

# Planning for Classroom 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.