

Overview of Individualized Supports - Strategies



Environmental Support

Physical Environment

- Put tape on an area and remind children to play outside the taped area or to keep toys within the taped area
- Use pictures and symbols on shelves, containers
- Provide individual spaces as needed, for example a carpet square for sitting

Social Environment

- Plan cooperative small-group activities that are highly engaging and provide facilitated practice during play so that a child is near peers but with support
- Arrange for a child to have a peer buddy during group activities and transitions

Temporal Environment

- Create a picture schedule and a first/then schedule for children
- Provide pictures or objects as a transition cue. Allow a child who needs extra support to take the transition object to the next activity
- Provide a calming area

Support with Materials

Placement of materials

- Place bins for clean up on the floor or in easy-to-reach places
- Lower the easel or use a table-top easel

Stabilize materials

- Tape or secure drawing paper to the table
- Use non-skid backing for materials, toys, and utensils

Assist the child's response

- Glue a small piece of Styrofoam to the corner of pages to assist with grasping to turn a page
- Plan for the use of sticky paper, contact paper, two-sided tape to assist children who are unable to glue
- Use grippers or wrap pieces of foam around crayons, markers, paintbrushes

Use materials that hold interest

- Include unique, shiny paper, stickers, stamps in the writing/art center
- Use a big book or large illustrations during story time

Supports during Activities

Manageable parts

- Hand the pieces of an activity to the child one by one and gradually increase the number of pieces given
- Break down the activity into several steps. Provide directions, modeling, and visuals for each step
- Put photos and visuals in strategic places in the classroom to help a child transition from one activity to the next
- Reduce the number of required steps for completing a task. Give the child a project with some steps already completed

Supports Based on Child Preferences

During group or transition times

- Let the child hold a favorite quiet toy during group time
- Allow the child to carry the favorite toy from one activity to another

Gaining Attention

- Incorporate a favorite activity into the beginning of group time, begin with a child's favorite song or activity such as bubbles to gain attention at the beginning of an activity
- If a child is hesitant to go to a certain play center, move a favorite toy to that center

Supports that Require Special Equipment

Increase access to activities and play areas

- Use a wagon that has room for two so that the child who needs to ride in the wagon has a peer buddy
- Incorporate the use of a sensory table or sensory lap pad for children who need support
- Provide chairs with arm and foot support when needed
- Provide seating for the floor so the child is on the floor with peers when appropriate

Increase participation

- Use loop scissors or other adaptive scissors
- Use large thick crayons, crayons/markers/brushes with grippers

Support from Adults

Presence and Interaction

- Play with the child, capture attention with favorite toys
- Position an adult near the child to facilitate, interact, and help
- Praise and encourage, make positive comments, model and give time for repetition of an action

References

CARA's KIT (Creating Adaptations for Routines and Activities)

from Division for Early Childhood (DEC) of the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC). This flip book provides information about how to make adaptations to the environment for children who have difficulty or need assistance with accessing and using materials in the classroom.

<https://bookstore.dec-sped.org/product-p/001.htm>

Sandall, Susan and Ilene Schwartz. ***Building Blocks for Teaching Preschoolers with Special Needs***. Curriculum Modifications by Type (chapter 5). Brookes Publishing, 2008.

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