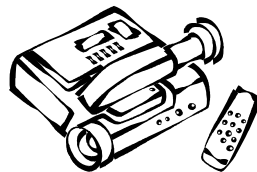
Modified Work Sheets  
Homework Check- Off Sheets  
Manila Folders  
Calculators  
Rulers

## Assisting Social Development and Improving Behavior



- Give the fidgety student routine jobs that allow him or her to get up and move around (running an errand to the office, emptying the wastebasket, sharpening pencils, watering plants, feeding the fish) Make sure the job doesn't have more than 1 or 2 commands.
- Place the student at the beginning or end of a line or the edge of a group to minimize bumping and give extra space.
- Learn the student's signs of frustration and intervene early.
- Use a student from an upper grade to tutor or be a buddy to model good behavior for the student. This also helps the younger student gain status in his or her peers' eyes.
- Teach personal space (Use a hula hoop to understand concepts such as standing closer than arm's length to someone, do not touch other people's clothing or body, when it is appropriate to sit in someone's lap and when it isn't).
- Post, model and enforce specific consequences for good and bad behavior in the classroom.
- Use visual cues to signal to the student that their behavior is deteriorating (stoplight game-green is good behavior, yellow is a warning signal and red indicates the student is out of control and needs to take time out).

- Reinforce appropriate behavior. Give tickets for appropriate behavior; 5 tickets= 5 minutes of extra play time. (This may be difficult for some students. Remember to use only over a short period of time).
- Teach self talk to help the student develop self control. Use specific, short phrases such as “stop and think.”
- Use role play or recording to model and for the child to rehearse appropriate social skills.
- Remember that the student’s misbehavior may be an expression of frustration or lack of understanding. Respond to it as such, rather than as intentional misbehavior.



### **Necessary Materials**

Hula hoops

Duct Tape

List of Jobs

Recording Device

Carnival Tickets

## Modifying the Curriculum



- Use materials and approaches appropriate for a child 3-5 years younger. Think stage appropriate vs. age.
- Use multiple modalities-visual, auditory, kinesthetic- whenever possible.
- Repeat everything you say and give the student plenty of opportunity to practice.
- Give the student extra time to complete work.
- Be patient.
- Allow students to use the computer to carry out activities whenever possible. (Computers provide immediate feedback and unwavering consistency of approach).
- Give directions one step at a time. Wait for the student to complete the first step in the directions before describing the second step.
- Design worksheets with no more than 3 or 4 problems and a lot of white space. Use graph paper for math.
- Build in frequent breaks for students (work for 10 minutes, have a 3 minute break) and gradually increase the time spent on task.
- Use concrete representation of time (stop watch, kitchen timer, sand timer)



### **Necessary Materials**

Computer Access

Modified Work Sheets/Graph Paper

Kitchen Timers/ Stop Watch

## Strategies for School Administrators



- Acknowledge to staff that many of these recommended strategies, such as keeping a calm visually simple classroom are contrary to what they are taught. Reinforce the importance of giving the strategies a try.
- Have staff in the hallways, cafeteria, playground and school bus loading areas to assist the child through transition times.
- If you have a naturally organized teacher on staff, ask him or her to provide suggestions to colleagues for organizing and simplifying the classroom to benefit the students.
- Ensure that parents and teacher don't have to start from scratch each year-provide the parents and the new teacher with a summary of the child's needs and "best approaches" that have been found most helpful. Make sure that this information is included in the child's school records. Focus on strengths and what WILL WORK as opposed to deficits.
- Find or assign one adult in the school to be the child's advocate (someone who will speak up for the child in a positive way and help him or her figure out how to resolve problems). The advocate can be any adult in the school from the principal to the custodian with whom the child has made a connection and who genuinely likes the child.