Characteristics of Children with Special Needs

- Characteristics… or stereotypes?
- Children with disabilities are individuals
- Stereotypes can limit our ability to predict children’s behavior
**Attention Deficit Disorder**

- Give clear and simple directions.
- Repetition and consistency is important.
- Keep children physically separated – assign seats.
- Activities may help distract a child.
- Report worsening behavior – it could indicate a serious problem.
**Autism**

- Simple 1 or 2 word directions.
- Don’t provide choices – use a gentle, firm voice.
- Distracting a child may help – something to hold in their hands.
- Storyboards can help.
- Some autistic children use keyboard communication devices.
- Evacuation planning is key.
- Pull the bus over when severe problems occur that impact safety.
**Hearing and Visual Impairments**

Consistency in seating, communication and student management is essential.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Visual Impairments</th>
<th>Hearing Impairments</th>
<th>Deaf-Blind</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Degree of intervention needed varies greatly – independence is the goal</td>
<td>Learn and use basic signs and finger spelling</td>
<td>Children who are deaf-blind are dependent on routine - communicate by touch</td>
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</tbody>
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Emotional Disabilities

- Use names and learn their interests.
- Don’t threaten or try to intimidate.
- Enforce safety rules consistently and fairly.
- Avoid “taking it personally” or getting trapped in a “conflict spiral.”
- Learn non-verbal clues to anticipate and defuse an incident.
- Structured daily routine helps.
Special Drivers for Special Children
Overhead Transparency

Intellectual Disability

- Consistency and routine are essential.
- Children with an Intellectual Disability are often affectionate and enjoy relating to adults.
- Speak simply and firmly.
- Watch for patterns of things that can provoke a child.
Multiple Disabilities

- Range and severity of disabilities vary greatly.
- Children should be closely monitored during the bus ride.
- Non-verbal communication may be necessary.
- Positive attention can side track negative behaviors.
Specific Learning Disability

- Establish trusting and respectful relationships.
- May not require special transportation arrangements.
- Driver sensitivity may defuse a potential behavior problem.
- Be patient and understanding when giving verbal directions.
Speech or Language Impairment

- Children may be targets of harassment or jokes.
- Learn each child’s unique patterns of speech.
- A child may “say one thing and do another.”
- A child with a language impairment may also have a hearing impairment.
Special Drivers for Special Children

Traumatic Brain Injuries

- Patience and compassion are essential.
- Verbal communication can be limited.
- Child was not born with the disability – may feel frustrated or angry.
- Rehabilitation staff may have tips for safe transportation.
Other Health Impairments

- **Asthma** - Air quality
- **Hemophilia** - Priority seating
- **Seizures and epilepsy** - Seat assignment - Light and temperature controls
- **Diabetes** - Recognize low blood sugar - Some diabetic children carry glucose tablets
- Health impaired children must be monitored during the ride.
Orthopedic Impairment

- A diverse population – ability to function independently varies.
- Wheelchair loading and securement requires diligence.
- Evacuation concerns – written plan is needed.
- Occupational and physical therapists can be good sources of information.
Children who are Medically Fragile

- Respiratory difficulties
- Tracheostomy, gastrostomy
- Colostomy, ileostomy
- Nasogastric tube
- Urostomy
- DNRs
- Ventilators, suction devices
- Oxygen

- Transporting medication – follow policy
- Children must be closely monitored during the ride
- Oxygen lines, feeding and drain tubes must be checked
- Evacuation plan must be in place
Preschoolers with Special Needs

- Neither compartmentalization nor lap seat belts are adequate for very young children on a school bus.

- Children less than 50 pounds must use an approved safety seat or Child Safety Restraint System.

- Keep out of rear seats.

- Evacuation concerns – have a plan.
Click the link below to complete the Characteristics of Children with Special Needs Quiz

Characteristics of Children with Special Needs