

Working with Children with Developmental Disabilities

Mentors:

- Check roster for additional information provided by parent. (Some parents are uncomfortable putting this information on the roster.)
- Often parents will request to privately discuss their child's special needs. Remain sensitive and professional.
- In some cases it will be apparent that a child may have a developmental disability, but the parents are either in denial, or uncomfortable acknowledging it. Remain sensitive to the situation and professional.
- All information about the children is confidential and should not be shared with other parents.

Assistants:

- If a parent discloses information to you about their child, make sure to have them speak to the Mentor.

In Lab tips:

- Understand and predict what is happening in the environment.
- Be aware of the classroom climate: recognize when emotions are high, and try to defuse explosive behavior by providing frustrated or emotional children attention, encouragement and options to resolve issues.
- If a child becomes overwhelmed, encourage him or her to take a two-minute break, or take some time to focus on decorating their bot.
- Children that become frustrated quickly or have difficulty staying focused respond well to structure and short-term goals. Give them incremental tasks to accomplish, and have them check in with you as they are completed. As goals are accomplished, give them praise before delegating a new task.
- When disciplining children, utilize the three strikes rule. Try not to become overly frustrated. These rules are in place to prevent Mentors from becoming overly emotional when dealing with behavioral issues.
- Recognize children that have difficulty transitioning and provide them with prompts 5-10 minutes before the transition occurs.
- Children with communication disorders can have difficulty understanding voice tones. When enforcing the 3 strikes rule or giving warnings, make sure to speak firmly but friendly, and always give a clear description of what the expectations are so he or she understands how to be successful.