

## Classroom Based Special Considerations for Children with Specific Learning Disabilities

The following Special Considerations are designed to be implemented either formally or informally by the classroom teacher in the classroom setting. They are open to negotiation between the parents and the classroom teacher. They are designed to provide the child with a happy and unthreatening environment where his or her learning disability does not overly intrude upon the child's attempt to succeed and enjoy school.

Special considerations are negotiated via the following two pathways:

### 1. The Policy Level

This means that parents and teachers meet together to formulate a set of statements (written or unwritten) that will guide what the child does and how he or she does it. Such a policy is, by and large, founded on the principle of **empathy**. In other words the teacher develops a sincere and educated insight into the child's struggles. That insight then creates a basic belief that the child requires a level of support and assistance that is clearly outside the normal way a classroom functions.

### 2. The Practical Level

At this level the teachers and parents work out a number of strategies including do's and don'ts that will be directly employed with the individual child at the classroom level.

This document outlines six areas that should be given significant thought when formulating a special consideration policy. The purpose of this document therefore is for parents to use it when negotiating both the need for a special consideration policy and the implementation of the associated practical strategies.

Such considerations are primarily designed for students with the following symptomatology or similar.

<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• at least average intelligence</li><li>• been diagnosed with a specific learning</li><li>• undiagnosed but is reading below grade and age level</li><li>• struggles with writing due to spelling, grammar or punctuation</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Struggles with maths concepts</li><li>• organizational skills are below average</li><li>• average oral language skills and social skills but poor academics</li><li>• strengths in art, drama, design, construction or sport but poor scholastically</li></ul>
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Special Consideration Area 1

Scholastic and Academic

*Classroom Work and Homework*

The following areas represent considerations that the teacher can implement but are difficult to measure or quantify by parents.

- Provide books on tape, and pre teach key vocabulary words before reading
- Encourage the student to engage in repeated reading strategies to build fluency and comprehension
- Provide tactile and kinesthetic materials when introducing maths concepts
- Check for understanding with maths problems, check that the student can identify and visualize the problem and estimate an answer before he calculates the answer
- Provide feedback soon after completion for maths and comprehension tasks
- Encourage student to become metalinguistic (think about his thinking) and to write daily in a journal

Parents can specifically measure the following considerations.

<b>Allow More Time for Assignments, Projects and Formal Examinations</b>
Notes and Questions

<b>Use of Assistive Technology (AT) for Written Work Including Assignments and Projects</b>
Notes and Questions

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**Paired Reading and a Reading Buddy**

Notes and Questions

**Reduce, Customize or Eliminate Homework**

Notes and Questions

## Special Consideration Area 2

### Tests and Reporting

The following areas represent considerations that the teacher can implement but are difficult to measure or quantify by parents.

- Provide situations where the student's intellect can be tested with the emphasis on the outcome. *Measure ability not disability.*
- Provide situations where the student's strengths and talents can be demonstrated and examined

Parents can specifically measure the following considerations.

<b>Eliminate Informal Grading or Classroom Based Tests Such as Weekly Spelling Tests or Eliminate Classroom Based Tests Entirely</b>
Notes and Questions

<b>Read Questions Orally for Tests</b>
Notes and Questions

<b>Provide a Scribe for Tasks Where Handwritten Responses are Unavoidable or Compulsory</b>
Notes and Questions

### Special Consideration Area 3

#### Learning Support for the Default curriculum

This area of consideration can be negotiated between the Classroom teacher and the Learning Support Teacher.

The following consideration is difficult to measure or quantify by parents.

- Explore both inclusive and exclusive practices relative to different kinds of support. Can a teacher come into the classroom to assist or can the child go out of the classroom to obtain assistance.

Parents can specifically measure the following considerations.

**Continue Learning Support, Aimed Particularly at Improving Reading, Writing and Spelling, and to Address any Weaknesses in Mathematics Which May be the Result of Increased Reading Demands**

Notes and Questions

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**Special Consideration Area 4**

**Mental Health – Empathy Building**

The following areas represent considerations that the teacher can implement but are difficult to measure or quantify by parents.

- View success in terms of improvement and personal best rather than against class expectations or standardized performances or criteria.
- Shift focus from trying to "fix" reading and other scholastic problems to accommodating (compensating) for the disability
- Encourage and celebrate what the student does well
- Expectations for reading, writing and spelling should be adjusted to what is realistic and achievable. - this should remain consistent across teachers and throughout his school years

Parents can specifically measure the following considerations.

<b>Avoid Humiliation (Such as Asking the Student to Read in Front of Class)</b>
Notes and Questions

<b>Provide Feedback and Praise and an Incentive and Reward System to Encourage Effort and Persistence.</b>
Notes and Questions

**Special Consideration Area 5**

**Home Agendas**

It may be useful in certain circumstances for the teacher to understand certain aspects of the child’s home environment and circumstances.

This following area is a consideration that the teacher can implement but is difficult to measure or quantify by parents.

- Support parent’s efforts to assist the student especially with private tuition and extra curricula activities to develop the student’s strengths, talents and interests

Parents can specifically measure the following considerations.

<b>Document Difficult or Unusual Home Situations That May Impact on the Student’s Ability to Cope or Complete Work</b>
Notes and Questions

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**Special Consideration Area 6**

**Peers**

These following areas represent considerations that the teacher can implement but are difficult to measure or quantify by parents.

- Model acceptance of the student's disability to peers and encourage participation in school life
- Discuss disabilities including learning disability with the class to improve their understanding, knowledge of the subject

Parents can specifically measure the following considerations.

<b>Document Actual or Potential Peer Interaction that May Damage Self Esteem. E.g. Bullying</b>
Notes and Questions