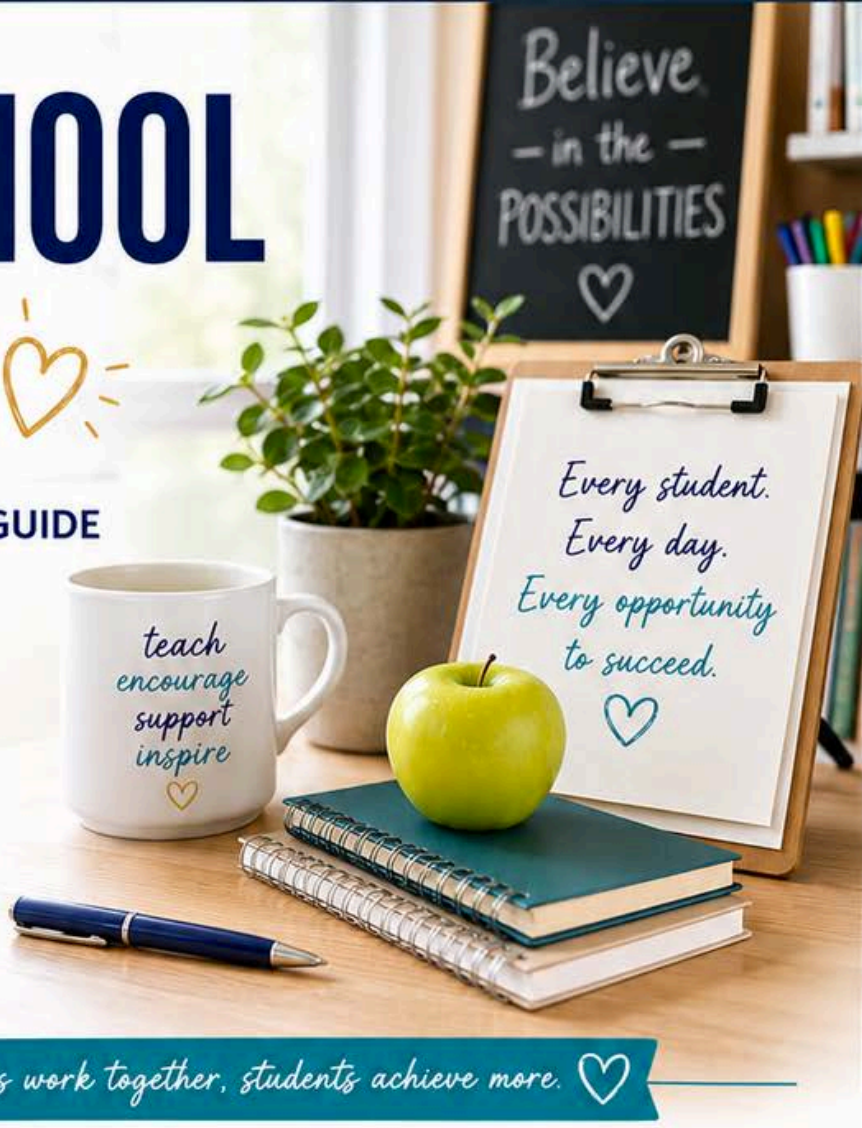
BACK-to SCHOOL Success

A GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHER'S GUIDE FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH IEPs & 504 PLANS



You play a powerful role in your students' success. This guide provides practical steps to help you start the year strong, build meaningful partnerships, and create an inclusive classroom where every student can thrive.

When educators and families work together, students achieve more.

YOUR ROLE MAKES ALL THE DIFFERENCE

BUILD STRONG RELATIONSHIPS

Get to know your students and their families. A positive connection lays the foundation for trust, understanding, and student success.

UNDERSTAND & APPLY SUPPORTS

Review IEPs and 504 Plans, use accommodations consistently, and collaborate with the special education team to meet each student's individual needs.

COMMUNICATE COLLABORATIVELY

Stay in regular communication with your students' families and the special education team. Open, ongoing communication leads to better outcomes.

CREATE OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH

High expectations, inclusive instruction, and a supportive classroom environment help every student reach their full potential.

Together,

WE CAN MAKE THIS A YEAR OF GROWTH AND SUCCESS!

- Every student belongs.
- Every student can learn.
- Every student can succeed.

Thank you for being such an important part of your students' journey!

BACK-TO-SCHOOL SUCCESS *A General Education Teacher's Guide*

FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH IEPs & 504 PLANS

BEFORE STUDENTS ARRIVE

A little preparation now sets the stage for a successful and inclusive year.

Taking time before the school year begins helps you feel confident, supported, and ready to meet the needs of every learner in your classroom.

- [ ] **REVIEW STUDENT DOCUMENTATION.**
  Read each student's IEP and/or 504 Plan carefully. Note accommodations, modifications, supports, goals, and service providers.

- [ ] **CONNECT WITH THE SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER.**
  Schedule time to collaborate before the first day. Discuss strengths, needs, accommodations, and effective strategies.

- [ ] **IDENTIFY KEY ACCOMMODATIONS & SUPPORTS.**
  Highlight must-do accommodations, routines, and supports. Clarify any questions.

- [ ] **REVIEW ANY BEHAVIOR SUPPORT PLANS.**
  If applicable, review the BIP and understand proactive strategies, triggers, and de-escalation supports.

- [ ] **CREATE A SYSTEM FOR SUCCESS.**
  Plan how you will consistently implement and document accommodations. Set up tools or trackers now.

- [ ] **PREPARE QUESTIONS.**
  Write down anything you're wondering about so you can start the year with clarity and confidence.

COLLABORATION IS KEY

Strong teamwork leads to strong outcomes.

- Share your classroom routines and expectations.
- Ask what works well for the student and what hasn't.
- Discuss communication preferences with the family.
- Clarify roles and points of contact.
- Plan for progress monitoring and ongoing communication.

REMEMBER

- Every student brings strengths, interests, and a story.
- Inclusion benefits everyone.
- Consistent supports create confidence.
- You don't have to do it alone—we're a team!

Quick Tip

A few hours of preparation now can save time, reduce stress, and help every student feel seen, supported, and successful from day one.

Prepared today. Powerful impact tomorrow.

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FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH IEPs & 504 PLANS

DURING THE FIRST MONTH

Build relationships, gather information, and set the foundation for success.

The first few weeks are critical for building trust, understanding needs, and establishing routines that promote learning and inclusion.

- [ ] **BUILD POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS.**
  Greet students warmly, learn their names, and show genuine interest. Relationships are the foundation for learning.
- [ ] **OBSERVE & GET TO KNOW YOUR STUDENTS.**
  Pay attention to what motivates them, how they learn best, and any patterns or challenges.
- [ ] **BEGIN COLLECTING DATA (IF APPLICABLE).**
  Follow the IEP for progress monitoring and collaborate with the special education teacher on data collection.
- [ ] **COMMUNICATE EARLY & OFTEN.**
  Share positives as well as concerns with both the special education teacher and the family.
- [ ] **IMPLEMENT ACCOMMODATIONS CONSISTENTLY.**
  Use agreed-upon supports with fidelity. Consistency helps students feel secure and confident.
- [ ] **DOCUMENT & TAKE NOTES.**
  Keep simple, organized notes about what you observe, strategies that work, and any concerns.
- [ ] **CELEBRATE SMALL WINS.**
  Acknowledge effort and growth. Positive feedback builds momentum and motivation.

TIPS FOR MEANINGFUL INCLUSION

- Provide access to grade-level content.
- Use UDL strategies to meet diverse needs.
- Offer choices when possible.
- Encourage independence.
- Create a classroom culture of respect and belonging.

WATCH FOR SIGNS

Early awareness helps you respond quickly.

Reach out if you notice:

- Difficulty completing assignments with accommodations
- Changes in behavior or mood
- Frequent absences or tardies
- Withdrawal from activities or peers
- Frustration, anxiety, or shutdowns

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO IT ALONE

Your collaboration with special education teachers, families, and other support staff creates the best outcomes for students.
Ask questions. Share ideas.
We are a team!

Relationships + Consistency + Communication = Success

When students feel seen, supported, and challenged, they are more likely to take risks, engage in learning, and reach their full potential.

Your care today creates possibilities for tomorrow.

FOR SUPPORTING STUDENTS WITH IEPs & 504 PLANS

THROUGHOUT THE SCHOOL YEAR

Consistency, communication, and collaboration create lasting impact.

Your ongoing support helps students stay on track, build confidence, and continue growing academically, socially, and emotionally.

- ☐ **MAINTAIN OPEN COMMUNICATION.**
  Keep the lines of communication open with families and the special education team. Share successes and address concerns early.
- ☐ **IMPLEMENT ACCOMMODATIONS WITH FIDELITY.**
  Consistent and faithful implementation ensures students receive the support they need to succeed.
- ☐ **MONITOR PROGRESS.**
  Use data (when applicable) and observations to monitor growth and adjust instruction as needed in collaboration with the team.
- ☐ **ADAPT & DIFFERENTIATE INSTRUCTION.**
  Meet students where they are and continue to provide high-quality, inclusive instruction for all learners.
- ☐ **CELEBRATE GROWTH & POTENTIAL.**
  Recognize effort, progress, and achievements—big and small! Encouragement builds confidence and motivation.
- ☐ **REVISIT & REVIEW.**
  Revist goals, supports, and strategies throughout the year. Adjust as needed and always keep the student's needs at the center.

KEEP THE FOCUS WHERE IT BELONGS

At the center of everything we do is *the student.*

- ✓ High expectations with the right supports.
- ✓ Relationships first, academics always.
- ✓ Every student can learn and grow.
- ✓ Small steps lead to big progress.
- ✓ Together, we can make a difference!

SELF-CARE MATTERS

You can't pour from an empty cup. Take care of yourself so you can take care of your students.

- ✓ Build a support network.
- ✓ Set realistic boundaries.
- ✓ Take breaks—you deserve them.
- ✓ Celebrate your impact.

YOU DON'T HAVE TO DO IT ALONE

Your collaboration with special education teachers, families, and other support staff creates the best outcomes for students. Ask questions. Share ideas. We are a team!

Quick Reminders

- You are an important part of your student's team. *Your role matters!*
- Partnership with families leads to better outcomes. *Work together!*
- Consistency builds confidence and independence. *Keep it consistent!*
- Communication creates understanding and trust. *Keep it open!*
- Every student has potential—let's help them shine! *Believe in them!*