

Planning for Adult Assistants

Consider the factors below as you include adult assistants in your classroom. Having extra adults working in the classroom is a challenge, but the benefits outweigh the drawbacks. Take your time. Plan out your strategy and enjoy the added support.

Benefits

- Improves adult to child ratio
- Provides more opportunity to review/reinforce skills
- Offers greater chances to enhance learning

Drawbacks

- Assistants are not trained educators
- Assistant skill levels vary
- Assistants may have control problems

Am I Ready to Invite Assistants into my Classroom?

1. Evaluate your style
 - What am I willing to allow assistants to handle?
 - How much extra planning am I willing to take on?
2. Lay out a plan in detail. Include how to:
 - Divide up curriculum lessons for small groups.
 - Select tasks organized around basic skills.
 - Train assistants for working with students.
 - Share the classroom expectations.
 - Handle misbehavior.
 - Organize and store group materials.
 - Track student progress/work, etc.
 - Communicate with the assistants during the school day.
3. Send a letter of invitation and have a meeting.
 - Share your educational goals for the class for the year.
 - Explain the focus/ tasks for each group.
 - Discuss how the small groups will function throughout the day.
 - Discuss handling misbehavior and your class rules.
 - Share a lesson plan worksheet if assistants will plan for groups.
4. Plan ahead allowing.
 - Plan tasks for 3 week periods or longer.
 - Create assistant activities requiring minimal supervision.
 - Produce notebooks, folders or tubs to organize the tasks.
 - Write clear, concise directions.
 - Organize group materials, books and supplies.
 - Provide a time line for each task.
 - Create a feedback plan.
5. Start slowly with 1-2 people a day.
 - Prepare all materials and place in an assistant work area.
 - Carve out a location where each group will meet.
 - Encourage assistants to keep the same jobs for the school year.
6. Shower assistants with sincere praise and thank yous daily.