

# TEACH Presents:

Tips to Help Maximize Participation  
and Inclusion for Students with DS  
During Distance Learning

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# Today, we'll talk about...



Optimizing

Optimizing home / school communication, collaboration, and engagement



Creating

Creating opportunities and planning for meaningful participation




Aligning

Aligning participation with IEP goals




Examples

Examples of effective strategies

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## Optimizing Home-School Communication, Collaboration, and Engagement

- Initial remote IEP meeting to discuss present levels, goals at-a-glance, curriculum modifications, and accommodations used in classroom that could be replicated at home (e.g. breaks, sensory tools, flexible seating, etc.)
  - Weekly check-ins: Talk about what worked and what needs improvement. Work together to make necessary modifications.
  - Goal setting: Focus on 1-2 IEP goals per week (too many goals, expectations, and assignments may lead to frustration and diminished motivation)
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# Create Opportunities and Plan for Participation

Use a strengths-based approach

Incorporate preferred and non-preferred activities to increase engagement and motivation (e.g. "Wheel Decide")

Develop an "Inclusion Matrix" based on daily or weekly schedule to help parents and teacher(s) identify the opportunities for meaningful participation

Identify and discuss student's communication needs

Provide visual reinforcement to help student plan steps and navigate as independently as possible

# Align Participation with IEP Goals

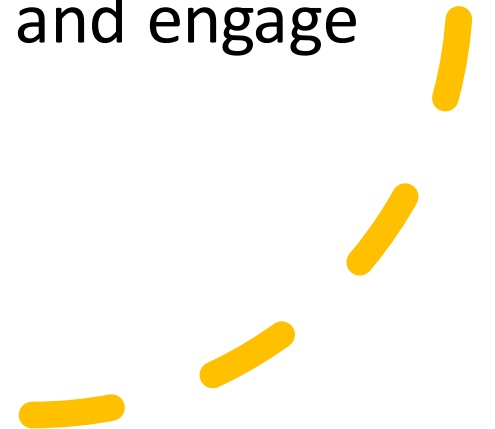
If student is working below grade level, how can we tie her IEP goals to what is being taught in the virtual classroom?

Requires planning and collaboration (schedule, modifications, materials, etc.)

Gives parents and teachers more tangible assessment opportunities

# Example: Math

- Sarah is fully included in her general education class but is working below grade level.
- Her teacher is giving whole group instruction about the concept of even and odd numbers. Sarah's current math IEP goal is related to identifying numbers 1-20.
- How can Sarah's teacher include and engage Sarah in this instruction?



# Ideas

- Have materials available at home to reinforce IEP goals (e.g. number line)
- Ask Sarah to name a number between 1-20, then choose a classmate to answer whether the number is even or odd
- When teacher names a number, if it's between 1-20, ask Sarah to name the number before she calls on another member of the class to answer whether it's even or odd
- Pair Sarah with a peer – she can name the number and the peer can name even or odd
- Utilize manipulatives, such as Numicon, to help connect grade-level content to IEP goal while connecting to unit being taught



## Example: Circle Time

- Sam has difficulty communicating but loves his peers and gets excited about circle time and calendar time every morning. Unfortunately, because it takes Sam more time to process and communicate his thoughts and ideas, he is often overlooked when his peers quickly raise their hands to answer questions about the day of the week, the day of the month, the month, and the weather.
- How could Sam's teacher and parents collaborate to help Sam feel more included in circle time?





Ideas...


Remember best practices! After you ask a question or give a directive, allow extra time for processing so all students have a chance to raise a hand and participate (e.g. 10-second rule)

Pre-plan how student will participate (e.g. On Monday, we'll ask Sam to name the day of the week)

Provide Sam with the tools to help him communicate his answer




Example: Science  
and Social Studies

- Teacher is lecturing about energy. Jenny's IEP goal is related to identifying 3-5 key terms for each unit and matching each term with a simplified definition.
  - How can we maximize Jenny's participation in this lecture?
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# Ideas

- Provide visual examples of each key concept (e.g. sun, wind, water)
  - As teacher lectures and names a type of energy, Jenny holds up a picture of the key word (may need prompting)
  - Utilize a peer/buddy to help prompt
  - Provide visual aids and appropriately-leveled text to help Jenny access key concepts
  - Ask Jenny to call on other students who are raising a hand
  - Allow Jenny differentiated means of expression to demonstrate her knowledge (e.g. visual, movement, song, or acting it out)
  - Provide meaningful, multi-sensory opportunities for entire class, including Jenny (e.g. at-home science experiments)
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# More ideas...

Virtual book clubs: Use breakout rooms to create book clubs based on students' reading levels and similar IEP goals or pair students with IEPs with reading buddies. Treat the book clubs as a social event and suggest that students come to these meetings with snacks. Have students dress in character or act out parts while engaging in comprehension activities in addition to working on yearly IEP goals.

Start virtual meetings with a fun, engaging activity: Start each virtual meeting with an engaging event to motivate students to join before starting academics. For example, on Mondays have students wear a costume, on Tuesdays schedule a household scavenger hunt, on Wednesdays allow students to bring their favorite stuffed animal to class. Such activities have students looking forward to attending, boost engagement, and tend to increase participation.

Movement breaks for all students

Record videos and give students who need extra help an opportunity to re-visit

# Remember...

- Empathy goes a long way – it keeps you patient and flexible
- Include your student/child, when possible, to learn about what is working and what is causing challenges
- Ask for help when you need it – communication is key
- Attend workshops and classes to gain better knowledge about students with Down syndrome and best practices to foster success
- Consider hosting a virtual Ability Awareness presentation in your classroom!
- Utilize DSCBA's free consultation services, workshops, and lending library