Instructional Resource Guide for the Parents of and Students with Disabilities

Alyssa McManaway

EDUC 221 – The Exceptional Student

3 December 2013
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Introduction

I put together this resource guide to be able to give to parents and students to supplement the materials given by a specific school. The resource guide includes all the possible disabilities categories under IDEA. It also includes sample teaching strategies and methods for each disability that you could try yourself in classes, recommend to your child’s teacher(s), or to try at home. It includes a list of websites that contain specific and detailed information about disabilities, and many links to other resources and support networks. I’ve also included a list of local, state, and national resources that can provide support for the parents of, and students with disabilities. While this is not a completely comprehensive list, if I was putting together something like this for a specific student and their parents, I would specifically tailor the resource to fit their specific needs.

I want to provide my students and their parents with specific resources for their local area, in this case the Roanoke Valley and Virginia. However, putting this resource guide together has given me a template, and the tools that I would need to help me put together something similar for an individual student. I put together this resource guide also because I want to provide my students and their parents with a comprehensive resources to help them understand their specific disability, where it falls under IDEA, provide them with extra resources apart from the school purchased materials. This project was a valuable learning experience, and it provides me with a template to use in the future.
Disability categories under IDEA:

Including one example teaching strategy, and an intervention/accommodation

**Autism**

Autism is a disability that affects both verbal and non-verbal communication as well as social interactions. Autism is generally observed and diagnosed before three years of age. Children with autism often engage in repetitive movements, and have trouble adjusting to changes in their environments, or changes in their daily routines. Children with autism also often respond in unusual ways to sensory experiences. For a child to be diagnosed with autism, the disability must affect their school performance.

One example teaching strategy for a child with autism is that teachers should structure their lessons so that they are consistent and predictable. Changes in routine are difficult for students with autism, so having a classroom routine such as an opening activity, a lesson, and then a closing activity would be beneficial for students with autism. Also having autistic students participate in class with their non-disabled peers helps to provide them with examples for appropriate behavior in the classroom. Finally, teachers should present information both visually (using pictures, PowerPoint, etc.) as well as verbally.

One accommodation that can be used for children with autism is a simple picture board. This allows autistic children to more easily express needs and desires, as well as to interact within the classroom. Subject specific picture boards could be created to help supplement classroom instruction.

(Autism Spectrum Disorders, Disability Fact Sheet #1, 2010)
(Categories of Disability under IDEA, 2012)

**Deaf-Blindness**

Deaf-blind children have both visual (sight) and hearing disabilities which severely limit their communication abilities. This does not however mean that these children can neither hear nor see. Children that have both visual and hearing disabilities fall under this category only if
they cannot be accommodated in special education programs for children with deafness only, or blindness only.

One example teaching strategy for a child that is both deaf and blind student is for a teacher to speak clearly and at a pace that the student can keep up with. If the student has an interpreter the pace of the lesson should be chosen so that the interpreter can keep up with the teacher. Using large-print handouts or handouts in braille can also be helpful for deaf-blind students. Teachers should meet regularly, and often to have handouts, and visual information converted to the student’s preferred method of comprehension before the lesson so that the student can stay with the pace of the class.

One accommodation that can be used for deaf-blind students is the use of an amplification device. This is a small microphone worn by the teacher which amplifies his/her voice so that the student can hear the teacher more clearly. Also the use of an interpreter or note taker could be helpful for the student. Providing class handouts and information in large-print versions or in braille can help for student understanding, however, these handouts should be given ahead of time so that the student has time to review them before the lesson is given.

(Categories of Disability under IDEA: Disability Fact Sheet #2, 2012)
(Considerations when Teaching Students who are Deaf-blind, 2001)
(Deaf-blindness: Disability Fact Sheet #16, 2012)

**Deafness**

A child that is deaf has such severely impaired hearing that they cannot process linguistic/auditory information, no matter if amplification is used. To be listed in this category, a child’s inability to process auditory information must negatively impact his/her school success.

One teaching strategy that can be used for deaf children is the use of written materials for a deaf child. Giving a deaf child a script of the lesson can help them read along and participate in classroom activities. Also if teacher is able, they can use some sign language to engage the student. Deaf students may have an interpreter with them in class to translate
lessons to sign language, so teacher pacing should be used so that the interpreter can keep up with the pace of the lesson.

Accommodations for deaf students include having a note taker with a deaf student so that the deaf student can interact during a lesson. Also using assistive technology such as hearing aids, or cochlear implants that can aide individuals in hearing is possible. Also using captioned lessons or captioned videos can help students that are deaf understand what is being said during a lesson.

(Categories of Disability under IDEA: Disability Fact Sheet #2, 2012)
(Deafness and Hearing Loss: Disability Fact Sheet #3, 2010)

**Emotional Disturbance**

Emotional disturbance is a disability that contains a number of different characteristics. These include the inability to learn that cannot be described by any other factors, the inability to form successful interpersonal relationships, inappropriate types of behaviors and feelings under normal circumstances, a generally persistent poor mood, or depression, and the tendency to develop fears or physical symptoms associated with problems.

One teaching strategies that can be used for children that fall under the emotional disturbance category is the use of positive behavioral support (PBS) which includes teachers providing a supportive and positive learning environment. Students with emotional disturbances need positive reinforcement for desired behaviors to minimize undesired behaviors. Maintaining an environment of positivity can help these students to reduce behavior problems and to help them feel more supported and comfortable in the school setting.

An accommodation that is available for students with emotional disturbances is the availability of psychological or counseling services. Psychological or counseling services can help students that are struggling with their emotions to feel comfortable discussing where they are struggling and can provide positive outlets for these individuals to express their emotions, such as journal writing, and through artwork.
Hearing Impairment

Hearing impairment can be either permanent or non-permanent, and negatively affects a child’s academic success; however, the child can process to some extent auditory and linguistic information. Amplification can be used with success for individuals with hearing impairment.

A teaching strategy that can be used for individuals with hearing loss is the use of an amplification device. One such device is a microphone that the teacher wears that amplifies his/her voice either to the whole class, or to a specific individual. Using amplification devices can help hearing impaired children to more actively engage in lessons, and have a better understanding of the content that was covered during the lesson.

One accommodation that can be used for hearing impaired students is the use of captions or sub-titles on visual materials. This can be using captioned videos, or providing the student with a written account of the visual part of the lesson. This way they can follow along more completely with the lesson.

Intellectual Disability

Intellectual disability is limited mental and intellectual functioning and in certain skills. These skills can be in communication ability, the ability to take care of oneself, and limitations with social skills.

One teaching strategy when working with students who are intellectually disabled is demonstrating the taught material. For example using pictures or hands on activities to engage intellectually disabled students helps them to better understand the material than verbal only lessons. Also, breaking up longer tasks into more frequent, shorter tasks can help students with
intellectual disabilities to complete tasks and not feel overwhelmed. Always provide assistance and feedback to them on their progress.

Accommodations for students with intellectual disabilities can include the use of technology and equipment that help the student to communicate more clearly. This could be the use of a picture board, or a voice generator device. Accommodations specific to the individual needs of the child should be used to give them the specific assistance that can help them to be successful.

(Category of Disability under IDEA: Disability Fact Sheet #2, 2012)
(Intellectual Disabilities: Disability Fact Sheet #8, 2011)

Multiple Disabilities

This indicates the combination of more than one disability (excluding deaf-blindness). The combination of disabilities fall under this category only if they cannot be successfully accommodated in special education programs for only one of their disabilities.

Teaching strategies for students with multiple disabilities should be tailored around their individual strengths, and weaknesses, and learning needs. As a teacher, you need to be familiar with the student’s IEP to understand how to best work with their individual needs and goals. Providing modifications are often important and necessary to help these students to participate actively in the classroom.

Accommodations for individuals with multiple disabilities can include large print text for individuals with visual impairments, and counseling for emotional disturbances. The combinations of accommodations are endless, and should again be tailored around the specific needs of the student.

(Category of Disability under IDEA: Disability Fact Sheet #2, 2012)
(Multiple Disabilities: Disability Fact Sheet #10, 2013)
Orthopedic Impairment

Orthopedic impairments include any severe physical limitation that negatively affects academic performance. Examples can include spina bifida, cerebral palsy, amputations, or burns just to name a few.

Teaching strategies for students with orthopedic impairments include working to adapt lessons to actively engage students with physical limitations. Make sure for example, if you are taking the class outside for a science lesson that there is a path available that provides access for a physically limited student. Lessons should be tailored for the specific needs, and strengths of the student.

Accommodations for individuals with orthopedic impairments often include assistive technology. Using devices that can aid in communication, and computer technology, as well as technology to help with physical limitations (such as a motorized wheelchair) can greatly help these students to actively participate in classroom activities. The use of assistive technology should be explored in depth to determine appropriate and effective tools for the individual needs of the child.

(Categories of Disability under IDEA: Disability Fact Sheet #2, 2012)
(Cerebral Palsy: Disability Fact Sheet #2, 2010)

Other Health Impairment

Other health impairments can include anything that limits the strength or ability of a child to focus in school. This can be related to asthma, or ADD, diabetes, or any number of other health problems. These health problems must negatively affect the academic success of the student.

Teaching strategies for health impairments can include working with students that have extended absences from school because of their health impairment. Providing students with modifications for curriculum and creating packets of work that can be completed over periods of time can be helpful for students that have extended absences due to chronic health issues. If
possible, private tutoring can be very beneficial for students when they are in the hospital to help them keep up with their school work.

Accommodations that can be used for students with health impairments is the ability and freedom for them to leave class or address medical needs in class without punishment. For example, if a diabetic student is feeling faint because their blood sugar is too low allowing the student to eat a snack or leave to check their blood sugar is important for their academic success.

(Categories of Disability under IDEA: Disability Fact Sheet #2, 2012)
(Other Health Impairments: Disability Fact Sheet #15, 2012)

Specific Learning Disability

Learning disabilities cause individuals to have difficulty in specific learning areas that negatively affects a child’s academic success. The most common are reading, writing, speaking, listening, reasoning and doing math. Three specific learning disabilities are dyslexia, dysgraphia, and dyscalculia.

Teaching strategies for students with learning disabilities can include giving students written and verbal instructions, and breaking large assignments into smaller, manageable chunks. Presenting information in more than one way can really help students with learning disabilities to grasp the information better.

Often students with learning disabilities are offered extended testing time so that they can take longer to read and digest what a question is asking. Also, students with listening disabilities can be given written notes, or borrow notes from a peer to help them comprehend the lesson more clearly.

(Categories of Disability under IDEA: Disability Fact Sheet #2, 2012)
(Learning Disabilities: Disability Fact Sheet #7, 2011)
Speech or Language Impairment

Speech or language impairments are difficulties with forming and enunciating words. This can come in multiple forms, but the four major categories of speech and language impairments are articulation, fluency, voice, and language. Children that struggle with impairments in articulation often produce sounds incorrectly (i.e. a lisp) or struggle to produce certain letters. With impairments in fluency children struggle to form sentences that flow in a logical progression (repeated words, pauses at inappropriate times). With voice impairments, children struggle with the pitch or loudness of their voices. Finally, with language impairments, children struggle to express their wants and needs and struggle to understand what others are saying to them.

Teaching strategies for children with speech/language impairments can include not forcing a student that struggles with reading out loud to participate in that type of activity. Allowing for independent reading time can be beneficial for students that struggle in that area. Also, understanding how your student communicates and adjusting lessons to include that type of communication can help to foster student involvement in classroom activities. Fostering a positive classroom environment where other students do not make fun of how the child talks is also a very important concept to maintain, since if the child is afraid that other students will laugh if he/she talks, they are less likely to engage in classroom activities.

Accommodations that can be made for students with speech impairments include using assistive technology such as communication devices, especially if the disability is because of physical limitations.

(Categories of Disability under IDEA: Disability Fact Sheet #2, 2012)
(Speech & Language Impairments: Disability Fact Sheet #11, 2011)

Traumatic Brain Injury

A traumatic brain injury is an injury to the head that occurs from the head hitting something or being shaken violently. This causes injury to the brain and can cause changes in a number of areas, such as thinking ability, behavior, vision/hearing, learning, and physical
activities such as walking/balance. A TBI must happen after birth (not during birth) and does not include brain injuries that are present at birth.

A teaching strategy for students with traumatic brain injuries is to give directions one at a time, often giving them written directions as well. This helps the student’s process information more clearly. Checking throughout the process also to make sure that the student has comprehended your instructions is valuable for their learning.

Accommodations for individuals that have had traumatic brain injuries can include giving extra time to finish tests, school work, and homework to allow for longer processing time on questions.

(Category of Disability under IDEA: Disability Fact Sheet #2, 2012)
(Traumatic Brain Injury: Disability Fact Sheet #18, 2012)

**Visual impairment (including blindness)**

Visual Impairments are a large category of impairments that cause limited or no vision (blindness). There are many different medical causes of visual impairments, but as a whole if left untreated, visual impairments can have lasting negative effects on a child’s academic success because so much of how we learn is through our sight.

Teaching strategies for students with visual impairments can include setting up the classroom so that students with visual impairments can easily locate their seat. Also making sure that print in PowerPoint presentations is large and easily readable, using simple font and easy to read slide designs.

Accommodations for students with visual impairments include using large-print materials or braille for individuals who are completely blind. Also, allowing students that have difficulty seeing to sit at the front of the class can help them stay more engaged with classroom activities.

(Category of Disability under IDEA: Disability Fact Sheet #2, 2012)
(Visual Impairments Including Blindness: Disability Fact Sheet #13, 2012)
Internet Sites with Resources on Disabilities

http://nichcy.org/state-organization-search-by-state

This website allows parents/students to search their individual state for state agencies, disability specific organizations, parent organizations, and other organizations that do not fall under these three categories. This is a great resource for students and parents that are looking for outside resources for their specific disability. This website gives contact information, and specific websites for each of the agencies/organizations. Since the website allows for customization it gives parents a very easy to navigate resource for finding helpful information and resources for their specific disability.

http://nichcy.org/org-gateway

This website is a search engine for national organizations in all areas of disabilities. It allows for easy searching of a whole number of disability related topics such as laws, research, and technological assistance, it even allows for searching for resources in Spanish. This is a valuable tool for individuals who are looking for resources across a wide variety of topics related to special education and disabilities.

http://idea.ed.gov/

This is the government website for IDEA. It is a little more complex to navigate, but has a lot of really valuable resources and information on all the steps in the process from referral to IEP’s to special education resources. This is a great comprehensive resource on IDEA and its implications across a wide area of topics.

http://www.pbs.org/parents/disabilities/

This is a great website from the PBS that helps parents to connect to outside resources and support networks. This website has valuable information on the specific disabilities, but it also includes articles on social issues in having students with disabilities, and parents rights. The articles are easy to understand which makes them more attractive for parents and students to read. Also, PBS provides links to many other resources within a specific area.
Sample List of Agencies Who:

Provide Services and Support for Persons with Disabilities

Roanoke Valley

Goodwill Industries of the Valleys – Youth Services

Address: 2502 Melrose Ave NW, Roanoke, VA 24017
Phone: (540) 581-0620
Website: http://www.goodwillvalleys.com/work-and-training-services/youth-services/

Blue Ridge Behavioral Healthcare – Family & Child Services

Contact Person: Gina Bevins Wilburn, LPC, LMFT, Director
Address: 3517 Brandon Avenue, Roanoke, VA 24018
Phone: (540)-981-1102
Website: http://www.brbh.org/family_serv.htm

Blue Ridge Autism and Achievement Center

Address: 312 Whitwell Drive, Roanoke, ViA 24019
Phone: 540-366-7399
Email: braac.roanoke@gmail.com
Website: http://www.braacroanoke.org/

State of Virginia

Children with Special Health Care Needs Program: Division of Child and Adolescent Health
Virginia Department of Health

Address: 109 Governor Street, 8th Floor Richmond , VA , 23219
Phone: (804) 864-7706
Email: AdolescentHealth@vdh.virginia.gov
Website: http://www.vahealth.org/specialchildren/
Division of Special Education and Student Services
Department of Education

Address: P.O. Box 2120 Richmond, VA, 23218-2120
Phone: (804) 225-3252
Email: doug.cox@doe.virginia.gov
Website: http://www.doe.virginia.gov/special_ed/

Protection and Advocacy: disAbility Law Center for Virginia

Address: 1910 Byrd Avenue, Suite 5 Richmond, VA, 23230
Phone: (800) 552-3962 (In VA)
         (804) 225-2042 (V/TTY)
Email: info@dlcv.org
Website: http://www.dlcv.org

National

First Signs, Inc.

Address: P.O. Box 358 Merrimac, MA, 01860
Phone: (978) 346-4380
Email: info@firstsigns.org
Website: http://www.firstsigns.org

Research and Training Center on Early Childhood Development

Address: 8 Elk Mountain Rd. Asheville, NC, 28804
Phone: (828) 210-8702
Email: info@puckett.org
Website: http://www.researchtopractice.info

American Association on Intellectual and Developmental Disabilities (AAIDD)

Address: 501 3rd Street, NW, Suite 200 Washington, DC, 20001
Phone: (202) 387-1968
Website: http://www.aaidd.org
Sample List of Curriculum/Research Based Resources:
Providing Instructional Support for Persons with Disabilities

General Education Curriculum:

The Gateway to Educational Materials (GEM), US Department of Education
www.thegateway.org/

Reading

Bookshare, U.S. Department of Education Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP)
http://www.bookshare.org/

Science:

National Science Teachers Association

National Institutes of Health
http://science.education.nih.gov/customers.nsf/WebPages/CSHome

History

Teaching history to support diverse learners, LD Online
http://www.ldonline.org/article/Teaching_History_to_Support_Diverse_Learners
Personal Reflection

Since I will be teaching a core area, I will not specifically be teaching special education classes, however, I will be teaching many children that have different disabilities. From learning disabilities to physical, health, or intellectual disabilities, all children come to the classroom with their own specific needs. This is an important concept to understand because as a teacher I need to be responsive to the needs of all of the students in my classroom. It is my responsibility as a teacher to make sure that each student is achieving to the best of their ability and that I am doing my best to provide them with the support, resources, and lessons that can foster academic success. This assignment and this class have taught me the importance of knowing your student, and knowing their individual disabilities, strengths, and needs. If you know your student, then you can tailor tools, and resources for their specific needs.

This assignment has given me a better understanding of each of the 13 categories that are covered under the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA). Researching each individual category gave me a much better understanding of how diverse disabilities can be. It gave be a much broader definition of a disability, which allowed me to be more prepared to handle any number of specific individual disabilities that a student might bring into my classroom.

This course has also greatly impacted my understanding of the needs and rights of individuals with disabilities. It has widened my eyes as far as the legal requirements and standards that teachers are expected to follow. Before this semester I was very unaware at the legal nature of teaching at a public school. This course has widened my understanding of what teaching will be like, the student population that I will be teaching, and the importance of being responsive, accepting, and willing to modify your lessons to meet the needs of all of the students in your class. I feel that this class and this assignment have both increased my awareness of my role as a teacher when working with students with disabilities. I feel better prepared, and have an even more accepting attitude about the benefits of being able to help students with disabilities succeed.
Work Cited


