

Tips for Using Kernels in Inclusive Classrooms

All students have distinct strengths and needs which make our classrooms richer. Teachers can adapt many aspects of the learning environment to support students with disabilities. The following guidance includes best practices for working with students with learning disabilities and/or developmental delays.



Instructional Practices

When working with students with disabilities, try the following during instruction:

- Model and narrate behaviors, procedures, and cognitive strategies used to build skills and complete complex tasks
- Break down new or complex tasks into smaller, more manageable pieces
- Use clear, simple language to explain reasons for the rules of classroom activities and games
- Encourage self-regulation through self-monitoring



Narrate the process you used to play a Kernel, such as On My Pizza. For example, share the strategies you used to remember all of your students' responses.

Materials

Use visual cues that guide students through physical spaces and abstract schedules such as:

- Daily schedules which include time for Kernels
- Graphic organizers to highlight important concepts and minimize focus on minute details



Create individual schedules for students to keep on their desks. Encourage students to check off each activity as it is completed.

Relationships



Foster structured, positive social interactions between students with disabilities and other students in the classroom. This gives students important opportunities to practice social skills, such as how to talk with classmates, or when to ask the teacher a question.



Take a look at the Kernels Roadmap: Initiating Communication for ideas about where to begin to help students communicate.

Preparation

Some students may need more support to participate in some activities. Give students one-on-one guidance either before or after presenting to the whole group, or provide support during group work to ensure they understand the instructions. Allow students to take breaks if needed to prevent overstimulation.



Before using a Kernel with the whole group, introduce it to students who struggle with the skill and may need extra time to prepare or practice.

Student Response



Encourage students to express themselves through a variety of methods such as drawing, writing, dancing, or singing. Be flexible with day-to-day variations in student performance – when a student's performance on one day doesn't mirror the previous day, recognize that the learning process has ups and downs.



Encourage multiple types of expression in the Kernel Awards to a Friend.