

For Youth with Developmental Disabilities

- **To give directions or demonstration:**
 - Keep it simple, organized and sequenced.
 - Speak clearly and slowly.
 - Stay in the youth's visual field.
 - Break down activities into manageable and learnable steps.
 - Be consistent.
- Offer assistance with activities requiring fine or gross motor skills if needed.
- Pay special attention to transition times. Give independent timelines or ask another youth to assist their peer in getting ready.
- **Stay positive!**
Keep the positive reinforcement going.

For Youth with Neurological or Physical Considerations

- Learn how to use and care for specialized equipment.
- Become familiar with handling and positioning techniques so that the youth is moved safely.
- Remember to set brakes on wheelchairs.
- Always ask the youth before you assist them. Communicate what is happening before you begin to move a wheelchair, or assist in other ways.
- Assist the youth in activities they may not be able to do alone (*self-care, throwing/kicking a ball, an art project, etc.*).
- **Always keep the needs of the youth in mind when planning activities or field trips:**
 - Transportation
 - Barriers that will need to be removed
 - Allowing for adaptive equipment
 - Modifications to allow for full or partial participation

For Youth with Visual Impairments

- Understand exactly what the youth's impairment is, they can vary greatly.
- Assure the youth's physical safety at all times.
- Use sighted-guide techniques. Work with the youth to train peers how to safely assist.
- **Consider the environment:**
 - Be aware of increasing or decreasing light as well as glares.
 - Use materials or pictures that are clear and uncluttered.
 - Use large print books or computer software that enlarges print materials.
 - Add tactile cues throughout the environment to increase independence.
 - If the environment needs to be adjusted, orient the youth to changes.
- Encourage the youth to learn through hands-on activities.
- Borrow or purchase adapted materials such as a beeper ball (*has a bell inside*) so the youth can participate in sports or games.
- If the youth reads/writes braille, borrow, rent or purchase materials to create braille labels; purchase or borrow braille books and other braille materials.

For Youth with Speech and Language Delays/Disorders

- Listen closely and use contextual cues to understand the message.
- If you can't understand the message after it is repeated, ask the youth if they can tell you with different words, or if they can show you.
- Keep directions simple and clear.
- Expand on what the youth is saying to model language and/or to help clarify the message.
- Model the correct usage and pronunciation of words versus correcting the youth.
- Provide frequent and concrete visual reinforcement while trying to encourage attention to facial cues.
- Learn to use adapted communication the youth may be using in other settings (*computers, tablets, keyboards, pictures, etc.*) and teach peers how to use them as well.

For Youth with Social-Emotional Disorders

- Offer consistent structure and routines.
- Prepare the youth for unexpected or planned changes in the schedule or routines.
- Teach the youth to use the posted schedule; offer an individual schedule if the group schedule is difficult for them to use successfully.
- Offer the youth two or three choices to help them problem solve, engage in activities and/or meet expectations.
- Use visual and/or auditory cues to prepare youth for transitions (*songs, lights*). For youth who struggle to transition, provide 1:1 cues early and additional support as needed.
- **Be vigilant:**
 - To anticipate when and where they have difficulties
 - To help the youth express their feelings in appropriate ways
 - Teach the youth how to remove themselves from stressful situations and to take steps to manage their emotions when needed

For Youth with Hearing Loss or who are Deaf

- Learn the degree of hearing loss and what that means to the youth.
- Learn how the youth communicates (*sign language, lip reading, hearing aids, etc.*).
- Position yourself near the youth and face them to increase likelihood they will understand your messages.
- Demonstrate new activities in more ways than just verbally.
- Determine a signal with the youth that they can use if they do not understand or if they need assistance.
- As a group, learn basic sign language and help the group learn the best techniques for communicating with peers with hearing impairments.

For Youth with Learning Disabilities

- Understand what the youth's learning challenges are.
- Allow adequate time and repetition to learn a new skill with many opportunities to practice.
- Break activities down into small steps and sequence them accordingly.
- Recognize attempts at participation and continue to encourage skill development and increased engagement.
- Use pictures to label objects and actions you are talking about.
- Assist youth who have a difficult time with impulse control to improve self-regulation by offering calm reminders before an activity and practicing in fun ways such as playing freeze dance, and other stop/start games.
- Make expectations realistic.
- Give frequent and consistent positive reinforcement.
- Know the youth's learning preferences. Have information and materials presented in appropriate and respectful manners.
- Recognize their skills and gifts and allow them to be seen as competent or skilled by other youth.