

WHAT EFFECTIVE INTERACTIONS LOOK LIKE WITH CHILDREN WITH DISABILITIES



Navigating interactions with children with disabilities can pose challenges for educators, but with the right approach, these interactions can be not only effective but also transformative for both the child and the educator. This resource aims to dispel common misconceptions and provide practical guidance for leveraging the CLASS® tool to support children with disabilities in educational settings.

1

Dispelling Myths:

Contrary to popular belief, the use of the CLASS tool is not limited to classrooms without children with disabilities. Research has shown that effective interactions are vital for the development of all children, regardless of ability. In fact, higher levels of Instructional Support have been linked to increased social competence in preschool children with disabilities (Aguar et al., 2019).

2

Understanding Interactions:

Interactions between educators and children with disabilities are reciprocal actions that play a crucial role in facilitating development across all areas. While interactions may vary based on individual needs, they can be measured and improved upon, like interactions with typically developing children.

3

Interactions Across CLASS Dimensions:

Practical strategies are provided for promoting positive interactions with children with disabilities within each CLASS dimension:

- **Positive Climate:** Welcoming and acknowledging each child individually.
- **Educator Sensitivity:** Tailoring responses to meet the unique needs of each child.
- **Regard for Child Perspectives:** Empowering children to actively participate in their learning journey.
- **Behavior Management:** Proactively addressing triggers and fostering empathy among peers.
- **Productivity:** Ensuring equitable participation in learning experiences for all children.
- **Instructional Learning Formats:** Reinforcing learning objectives through personalized instruction.
- **Concept Development:** Encouraging sensory exploration and connecting learning to real-life experiences.
- **Quality of Feedback:** Providing constructive feedback to support language and skill development.
- **Language Modeling:** Engaging in reciprocal communication and utilizing various communication modalities.

By embracing the principles of the CLASS tool and tailoring interactions to meet the diverse needs of children with disabilities, educators can create inclusive and enriching learning environments where every child can thrive and reach their full potential.

