

5-2023

EFFECTIVE INCLUSIVE STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: GUIDES FOR GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

Lynda Hawkins

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd>



Part of the [Special Education and Teaching Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Hawkins, Lynda, "EFFECTIVE INCLUSIVE STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES: GUIDES FOR GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS" (2023). *Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations*. 1611.
<https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd/1611>

This Project is brought to you for free and open access by the Office of Graduate Studies at CSUSB ScholarWorks. It has been accepted for inclusion in Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of CSUSB ScholarWorks. For more information, please contact scholarworks@csusb.edu.

EFFECTIVE INCLUSIVE STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
GUIDES FOR GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Masters of Science
In
Special Education

by
Lynda Jonelle Hawkins
May 2023

EFFECTIVE INCLUSIVE STRATEGIES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
GUIDES FOR GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

A Project

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

In Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

Masters of Science

In

Special Education

by

Lynda Jonelle Hawkins

May 2023

Approved by:

Dr. Shannon Sparks, First Reader

Dr. Jemma Kim, Second Reader

© 2023 Lynda Jonelle Hawkins

ABSTRACT

The Disability Education Act 2004 (IDEA) and Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) has given students with disabilities the right to be included in the general education classroom. With that comes a challenge for teachers as they must find ways to reach every student. The Purpose of this project is to provide a way of achieving that goal. The Buddy System, for example, is a supportive method for teachers. General education students are paired up with students that need assistance. These students take on the role of assistant teacher/mentor to help guide their peers through classroom activities and assignments. With everyone on board, administrators, teachers, students, and parents, the system outlined in this project can help ensure students with disabilities are being provided a quality education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to show my appreciation to my committee chair Dr. Shannon Sparks, for her encouragement and support throughout this project. She was there for me as I had some setbacks and encouraged me to keep going. She has even sat on the phone and listened to me cry as I went through some difficult times. She answered my questions and gave suggestions to help me stay on track. I have had the privilege of taking some courses with Dr. Sparks, she is a professor that cares about her students. She is a professor that has gone above and beyond her call to help me through this project.

Special thanks to Dr. Jemma Kim, for agreeing to be my second reader. When I returned to CSUSB, she helped me get everything approved so I could do this project. She is amazing!

DEDICATION

I dedicate this project to my children. You all know that it was a struggle for me, and I never gave up. I want you all too always remember that no matter what, you can do what you set your mind to. It may not be easy, but you can do it.

To my Kenley and Riley. I am so proud of you, and I want you to set goals in life and achieve them. You have to work hard and never give up.

Mr. Navarro for taking the time to be my second pair of eyes and helping me with all my computer challenges (I am not the best when it comes to a computer). He is a great friend and I really appreciate all he did to help me with this project.

Lastly, I want to say without my faith in God, I would not be where I am today. He has helped me through so many difficult times in my life. I cannot thank him enough for his everlasting love and mercy. All praise, glory and honor belong to him.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	iv
LIST OF FIGURES	vii
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION	
Statement of Problem	1
Purpose Statement	4
The Significance of the Project	4
Limitations	5
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	
Fundamental Understanding of Classroom Inclusion	8
Creating and Promoting Classroom Inclusion Buddy Systems	11
Circle of Friends Categories	12
Class-Wide Peer Tutoring	12
Peer- Assisted Strategies	12
Cross-Age Tutoring	13
Peer-Mediated Intervention	13
Challenges	14
Overcoming Biases Towards Classroom Inclusion Buddy Systems	14
Inclusion Buddy System Outside of the Classroom	16
Inclusion Programs Benefits for Typical Peers' Needs	17
The Effectiveness of Inclusion Classroom Programs	18
Mindfulness Aspect of the Buddy System Programs	19
Next Steps in Life Transitioning to Junior High School	21
Next Step in Life Transitioning from Junior High to High School .	23
Life After High School Graduation	24

Classroom Quality of Life In and Outside of the Classroom	26
Conclusion	27
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY	
Introduction	29
Manual Contents	30
Team Building Activities	30
Buddy System	31
Environment	31
Organization/Planning	31
Academic Support	32
Step-by-Step Instruction	32
Partial Day	33
Visual Aids	33
CHAPTER FOUR: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	
Conclusion	34
Recommendations	34
APPENDIX A: RESOURCE MANUAL	35
REFERENCES	87

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Circle of Friends Categories	12
--	----

CHAPTER ONE:

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

Teachers today are facing many challenges in the classroom such as: changes in federal laws, budget cuts, an increased number of students in the classroom, and COVID-19 (i.e., global pandemic). With the introduction of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act 2004 (IDEA) and NO Child Left – Behind Act (NCLB), now reauthorized as the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA), curriculum has changed the way general education functions (Gartin, 2005). These changes have given students with disabilities equal opportunities to receive a (a) Free Appropriate and Public Education (FAPE), (b) appropriate evaluation, (c) Individualized Education Program (IEP), (d) Least Restrictive Environment (LRE), (e) parent and student participation in decision making, and (f) procedural safeguards (Hayes, 2013). This has caused teachers to shift how they educate both students with disabilities and their peers in the classroom. Finding new and creative ways to include students with special needs has led to the development of inclusive programs (e.g., buddy system) embedded within the Individual Educational Program (IEP) (Gartin, 2005). Teachers are challenged to create general and individual education plans within the classroom setting. With increased pressures on teachers, the overwhelming need for creative ways to educate all students is necessary. As inclusive classrooms are becoming the

norm, teachers must find ways to reach every single student. Without buddy systems and peer supports, students with disabilities could possibly be left behind and denied access to a free and appropriate education. Cultivating these programs in the classroom and utilizing these programs qualitatively and efficiently is the challenge teachers are facing every day in the field of education.

No two students with disabilities require the same level of attention. Educators must determine how to individualize programming for all students with disabilities. Teachers who fail to utilize the buddy system and other inclusion programs would face overwhelming frustrations by not being able to help and teach all students within their classroom setting. Furthermore, these frustrations can lead to a breakdown in the classroom order. This may cause students in the classroom to have diminished access to their teachers and limited access to supports. Inclusion buddy systems are supportive methods for teachers to utilize. Students with disabilities are paired up with fellow students creating a cohesive circle of friends. Students take on the role of teacher, friend, and mentor to help guide and educate their fellow peers through classroom assignments. According to the law, Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), no child can be denied an education. Educational programs have had to view inclusion in the classroom in a variety of ways. Inclusion in education is not limited to the four walls of the classroom. Inclusion encompasses a multifaceted approach and requires that everyone embraces the buddy system, but the problem is not everyone embraces it. It requires administrative support of all the school and

district administrators, the surrounding communities and families. Once everyone is onboard with the buddy system, inclusion in the classroom becomes less of a burden and becomes a way of everyday life. Students who have the support of the teacher, administrators, and outside communities feel a greater sense of accomplishment, thereby reducing inclusion burnout from lack of support and resources (Carter, 2015).

The beauty of inclusion and the usage of buddy systems such as the *Circle of Friends* is that it allows for greater options on how to meet the needs of students with disabilities (Carter, 2015). For example, under the Circle of Friends umbrella, a student with disabilities can start out at the beginning of the school year utilizing Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS; Carter, 2015). The IEP team meets regularly to review data and determine if the student is making adequate progress towards their IEP goals and if not, the team makes modifications to meet the student's educational needs. Changes and modifications to the IEP are made through direct observation, testing and interviewing both peer buddies (i.e., general and special education students). The results of these observations, interviews and other data collected (i.e., test results) will be brought to the IEP team for discussion, analysis, and recommendations. If the Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS) program fails or is not the best fit to meet the needs of students, the IEP team can transition into a Cross Age Tutoring Program, or Peer-Mediated Intervention Program or a combination of two or more programs. The IEP team will determine which

program or programs are best suited for the student (Castanegra, 2005; Moser, 2018).

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this project is to educate educators on using the general education classroom inclusion buddy system to create a positive and safe learning environment. Teachers can no longer view the classroom in terms of “this is how we have always done things.” Educators must challenge themselves to create general education plans for all students in the classroom. The balancing act of teaching all students, including those with special educational needs, within the same classroom is only possible if teachers, students, administrators and the community at large band together utilizing the buddy system to ensure all students have an equal opportunity to a meaningful education. Students in the classroom, regardless of their needs, have the right to be included in the general education process, without fear of segregation or bullying. The review was also written to demonstrate the benefits of creating a better quality of life for special needs students as they transition through schools (i.e., elementary to middle school, middle to high school, etc.) and how buddy systems can benefit all students in their daily lives.

The Significance of the Project

An increase in the number of students being placed in the classroom (e.g.,

40 or more students), budgets cuts, lack of resources and more students with diverse cultural/linguistic backgrounds and learning styles has placed enormous strains on teachers as they struggle to meet the diverse learning needs of all students (i.e., doing more with less resources). This literature review was written to serve as a tangible resource for teachers, administrators, specialists and other educational professionals to use in understanding how to support all diverse students in the same classroom environment. This literature review is a tool for educators to become familiar with various buddy systems in inclusive classrooms and use this knowledge to develop programs and ideas to better educate all students within their classrooms. Using this resource educators may be able to develop a buddy system for their own classroom community.

Limitations

This project provides research on the effectiveness of classroom inclusion buddy systems, ideas and examples of models and ideas for implementing. This is not the be all end all ways to implement a system. There are several different ideas or programs out there that can be researched and implemented. Implementation is also dependent on student population and effectiveness. There is much more empirical evidence supporting it and many more examples of strategies or models. The literature review focused primarily on the benefits of using inclusion in the classroom (Carter, 2015). Other limitations include gaining

the trust and buy-in of all special and general education teachers, administrators, and the general community at large to utilize the buddy system. Overcoming cultural taboos and personal beliefs that students should be segregated and not be included is going to be my life long challenge.

CHAPTER TWO:

LITERATURE REVIEW

Chapter two provides various approaches and gives greater understanding for educators on how to be more effective thereby being more efficient in classroom inclusion. The objective of this chapter is to provide a greater understanding of the legal requirements for inclusion in the classroom and the use of classroom buddy systems for students with disabilities within general education classrooms. This chapter discusses a general overview of the unique challenges students with disabilities face transitioning from grade level to grade level and will include a brief discussion about the quality of life students with special needs endure on a daily basis. Educating teachers and other educational professionals on the positive attributes in classroom inclusion and the use of buddy systems, makes for a more productive and positive experience inside and outside of the classroom for students and adults with disabilities. While there are many resources available for teachers on how to utilize classroom inclusion and buddy systems, this chapter focuses on general ideas and gives brief descriptions. There is not a one size fits all solution for students with disabilities, so a more well-rounded approach is necessary for teachers and students in education; one that allows all students to have access to a quality education and life.

Fundamental Understanding of Classroom Inclusion

Inclusion in the classroom is the natural progression of the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Schirmer, 1995). This was later ratified by congress to be known as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990. However, it would take two more years for IDEA to recognize the necessity for inclusion in the classroom. The implementation of IDEA would not fully come into effect until 2004 when the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act was once again ratified by the US Congress and signed into law (Hayes 2013; Kilansoski 2010; Schirmer 1995). IDEA (2004) requires that all public schools provide individuals with disabilities six basic rights: (a) a Free, Appropriate, and Public Education (FAPE), (b) appropriate evaluation, (c) Individualized Education Program, (d) Least Restrictive Environment, (e) parent and student participation in decision making, and (f) procedural safeguards (Hayes, 2013). These six rights present a challenge for all educators and other educational professionals in the classroom. Teachers must implement these rights for all students and can no longer isolate, segregate, discriminate, or deny any student the same educational experience as every other student simply because a student has a disability (Rojewski, 2015). Legal requirements have caused many school districts to come up with ingenious inclusive educational programs (Brock, 2016; Hayes, 2013; Reiter, 2007). Additionally, IDEA (2004) introduced and reinforced the Individual Education Program (IEP) which is the cornerstone for students with special needs. IEP mandates teachers in every

grade level to create and utilize these IEPs in order to provide “Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) to all students with disabilities” (Gartin, 2005).

According to the IDEA (2004), an IEP is “*a written statement for each child with disability*” (Gartin, 2005). IEPs must be: 1.) Academically achievable and functionally performable and 2.) Must have a statement of how the child’s disability affects involvement and progress in the general curriculum (Gartin, 2005). IEPs are utilized at all grade levels and are a significant tool that teachers use in order to be in compliance with the Every Student Succeeds Act (ESSA) and IDEA (2004) (Gartin, 2005). Written goals must be specific and achievable for the individual. For example, an IEP for a student in the second grade cannot have a written goal to graduate high school by the end of the school year (Prince, 2013). Teachers can recommend a student with a disability to enroll in peer-assisted learning strategies (PALS) (Moser, 2018). In order to ensure IEP goals are met and are adequate for the student, IEP teams meet annually. These teams are comprised of the parents/legal guardians, a general education teacher, a special education teacher, a school district representative, and the special needs student with attendance being mandatory for all members. Local schools can determine the frequency of when and where the IEP teams will meet (Gartin, 2005). IEPs are not only limited to special needs students inside the classroom, IEPs are also utilized to aid in the transition process from high school into postsecondary education and/or independent living, employment, and other life practices/functions (Prince, 2013). Because there is not a one size fits all

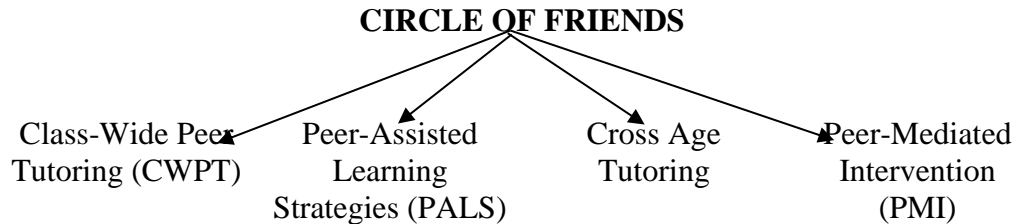
solution for every state, county, school district, grade level, and classroom, teachers face the challenge of creating a positive learning environment for all students in their classroom. Students with disabilities require an individualized education plan to facilitate learning in the classroom without hindering or disturbing typical peers. Overwhelming case studies have shown there is a positive acceptance of inclusion programs and it takes educating and working with families, teachers, administrators, general population students, and communities to promote programs (Frederickson et al. 2003, 2007; Green, 2008; Hayes, 2013).

Creating and Promoting Classroom Inclusion Buddy Systems

When you have a new program in the classroom, support for the program requires a trifecta approach. Support must come from the administration and teachers, student body population, and from parents/guardians (Carter, 2015). A lack of support from any of these three groups will cause the entire program to self-destruct and lose its effectiveness in educating individuals with disabilities. It is crucial that each teacher must collaborate and work with parents and students in developing or selecting the best individualized education plan, pairing with the individuals to participate in the program and educating students in the program on their roles and their functions. Students then must be able to work with their special needs peer counterparts, work with teachers and paraprofessionals, and reflect and give advice to the teachers about what is/is not working within the inclusion classroom program (Carter, 2015). As a result of multiple plans and ideas, a common theme has started to develop across the nation known as The Circle of Friends (Frederickson, 2003). This concept is meant to increase classroom acceptance for those students who have special needs and promote education and social skills for students with special needs. Circle of Friends can be broken down into four subcategories: Class-Wide Peer Tutoring (CWPT), Peer-Assisted Learning Strategies (PALS), Cross Age Tutoring, and Peer-Mediated Intervention (PMI).

Circle of Friends Categories

Figure 1



Class-Wide Peer Tutoring

CWPT pairs low level academic and socially skilled students with students who are more advanced both socially and academically. The pairing then has an individualized program and the more advanced student who has demonstrated their accelerated ability to understand and teach math, can teach their fellow classmates who may require individualized education more efficiently (Castanegra, 2005; Moser, 2018).

Peer-Assisted Strategies

Teachers do not have the resources that they have had in the past. There are increased pressures to meet the standards with a wide range of abilities within the classroom. Peer tutoring highlights a way of supporting students and gives a sense of purpose. The students are also holding each other accountable for their schoolwork. They are also building social skills between students with and without disabilities (Snell, 2000; Jannez, 2000). This emboldens students

and gives a sense of purpose, allowing them to demonstrate that they can support their peers in the classroom (Castanegra, 2005; Moser, 2018).

Cross-Age Tutoring

Cross-Age Tutoring is an effective program where a younger student is paired with another student who is generally older in age and is in a higher grade level. For example, a high school freshman with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) is paired with a high school senior who has been trained on how to interact with students who have ASD (Bond, 2010).

Peer-Mediated Intervention

Finally, there is *Peer-Mediated Intervention* (PMI). PMI is a variant of PALS, but whereas PALS focuses primarily on classroom collaboration focusing entirely on education, PMI focuses on increasing social interactions between special and typical peers (Green, 2008). PMI also attempts to use limited adult intervention and mediation, placing an emphasis on peer support and peer education (Hu, 2018). While these four categories are effective in developing buddy system groups, they are not the only programs which work, however, they have become very effective and popular in the classroom. These four programs have been effective in overcoming education and other barriers. They are simple and effective in creating greater classroom participation and creating a positive

learning environment for all students in the classroom (Castanegra, 2005; Moser, 2018).

Challenges

Often these programs provide multiple support for including students with disabilities in the classroom. However, they do face ongoing challenges in doing so. One challenge presented to teachers is they must adapt to the placement/arrangement of students within the classroom everyday (Brock 2016; Leatherman 2005; Reiter 2007; Schirmer 1995). Placing students so everyone is included in the classroom without disruptions is a huge challenge (Van Den Berg, 2018). Inclusion programs of any kind give students with special needs a greater quality of life, a sense of purpose and acceptance amongst their fellow peers and a reduction of stigmatization and shaming (Reiter, 2007).

Overcoming Biases Towards Classroom Inclusion Buddy Systems

The benefits of inclusion impact individuals with disabilities in areas of literacy, writing, social interaction, playground interactions, and bullying reduction. The greatest hurdle for administrators, teachers, communities, and typical peers is to overcome the stigma of individuals with disabilities in the classroom. Twenty different case studies from seven different countries attempted to identify negative attitudes towards students with disabilities. Classroom size, type of disability and teachers' attitudes towards inclusion all

factored into the stigma of not wanting students with special needs in the classroom (Anke De Boer, 2012, Leatherman, 2005). These factors were significantly reduced when clearly defined programs and goals were implemented. There is still overwhelming evidence that classroom inclusion is extremely beneficial (Anke De Boer, Beltman et al., 2012; Santillan, 2019; Van Den Berg, 2018). In order to identify the benefits, a pretest must be administered to establish a baseline of where students are mentally, emotionally, academically and socially through their peer interaction ability at the beginning of the school year, (Beltman, 2012; Espelage, 2016; Fredrickson, 2007).

McDonnell et al., (2003) tested 14 students with special needs ranging from ages 8 to 12. They were included in this study to establish their academic level of reading, language arts and math (see table 1). Each student was tested at the beginning of the school year and then retested again at the end of the school year with 93% of all students seeing positive increases in their test scores. These students received specialized training throughout the year from paraprofessionals, teachers, and peer groups. This is tangible proof that students who participate in inclusive classrooms reap the benefits from an education. Multiple studies have concluded classroom buddy systems work by pairing individuals with disabilities with their typical peer counterparts (Carter, 2015, Moser, 2018). The buddy system, classroom pairing, and *Circle of Friends* programs eased the burnout of educators and paraprofessionals in the classroom, allowing teachers the time to teach all students.

Without the buddy system, fellow students can experience inclusion burnout (Reiter, 2007). Inclusion burnout is when typical students are willing participants in inclusion programs, but become frustrated due to various factors such as monotony, a lack of guidance, external and internal pressures, mental fatigue and a lack of support. These factors cause participants to “bow-out” of the programs and no longer want to be a member of the *Circle of Friends* (Reiter, 2007). These circumstances can be mitigated and even reversed with proper training. Inclusion goes far beyond just the four walls of the classroom. Inclusion can help students when it comes to social groups, playground behavior, and emotional regulations (Santillan, 2019).

Inclusion Buddy System Outside of the Classroom

Santillan (2019) argues there is a direct correlation with students who are properly included and accepted within the classroom as they have a greater chance of peer engagement and being socially accepted outside of the classroom and on the playground, *“socialization opportunities presented in schools allow students to interact with peers in structured and unstructured settings, which make the classroom and playground ideal contexts to facilitate the development of pivotal social skills.”* These positive peer social engagements can only be achieved if everyone in the classroom, from the teacher to the peer buddy for the student with disabilities (SWD), all work in tandem to create a positive healthy learning environment.

All students who have been socially accepted on the playground and other outside classroom areas (lunchrooms, bathrooms, hallways, etc.) saw a significant reduction in assaults, verbal bullying, and other acts of public humiliation (Brock, 2016; Espelage, 2016). Buddy system programs within the classroom saw peers defense towards individuals with disabilities and a general willingness to protect them from bullying. The typical peers' willingness to step up and provide protection for individuals with disabilities causes those who have been bullied to have newfound confidence and gratitude, knowing help came from a friend, not a teacher or other adult figure (Brock, 2016).

Students who have been included in school activities, and also included in classroom participation were less likely to engage in isolationism, and self-injurious behaviors (slapping, hair pulling, head banging, etc.) (Humphrey, 2011). Additionally, individuals with disabilities who were placed in inclusive programs were less likely to have an emotional meltdown. Students who have an emotional outburst disturb instructional time causing the teacher and related professionals to focus on students with disruptive behavior (Humphrey, 2011; Palomino, 2017). The benefits are not limited exclusively to students with special needs. Those students who become the individuals with disabilities peer buddy also benefit from inclusion programs.

Inclusion Program Benefits for Typical Peers' Needs

Carter (2015) suggests students who become involved in supportive groups have a richer and wider sense of peer advocacy. This causes a deeper commitment in wanting to include all students to learn about each other, thereby becoming more tolerant towards any individual with a special need. This tolerance and inclusiveness create lasting friendships and an overall better learning environment for all students, regardless of their need, to learn together. The intangible benefits for those students who participate in inclusion programs are equally satisfying as students with special needs receive a passing score on a test or are selected for a team sport (Carter, 2015). The overall benefits for inclusion buddy system programs in the classroom are crucial for school site and communities (Carter, 2015).

The Effectiveness of Inclusion Classroom Programs

For a program to be effective, it must meet the following criteria. First, the program must have strong leadership, and teachers who are committed to the program. Second, there needs to be strong parent/community participation. Finally, the general student body must be trained and understand the benefits of the program and how it works (Carter, 2015; Humphrey, 2011; Reiter, 2007). The effectiveness of inclusive programs in the classroom should be measured in how well they improve academic skills, social interaction with their fellow peers, and improvement in overall self-awareness (Fredrickson, 2007; Palomino, 2017).

However, should the program fail at being effective in teaching all students regardless of their needs, one should ask themselves the following questions: 1) Do these programs improve the quality of their educational experience for students with disabilities in the classroom 2) With the implementation of this program will all students regardless of their needs grow socially and have positive peer social interactions and engagements in and out of the classroom? If there is any hesitation in answering these questions, then the program is ineffective and should be terminated (Carter, 2015; Fredrickson, 2007; Hayes, 2013).

Mindfulness Aspect of the Buddy System Programs

Buddy system inclusion programs are extremely beneficial in the development of individuals with disabilities, cognitive capabilities and their social interaction skills (Palomino, 2017). There is a final aspect that inclusion programs offer children with special needs, and that is the development of their emotional wellbeing. Buddy System inclusion programs protect students' feelings, emotions, and self-esteem, widening the choices available to them and acknowledging their uniqueness (Carter, 2015; Espelage, 2016; Fredrickson et al., 2007; Palomino, 2017; Santillan, 2019). Creating these feelings of self-awareness should be implemented early on in a child's education.

It is at the elementary school level that all students become aware of their successes, failures, social standings, and begin to develop their identity. Social

emotional needs in all children is vital to their success in their cognitive development and sets the stage of how well they will socially interact with their fellow peers in all social engagements (Palomino, 2017). Students face a barrage of barriers inside and outside of the classroom that limit the scope of their educational experience. These barriers include, but are not limited to: language barriers, socioeconomic barriers, geographical locations, and access to resources (Palomino, 2017). Students who are English Second Language (ESL) students must overcome these barriers in both English and Spanish and often with parents who cannot communicate with teachers or facilitators. These barriers can be humiliating when asking for help from teachers for students with and without special needs. However, when a child with special needs is placed in a buddy system program, that student has an advocate who can help overcome those barriers (Palomino, 2017). Inclusion within the classroom is not limited to just elementary school classrooms. With the progression of grades, students move to the next grade level each year until students with special needs are finally ready to transition from elementary schools to junior high schools. The challenges teachers and other education professionals face on a daily basis in elementary schools, are also faced by teachers in higher grade levels. The challenges do not diminish with the passing from one grade level to the next, they only get more complicated and compounded.

Next Steps in Life Transitioning to Junior High School

The transitional period from elementary school to junior high school is a critical time in any child's life. Students with special needs and their fellow peers must embrace many new changes and challenges which for some students, can be very disconcerting (Cantin, 2004; Pearson, 2017). New junior high school students face uncertainty as they arrive at a new school site location with new teachers, new students, older students, and a barrage of hormonal/biological, and significant social changes within their own bodies (Knesting, 2008). Additionally, students at the junior high school level have teachers who are more demanding as students are graded more harshly in junior high than in elementary schools. Class sizes are larger, and in most junior high schools, students must physically move from one classroom to the another as they transition from subject to subject. For example, math and science class are blocked together in one classroom with one teacher while language arts, social studies, and history take place in another classroom with a different teacher (Knesting, 2008). This also means that teachers have less time to give one on one attention to individual students (Cantin, 2004). All of these changes can be difficult for all new junior high school students regardless of special needs. Students with special needs in an inclusive classroom are more and more dependent upon peer buddy systems (Aikins, 2005). Junior high school teachers also must rely on developing IEPs and executing those IEPs (Gartin, 2005). Students with special needs are more dependent upon their fellow peers to guide them through the various

challenges in and out of the classroom, not just academically but emotionally, and physically as they have to go from classroom A to classroom B to classroom C (Knesting, 2008). According to IDEA (2004) middle school teachers face the same challenges and legal requirements as elementary school teachers (Strom, 2013). However, elementary school teachers are able to take more of a hands - on approach to individualized education plans (IEP) and one on one teaching. In junior high school, with the all of aforementioned challenges, both students with special needs and teachers are forced to use buddy systems and place a greater emphasis on IEPs due to limitations (Strom, 2013). A collaborative teamwork approach between teachers, peer groups, administrators, and parents is used to bridge the gap between students with special needs and access to the teacher (Strom, 2013) With this greater emphasis on teamwork, buddy systems encourage and stronger friendships amongst students with special needs and fellow peers (Aikins, 2005). Evidence suggests that students with special needs in junior high schools tend to befriend and hang out more with fellow peers who are female. This may be indicative of students with special needs feeling safer to be around female students (Aikins, 2005).The quality of life for students with special needs in junior high schools can include strenuous teasing, bullying, and verbal and physical assaults which increase as students advance from one grade level to the next (Huebner, 2005). But, strong peer groups and schools who embrace inclusion in and out of the classroom see a reduction in these types of negative behaviors that are aimed towards students with special needs (Aikins,

2005, Knesting, 2008). Advancing from elementary school to junior high school is a natural and progressive process, and continues from junior high school to high school.

Next Steps in Life Transitioning from Junior High to High School

High school teachers are not exempt from dealing with students with special needs in the classroom. The challenges high school teachers face are even greater than their elementary and junior high school counterparts. High school teachers face even greater scrutiny, expectancy factors, harsher grading demands and classroom structural issues that elementary teachers do not face (Reusen, 2001). Unlike elementary school teachers who have class sizes ranging from 25-35 students, high school teachers can have 125-400 students depending on the subject (Reusen, 2001). Elementary teachers teach general education and multiple subjects. High school teachers are single subject teachers who are experts in that specific subject only and tend to not want to adapt to IDEA (2004) mandates (Reusen, 2001, Trainor, 2016). Other differences between elementary and high school teachers include preparing students not just to advance to the next grade level, but equipping students with tools and the necessary knowledge to advance to higher education and independent living. Additionally, high school teachers must deal with before and after school extracurricular activities that elementary teachers do not have to contend with (Carter, 2010). A final difference is that a greater number of high school teachers

have little to no training on effective ways to include students with special needs in a high school classroom environment (Reusen, 2001). While challenges in the classroom exist, teachers who have had special education training, and have had training on effective inclusion practices in the classroom tend to be more enthusiastic in including students with special needs in their classroom. Since it is a collaborative effort to be able to manage and educate students with special needs, effective methods to provide a positive learning environment include IEPs, buddy systems, peer support groups, community support groups, school administrators' support and other variables which can prepare students with disabilities to attend postsecondary schools. Students with disabilities who have transitioned from elementary school, to junior high school, to high school in an inclusive classroom make up 75% of students who completed high school and graduated with a standard diploma or a general equivalent degree (Trainor, 2016). Fewer than half of all students with special needs who graduate from high school attend a postsecondary school, community college, or vocational training school (Trainor, 2016).

Life After High School Graduation

A major factor that students with disabilities face in wanting to advance their education post high school is once a student graduates, IEP and inclusion within the classroom ends. Institutions for higher education (IHE) are no longer bound to IDEA (2004) but must adhere to the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and

American with Disabilities Act (ADA) (2008), specifically section 504 of the ADA (Severance, 2011). As a result, IHEs are required to provide reasonable accommodations and auxiliary aids, but IEPs, buddy systems, and inclusion are loosely enforced, if at all (Severance, 2011). Some IHEs do provide employment opportunities, internships for students with special needs as well as programs for financial aid, independent living, life skills and many other vital tools necessary for adults with special needs to be able to succeed and live productive lives (Severance, 2011). These opportunities help students with special needs to be able to transition into being contributing and productive members of society. While these programs are offered here in the United States, and most modern nations worldwide, there are still familial and cultural stigmas for individuals who are different mentally, emotionally, or physically that cause them to be ostracized and shunned. There is a belief that once an individual student or adult graduates “they’re on their own” (Svraka, 2011). Many third world countries do not have enough resources to allocate funds to special needs students or adults with disabilities. This lack of resources places enormous strains on families financially and emotionally as they struggle to raise a child with special needs (Svraka, 2011). A lack of resources can greatly affect the quality of life of students with disabilities. According to Svrake (2011), there is a tapering down of how many resources are provided to students with special needs, even to the point of where once they graduate, they are left to fend for themselves. Fortunately, the United States and other major industrial nations have made

major strides toward providing students and adults a quality of life which is as close to a “normal life” one with a disability can have (Edwards, 2003).

Classroom Quality of Life In and Outside of the Classroom

Quality of life (QoL) is a very broad topic and is unique to the individual and the specific disabilities they possess. Edwards (2003) refers to an individual’s quality of life as various “aspects of an individual’s wellbeing as well as various aspects of the environment in which an individual is raised and their standards of living.” Quality of life is dependent upon a multitude of factors including family support, social, economic, religious beliefs and practices, cultural beliefs, community support, and school support (Morisse, 2013). As students with disabilities age and transition from grade level to grade level, research indicates there is a gradual and subtle change in them. As a student with disability ages, friendships are tested and, in some cases, friendships are broken. Students with disabilities increase their dependency on familial relationship and by the time the student graduates from high school, there is a 25%-50% increase in family relationships and dependencies (Carter, 2010; Moser, 2018). This is a direct correlation with decreased friendships, as students with disabilities spend less time with their fellow peers but they increase their time with family members (Carter, 2010; Moser, 2018). It should be noted this study did not focus on the QoL for students with disabilities. Instead, the primary focus was on the positive

attributes of the utilization of buddy systems. Therefore, the quality of life is entirely dependent upon the individual and the environment in which they live in.

Conclusion

This literature review focused on the development and necessity of buddy system inclusion programs in the classroom. Additionally, it focused on the discussion regarding transitioning from grade level to grade level, and the greater need for inclusion in the classroom and utilization of various buddy systems. Students who participate in such programs continually see success and positive mental development. While teachers continue to face statewide budget cuts across the nation, utilizing resources such as buddy system programs can free up the most precious resource, “time.” This includes time to not only help individuals with disabilities but also their typical peers. Classroom inclusion and the utilization of the buddy system allows students to become more dependent on each other in order to grow and develop the necessary mental, social, emotional, and academic skills needed in the classroom, on the playground, and in a home environment (Carter 2015). The buddy system is unique in that it is all-inclusive and equally tailored to the needs of the individual student. Everyone benefits from the program as students with special needs have a peer advocate who helps them understand their school lessons. In addition, models show how to behave in social settings and in completing other various tasks (Frederickson, 2003). Typical peers have a chance to understand and help someone with

special needs, thus creating opportunities to gain a better understanding of the world and community they live in. Finally, teachers also benefit from these programs (Anke De Boer, 2012; Espelage 2016; Hayes 2013, Leatherman 2005). The buddy systems allow greater freedom to move around and aid other students in the classroom without frequently diverting their attention to one or two students in the classroom. Teachers can rely on the student buddies to help teach and explain lesson plans and assist with completing related class tasks. This creates team building, confidence, and emotional wellbeing with all students in the classroom (Anke De Boer, 2012).

CHAPTER THREE:

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

This chapter focuses on creating the manual, the overall design, and identify the target population and setting. This manual (see Appendix A) is for general education elementary teachers who have students with disabilities in their classrooms on a full-time basis. Thus, they will be using a buddy system within the classroom setting. This manual is for teachers who have not worked with students with disabilities on a daily basis. Included are things to look for and things to think about when you are setting up your classroom for the year. A buddy system is very important for students with disabilities to feel a sense of belonging. It is important for all students to have a supportive environment and not feel isolated.

The teachers' manual provides general education teachers tips on how to integrate a student with disabilities into their classroom. Many general education classrooms do not have the opportunity to have students with disabilities in their classroom on a full-time basis. This manual provides useful ways to help teachers set up a positive and interactive classroom. Some of these strategies shared in the manual have been proven effective in decreasing negative behaviors in the classroom. It is important to avoid a chaotic classroom that

triggers unnecessary behaviors. Educators should want all students to be involved in the daily routines of their classroom.

Manual Contents (See Appendix A)

First, a teacher survey was developed. Additionally, it is important to have buy-in from teachers. The survey developed asks teachers if they are willing to dedicate their time and work collaboratively with other teachers to make this program work.

Students have to answer a questionnaire. The questionnaire is used for the general education students that are interested in becoming a buddy in their classroom. Students with disabilities also answer these questions. By having all students answer these questions, the information provided assists in pairing students by likes and interests.

Team Building Activities

Team- building activities should be done whole class. This creates unity within the classroom. Educators want everyone to feel as though they belong. It is recommended that a team-building activity happen at least once a week, to keep the spirit alive within the classroom. If you notice like students are not feeling like they are a part of the class, then do these activities as often as you need to. It is very important to do an activity when you get a new student in the classroom.

Buddy System

A buddy system contract should be developed. After students have been paired together, the teacher meets with each team, and presents them a copy of the contract. The teacher goes over each item on the contract and has the students date and sign it. This holds all students accountable and responsible.

Environment

When the teacher receives their class list of students including those with disabilities and IEPs, the information should be used to create the classroom seating - chart. Are there any students that may need seating accommodations? It is important to make sure that students with disabilities are not segregated in the classroom. They are to be mixed within the general education classroom and next to their buddy. Also, make sure your class rules are posted for all students to see. I

Organization/Planning

Being organized is very important. Students need to have a consistent schedule. If there is going to be a change in their schedule, the teacher needs to give a warning so they are aware of the change and it can be a smooth transition.

Academic Support

There are a few different kinds of Co-teaching styles, depending on the subject matter, teacher relationship/preference, and student needs. One teaching while one is assisting is one form of Co-teaching used in classrooms. One teacher is directly instructing students while the other assists individual students as needed. This is the most common form of Co-teaching for a General Ed teacher and a Special Ed teacher. Parallel Teaching is another form of Co-teaching. The class is divided into two groups and each teacher teaches the same information at the same time. Another form is Station Teaching where each teacher teaches a specific part of the content to different groups as they rotate between teachers. This one is good for teaching multi-step processes. Alternative Teaching is where one teacher teaches the bulk of the students, and the other teaches a small group based on need. This way is also commonly used.

Step-by-Step Instructions

Providing students step-by-step instructions will help them stay on task and organized. They will know what they are supposed to finish first, second etc. This also helps with their anxiety allowing them to get their work done. They know if they follow the instructions provided, they will get everything done in a timely manner.

Partial Day

There may be situations that a student may need a shortened school day. The only time this is appropriate is if the student is physically unable to handle a full day, or the student has to have medical attention that cannot be administered at the school site. This shortened day is a decision made by the IEP team.

Visual Aids

Visual aids are helpful for students with disabilities, especially for students who are non-verbal. They will be able to locate things in the classroom and communicate personal needs. This goes with color-coding. Give each student with a disability a color that is their color for the year. This will help them be able to find what they need by looking for their color.

CHAPTER FOUR:

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

Today, teachers are facing many challenges in the classroom laws, budgets cuts, increase in numbers and now recovering from a pandemic. Laws have changed over the years and students with disabilities are no longer kept in their own classroom. They are now allowed equal opportunities in the education system. These students all require their own level of attention. This takes a lot of the teachers' attention. By using the buddy system this puts less of a burden on the teacher and allows the teacher to support all students. The buddy system creates a positive and safe learning environment.

Recommendations

It is recommended that this manual be provided to all teachers that are involved in the buddy system program. Also, those that are interested in getting involved in the program. It would be a benefit that as the program expands that this manual is continually developed by adding any new resources and techniques that teachers find work well.

APPENDIX A
RESOURCE MANUAL

Effective Strategies to Include Students with Disabilities in Full Day General Education Classroom Resource Manual



Table of contents

Introduction.....	38
How to Buddy Up Your Students	38
Section 1: Teacher Survey.....	39
Section 2: Look for Student Personalities/Student Questionnaire	40
Section 3: Buddy System Contract.....	45
Section 4: Team Building Activities	46
Section 5: Environment/ Seating Arrangements.....	48
Section 6: Classroom Rules.....	61
Section 7. Organization/Planning.....	62
Section 8: Daily Plan.....	63
Section 9: Class Schedule.....	64
Section 10: Making Task Manageable.....	65
Section 11: Visual Aids.....	67
Section 12: Being Consistent/ Academic Support.....	72
Section 13: Co-Teaching.....	73
Section 14: Step-by-Step Instructions.....	74
Section 15: Modify Class Assignments.....	75
Section 16: Partial Day.....	80
Section 17: Behavior.....	81

Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to provide evidence- based strategies and resources to help educators in preparing a classroom for students with disabilities in the general education classroom. I hope this manual will help educators better prepare for the needs of their students. This manual consists of sample documents that will help in implementing a buddy system that will flow affectively.

How to Buddy Up Your Students

A buddy system is where you have two individuals that you feel will work well together due to their abilities, their academic levels, their attitudes and abilities to work with others. A student questionnaire is given to the students that are interested in being a part of the buddy program. The answers to their questions and the teachers' observations of interested students will help in the process of pairing students. Each participant has a job to do within this buddy system. Their job for our purposes is to ensure that their buddy's schoolwork is done in a timely manner, their buddy is kept on track, things are kept organized and support each other above all.

Teacher Survey

As many of you have heard, we are starting a new program here at Arlanza. We are starting a full-time buddy system program that integrates general education students with students with disabilities. This will happen in the general education classroom on a full-time basis. We are looking for teachers that are interested in being a part of this program and watching these students excel.

Teacher's
name_____

Grade level you
teach_____

Your
qualifications_____

What makes you want to be a part of this program?

With this being a new program there will be some extra meetings/workshops that will be required in order for it to work. Will you be willing to attend these meetings/workshops to make this program work? Yes No

Will you be flexible as we brainstorm on curriculum to provide effective learning for these students? Yes No

Will you be willing to work with all staff that is involved to plan a well- balanced program for all students in this program? Yes No

Will you be willing to give feedback to supervisors and fellow teachers and collaborate as to what is working and what is not working? Yes No

How would working with the buddy system in your classroom impact your classroom and teaching?

What kind of support do you believe you will need for this program to be successful?

Look for Students Personalities

Students come to us in all different shapes and sizes. They also come with all different personalities. Some have great personalities and others not so great. When looking for a student you would like to be a buddy, you want someone that has high quality personality traits. This would be a student you could depend on. Here are a few personality traits you might look for in a student you would use as a buddy:

Someone Who Ask Questions

This student is not afraid to express their lack of understanding. They will ask questions that many other students in the class have, but will not ask. This buddy is beneficial to a buddy who is shy or does not have speech due to a disability. They will speak up for their buddy.

Hard Worker

A hard worker does not mean that this student is the smartest but they are self-motivated to get the job done. These students will always try their best. They are the students that will turn in their assignments on time. They will be a good motivator to all students around them.

Leaders/ Problem Solver

Students that are leaders have the power to motivate students around them. These students can be used as a resources to help other students. Leadership skills sometimes come naturally as they lead others by their example. They are well rounded students.

Scholar

These students cannot wait to get to school. They are motivated and just want to be there. They love school, enjoy learning and want to be successful. When given the opportunity to learn something they go for it.

Solid Citizen

This student is just a good student. They learn more because they tend to follow direction, they try their best and are teacher pleasers. These students are respectful and polite not only to the adults but to their peers as well.

Trustworthy

All teachers love students that they can trust. These students are given opportunities that would not be given otherwise, because they can be trusted. Peers know if a student is trustworthy and if they can trust them or not.

Support System

The difference between a student that has a support system at home and a student that does not have a support system at home. You can tell a difference. A student that has a good support system has all the qualifications of a good student that would be a good buddy. This is due to the morals and values and the importance of an education that has been put into this student.



Student Questionnaire

Name _____

Grade _____

What makes you want to be a part of the buddy program?

Do you think you have good organization skills? Yes No
(circle one)

Are you willing to help other students who need help even
if it means giving up some of your recess time? Yes No
(circle one)

Are you willing to help your buddy with whatever they
need help with? Example: Your buddy may need help
getting their lunch out and their drink opened. Yes No (circle
one)

Place your area of academics in order of favorites.

Example: 1 Science, 2 Math etc.....

1st _____ 2nd _____ 3rd _____
4th _____ 5th _____

List of possible subjects.

Math, Language Arts, Science, Social Studies, Writing

Are you a patient person? Explain if you think you are or if you are not. Give an example of a time when you had patience.

You will need to complete your school work and also help your buddy do theirs and stay on task. Is this something you think you can do? Yes No (circle one)

Your teacher will support you, but if you are feeling overwhelmed what are some things, she/he might do to help you?

What are some of your favorite things?

Holiday: _____ Color: _____

Month: _____ Drink: _____

Season: _____

Candy: _____

Sport: _____

Food: _____

Movie: _____

Book: _____

TV Show: _____

Video Game: _____

Buddy System Contract

I will support my buddy any way that I can.

I will help keep my buddy on task.

I will encourage my buddy when he/she is discouraged or upset.

I will help keep my buddy organized.

I will try to explain the assignment to the best of my ability. If I cannot. I will seek the help of the teacher.

I will try to always stay positive. (I know I will have some tough days)

I will praise my buddy for all their successes small or large.

I will make sure they have all the necessary supplies to complete their required task.

Signature _____

Date _____

Team Building Activities

Here are several web sites for some good team building activities. These are activities not just for your buddy but activities you can use for your whole class.

Team Building Games and Activities for the Classroom

www.weareteachers.com

15 Fun Team Building Activities and Trust Games for the Classroom

www.bookwidgets.com

10 Team Building Activities for Students

www.tophat.com

12 Team Building Activities for Teachers and Students

www.outbackteambuilding.com

22 Fun Team Building Games & Activities for Kids

www.unicefkidpower.org

28 Team Building Games and Activities

www.pinterest.com

Ice Breakers for Social Distancing and Virtual Classroom

www.teachingwithamountainview.com

5 Super Fun Team Building Activities for Teachers and Educators

www.teambuildingkits.com

25 Team Building Activities for Teachers- Sign up Genius

www.signupgenius.com

16 Fun Team Building Activities for Kids

www.activitiekids.com

10 Team Building Activities for Distance Learning

www.eschoolnews.com

School Team Building Activities for Students and Teachers

www.totalteambuilding.com

Team Building Exercises and Activities

www.mindtools.com

25 Community Building Activities for Virtual Classrooms

www.ideas.demco.com

57 Virtual Team Building Activities for Remote Teams in 2021

www.snacknation.com

Environment

There is a social climate that affects the emotional and the physical parts of a classroom. Teachers effect and influence the growth and behavior of their students. In turn, this affects the dynamics of peer interaction. The environment is paramount to the learning of students. Having an environment where students are building positive learning goals and learning good social skills leads to students who will succeed.

Seating Arrangement

Seating arrangement can mean everything when it comes to a student with a disability. Some students need to be on the end of the row so they are less distracted. Some students need to be in the back row because they cannot have anyone behind them. So, as a teacher working with this buddy system, we need to take all of this into consideration when we are setting up our classrooms.

First, how many buddies are we going to have that year? Because it will change from year to year. Second, what are the needs of our students? Third, what arrangement is going to work best for this group of students? We will find that every year we may need to use different arrangements because different students have different needs. As teachers, we need to make sure the arrangement is effective. When the students arrive, you may find you have to make adjustments. These are just a few examples of some of where you might sit a student and his/her buddy based on disabilities:

Visually Impaired/Deaf or hard of hearing:

These students should sit in the front row close to the teacher. Teacher should wear a mic for the student who is hard of hearing or have an interpreter so these students are aware of everything that is going on in the class.

Mental Health Condition (ADHD): (other health impairment)

This student may need more than one place to sit, so they can move around from place to place. This is due to attention span.

Acquired Brain Injury: (traumatic brain injury)

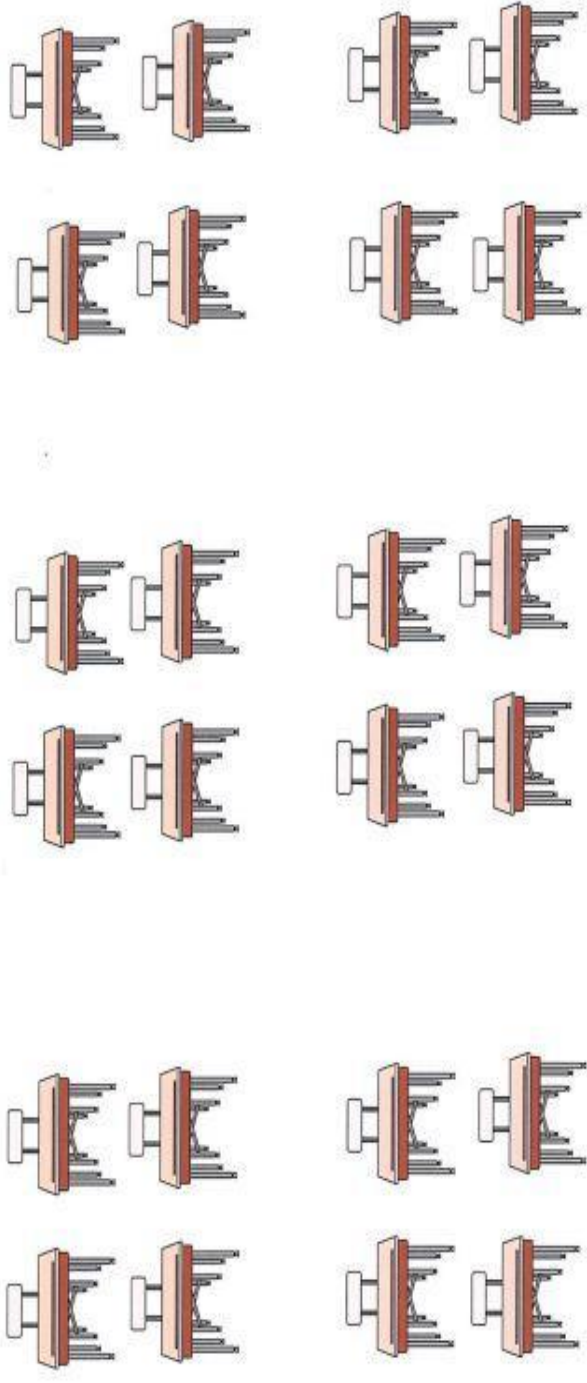
This student may need to sit on the end of the row or on the back row so they can get the assistance they need, due to limitations.

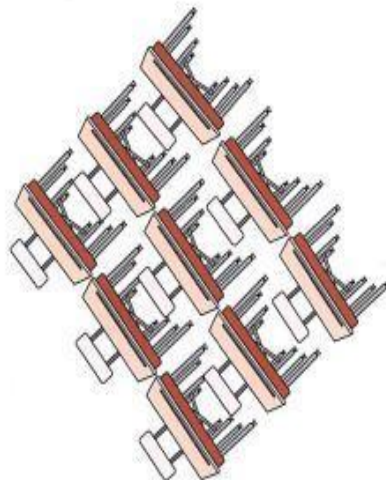
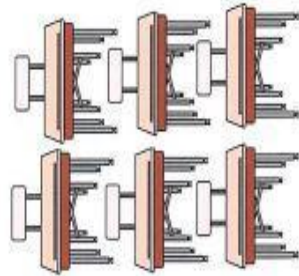
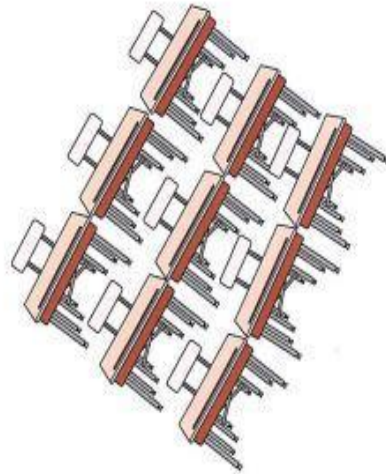
Autism Spectrum Disorder:

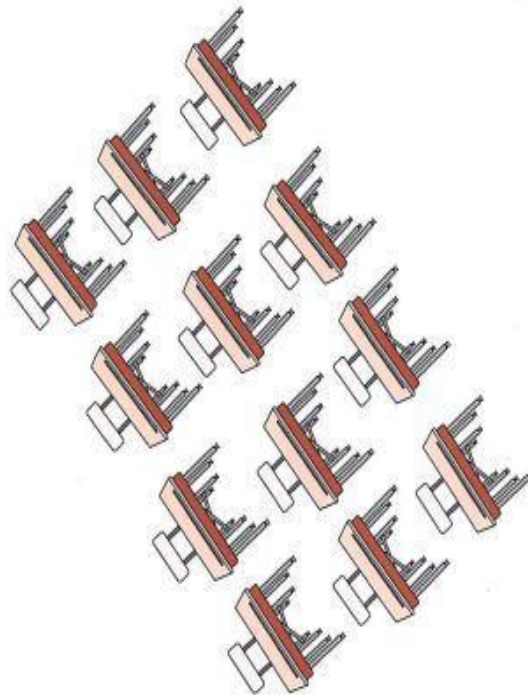
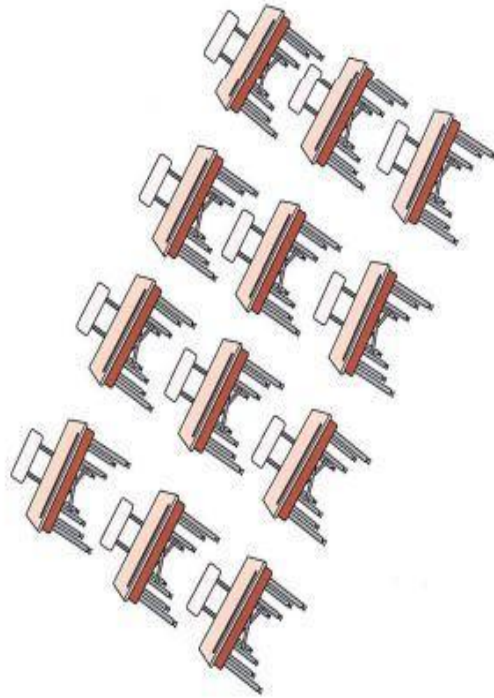
Depending where they are on the spectrum mild–moderate-end of the row. If the IEP states that the student needs special accommodations, teacher must provide those accommodations. High functioning, more than likely can sit anywhere they are comfortable.

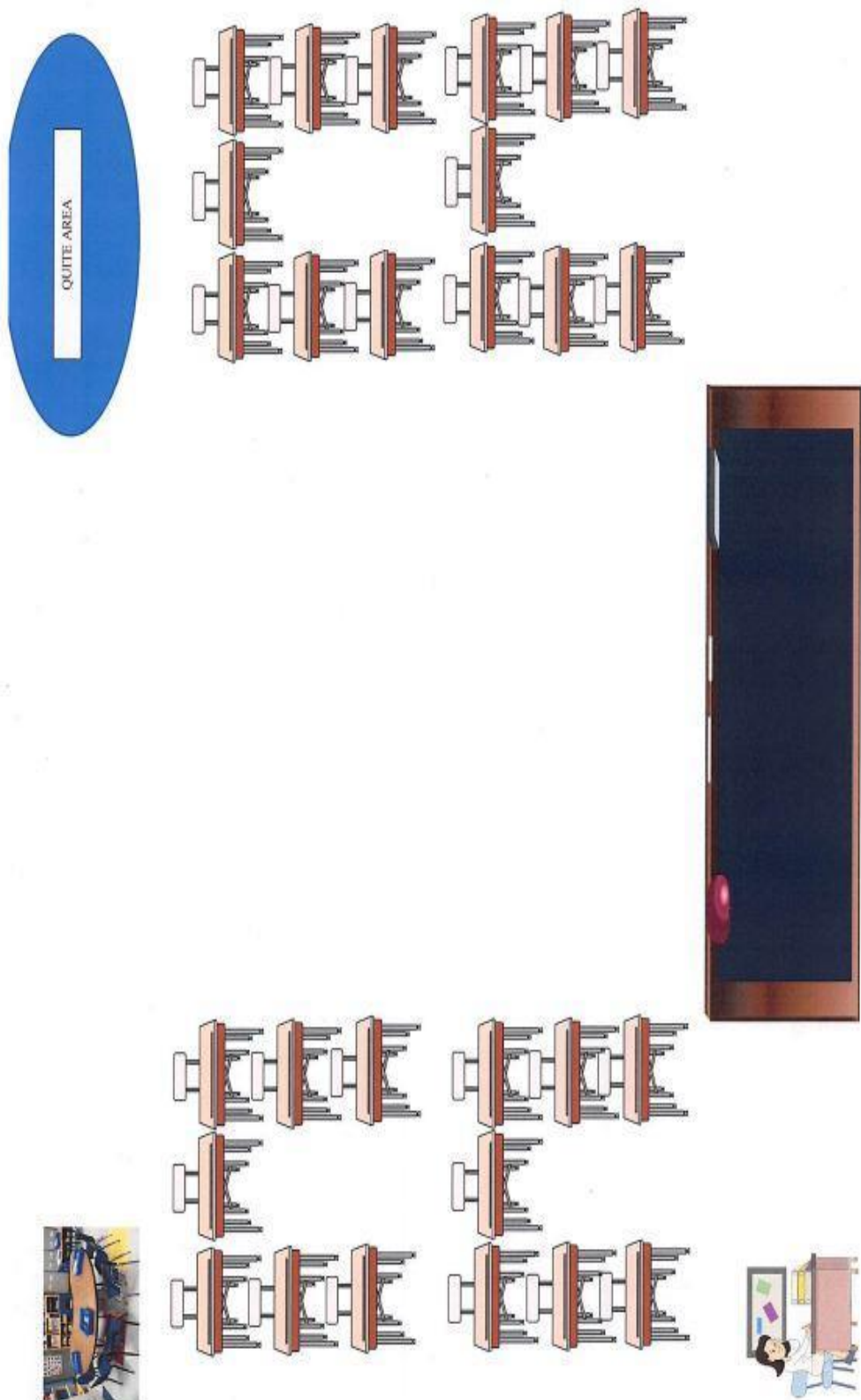
Physical Disability:

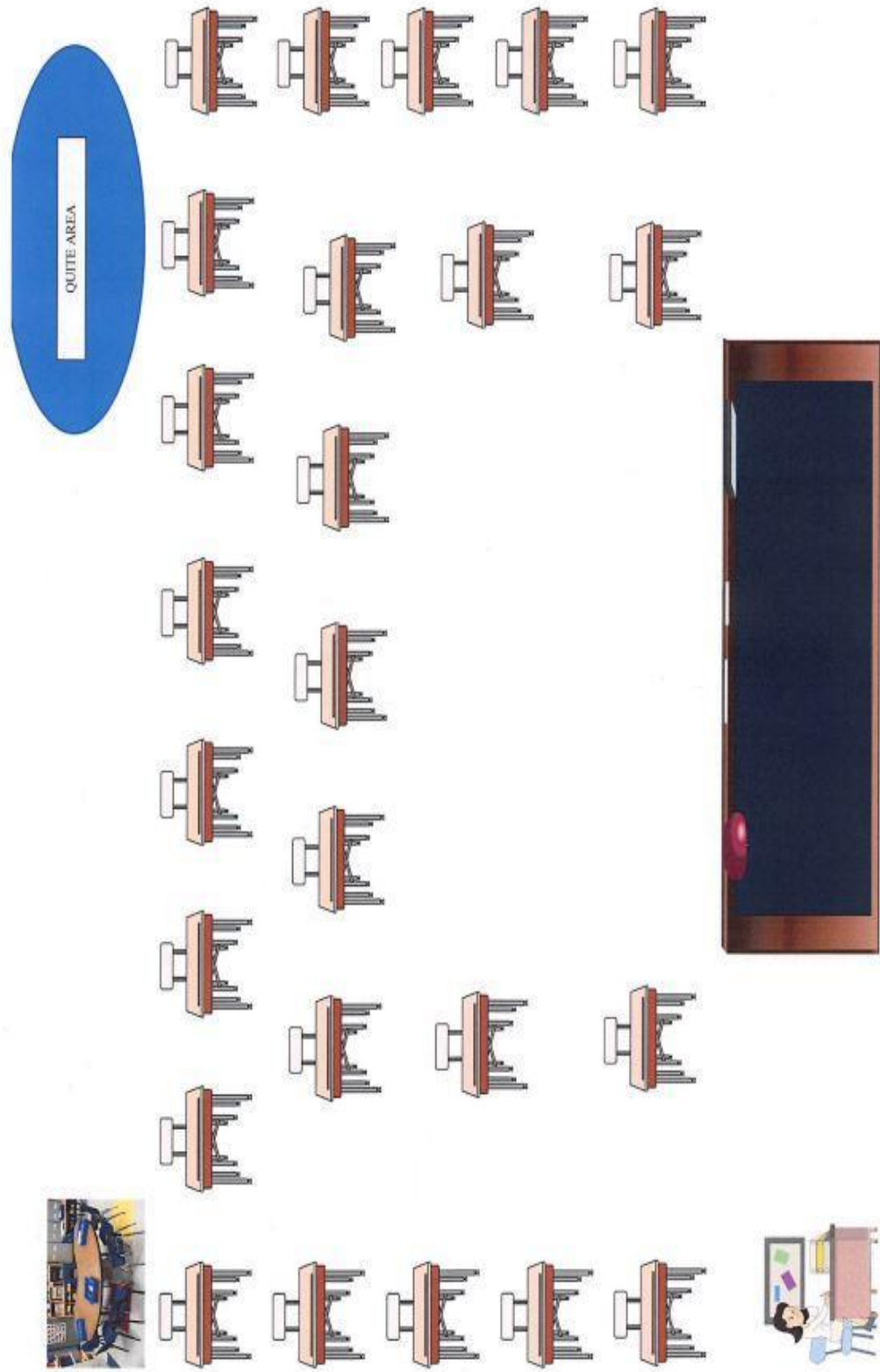
Students with wheelchairs need space within the classroom arrangement. Make sure a chair is moved and they are a part of the classroom arrangement. Also, make sure the rows are wide enough for the student to move about the room with their wheelchair. Do not make them sit on the outside and feel like they do not fit in. Any other physical disabilities, make sure they are accommodated are a part of the class and made to feel as they are a part of the class.

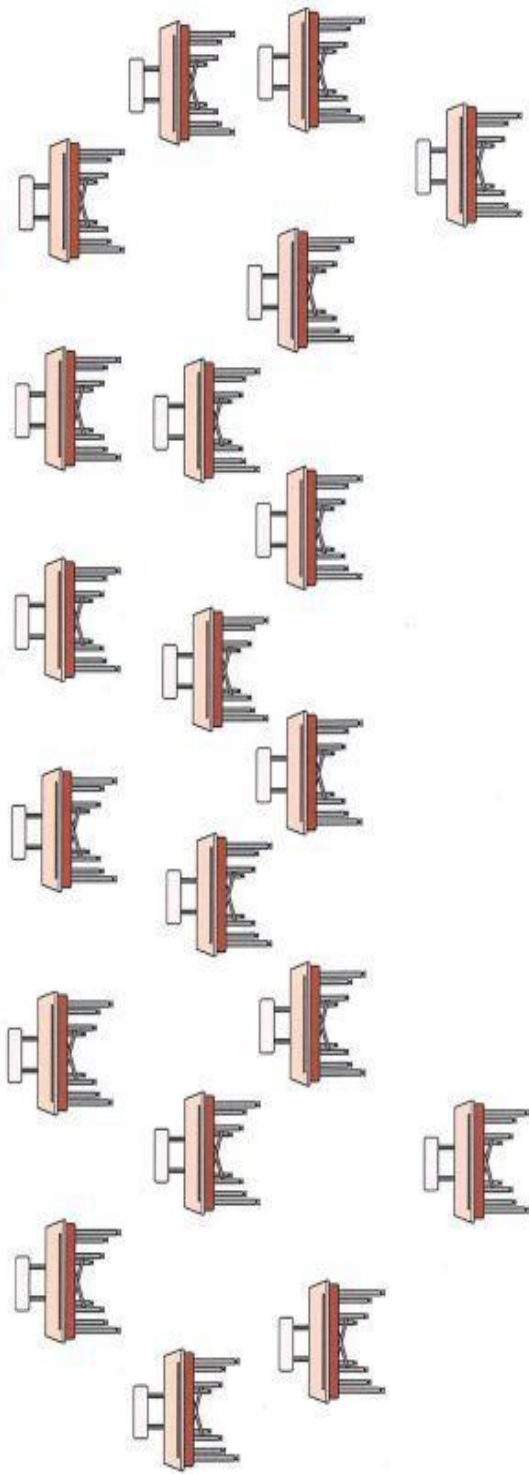


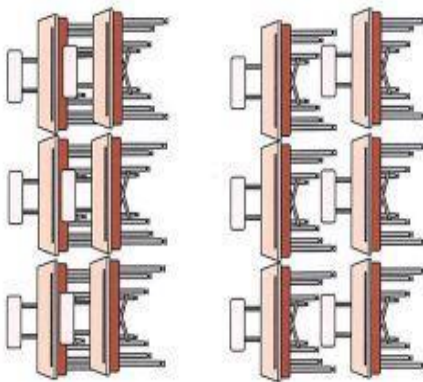
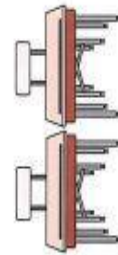
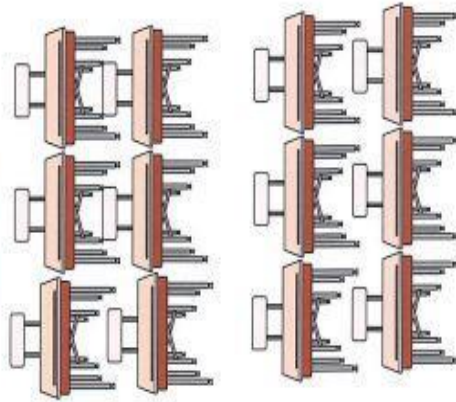


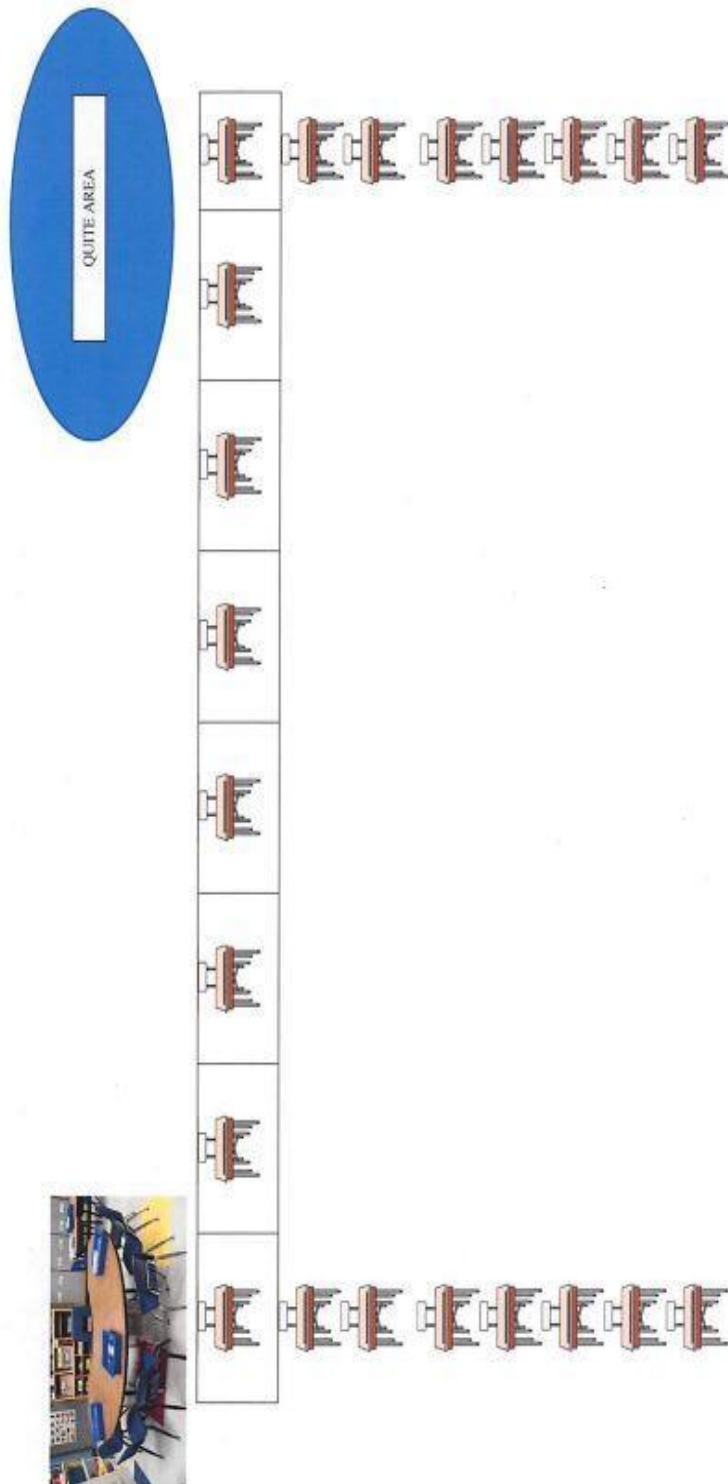


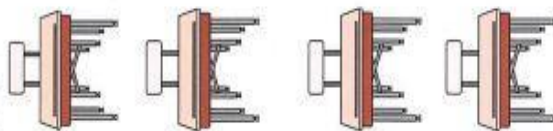
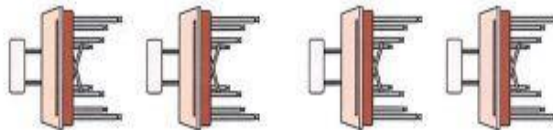
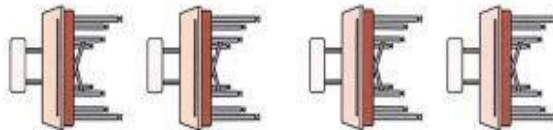
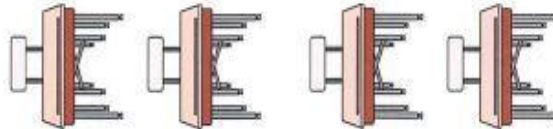
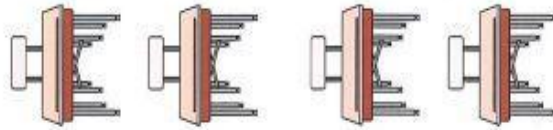
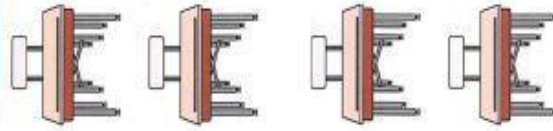


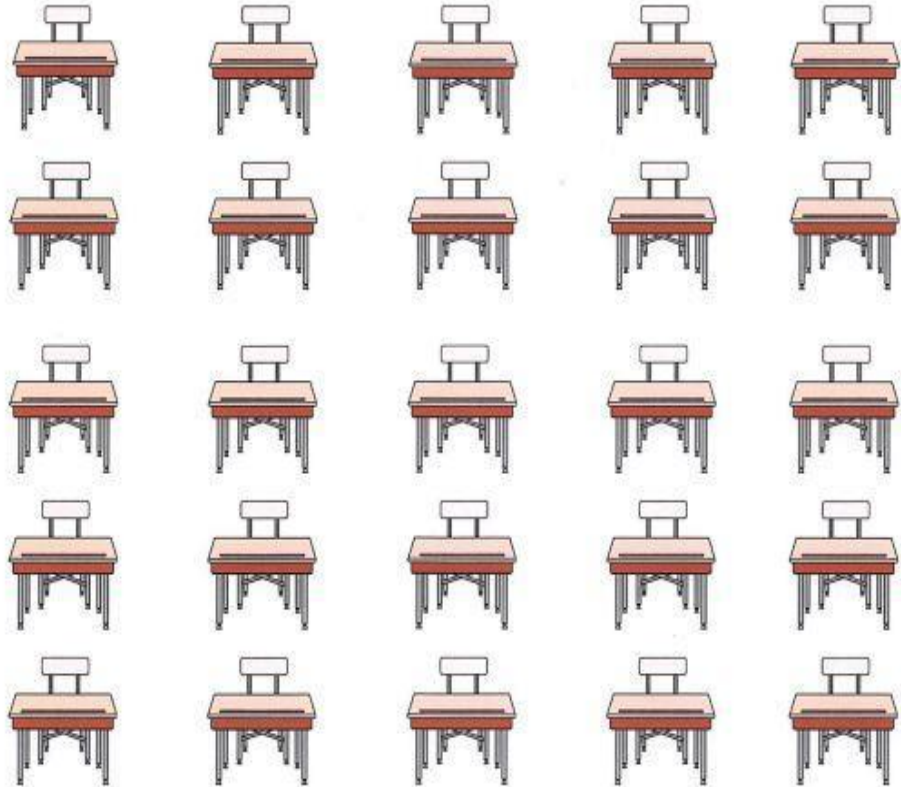


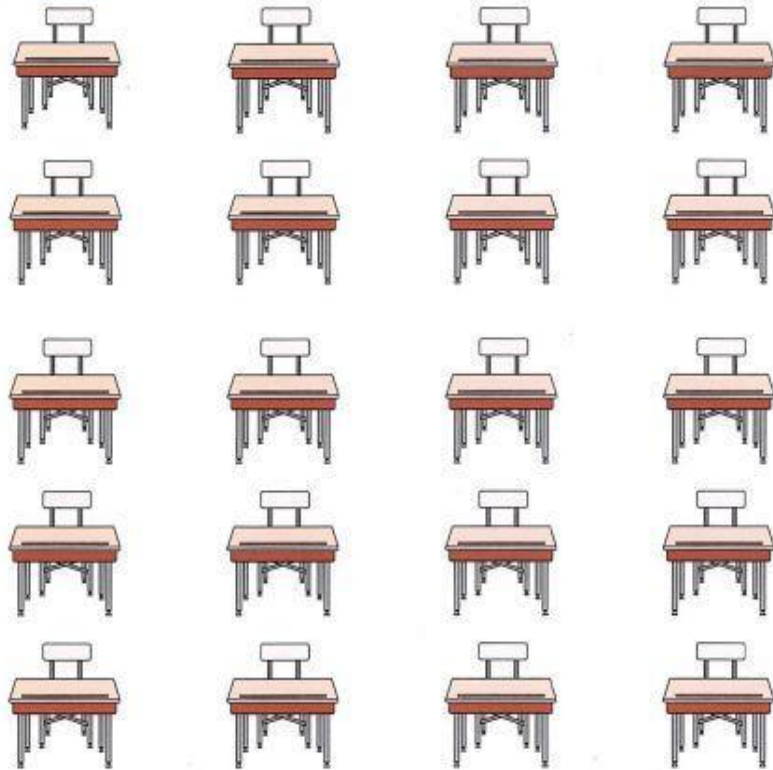












Classroom Rules

These rules are to be posted in the classroom. These class rules should be created as a class, so the class has ownership of the rules.

Stay in your seat unless you have permission to move about.

Keep hands and feet to yourself.

Raise your hand if you have something to say.

Do not blurt out. (Even when you get so excited, because you know you know the answer)

Be respectful of others property.

Be respectful of school property.

Walk inside the classroom.

Keep your area nice and neat.

Come to school prepared for the day.

Always be kind.

There are so many more rules you could add. Make them work for your classroom.

Organization/Planning

This is an area that is very important for many students. Having clutter all around the classroom is very distracting and stressful. We as teachers need to take items that do not impact student learning and put it away so our classrooms are not cluttered.

Teachers are the worst to keep those things we call “just in case I need this someday.” We know that day is never going to come. Let it go and move on. The clutter in our rooms affects student learning. Keep nice and neat areas. Everything should be organized so that students have ownership of that classroom and can find what they need any time they need it. Label your areas, drawers, and baskets for student use. Label books accord to their reading levels, this makes it easy for students to find a book they can read. All of this organization and decluttering helps your students feel calm, comfortable and focused in their space.

Daily Plan

(This is an example. You will make what works for you. Students can check off as they finish each one. This helps them stay on task and know where they are. Buddies can also help with this. I put this in a plastic sleeve so students can use a dry erase marker and you do not need hundreds of copies.)

___ **First**, put my homework in my desk and get ready for breakfast.

___ **Second**, clean up my breakfast mess. ___ Get out my homework so I am ready

to correct it with the class.

___ **Third**, Put my corrected homework in the basket. ___ Put my folder in my desk. ___ Get out my ELD folder.

___ **Fourth**, put ELD folder away. Get ready for language arts and teacher instruction.

___ **Fifth**, pull out reading journal and work with my partner.

___ **Sixth**, go to the carpet for read aloud.

___ **Seventh**, go to recess.

___ **Eighth**, Go to my small groups,
group1 _____ group 2 _____ (student
writes in what they are doing for the day. This is teacher directed.)

___ **Ninth**, get writing journal out.

___ **Tenth**, go to lunch.

___ **Eleventh**, get out _____ (teacher will put on what
student needs depending on the day of the week, will depend on what
they get out. Refer to schedule).

___ **Twelfth**, ___ Get out your math book. ___ Go get a bag of math
manipulatives.

Thirteenth, ___ Get homework folder out. ___ Put homework in
backpack. ___ Clean up.

Class Schedule

8:00 – 8:20 Breakfast

8:25 – 8:35 Correct Homework

8:35 – 9:05 English Language Development

9:05 – 10:05 Language Arts

10:05 – 10:25 Read Aloud

10:25 – 10:40 Recess

10:40 – 11:15 Small group activities

11:15 – 12:00 Writing

12:00 - 12: 45 Lunch

12:45 – 1:15 Science M/W/ Social Studies T/TH Art F

1:15 – 2:10 Math

2:10 – 2:25 Homework/ Clean-up/ Pack up/ Dismiss

Making Tasks Manageable

This is very important because many times students with disabilities will become overwhelmed with the amount of work they have to complete.

Depending on the students, you will break the work up into chunks. If the rest of the class is writing a five-paragraph essay, you may have your student with disabilities write only three paragraphs. Depending on their abilities, some may only be able to write one paragraph. They will only focus on one paragraph at a time. When it comes to math, only have them do half of the required number of problems everyone else is doing.

When you are giving a class test, make sure you always give a student with disabilities extra time. Depending on his/her IEP they may even need the test to be read to them. We always want the student to feel successful. We need to go that extra mile to make that happen. (A sample of breaking down the work into chunks is included)

CLASSROOM CHECKLIST

Use this checklist to help your children do their homework easily and stress free.

READING...

- ☐ READ PAGES 5-10

COMPUTATION QUESTIONS...

- ☐ DO COMPUTATION QUESTIONS 1-5

WRITING...

- ☐ WRITE SUMMARY ABOUT STORY

MATH...

- ☐ DO MATH PAGES 1-5

SCIENCE...

- ☐ READ PAGE 4-9
- ☐ DO QUESTIONS 1-10



Visual Aids

Visual aids can be very helpful to students with disabilities. Some students learn more efficiently with the help of visual aids. They can recall content and see where to find materials with the help of these visual aids. Also, a buddy or teacher can just point to a visual aid to remind them as to what they are supposed to be doing or what is coming up next in their schedule. Visual aids can be customized to a student's individual needs. Visual supports can also be used in so many areas of a student's academics. Examples: understanding rules, communicating with people, schedules, checklist, token boards and behavior support.

Understanding rules: This visual aid may have pictures of the behaviors that you want the student to do. As a teacher, you can just point to the behavior you are wanting the student to do and they will know what is expected of them.

Communicating with others: Some students are non-verbal and need these visual aids to communicate with others.

Schedule: A schedule is very important for some students. Knowing where they are in their day and what is going to be happening next helps keep their anxiety level low.

Checklist: The checklist is a way for the student to keep track of all the things they need to do. As they finish a task, they can check it off their list.

Token boards: These are visual aids that help the student see how they have done for the day. These are rewards. Students get rewarded for good behavior and staying on task. Tokens will be taken away for misbehavior as well. They can be given stickers, dojo points, good notes home, or computer time. Find something students like to do and use it as a reward.



I AM THIRSTY



I NEED TO USE THE BATHROOM



NO HITTING



NO TALKING



**No
running**



No Spitting



I AM HUNGRY



I AM LISTENING



WORKING AT DESK



READING



WALKING



EATING LUNCH



RECESS TIME



SITTING IN A CHAIR



USING A PENCIL



WORKING WITH TEACHER

Being Consistent

Consistency is very important in the lives of students with disabilities. They have so many things to worry about. Examples would be, will I be able to read this, will I remember the steps, is someone going to make fun of me, do I know what I am supposed to do next, where is that paper I had in my desk, I have no idea what he/she just said to me. The day and the life of a student with disabilities is hard so we need to do everything we can to help them. Having a predictable routine is a great way to reduce stress and gives them one less thing to worry about. Of course, things do happen and we do have to change a routine now and then. When these changes have to happen, go to your students with disabilities and let them know ahead of time. There is going to be a change in the schedule, and what it is going to look like for them.

Academic Support

Academic support is any strategies that will help the students be successful in school. After an IEP is finished, the kinds of supports are decided and discussed. Strategies are then put into place to help the students in academic areas they need help in.

There is a range of different services that a student may need. They may need one or more of these services, such as occupational or physical therapists, counselor or resource services (in class and pull out). Some of these services may not be available at every school site. Modifications and adjustments may be made if the students need the services. Always remember placement plays a role in a student's services.

Co-Teach

Co-teaching allows students with disabilities to remain in the general education classroom. This allows them to receive general education curriculum. There are unique relationships that go along with co-teaching.

Two or more professionals:

A general education teacher and a special education teacher teaching together in the same room.

Shared classroom space:

The teaching takes place in the general education classroom by both teachers.

Diverse groups:

Both general education and special education teachers provide instruction for students with disabilities. Also, for students without identified disabilities.

Jointly delivering instruction:

Co-teachers plan lessons together and use high involvement strategies so that all students will be engaged in the lesson.

Co-teaching has benefits to both groups of students.

Step-by-Step Instructions

Step-by-Step instructions are very important for students with disabilities. They need to have a check off list so they can keep track of what they are doing and what comes next. This is an example.

Step 1. Put your name on your paper. (Sounds simple, but for some they need that)

Step 2. List the order in which the tasks are to be done. Give in small chunks. Give one step instruction at a time. (Do not want to overwhelm the student)

Step 3. Always check with students for understanding. (Just because you broke it down into small chunks does not mean they understand)

Step 4. Break the assignment down to even smaller chunks. (Yes, it is going to take them longer to finish. That's okay, it is the product not the process.)

Step 5. If you see the student is overwhelmed then give the option to step away. Go get a drink or move to the quiet area. They can also take five or ten minutes to do something else.

Step 6. When they do return to the assignment, go over what they have done and remind them what they have to finish. Let them know they have plenty of time to finish.

Modify Class Assignments

There are several ways that we as teachers can modify a student's class assignment. Not all students will need their assignments modified. Depending on the subject you're working on will depend on how you modify the assignment. Always consider giving extra time to finish the assignment.

Math: give the student less problems to do, provide a hundreds chart for counting or a multiplication chart. Have manipulatives available for those that want to use them. Anchor charts on the wall so students can use as a reference. (This goes for all subjects)

Writing: we would give the students a list of high frequency words they could use in their writing. Teacher could have a prewritten essay with fill in blanks. Students would then have a word bank to choose from.

Reading is one area that is very difficult for students that are below grade level. Give students books that are at their academic reading level.

Test taking is not fun for anyone. Allow students to use their notes and books.

Have a class note taker. Then allow students with disabilities to use these notes if they want to.

When writing the student's IEP make sure all accommodations are put into the IEP.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20
21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30
31	32	33	34	35	36	37	38	39	40
41	42	43	44	45	46	47	48	49	50
51	52	53	54	55	56	57	58	59	60
61	62	63	64	65	66	67	68	69	70
71	72	73	74	75	76	77	78	79	80
81	82	83	84	85	86	87	88	89	90
91	92	93	94	95	96	97	98	99	100


Hundreds chart—21

Multiplication Chart


×	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
2	2	4	6	8	10	12	14	16	18	20
3	3	6	9	12	15	18	21	24	27	30
4	4	8	12	16	20	24	28	32	36	40
5	5	10	15	20	25	30	35	40	45	50
6	6	12	18	24	30	36	42	48	54	60
7	7	14	21	28	35	42	49	56	63	70
8	8	16	24	32	40	48	56	64	72	80
9	9	18	27	36	45	54	63	72	81	90
10	10	20	30	40	50	60	70	80	90	100

Multiplication

Arrays



$$2 \times 3 = 6$$



$$5 \times 3 = 15$$

Repeated Addition

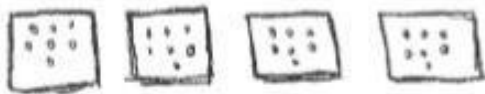
$$4 \times 6 =$$

$$6 + 6 + 6 + 6 = 24$$

$$3 \times 2$$

$$2 + 2 + 2 = 6$$

Equal Groups



$$4 \times 7 = 28$$

Number line



$$3 \times 4 = 12$$

Candy Store

Andrena, Nicci and Jory went to the candy store. Nicci bought a _____. Jory paid .50C for a _____. Andrena wanted a large _____ because she was thirsty. The kids walked back to the park to enjoy their _____.

Word bank:

lollipop
cookie
candy bar
water
soda
treat
snack

Hot Dog Dinner

Last Night my mom made us a _____ dinner. She made the best _____ in the world. I ate so many _____ I felt sick. My sister got _____ on her shirt. My brother spilled his _____. I sure do love when my mom makes _____ for dinner, they taste so _____.

Word bank:

hot dogs
hamburgers
muster
ketchup
milk
soda
yummy
delicious

Partial Day

The only time it is appropriate to have a student have a shortened day is when it is determined that the student is physically unable to tolerate a full day schedule or the student has medical needs that have to be addressed outside of school. A partial day must be discussed by the students' IEP team and all documentation must be put in place for the student to start a partial day schedule.

Partial Day Schedule

Kinder

8:00 Start of the school day
8:00- 8:20 Carpet time
8:20 – 9:00 Language Arts
9:00 – 9:30 Math
9:30 – 9:45 Read aloud
9:45 – 10:00 Writing
10:00 recess Time student goes home

Partial Day Schedule

1st-5th

8:00 Start of the day
8:00- 8:20 New business and what our day looks like
8:20 -9:20 Language arts
9:20 – 10:15 Math
10:15 -10:30 Recess
10:30 – 11:15 Writing
11:15 – 11:55 IDR/ interventions
11:55 Student goes home

Behavior

Maintaining behavior is very important. Some students with disabilities do well in finishing their task within the allotted time. Others may not do so well. These are the students that you will have behavior issues with and need reinforcement to help keep them on task. There are several reasons why bad behaviors may be happening with a student. The student may have anxiety, they may need more structure, they could be overwhelmed with the task at hand, there could be the lack of understanding. The best behavior problem is attention seeking behavior. The student is just seeking attention. Knowing your students is very important. There are several ways to help these students to stay on task. Here are a few: behavior chart, contracts, token boards, student moving themselves to a quiet space and rewards for good behavior. Behavior support: Student is supported with the expectations of their behavior in class and what consequences will occur if they do not contain their behavior.

Behavior Contract

Date: _____

I promise to work on these behavior expectations: _____

Choose 3 of the following or create your own.

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| ✧ I will avoid whining | ✧ I will go to bed when asked | ✧ I will complete my homework on time |
| ✧ I will use good manners | ✧ I will not interrupt | ✧ I will not hit |
| ✧ I will respect the property and privacy of others | ✧ I will be sensitive to the feelings of others | ✧ I will get ready for school on time |
| ✧ I will avoid places and objects that are unsafe or dangerous | ✧ I will present a positive attitude instead of being negative, pessimistic or rude | ✧ I will take responsibility for my actions and not blame others |
| ✧ I will pick up after myself | ✧ I will not tattle | ✧ I will keep good hygiene |
| ✧ I will eat healthy foods | ✧ I will do my chores | ✧ I will _____ |
| ✧ I will _____ | ✧ I will _____ | |

Reward for meeting these expectations: _____

Consequence for not meeting these expectations: _____



Child Signature: _____ Date: _____

Parent Signature: _____ Date: _____

Check in Check out Sheet

Date _____

Name: _____

Rating scale: 2=Great

1=okay

0=not met/not attempted

Points possible _60_

Points received _____

% of Points _____

Goal is 30+ Goal Met? Y N












































































	Morning Transition	AM Class work	RSP	Transition to and from recess	Classwork before lunch	Transition to and from lunch	PM Class work	Transition home	PE	Music
Respectful	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0
Responsible	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0
Safe	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0	2 1 0

Possible rewards: stickers, dojo points, good notes, drawing time (take 5). He is allowed to stand to work if need be.

Comments: _____

Home Note

Name _____ Week of _____



Behavior	Mon	Tues	Wed	Thurs	Fri
Stay in Seat/ place	  	  	  	  	  
Keep hands/feet to self	  	  	  	  	  
Follow Directions	  	  	  	  	  
Complete work	  	  	  	  	  
Overall	  	  	  	  	  
Notes					

parent signature: _____

My Behavior Tracker

Name: _____

Date: _____

Goal or Rule (List below)		
	AM	
	PM	
	AM	
	PM	
	AM	
	PM	
	AM	
	PM	
	AM	
	PM	

Weekly Level System Contract

Student: _____

Date	Purpose for contact
Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> OK <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Homework today? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> What is it?
Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> OK <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Homework today? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> What is it?
Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> OK <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Homework today? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> What is it?
Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> OK <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Homework today? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> What is it?
Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Excellent <input type="checkbox"/> OK <input type="checkbox"/> Poor Homework today? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> What is it?
Weekly Totals	Excellent _____ OK _____ Poor _____

Excellent	OK	Poor
1. On time and ready to start	1. On time	1. Late
2. Consistently follows class rules	2. Follows class rules much of the time.	2. Doesn't follow class rules
3. Completed assignments, 85 to 100% Accuracy	3. Completed assignments, 65-85 % Accuracy	3. Completed assignments less than 65%
4. Attends to instruction when teacher is in front of the class	4. Attends to instruction most of the class period.	4. Is off task or inattentive most of the period
5. Volunteers in class	5. Participates when called on.	5. Does not participate in class.

REFERENCES

- Aikins, J. W. (2005). Navigating the transition to junior high school: The influence of pre-transition friendship and self-system characteristics. *Blackwell Publishing Ltd.*, 42-60.
- Anke De Boer, S. J. (2012). Students attitudes towards peers with disabilities: Reviw of the literature. *International Journal of Disability : Development and Education*, 379-392.
- Beltman, B. M. (2012). The institution-wide peer mentoring: Benefits for mentors. *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education*, 33-44.
- Brock, M. E. (2016). Implentation and generalization of peer support arrangements for students with severe disabilities in inclusive classrooms. *The Journal of Special Education*, 49, 221-232.
- Cantin, S. a. (2004). Change and stability in children's social network and self-perceptions during transition from elementary to junior high school. *International Journal of Behavioral Development*, 561-570.
- Carter, E. B. (2010). "What are you doing after school?" Promoting extracurricular involvement for transition-age youth with disabilities. *Intervention in School and Clinic Vol. 45 (5)*, 275-283.
- Carter, M. A. (2015). Promoting inclusion, social connections, and learning through peer support arrangements. *Exceptional Children*, 48(1) , 9-18.

- Castagnera, R. B. (2005). Peer supports and inclusive education: An underutilized resource.
Theory Into Practice, 45(3), 224-229.
- Edwards, T. P. (2003). Quality of life of adolescents with perceived disabilities.
Journal of Pediatric Psychology, 28(4), 233-241.
- Espelage, D. C. (2016). Social-emotional learning program to promote prosocial and academic skills among middle school students with disabilities. *Remedial and Special Education*, 37(6), 323-332.
- Frederickson, N. A. (2003). Utilizing the classroom peer group to address children's social Needs and evaluation of the circle of friends. *The Journal of Special Needs Education*, (36)4, 234-245.
- Fredrickson Norah, E. S. (2007). Assessing the social and affective outcomes of inclusion.
British Journal of Special Education, 34(2), 105-115.
- Gartin, B. N. (2005). IDEA 2004. *Remedial and Special Education*, 26(6), 327-331.
- Gasser, L. J. (2018). Inclusive classroom norms, children's sympathy, and intended inclusion toward students with hyperactive behavior. *Journal of School Psychology*, 72-84.
- Green, L. (2008). Group cooperation, inclusion and disaffected Pupils: some responses to informal learning in the music classroom. Presented at the RIME Conference 2007, Exeter, UK. *Music Education Research*, 177-192.

- Griggs, L. E. (2013). A randomized trial of classroom intervention to increase peers' social inclusion with attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder. *Journal of Inclusion and Clinical Psychology*, 81(1), 100-112.
- Hayes, L. C. (2013). Educator's readiness to teach children with autism spectrum disorder in an inclusive classroom. *The Researcher*, 225(1), 67-78.
- Huebner, S. R. (2005). Middle school students' perceptions of quality of life. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 15-24.
- Humphrey, N. . (2011). Peer interaction patterns among adolescents with autistic spectrum disorders (ASDs) in mainstream school settings. *The National Autistic Society*, 15(4), 397-419.
- Kilanowski, C. F. (2010). Inclusion classroom and teachers: A survey of current practices. *International Journal of Special Education*, 43-56.
- Knesting, K. C. (2008). Settling in: Facilitating the transition to an inclusive middle school for students with mild disabilities. *International Journal of Disability; Development and Education*, 265-276.
- Leatherman, J. J. (2005). Teachers' attitudes toward inclusion: Factors influencing classroom practice. *Journal of Early Childhood Teacher Education*, 23-36.
- McDonnell, J. N. (2003). The achievement of students with development disabilities and their peers without disabilities in inclusive settings: An exploratory study. *Education and*

Treatment of Children, 26 (3), 224-236.

- Melanie Viglas, M. P. (2018). Effects of a mindfulness-base program on young children's self-regulation prosocial behavior and hyperactivity. *Child anf family studies*, 1150-1161.
- Morisse, F. E. (2013). Quality of life in persons with intellectual disabilities and mental health problems: An explorative study. *Hindawi Publishing Corporation The scientific world journal* , 1-8.
- Moser, E. O.W. (2018). Fostering the computation competence of low achievers through cooperative learning in inclusive classrooms: longitudinal study. *Learning Disabilities: A Contemporary Journal*, 16(1), 19-36.
- Palomino, M. D. (2017). An analysis of self Concept in students with compensatory education Needs for Developing a Mindfulness-Based Psychoeducational Program. *SAGE Open* , 1-11.
- Pearson, N. E. (2017). Sedentary behavior across the primary-secondary school transition: A systematic review. *Prevention Medicine*, 40-47.
- Prince, A. A. (2013). Postsecondary transition under IDEA 2004: A legal update. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 48(5), 286-293.
- Reiter, S. T. (2007). Inclusion of pupils with autism. *SAGE Publication and the National Autism Society*, 321-333.
- Reusen, A. A. (2001). High school teacher attitudes toward inclusion. *The University of Norh*

Carolina Press, 7-17.

Rojewski, J. H. (2015). Causal effects of inclusion on postsecondary education outcomes of

individuals with high incidence disabilities. *Journal of Disabilities Policy Studies*,

25(4), 210-219.

Santillan, L. L. (2019). Brief report: Examining association between classroom social

network inclusion and playground peer engagement among children with autism

spectrum disorders. *Focus on Autism and Other Development Disabilities*,34(2),

91-96.

Schirmer, J. C. (1995). Diverse learners in the classroom. *The Reading Teacher*, 66-68.

Severance, T. P. (2011). Beyond the classroom: Internships and students with special needs.

American Sociological Association, 39(2), 200-207.

Strom, P. R. (2013). Teamwork evaluation by middle grade students in inclusive classrooms.

Middle Grade Research Journal, 8(3) , 83-97.

Svraka, E. L. (2011). Family quality of life: adult school children with intellectual disabilities in

Bosnia and Herzegovina. *Journal of Intellectual Disability Research*,5(12), 1115-1122.

Trainor, A. M. (2016). Characteristics of transition planning and service for students with high

incidence disabilities. *Learning Disability Quarterly*,39(2), 113-124.

Van Den Berg, S. (2018). Enhancing social inclusion of children with externalizing problems

through classroom seating arrangements and randomized controlled trial.

Journal of

Emotional Behavioral Disorders, 26(1), 31-41.

Webster, Jerry. (2020, August 26). A behavior contract and behavior monitoring tools.

Retrieved from <https://www.thoughtco.com/behavior-contract-and-behavior-monitoring-tools-3110696>

Xiaoyi Hu, Q. Z. (2018). Using p-mediated LEGO® play intervention to improve social

interactions for Chinese children with autism in an inclusive setting. *Journal of Autism*

and Developmental Disorders, 48, 2444-2457.