

## ***Module 8: Special Needs***

**Read the following Case studies write down what YOU can do to support the child?**

- Ted is a nine year old with Cerebral Palsy, intellectually he is at grade level but he is unable to walk. He uses a wheelchair. Everyday when you go to the playground, he spends time observing other kids in play. There is a sand surface in the play area where most kids play. Ted's chair doesn't really work in that area.
  1. How will you plan for the inclusion of Ted in outdoor activities?
  2. How might you inspire other kids in the program to include Ted?
  
- Maggie is eleven and has been diagnosed with attention deficit hyperactivity disorder. (ADHD). Maggie often fidgets with hands or feet, and squirms while seated, she also has trouble waiting in line or taking turns. Maggie has very little impulse control and will blurt out answers. Transition times are very difficult for Maggie and she often gets "in trouble" during transitions and while waiting.
  1. What ideas do you have for helping Maggie to be successful?
  2. Where can you learn more about ADHD and strategies to help Maggie be more successful?
  3. How can you pro actively plan transition activities to support Maggie?
  
- Sarah is six, she does not have identified special needs. However, Sarah has had to switch schools several times and has had a tough home life. Her mom has lost her job and has had several boyfriends stay at their house. Sarah, is very shy, cries a lot and has begun to wet her pants.
  4. What will you do to engage Sarah in your program? How will you find out what you need to know about Sarah?
  5. What will you ask your supervisor about Sarah?

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### **Ideas for supporting Ted, Maggie and Sarah:**

**Ted:** The key for a child with physical limitations such as Ted's is that you pro actively plan to include him. We don't want Ted to be on the sidelines watching the other kids. Think ahead – how can you look at the situation a different way?

- Check with TED, ask him how he can be included
- Pro actively plan large and small group activities on other surfaces that can include Ted.
- Have peers bring materials to Ted when needed
- Clear pathways in your indoor and outdoor environment that might allow for Ted's inclusion.
- Include Ted in the planning!

**Maggie:** What do you know about ADHD? Where can you get more information? How will you find out about this particular persons needs? (ask your supervisor and possibly read confidential school or program records)

Structure and consistency are important for individuals with ADHD. Keep program rules simple and limit them. Identify expectations and consequences. Provide students with ADHD with private, discreet stay on task reminders and advance warning about transitions. Check with Maggie, what ideas does she have for the times that are challenging? Can you plan simple quick activities to assist with transitions?

- Be predictable
- Support the student's participation
- Help students correct their own mistakes.
- Help students focus.
- Lower noise level.
- Break down directions into smaller pieces

**Sarah:** Children's lives may be difficult, with ongoing stress and trauma. Kids may return home to a caregiver who is unengaged, depressed, chemically dependent, violent, mentally ill, or highly stressed. Staff must understand how to create a physically and emotionally safe space for all participants. This includes a space where there is no teasing, put downs or bullying. This includes a space where staff strategically plan to INCLUDE kids and MAKE the time to connect with each participant daily.

- Talk to Sarah, see if she wants to talks in more detail about her life.
- Observe Sarah with her peers. Document any behaviors or situations that are of concern.
- Show Sarah you care about her by spending individual time doing things Sarah likes to do.
- Notify your supervisor immediately if you have concerns about Sarah!