

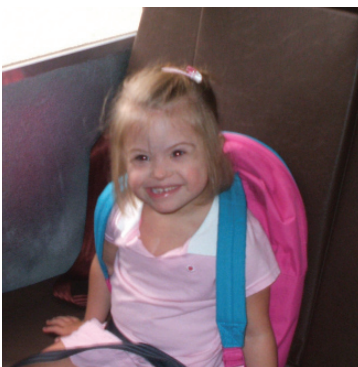


Inclusion Solutions

A newsletter for educators who are doing amazing things!
Spring 2009

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

Supporting and Empowering People with Down syndrome and Their Families.



**Upcoming Specialist Training:
Thursday, April 2, 2009**

**“Honey I blew up the curriculum”
Focusing on classroom accommodations**

**by Nancy and Bridget Brown
butterfliesforchange.org**

IEP Development: Goals & Strategies

Good IEP Goals

Putting dreams or visions into words is part of the ongoing, long-term planning for a student with a disability, and serves as the basis for mapping out the journey in which the student, the family, and educators will embark. Having a vision helps plan next year’s destination. Good IEP goals

- Are driven by child needs;
- Are mutually agreed on by the family and the school;
- Support activities that are valued and typical of others who are the same age as the child;
- Support school and community membership; and
- Facilitate movement toward the long-range goals set by the child and her family.

One way to frame appropriate IEP goal development is to ask the following questions:

- What do students this age do in school, at home, and in the community?
- What does this student want and/or need to do?
- What can the student do now?
- What kinds of support will the student need?
- What sorts of accommodations will we need to make?

Strengths & Strategies Pages - By Dr. Paula Kluth

Strength & Strategies” pages are simply lists that provide positive and useful information about a single learner. One list contains a student’s strengths, interests, gifts, and talents. The other list answers the question, “What works for this student?”; this list should contain strategies for motivating, supporting, encouraging, helping, teaching, and connecting with the learner. “Strengths & Strategies” pages can be used anytime for any purpose. I often use them to begin IEP meetings. They can also be used as an attachment to a positive behavior plan or as a communication tool for teams who are transitioning a student from teacher to teacher or school to school. The focus on positive language and abilities can prompt educators to think and talk about students in more proactive way. It can also help teachers make changes in their planning and in their daily practice. Specifically, educators may be able to use these forms to:

- Plan curriculum and instruction
- Create adaptations
- Develop IEP goals
- Design supports for challenging situations
- Enhance collaborative communication between families and schools

Dr. Paula Kluth is a consultant and author who works with teachers and families to provide inclusive opportunities for students with disabilities.

Visit Paula Kluth’s website to learn more: <http://www.paulakluth.com/articles/strengthstrateg.html>

Recess Roundup!

Having difficulty getting your student with Down syndrome to come in from recess? Try one of these tips:

- Have the student be responsible for blowing the whistle/raising the flag to end recess.
- Have the student be responsible for getting everyone lined up to come in.
- Give the student a reason to go in from recess such as delivering a note to a teacher or bringing in the play equipment.
- With parental permission, have the student “give back” any wasted time coming in at the end of the day.

Tips for Teaching Math to Learners with Down Syndrome

In all learning it is important to avoid rote memorization of facts. It is better to learn to understand the concept through actual experience. Teaching people with Down syndrome to recite numbers is a rather simple task. Helping people with Down syndrome understand the “language of mathematics” is a slow, time-consuming task. Mathematics is a language of symbols which describes relationships between figures, forms and quantities. Mathematics is not merely teaching to recite numbers. The steps to teaching include:

- **THE ABILITY TO SEE SIMILARITIES**

These similarities may be of any type or nature. They may be color, shape, size, taste, brightness, or even such personally abstract things like favorite foods or music. A learner with Down syndrome needs to have repeated experience seeing how things are alike, before there is any reason for wanting to group and later count these things.

- **THE ABILITY TO GROUP SIMILAR THINGS**

In the beginning, actually placing the similar things side by side is necessary. Most things can belong to several different groups. A coat may belong to a blue group, a clothing group, a cotton group, and a buttonhole group. Organizing and reorganizing these groups is necessary in order to develop understanding.

- **THE DESIRE TO COUNT THINGS IN GROUPS**

Even after things are grouped, there is frequently not a need to give a symbol name to the number of things in the group. Some languages do not have all the numbers that we are familiar with in the English language. They simply have a label for one and a label for many. Needing to make things even as with teams, is one of the more basic reasons to count.

- **THE UNDERSTANDING OF 1:1 CORRESPONDENCE**

It is difficult for some people to learn that for each number there must be something that is counted. It is important in early learning for individuals with Down syndrome that they are actually counting objects. Some teachers have used small stones, blocks or other tangible objects. It is important that learners can handle these things themselves.

People with Down syndrome are concrete learners; this means it is important that the objects are actually present and that they can handle the objects and group the objects according to their own interests.

- **A PURPOSE FOR COMPARISON OF THE AMOUNTS IN GROUPS**

Abstract or arbitrary comparisons do little to enhance learning. Comparison between numbers of boys and girls, black shoes and white shoes or school lunches and sack lunches may be necessary in order for the learner to be interested in comparisons.

- **SOME NUMBERS MAY HAVE NO ORDINAL MEANING.**

Telephone numbers, street addresses and social security numbers have only arbitrary meaning; they are not “counting” things. It is necessary to memorize these numbers rather than to use them in computation. With all these steps to learning coupled with inconsistency of number meanings, it is no wonder that individuals with Down syndrome usually have little interest in abstract mathematical concepts.

A better understanding of the grouping process and one-to-one correspondence is probably the most vital concept for day-to-day use. Without the understanding, reciting numbers or number facts is a meaningless rote process.

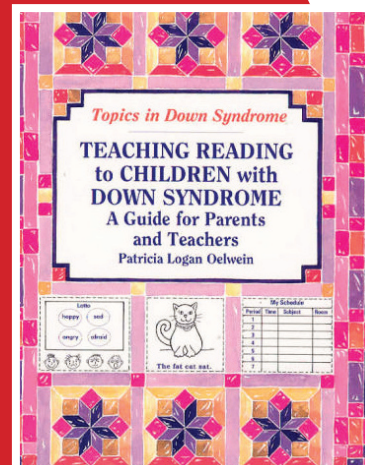
May we suggest...

TEACHING READING TO CHILDREN WITH DOWN SYNDROME

Pat Oelwein, author of *Teaching Reading to Children with Down Syndrome: A Guide for Parents and Teachers*, presents a systematic, individualized, language experience reading program used successfully with thousands of children with moderate and severe disabilities including Down syndrome and autism.

This fun and functional book breaks reading down into simple steps that ensures success in each stage of learning—acquisition, practice to fluency, and application to practical use.

Available from www.woodbinehouse.com



Contact DSAM at 901.547.7588 or admin@dsamemphis.org

Helping Students With Special Needs Maximize Learning From Reading a Textbook

Textbooks can be daunting to students with disabilities; however, educators can assist them in tackling material by using the following strategies:

Using Graphic Organizers to make relationships within domain knowledge explicit. Confusion is conquered when students have visualized relationships before they begin to read. Frustration will be eliminated when confusion is conquered. Completion of the reading assignment is more likely when students comprehend text. Reasoning is supported by comprehension.

Preteaching Vocabulary helps eliminate confusion as students begin reading with the big picture in mind. Vocabulary knowledge is the number one predictor for reading comprehension in any student. Students with special needs are less likely to struggle if they have seen key vocabulary words in advance before seeing them in relation to the other information provided.

Highlighted Textbooks assist with reading comprehension by pointing out key concepts and important text. Students with special needs may have many problems reading an entire chapter due to problems such as decoding text, comprehending text and discriminating important details. Highlighting critical concepts insures that the student is focusing on the most important information.

Recorded Textbooks are a great alternative for students who have difficulty with reading comprehension! Many text books are already available in audio formats. Check with your district to see if this is an option for your students with special needs.

Peer Readers can help students with reading problems to learn the textbook content. This is a great option if the textbook in question is not already available in an audio format. Peer readers also provide a social component to learner that many students with special needs will benefit from.

Study Guides are a great way to encapsulate a multitude of information covered in an entire chapter. These condensed versions of the same content make it easier for a student with special needs to not become overwhelmed.

Information adapted from: Successful Inclusion Strategies for Secondary and Middle School Teachers by M.C. Gore.

“Let Me Think About It”

A student with cognitive delays needs more time to decode the spoken word or visual symbols. Although students with Down syndrome are visual learners, they typically exhibit challenges in processing both auditory and visual information.

Some students are merely supplying you with an automatic response that doesn't really answer the questions such as, "How are you?" "Fine" (even when he looks sick) If you really want to know how he feels, you may need to give your student some extra processing time or thinking time. The following suggestions may help promote "thoughtful" responses and not merely automatic responses:

WAIT UNTIL YOU HAVE THE STUDENT'S ATTENTION BEFORE TALKING-

- Ask for silence from the student and others around him.
- Wait for eye contact and be in close proximity.
- Speak at eye level

SPEAK SLOWLY IN A LOUD CLEAR VOICE-

- Emphasize important words with intonation or beat
- Use an interesting voice
- Speak with authority

CHUNK INFORMATION INTO MANAGEABLE SOUND BITES

- One sentence at a time
- One important message per sentence
- Limit "ands", "buts", and negative words

USE PLAIN LANGUAGE FOR IMPORTANT INSTRUCTIONS-

- State facts simply
- Use short concise sentences
- Pair words with gestures
- Pair words with visual cues

AND NOW COMES THE REALLY HARD PART... Wait for a response-

- Give a direction and WAIT for a response
- Don't interject or repeat instructions
- Wait at least 10 seconds for a response to prevent you from interrupting the "thinking time."

If you interject or repeat directions the child will have to begin processing the information all over again. It may be difficult to be patient but allowing the child to process the information is necessary if you want a response.

Got a great idea?

Do you have a great idea you would like to share with other educators? The Down Syndrome Association of Memphis and the Mid-South would love to hear from you on the methods you are using to create positive outcomes for students with Down syndrome. Educators who submit a tip, strategy or article for the Fall edition of Inclusion Solutions will be entered in a contest to win a \$50 American Express Gift Card. Submissions should be e-mailed to: director@dsamemphis.org by May 1, 2009. One winner will be drawn from the entries and the winner will be notified in early May. All tips will be published with the educators name so others will recognize the great work you are doing.



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