

The parent perspective: Inclusion and acceptance in the classroom

Group Exercise

Read the profile and scenario with your group and use the planning guide to adapt the activity.

Mark

Mark is a 12-year-old boy attending Grade 5 in a public elementary school. He has a particular fascination with jungle animals, and would love to go on a real safari. He uses the Internet, and programs like Google Earth, to look up information about animals and safari tours, and knows a lot about the countries and game parks of southern Africa. He is friendly and likes his teachers and classmates.



Mark has no physical impairments, but his cognitive and academic skills are below grade level and he is older than the other kids in his grade. Mark can read, write and engage in basic conversation, but will usually steer conversations to a limited set of preferred topics, such as safaris. Attempts to re-focus him on other topics, like what is being taught, can sometimes be difficult. He is also prone to speaking using lines from TV shows or movies rather than constructing his own sentences. If you understand the context the line is taken from then these usually make sense, but if you don't, it can be hard to understand what he is trying to communicate.

Mark needs a high level of supervision to make sure he stays on task and does not wander off or do things he should not do, especially during recess, lunch and unstructured activities. It is hard to get him to fully participate in group activities, such as gym class and assemblies, unless he is directly engaged and interested in what is going on. Long, multi-step instructions (like the rules of a game) are particularly difficult for him to process and remember.

Scenario

Your students will be participating in a school play. There is a lot that goes into a school production in order to make it a marvelous success.

Mark really enjoys acting and dancing, but finds it very hard to perform on stage. Loud noises and bright lights affect Mark more than most kids. He will have trouble memorizing lines and staying on task. What would be the best way to help him feel comfortable while he is on stage performing?