# 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

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

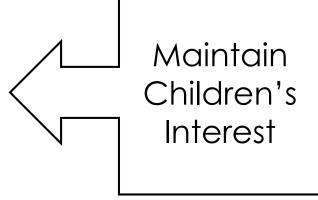
#### How to help students in an inclusive classroom

- 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





## Considerations in a physical environment

- Should enable all children to
  - move around <u>safely</u> 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
- Assign seats around table or at group time to encourage social interaction
- 3. Provide materials appropriate to the skills or interaction desired
- Promote selection of materials that facilitate cooperative interaction
- Make sufficient materials available to promote cooperation and imitation

#### Creating a friendly classroom environment

- ► 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 informationsharing 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 informationsharing strategies

- 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

Heward, W. L. (2013). Exceptional children. An introduction to special education (10<sup>th</sup> ed.). Pearson.

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