

Ten Tips for Special Educators

Collaborate, communicate and promote the participation of students with disabilities in the inclusive classroom.



Visit the regular classroom.

Measure student progress and participation in the general education classroom. Your lesson modifications, adaptations, and learning goals will be more meaningful.



Define roles and expectations.

Go to classroom teachers and explain your role and how you can help. Specify what you will need to increase student participation. Discuss discipline and behavior expectations.



Use the expertise of others.

Do not waste time researching content areas. Solicit the classroom teacher's participation. Ask for the syllabus, learning objectives, outcome standards, rubrics and any other content information.

Develop a rapport with others.



Talk with teammates and administrators in person! Encourage others to voice concerns, hopes and fears. Even a two-minute chat between classes can establish collaboration.

Watch your language!



Teamwork stems from good communication. Use people-first language. Avoid acronyms or language specific to your field.

Invite students to IEP's.



Students who attend their own meetings understand their role and responsibilities. Ask students, family, friends, teachers and other professionals to share their goals and expectations with the student.



Promote student-teacher relationships.

Brag about student strengths! Tell classroom teachers how students can participate. Never apologize for placing a student in a general class or promise that a student will "not be a bother."



Use friends as natural supports.

Let peers walk together between classes, program communication devices and assist at lunch.

Supervise classroom aides.



Give paraeducators explicit instructions. Outline duties in detail. Always follow up and monitor how things are going in the classroom!

Promote active, experiential learning!



Alternative methods encourage active learning for ALL students. Assist classroom teachers plan cooperative learning groups, learning centers, and project-based lessons.