

strategies both in and out of the classroom setting. Informal conversation, e-mail, phone calls, and an interactive journal are just a few of the many ways teachers can maintain two-way communication with families. Administrators must also stay informed of the progress of students with disabilities. The continual support of administrators for general and special education staff promotes collaboration among staff serving students with disabilities.

Summary

Creating inclusive TK classrooms means that teachers thoughtfully prepare an environment that reflects students of all abilities and permits access to curriculum in a way that is both appropriate and functional for all. Flexible routines, intentional prompts and cues, and collaborative work encourage all learners as they seek to be active participants in the classroom setting. At the root of inclusive work is communication and collaboration with families, specialists, school administrators, and other community stakeholders.

Students Who Are English Learners

California has a diverse population of young learners from varied linguistic and cultural backgrounds. Teachers of TK students recognize the value of diversity and show respect for each child's home culture and language by incorporating familiar words, objects, and images into program and curricular design. At the same time, they continually encourage the development of English language and literacy skills. Creating family and community partnerships for children who are learning English is also an important goal for educators. Teachers make use of dynamic instructional strategies that engage different modalities to bridge linguistic backgrounds. They provide concrete tools for making sense of and acquiring skills in the English language. Strategies for encouraging home-school connections, as well as inclusive practices for English learners, are discussed in this section.

Vignette

Ms. Wilson gathers her TK students for shared-book reading time. She positions herself at the front of the group, slightly raised in her chair so that all students have access to the illustrations in the big book and her visual props. Approximately half of the students in the class speak a language other than English at home. Before Ms. Wilson begins reading, she brings out puppets and real objects to introduce new English vocabulary from the story. "Today we are going to read a story about a hermit crab (holding up a puppet of a hermit crab). Let's all say 'hermit crab,' okay?" After prompting the students' choral response, Ms. Wilson continues, "What do you see on our hermit crab?" A young boy says "pincher" in Spanish and then moves his fingers together in a claw-like movement. The teacher responds, "Yes, Vicente! The hermit crab has claws (pointing to the puppet's claw) that pinch. Let's all make our hands into claws (mimicking Vicente's movement). We are pinching our claws like a hermit crab." Ms. Wilson introduces a few more words with props: She introduces 'shell' by using a real hermit-crab shell, and she introduces 'ocean' by showing pictures of the beach and underwater scenes. She then proceeds to read the story, using dynamic tones and gestures.