



High-Leverage Practices in Special Education

Collaboration

Effective special education teachers collaborate with a wide range of professionals, families and caregivers to assure that educational programs and related services are effectively designed and implemented to meet the needs of each student with a disability. Collaboration allows for varied expertise and perspectives about a student to be shared among those responsible for the student's learning and well-being. This collective expertise provides collaborators with a more comprehensive understanding of each student's needs, which can be used to more effectively plan and implement instruction and services.

Teachers use respectful and effective communication skills as they collaborate with others, considering the background,

socioeconomic status, culture, and language of the families and the professionals with whom they work. Collaborative activities should be focused on (a) designing each student's instructional program to meet clearly specified outcomes and (b) collecting data and monitoring progress toward these outcomes. Effective and purposeful collaboration should enlist support from district and school leaders, who can foster a collective commitment to collaboration, provide professional learning experiences to increase team members' collaborative skills, and create schedules that support different forms of ongoing collaboration (e.g., individualized education program [IEP] teams, co-teachers, teachers-families, teachers-paraprofessionals).

HLP1	Collaborate with professionals to increase student success.
Collaboration with general education teachers, paraprofessionals, and support staff is necessary to support students' learning toward measurable outcomes and to facilitate students' social and emotional well-being across all school environments and instructional settings (e.g., co-taught). Collaboration with individuals or teams requires the use of effective collaboration behaviors (e.g., sharing ideas, active listening, questioning, planning, problem solving, negotiating) to develop and adjust instructional or behavioral plans based on student data, and the coordination of expectations, responsibilities, and resources to maximize student learning.	



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HLP2	Organize and facilitate effective meetings with professionals and families.
<p>Teachers lead and participate in a range of meetings (e.g., meetings with families, individualized education program [IEP] teams, individualized family services plan [IFSP] teams, instructional planning) with the purpose of identifying clear, measurable student outcomes and developing instructional and behavioral plans that support these outcomes. They develop a meeting agenda, allocate time to meet the goals of the agenda, and lead in ways that encourage consensus building through positive verbal and nonverbal communication, encouraging the sharing of multiple perspectives, demonstrating active listening, and soliciting feedback.</p>	

HLP3	Collaborate with families to support student learning and secure needed services.
<p>Teachers collaborate with families about individual children's needs, goals, programs, and progress over time and ensure families are informed about their rights as well as about special education processes (e.g., IEPs, IFSPs). Teachers should respectfully and effectively communicate considering the background, socioeconomic status, language, culture, and priorities of the family. Teachers advocate for resources to help students meet instructional, behavioral, social, and transition goals. In building positive relationships with students, teachers encourage students to self-advocate, with the goal of fostering self-determination over time. Teachers also work with families to self-advocate and support their children's learning.</p>	