

## **Differentiated Teaching Styles and Top Training Tips**

A thorough run down with Q&A on differentiated teaching styles to address the varied ways in which students learn in the congregational school setting. Top training approaches to implement now and to train teachers in the future.

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# matan

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- **MISSION STATEMENT:** Matan educates Jewish leaders, educators and communities, empowering them to create learning environments supportive of children with special needs, through training Institutes and consultations across North America.
- **VISION STATEMENT:** By advocating for the inclusion of diverse learners, Matan enables the Jewish community to realize the gift of every individual and fulfill its obligation to embrace all children regardless of learning challenges in every Jewish educational setting.

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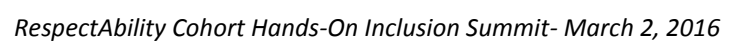
## The Basketball Pass

- Video



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## For example...

- Convey information using visual, auditory, tactile and kinesthetic cues.
- Build in multiple ways to participate in an activity.

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## For example...

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**LessonPix**  
*Custom Learning Materials*

- Visual schedules
- Social stories
- Behavior check-ins
- Games
- First/next

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## For example...

- **Movement:** some students need to move in order to understand things.
  - Use active (gross motor) games to give students a movement break while also incorporating in learning opportunities
  - For some students, pacing or rocking will help them attend.
  - For others, building in movement will help them re-focus.



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### Tip #3

- In large group activities, assign someone to be on the lookout for kids who are getting over-stimulated and need a break.



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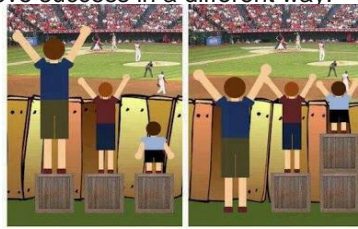
*RespectAbility Cohort Hands-On Inclusion Summit- March 2, 2016*

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## Tip #5

Recognize that all children learn differently; one activity may not be successful for a particular child, but he/she could achieve success in a different way.



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## Tip #6

Incorporate acceptable choices into the routine – even very young children can learn what works best for them.

The logo for CHOICES features the word "CHOICES" in large, bold, red capital letters. Below each letter, a hand is visible, holding the letter from underneath. The hands are of various skin tones, symbolizing diversity and community support.

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## Tip #7

Consider alternative seating, such as carpet squares, sit discs, flap-back chairs, etc.



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## Tip #9

Establish quiet corners in your classrooms so children can take a “sensory break”.



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## Tip #10




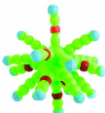


Have age-appropriate fidgets available and help children learn to identify when they need to utilize one.



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## For example...

<p>Tangle Therapy</p> 	<p>Stretchy Frogs</p> 	<p>Squiggles</p> 
<p>Tactile Atom Ball</p> 	<p>Nubby Ball</p> 	<p>Therabands</p> 

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## Tip #11

Understand that children with challenging behaviors are trying to tell you something.

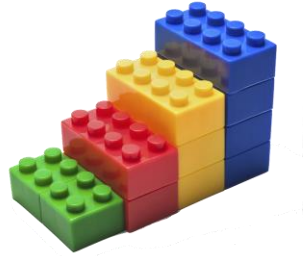


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## Tip #12

Offer an optional structured activity during break times or down times.

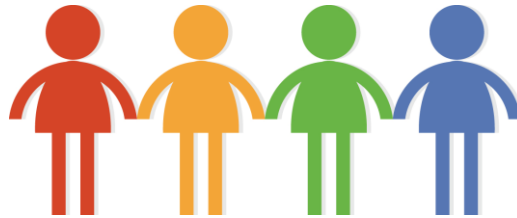


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### Tip #13

Consider yourself a part of the Individualized Religious Education Plan.



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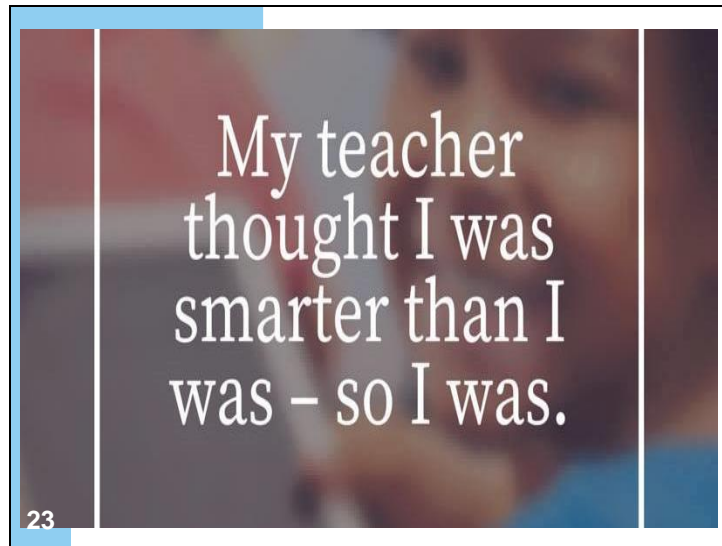
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**For example:**

- Add an “adaptation” section to your lesson plan template.
- Use checklists and calendar reminders.
- Give yourself your own “IREP” goals.
- Apologies can go a long way.

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## Working with Students with Learning Differences

- Provide personalized schedule – tape to desk
- Provide personalized classroom rules
- Think about where the best seat for the child is – i.e. away from doors and windows, close to teacher
- Use color coding
- Think about what modality of learning works best for the child
  - Verbal
  - Written
  - Tactile
  - Kinesthetic
- Shorten instructions
- Give specific, concrete examples
- Allow longer time to process questions and answers. Give time to process before asking next questions
- Prevent adding pressure and anxiety by not over asking the same questions
- Ask child to repeat back to you what they understood
- Be sure you have child's attention before giving instructions – in some cases, this will mean making eye contact, but not always!
- Speak slowly and clearly but do not over-exaggerate
- Give directions in a logical sequence, using words such as “first”, “next”, “last”
- Combine oral instructions with written cues
- Make transitions clear and give time warnings when things are about to change – consider visual transition tools like a Time Timer, music or a sand timer
- Review previously learned material in backwards order (start with what was learned most recently, then work back)
- Avoid asking the child to listen and write at the same time
- Be very consistent with rewards and consequences
- Be mindful of the physical placement of your own body – sometimes just your presence can be helpful for disruptive students.
- Develop a private signal with particular students
- Give breaks - if you cannot give the whole class a break, allow a student to take a break by going on an errand, etc.

Use multi-sensory teaching techniques with your student:

- Trace letters from sandpaper, felt, shaving cream, finger paint

- Make letters from pip-cleaners, clay, glue, or using the child's own body
- Flashcards
- Picture cards
- Riddles
- Games that involve hopping, jumping, standing
- Games that involve matching – memory games, bingo
- Cues to help child remember which direction to read (i.e. green for where to begin and red for where to stop)
- Line markers to focus on one line or letter on page

**Working with Children with Sensory Processing Disorder, or characteristics of SPD** (*Adapted from Sensory-Processing-Disorder.com*)

### **Physical Accommodations**

- Use carpet squares when sitting on the floor to keep children in their own space.
- Adjust chairs/tables so children sit with feet flat on the floor and hips bent at a 90 degree angle.
- Use alternative seating, such as therapy balls, beanbag chairs, or positioning wedges.
- Allow children to work in a variety of positions; laying flat on the floor propped on elbows, standing at a table or easel, etc.
- Use a soft, plush rug to help muffle noise.
- Have weighted blankets/lap pads or bean bags in a quiet reading corner.

### **Visual Accommodations**

- Post a daily schedule with pictures.
- Use visual cues such (words with pictures) for organizing personal belongings.
- Use dim lighting and pastel colors.
- Turn off lights during quiet breaks.

### **Auditory Accommodations**

- Have earplugs or sound blocking headphones available for children who are sensitive to, or distracted by environmental noises.
- Establish eye contact with the child before speaking to them.
- Teach children to ask for help.
- Break directions down into steps and allow extra time for children to process them.
- Warn children of any loud noises before they occur (bells, fire alarms etc.).

### **Organizational Accommodations**

- Give simple, step-by-step directions. Have child verbalize steps needed to accomplish the task. Demonstrate/model the task, then ask the child to try it.

- Use a consistent approach when teaching a child a new skill and allow time to practice and master the new skill.
- Present directions to the child consistent with their best modality for learning (i.e., auditory, visual, or multi-sensory).
- Help the child plan for each task by asking questions such as, "What materials will you need?" "What will you do first?" "What do you need to do when you are done?"
- Help children who have difficulty with transitions by using a timer/verbal cues.
- Help prepare the child for transitions with an orderly clean up and transition cue (the same song each time, the same set of instructions, etc.).

### **Sensory Accommodations**

#### *Alerting Activities for the Low-Energy Child*

- Use bright lighting.
- Have the child pat cool water on their face.
- Take frequent "gross motor" breaks (i.e., jump, hop, march in place, sit ups etc.).

#### *Calming Activities for the High-Energy Child*

- Use low-level lighting (no fluorescent lights if possible).
- Allow the child to listen to calming music with headphones.
- Use a soft voice; slow down your speech and movements while talking.
- Allow the child to lay on the floor in a secluded area with weighted blankets, heavy pillows or bean bag chairs on top of them.
- Push down on the child's shoulders, with equal and constant pressure.
- Avoid rushing the child.
- Have the child be responsible for the heaviest work at clean up time - putting heavy books or objects away, moving chairs, wiping down tables, etc.
- Plan ahead and allow enough time between and during activities.
- Provide opportunities for the child to jump on a mini trampoline, bounce on a therapy ball or sit on one to provide extra sensory input.
- Allow the child to have quiet fidget toys, chew toys or stress balls.
- Have child do "chair pushups" (raising their body off the chair with hands next to them on their seat) and/or tie Thera-Band around their chair.

### **Behavioral Accommodations**

- Empower and encourage the child ("you're ok" and "way to go").
- Avoid rescuing when the child is struggling.
- Use positive praise when the child tries his best, attempts something new, asks for help, or accomplishes something even if the outcome is not quite what it should be.
- Be specific with constructive criticism; say positive things about what the child DID accomplish.

- Validate them, their efforts, choices and feelings no matter what!
- Establish firm, clear rules with appropriate consequences if the child breaks them.
- Talk through a task/problem with the child if they are struggling.
- Be aware of the child's signs when they are starting to lose control.
- Teach children about personal space and enforce staying within those limits.
- Help the child generate ideas.

### **Working with Students with Asperger's Syndrome or Autism**

- Review the schedule for the day in multiple modalities – pictures, written and spoken words, etc.
- Prepare them for anything that might be different in the routine. For example, “Music will be second today instead of third.” Anything that is very out of the ordinary (like a fire drill) will need to be explained in advance so they know exactly what to expect.
- Give warnings (5 minutes, 2 minutes) when an activity is going to change. Transitioning to new activities is typically difficult for children with ASD (autism spectrum disorders).
- Use music and stories to teach information and engage the students.
- Use his/her particular interest and apply it to the lesson. Also use it as a reward – i.e. after we finish x, you can have 5 minutes to draw trains

## Children's Books

Programming material on the Educators' Page of the PJ Library website under respecting differences - <https://www.pjlibrary.org/Beyond-Books/Educators/Values-Programs>

<https://www.pjlibrary.org/PJLibrary/media/PJ-Library/PDF-files/JDAIM-2016-The-Mitten-String-Educational-Materials-Final.pdf>



In support of **A Call for All**, we wanted to highlight the PJ Library books that can help stimulate family discussions about people with disabilities.



**Cakes & Miracles** by Barbara Diamond Goldin, illustrated by Jaime Zollars

Hershel's blindness doesn't keep him from living life. He helps his mother by doing chores, but wishes he could do even more for her. When an angel appears in Hershel's dream and encourages him to make what he sees when he closes his eyes, the boy sneaks into the kitchen, transforming his mother's cookie dough into beautiful hamantaschen (three-cornered fruit-filled cookies) that can be sold to raise money for the family at Purim.

**Jeremy's Dreidel** by Ellie Gellman, illustrated by Judith Friedman

At a dreidel-making workshop, Jeremy's friends think he's molding a secret code on

*his clay dreidel. But he's really making a special gift for his father, who is blind. How will he get his friends to appreciate his special dreidel?*

**The Mitten String** by Jennifer Rosen, illustrated by Kristina Swarner

Ruthie loves to knit -- and to help people. When her family gives shelter to a deaf woman and her baby, Ruthie realizes there's a way for her to do both at once!

**Nathan Blows Out the Hanukkah Candles** by Tami Lehman-Wilzig with Nicole Katzman, illustrated by Jeremy Tugeau

Jacob loves his brother Nathan, who is autistic. When Hanukkah comes, Jacob worries that Nathan might

embarrass him in front of his new friend. What if Nathan blows out the Hanukkah candles?!

### *Reading Levels & Special Needs*

If you have a child with any special learning needs who is older than the stated age group of your respective community but who may benefit from the PJ Library materials offered, please contact your Community Program Professional. We welcome your child's enrollment in any age group you deem appropriate. For children living in the DC area, please contact Sarah Rabin Spira (301-230-7243, [sarah.rabinspira@shalomdc.org](mailto:sarah.rabinspira@shalomdc.org))