

Workshop: Creating an inclusive environment in the preschool classroom

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Workshop

- ▶ Including children with special needs in the mainstream classroom
- ▶ Children's behavior
 - ▶ What is challenging behavior?
- ▶ Helping students in an inclusive classroom
 - ▶ Classroom accommodation
 - ▶ Classroom adaptation
 - ▶ Peers & Family
- ▶ What can teachers do
 - ▶ Positive attitude
 - ▶ Information sharing

Including children in your preschool classroom

- ▶ Positive perception of in-service preschool teachers have found undertaking further training in including children with needs: learning disabilities (SLD), dyslexia, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD), autism spectrum disorder have helped them with information
 - ▶ To understand the child
 - ▶ To support the child
 - ▶ To teach the child

Including children in your preschool classroom

- ▶ Children require the nurture and care of the early childhood educator.
- ▶ Mild behavioural issues: Inattention, Fidgeting, Emotional outbursts
- ▶ Behaviours which require referral to a pediatrician are children with a possible diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and Intellectual Disability (ID), Global Developmental Delay (GDD)

Disability activities

- ▶ Activities to demonstrate the challenges of having a disability
- ▶ Designed to simulate classroom behaviours

Teaching Strategies

Helping students: Behaviour strategies

1. ADHD
2. ASD
3. SLD
4. ID/ GDD

Teaching strategies

- ▶ Behaviour difficulties associated with ADHD
 - ▶ Active, Inattention, Fidgets

Teaching example

- ▶ Anger management

Teaching strategies (ASD)

- ▶ Behaviour difficulties associated with ASD
 - ▶ Communication (eg eye contact), Social skills (eg Plays alone), Repetitive behavior (washing hands, flapping)
- ▶ Teaching example
 - ▶ Visual Schedule
 - ▶ Social Stories

Teaching strategies

- ▶ Behaviour difficulties associated with SLD
 - ▶ Reading and writing difficulties

- ▶ Teaching example
 - ▶ Writing outlines

Teaching strategies

- ▶ Behaviour difficulties associated with ID
 - ▶ Learning difficulties in adaptive skills
- ▶ Teaching example
 - ▶ (Discrete Trial) – ABC
 - ▶ Simplifying steps
 - ▶ Token Board (Rewards)

Helping students in the classroom environment

Classroom Adaptation

1. Environmental Structuring
Class activity , Class instruction, Class materials
2. Organisation
Movement & Class rules
1. Attitude change and information-sharing strategies
Teacher perception

How to help students in an inclusive classroom

- ▶ Understand their unique abilities and challenges
- ▶ Identify and teach essential classroom rules and behaviours and learning strategies
- ▶ Different classroom environments.

Considerations in a physical environment

- ▶ Learning materials should be of different
 - ▶ sizes,
 - ▶ shapes, and
 - ▶ textures
- ▶ Rotate toys and objects to be used rather than having everything out all the time



Encourage exploration and active manipulation



Maintain Children's Interest

Considerations in a physical environment

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- ▶ Should enable all children to
 - ▶ move around safely and;
 - ▶ accommodate different motor abilities and activity levels.
- ▶ Class room should be uncluttered with well-defined and consistent activity areas
- ▶ Traffic patterns between areas should be
 - ▶ clear, easy to recognize,
 - ▶ Have sufficient space between furniture
 - ▶ Height of tables and chairs should support children to sit well

Use of environmental structuring

1. Keep groups relatively small
2. Assign seats around table or at group time to encourage social interaction
3. Provide materials appropriate to the skills or interaction desired
4. Promote selection of materials that facilitate cooperative interaction
5. Make sufficient materials available to promote cooperation and imitation

Creating a friendly classroom environment

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- ▶ Include peer reading of books
- ▶ Encourage cooperative academic and nonacademic games
- ▶ Establish learning centers
- ▶ Teach with friendship themes
- ▶ Develop a classroom identity

Use peer-based strategies

- ▶ Positive peer reporting (PPR) - encouraging peers to write positive things about each other to encourage prosocial behaviour “**catch them being good**”
- ▶ Class and peer support meetings: Used to address classroom social interaction problems where the class and peers will brainstorm for ideas and strategies
- ▶ Peer mentoring, buddy, and partner systems: Provide opportunities for students to assist other students in daily activities (lunchtime)

Preparation for Intervention

Intervention and preparation

- ▶ Classroom rules and expected behaviours
- ▶ Introduce class routines to develop independence
 - ▶ Location of materials
 - ▶ Monitoring time taken to complete activities
 - ▶ Weekly and Daily Schedules
- ▶ Organisational skills
 - ▶ Highlighting instructions
 - ▶ Communication notebooks
 - ▶ Weekly and Daily schedules
- ▶ Building Social Competency

Understand Child's Unique Abilities and Challenges

- ▶ Getting information about the child in inclusive settings
- ▶ Create a folder containing information and photos that
 - ▶ Strengths
 - ▶ Ability levels
 - ▶ Social and behavioural skills
 - ▶ Preferences
 - ▶ Interests
 - ▶ Successful instructional strategies
 - ▶ Background information

Involve family members

- ▶ Involve family members
 - ▶ Family members can create opportunities for support outside of school
 - ▶ Families can lead after-school activities to facilitate friendships of their children
 - ▶ Families can connect with other families
- ▶ Encourage participation in extracurricular and community-based activities
 - ▶ Sharing of mutually enjoyable activities fosters friendships
 - ▶ Activities can be adapted to be more inclusive

Teacher perception

Teacher Attitude change and information-sharing strategies

Reflect on personal attitudes, behaviors and language

- ▶ View each child as competent and multidimensional
- ▶ Highlight child's abilities rather than challenges
- ▶ Use person-first language
- ▶ Acknowledge individual differences
- ▶ Establish high expectations for all children
- ▶ Affirm children and their achievements

Attitude change and information-sharing strategies

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- ▶ Provide choices to children and solicit their preferences
- ▶ Provide opportunities for children to assume leadership positions
- ▶ Use age-appropriate language and topics
- ▶ Speak directly to children
- ▶ Respect your children and their independence
- ▶ Teach your children to show mutual respect for others

Including all children in your preschool

Accessibility: They can get to where they want to go

Accommodation: They can do what they want to do

Resource availability: They can access the resources they need to succeed

Social Support: They are accepted by others

Equality: They are treated with respect and equally with other

Including children in your preschool classroom (3 R)

- ▶ **Recognition** – Awareness of the child's strengths and difficulties
- ▶ **Reflect** – Reflect on child's unique characteristics
- ▶ **Re-organize**: Relook at your activities to see how you can accommodate the child in your classroom

References

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Salend, S. J. (2011). *Creating inclusive classrooms: Effective and reflective practices* (7th ed.). Upper Saddle River, N.J. : Pearson.