



Inclusion Solutions

A newsletter for educators who are doing amazing things!

Winter 2009

Individuals with Down syndrome have unlimited potential when given the opportunity to succeed.



Down Syndrome Association
of Memphis & the Mid-South

901.547.7588

**Supporting
and
Empowering
People
with Down
syndrome
and Their
Families**

Great Things Happen In Inclusive Schools

Inclusive Schools Week, set for December 7-11, 2009, is an annual event held each year during the first week in December and is sponsored by the Inclusive Schools Network (ISN) at Education Development Center, Inc. (EDC). Since its inception in 2001, Inclusive Schools Week has celebrated the progress that schools have made in providing a supportive and quality education to an increasingly diverse student population, including students who are marginalized due to disability, gender, socio-economic status, cultural heritage, language preference and other factors. The Week also provides an important opportunity for educators, students and parents to discuss what else needs to be done in order to ensure that their schools continue to improve their ability to successfully educate all children.

For more information or to download a celebration kit to use at your school visit www.inclusiveschools.org

Upcoming Specialist Training, January 28, 2010

"Practical Solutions for Educating Students with Down Syndrome" workshop.

Designed to help you understand how to successfully engage, instruct and enjoy your student with Down syndrome, this workshop will provide an overview of the specific learning needs characteristic of students with Down syndrome. Tips, strategies and solutions relevant to pre-school through high school will be covered. Attendees will learn:

- How to open the lines of communication
- Ways to promote independence
- Environmental factors which promote success
- Effective home/school partnership techniques
- Various community resources
- Behavior modification strategies
- Alternatives to reward systems
- How to promote friendships
- Effective IEP goals
- Health issues affecting learning

This workshop will be open to all educators! Workshop will be held at 8 am on January 28th at the Memphis Educations Association, 126 S. Flicker Street, Memphis.

Contact DSAM at 901.547.7588 or admin@dsamemphis.org

Some Thoughts on Seclusion and Restraint

by Bev Adcock

The issues of restraining and/or secluding children with disabilities who have serious behavior problems is a hot topic right now. After several people died while being restrained or secluded, Congress, as well as many State legislatures, are struggling to come up with laws that protect everyone. Eventually, this is expected to become part of federal law. Until then, schools and parents need to proceed very carefully. This issue affects everyone. Here in Tennessee one school district actually built wooden boxes, drilled air holes in the top, put children inside them and padlocked them in. This may have been a one-time occurrence – although the fact that they had time to build boxes makes that unlikely – but it turned into a full-time placement for those children. It accomplished nothing except to needlessly punish children even before they had a behavior and allow staff to ignore their responsibility to teach. It is nothing less than child abuse.

Seclusion itself isn't bad. Getting away from everything to a quiet place where you can calm down and pull yourself together is something we do for ourselves when we are upset. Used correctly, it can be an effective part of a behavior plan.

Usually a child is removed from class if he is aggressive (hurting himself or others or throwing things) or uncontrollably screaming and it disrupts class for more than a few minutes. Short outbursts or minor or one-time hitting, kicking, etc. should be handled by other methods. For example, you might move a child to the hallway for a few minutes and then return him to class once he is calm.

If the out-of-control behavior is serious or goes on longer than a few minutes, more needs to be done. Seclusion shouldn't be punishment or a way for adults to escape a frustrating situation. So how do you decide when it is OK and when it isn't? First, there is a difference in "seclusion" versus "time out" or "cool down." Seclusion usually means a place where the child is locked in and left alone. Time out and cool down rooms are usually not locked and while the child may be alone, staff are nearby and make frequent visual checks to be sure the child is OK. Tennessee has very strict definitions for locked rooms that include the size, materials, doors, windows and locks as well as how often staff must check on the

child. If seclusion, time out or cool down is suggested as a way to deal with behaviors, find out exactly what they mean. Removing a child and keeping them away from everyone else should always be the last resort. After the first time it happens, the IEP Team needs to meet and come up with a better plan for addressing the behavior.

The first rule of behavior management is that the child must be protected from harm. No child should ever be locked up. Locks are a substitute for having staff with the child and allow staff to walk away and stop trying to resolve the problem. Leaving a child who is out-of-control locked up alone is a recipe for disaster. He could hurt himself or have a seizure because he is so agitated. Children locked in seclusion rooms have been seriously injured and some have died.

Because of the possibility of danger to the child, staff must always be either with the child or close by making frequent visual checks. That way if the child hurts himself or has a seizure, staff can quickly intervene. Some children need an adult to help them get calm. Others may need to be alone, but staff still need to keep a close eye on them.

Restraint, or holding a child down, should only be used if it is the only way to keep him from hurting himself or others. Never lie on top of a child or hold them in a way that will restrict their breathing. If a child tells you he can't breathe, let him go immediately. Children have died while being restrained.

Any time you have a behavior plan for a child, make sure you understand everything, including how and when different parts of it will be used. If time out/cool down will be used, be sure you ask and understand:

What is meant by "time out/cool down/seclusion"?

- When would time out/cool down be used (for which exact behaviors)?
- How often or how long would the behavior have to happen before time out/cool down is used?
- How severe would the behavior have to be?
- Where would time out/cool down take place (location of room, size of room, etc.)?
- Has the room been set up so ensure the child's safety?
- How long would the child be in there at a time?

- How many times a day?
- Where will staff be? How frequently will they check on the child? (Visual checks should be done at 1-minute intervals.)
- How will staff decide if using cool down is helping?
- What criteria will be used to decide when the child will return to class?
- Most important: What methods are being used to prevent the behavior from occurring in the first place?
- Never agree to have a child locked in.

As a general rule, if anything in the plan would be unacceptable for a nondisabled child or for someone to do to you if you got mad, it is NOT a good idea. However, if a child is attacking others and needs to be alone to get calm, staff may need to temporarily hold the door closed. This is better than using a lock as it keeps staff close and focused on calming the child down.

Be careful about using cool down with children who prefer to be alone and will act out so they can go to the cool down room. For students who prefer to be alone, find a different approach.

The set up of the cool down room depends on a child's needs. If a child bangs his head or throws himself against walls or floors, these should be padded. On the other hand, if the child's out-of-control behavior is screaming, the physical design of the room may not be as critical. Ask to see the room and think in terms of what the child does when out of control and what helps them calm down. Don't ask for things a child doesn't need. The room should be empty so there is nothing to throw and nothing to do. The child should only be there until they are calm enough to return to class.

Even in the best-run programs, sometimes children who are out of control get hurt. They may scoot themselves across the floor during a tantrum and get rug burns. They may scratch or bite themselves. They may bruise or cut themselves when they fall against walls, floor or furniture. If a child is injured, ask lots of questions but don't assume it was the fault of staff. On the other hand, make sure it wasn't abuse. Regardless of the cause, focus on making sure it won't happen again. Work with the parents to plan how to prevent any future harm by changing staff, providing staff with more training, changing the location or adding some safety precautions. Parents should be informed about any



incidents and included in discussions about how to address the behavior.

Check frequently on how the elements in the behavior plan are working and change them if they are not effective. There must be documentation on when and why the child is in time out/cool down so the IEP Team can see how often it occurs and if the frequency is going down. Cool down can be a useful tool, but it should not be the only method used for out-of-control behaviors.

It is possible to improve the behavior of any child. But it requires a thoughtful, planned approach with a behavior plan that clearly spells out what needs to happen. Prevention should always be the biggest part of any behavior plan with the child's safety as the number one priority.

Bev Adcock is co-owner of Possibilities, Inc., a company that provides training and consultation to parents and school districts on special education. She has been a classroom teacher, principal and surrogate parent and served on a Special Education Advisory Committee for a school district. She is co-author of 9 books and training curriculum and is a Behavior Consultant to parents and

20 WAYS TO ADAPT THE READ ALOUD

So many of us can remember our teachers reading from a favorite book. I fondly remember, for example, Ms. G, my second grade teacher, reading *The Boxcar Children* (Warner, 1942). I could not wait to settle into my desk after recess to hear the many adventures of Henry, Jessie, Violet, and Benny. Even at an early age I viewed the read aloud as one of the most sacred parts of the school day.

The read aloud helps us to build and experience a sense of community, it provides us with common ground for discussion, it entertains us, it requires no (or very little) formal student response so it gives all learners a time to feel confident and competent, and it connects us to reading and to books as a way to learn and enjoy. For all of these reasons, it is heartbreaking to see students in inclusive classrooms excluded from the read aloud. Learners may be excluded because the teacher believes the activity will be of little benefit to the individual or because the student cannot participate in a typical way. One teacher recently told me she asked one of her students to be pulled from the read aloud because “he doesn’t even look up at the book.” They may be excluded because the teacher thinks there are other more important skills to develop during that period of time. One of my former co-teaching partners once asked if we should pull a student from the read aloud so we could address a few “life skills” or functional skills

(e.g., hand washing, making change) during that time. Both of these scenarios illustrate how why and how learners lose access to the incredibly rich experience of shared reading time; educators do not yet understand the read aloud as powerful for all.

Including all students, including those with the most significant disabilities, in the read aloud is one of the easiest ways to promote language learning as the development of literacy skills in individuals with disabilities is associated with being exposed to models of individuals using printed materials (Koppenhaver, Coleman, Kalman, & Yoder, 1991) and having opportunities to interact with others around written materials (Koppenhaver, Evans, & Yoder, 1991). Reading to students can improve their fluency (Blau, 2001), help them access content they could not access on their own (Crossley & McDonald, 1984; Blackman, 2000; Mukhopadhyay, 2001), and expose them to a range of genres, especially those they would not choose on their own. And, to respond to my former co-teacher who thought other skills might be more important to develop, we should also consider that no skill is potentially more functional than reading.

Because of the relatively low demand on the learner during the read aloud, most students will require nothing but a space to sit and listen. Others, however, may need adapted roles, materials, strategies, or expectations

to participate in a meaningful way. Consider these twenty ideas for including all students in the read aloud. These suggestions may work for students who need to fidget or move during whole-class instruction, those who need materials to keep focused, those who profit from having an active role in lessons, those who benefit from collaborative learning, and those who require alternative ways of demonstrating attention, engagement, and interest. Some of them work best for younger children but most of them would be appropriate for fiction and non-fiction selections and for students in grades K-12:



1) Give the student (or students) the same book so they can follow the story as the teacher reads;

2) Give the student an adapted version of the book (e.g., a book with extra pictures, large type, or laminated pages) so they can follow along as the teacher reads;

3) Give the student a related book (one that has interesting images perhaps) that will help them focus on the content and stay interested in the subject area (e.g., when the teacher is reading a passage on the Berlin Wall, the child can be paging through the picture book, *Talking Walls* [Knight, 1995]);

4) Let the student explore a “story bag” filled with objects related to the story (e.g., the bag for *A River Ran Wild* [Cherry, 1992] could be filled with a map of the Nashua River, a little vial of water, a pressed wildflower, and a small plastic frog);

5) Give the student a puppet to hold during the story and let him perform parts of the book on his own or to the class;

6) Give a student a copy of the text to highlight words or phrases of interest as the teacher reads;

7) Give a student a copy of the text to doodle on or code with symbols (e.g., a for “I agree”, s for “I don’t understand”) as the teacher reads;

8) Give the student cards to hold up during key passages (e.g., every time the bad wolf is mentioned, the child holds up a picture of the wolf or every time the teacher says “respiratory system”, the student holds up a photo of the lungs);

9) Give the student something text-related to fidget with as the story is read (e.g., the student fidgets with a train car as the teacher reads a newspaper article about transportation);

10) Give the student a job during the read aloud (e.g., a smaller child can help turn the pages of a big book, an older child can click a PowerPoint slide with the pages of the text displayed on it);

11) Have the student read the book (if possible) to the class (alone or with a partner) instead of listening to the teacher read it;

12) Have the student co-teach the book by asking key questions (prepared on cards or programmed into a communication device) throughout the read aloud (e.g., “What do you think will happen next?”);

13) Have the student participate by reading the first sentence (verbally or via a communication device), the last sentence, and/or repeating or important passages;

14) Stop reading at designated points and have the student act out impromptu scenes from the text with classmates;

15) Give the student a notebook to draw images that come to mind as they listen to the story or passage (this may also help to boost comprehension);

16) Give the child a notebook to write key words or ideas they hear as they listen to the story or passage (this may also help to boost comprehension);

17) Give the child a story-related coloring page or worksheet to complete as they listen to the story;

18) Give the student a notebook to write in questions about the text that they might ask the teacher later;

19) Give the student a special “book listening space” to use during the read aloud (e.g., sitting in a special chair, standing at a lectern); or

20) Have the student play “read aloud” bingo and cross off words or phrases that he hears on a sheet of paper.

From 20 Ways to Adapt the Read Aloud by Paula Kluth, 2006. Available at paulakluth.com



Nine Types of Adaptations

Size: Adapt the number of items that the learner is expected to learn or complete.

For example: Reduce the number of social studies terms a learner must learn at any one times.

Time: Adapt the time allotted and allowed for learning, task completion, or testing.

For example: Individualize a timeline for completing a task; pace learning differently (increase or decrease) for some learners.

Level of Support: Increase the amount of personal assistance with a specific learner.

For example: Assign peer buddies, teaching assistants, peer tutors, or cross-age tutors.

Input: Adapt the way instruction is delivered to the learner.

For example: Use different visual aids, plan more concrete examples, provide hands-on activities, place students in cooperative groups.

Difficulty: Adapt the skill level, problem type, or the rules on how the learner may approach the work.

For example: Allow the use of a calculator to figure math problem; simplify task directions; change rules to accommodate learner needs.

Output: Adapt how the student can respond to instruction.

For example: Instead of answering questions in writing, allow a verbal response, use a communication book for some students, allow students to show knowledge with hands-on materials

Participation: Adapt the extent to which a learner is actively involved in the task.

For example: In geography, have a student hold the globe, while others point out locations.

Alternate: Adapt the goals or outcome expectations while using the same materials.

For example: In social studies, expect a student to be able to locate just the states while others learn to locate capitals as well.

Substitute Curriculum: Provide different instruction and materials to meet a student's individual goals.

For example: During a language test, one student is learning computer skills in the computer lab.

from Adapting Curriculum and Instruction in Inclusive Classrooms: A Teacher's Desk Reference, by Deschenes, C., Ebeling, D., and Sprague, J., 1994.



DSAM
2893 So. Mendenhall Rd. Suite 3
Memphis, TN 38115
www.dsamemphis.org

**Non Profit Org.
U.S. Postage Pcd.
Germantown, TN
Permit # 105**