

Tips for More Inclusive Small-Group Activities

Excerpted from *Building Blocks for Teaching Preschoolers with Special Needs, 2nd Edition*, by Susan Sandall, Ph.D., & Ilene Schwartz, Ph.D.

www.brookespublishing.com/building-blocks-for-preschoolers



Environmental Support

Alter the physical, social, and temporal environment to promote participation, engagement, and learning

If

a child grabs objects from others. . .

. . . add physical structure to the activity by putting the child's project on a plastic tray or in a cardboard box lid. This way, the child has a reminder of which items are his or hers and are relevant to the project.

If

a child has difficulty transitioning to small-group time. . .

. . . assign seats at the small-group table. Post the child's name on the table or on his or her chair. This ensures that children know exactly where they need to sit at small-group time and eliminates transition chaos. Or give the child a name to take to small-group time

If

a child has difficulty following directions . . .

. . . present only one step with the corresponding item at a time. Present another step only after he or she has completed the first.



Material Adaptation

Modify materials so that the child can participate as independently as possible.

If

a child is matching word cards to pictures of objects, but the child's arm movements move the cards out of their correct places . . .

. . . put Velcro on the back of the cards and the pictures. Let the child attach the cards and the pictures to a board.

If

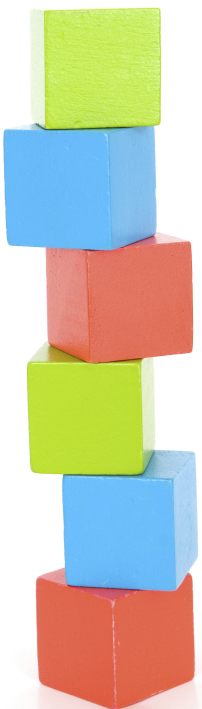
the table is too high for the child . . .

. . . attach a foam board or cushion to the child's seat by using Velcro or tape.

If

a child has difficulty holding a pencil . . .

. . . wrap the pencil with tape so that it becomes bigger and easier for the child to hold.





Activity simplification

Simplify a complicated task by breaking it into smaller parts or by reducing the number of steps.

If

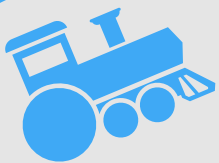
a child has difficulty with puzzles or games that have lots of pieces . . .

. . . hand the pieces to the child one by one, or start with a completed puzzle and gradually increase the number of the pieces taken out.

If

a child is overwhelmed by the project the group is working on . . .

. . . make picture cards to illustrate the steps or parts of the activity.



Child Preferences

If the child is not taking advantage of the available opportunities, identify and integrate the child's preferences.

If

a child has a tantrum and tries to leave the small group . . .

. . . let the child hold a favorite, quiet toy or a material that will be used during the activity. Give the child the toy before the activity begins.

If

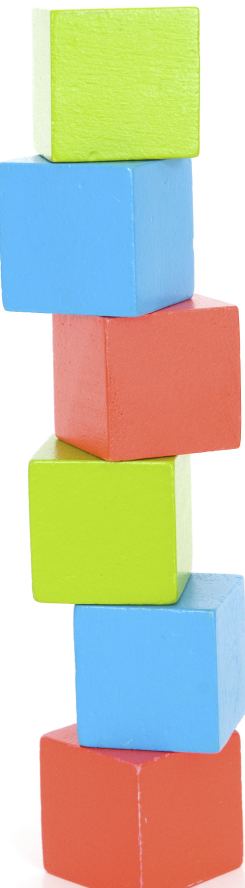
a child is not willing to go to or participate at small group . . .

. . . integrate a favorite item into the activity. For example, if a child loves trains, have the child run a toy train through paint to create

If

a child finishes the activity quickly and then wants to leave . . .

. . . create "finished boxes" with motivating items inside that the child can use only after he or she finishes small group and remains at the small-group table.





Adult Support

Have an adult intervene to support the child's participation and learning.

If

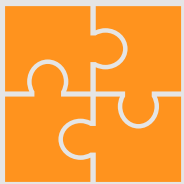
a child seems to be confused by the steps involved in a cutting and pasting activity and does not know where to start . . .

. . . have an adult sit beside the child and show him or her how to cut out a shape and glue it to the paper without telling him or her directly.

If

a child appears to be getting frustrated in the activity . . .

. . . provide encouragement by taking turns with the child.



Peer Support

Utilize peers to help the child learn important objectives.

If

a child has difficulty putting the last few pieces of a puzzle in the correct places . . .

. . . let another child who has put the puzzle together successfully tell or give clues to the child about where the pieces go.

If

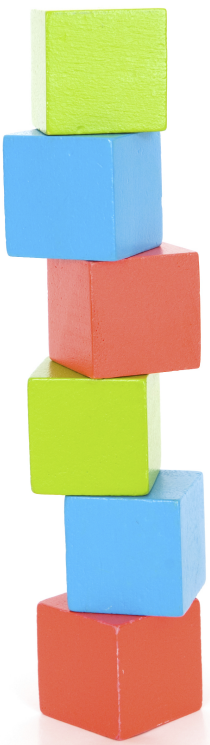
a child has difficulty opening a jar to get playdough or other materials out . . .

. . . pair the child with another child so that the partner can hold the bottom of the container firmly on the table while the child takes off the cover.

If

a child with fine motor difficulties becomes frustrated while stringing beads because the beads keep falling out of the child's hands when he or she tries to hold the string in one hand and the bead in the other hand . . .

. . . pair the child with another child, and ask the partner to hold the beads for him or her, so that the target child can focus on putting the string through the beads. Or, ask the pair to figure out who will do which part of the task.





Invisible Support

Purposely arrange naturally occurring events within one activity

If

a child spends most of small-group time standing or squirming in the chair ...

... move the small group to an area of the room where sitting at the table is not required.

If

a child has difficulty understanding the teacher's verbal directions ...

... give the child a turn immediately after a child who is successful.

Your ideas:

