

Items to Consider for Special Education Classrooms

1. An iPad



For children with ED, the benefits of having I-Pads in the classroom are immeasurable. Anything from making lists and checking them off, to social skills and timers, are helpful for students. There are literally thousands of apps, for every age group, and many of them free.

2. Sensory Tool Box



All children are “sensory kids,” however; children with ED tend to need more time with sensory activities. Sensory stimulation

such as deep pressure provided by applying pressure with the therapy ball can be as effective as Temple Grandin's "Squeeze Machine." Examples of things to have in your sensory toolbox include, therapy bands, wiggle cushion, stress ball, squish balls, weighted blanket, weighted vests, hug vests, pillows, gym mat and therapy ball, ankle weights, a cookie sheet filled with rice, a large cake pan filled with sand and sandbox toys, shaving cream (a fun way to practice letter formation), water tub, straws, funnels and measuring cups and measuring spoon sets, one man pup tent, flash light. Other ideas include, boxing gloves and a punching bag, jump rope, hourglass sand timer, and the list goes on. Imagination and invention, along with necessity, will fill your classroom in no time.

3. A Calming Station



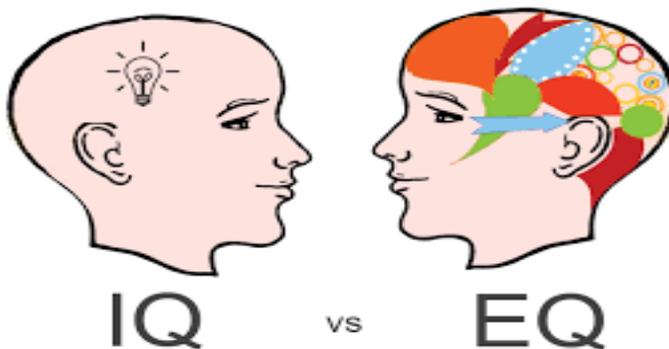
A place that is considered safe by the student that is quiet, and peaceful with the availability of comfort things like pillows, a blanket, and calming music.

4. Timer



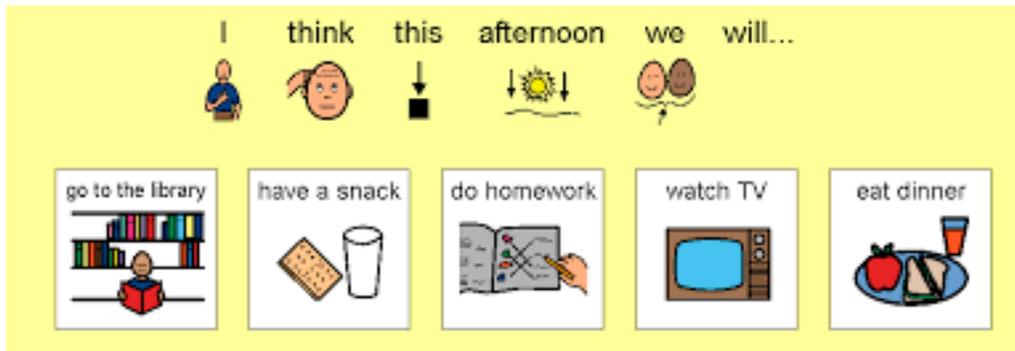
A visual timer gives the student a sense of time; a visual beginning and ending for work assignments, breaks and “mood” management.

5. Emotion/Cognitive Instruction



Emotional recognition and regulation curriculum such as - Brain Wise, Think Good/Feel Good, Skills Streaming, The Amazing Five Point Scale. Workbooks for teens by author Lisa M. Schab, LCSW are great too.

6. Visuals



Visuals include, “first/then” cards, visual schedule, posted rules and consequences, token visuals and earned reward schedule, and calming reminders. Additionally, emotion charts and books that normalize emotional experiences work well.

7. A Mirror



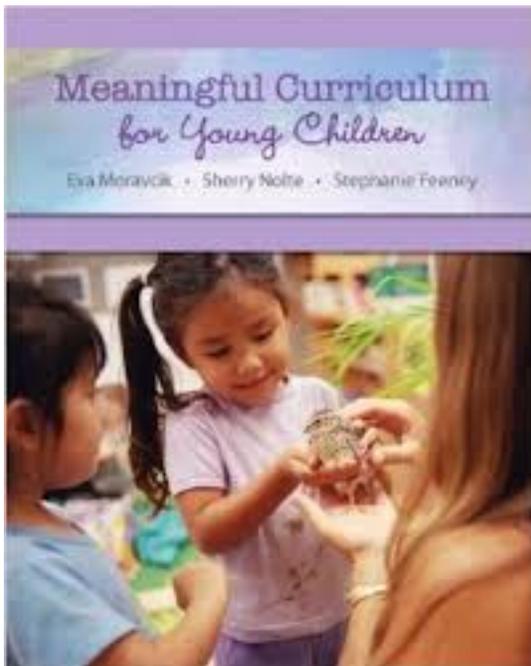
For younger children a mirror provides a guide for deepening their recognition and understanding of emotion and facial expressions. Pairing a mirror with emotion identification cards is a fun way to teach emotional recognition. For older children a mirror can provide instant facial expression feedback for social awareness and provide assistance in training facial awareness for generalized situational training.

8. Healthy Snacks



Eating can be a social and calming activity. Healthy snacks are a must have for a classroom for students with ED. Send a list of healthy snack expectations home and ask parents to avoid sending sugar filled treats.

9. Meaningful Curriculum



Frequently, children with emotional disabilities learn better if content is available visually, auditory, and tactically. Find curriculum that has manipulatives, video, and audio components.

9. Organized Materials



Children with ED frequently have trouble with their executive function skills. Organize materials, books, supplies and activities in a color code system, folder system, and/or box with picture label construction. Centers are a great way of organizing items.