

SUPPORTING STUDENTS IN SPECIAL EDUCATION



1. **Know the Student Deeply.** Read the IEP carefully, especially Present Levels and Accommodations. Learn about the student's strengths, interests, and triggers. Use "Name, Need, Narrative" to personalize support. ([Hattie, 2018](#))



2. **Implement Universal Design for Learning (UDL).** Provide multiple means of representation (e.g., text, visuals, audio). Offer multiple ways to respond (e.g., speaking, writing, drawing). Allow multiple ways to engage (e.g., choice, gamified activities). ([CAST, 2018](#))



3. **Use Evidence-Based Instructional Practices.** Break down tasks into smaller steps. Model and think aloud. Use visual supports, graphic organizers, and checklists. ([Archer & Hughes, 2011](#))



4. **Prioritize Collaboration.** Establish regular co-planning time between general and special educators. Use flexible grouping strategies. Clarify roles in co-taught classrooms to avoid "velcro para" syndrome. ([Friend & Cook, 2017](#))



5. **Provide Consistent Feedback and Reinforcement.** Use positive reinforcement more than correction (4:1 ratio goal). Tie feedback to specific behaviors or goals. Use visual behavior charts or progress trackers. ([Marzano, 2010](#))



6. **Differentiate, Don't Dumb Down.** Differentiate by process, product, and content — not by lowering rigor. Allow alternate formats to demonstrate mastery. Adjust pacing, materials, or level of support, not learning goals. ([Tomlinson, 2017](#))



7. **Engage Families as Partners.** Keep communication proactive, not just when there's a problem. Use plain language, not just educational jargon. Celebrate progress together, even small wins. ([Wong & Hughes, 2006](#))



8. **Use Data to Drive Decisions.** Track academic and behavioral goals regularly. Use data to adjust strategies — not just to report. Share data with students to build ownership. ([Fuchs & Fuchs, 2007](#))