

Table 7.1: High-Leverage Practices for Special Education

| Best Practice | Description |
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| 1. Collaborate with professionals to increase student success. | Collaboration between all members of the school team, including general education teachers, special education teachers, and interventionists, is intentional and ongoing to support mastery of students' academic and behavior goals. |
| 2. Organize and facilitate effective meetings with professionals and families. | Individual teachers, teacher teams, and intervention teams organize meetings with families, colleagues, and other service providers through the use of agendas, meeting norms, and other tools to focus the meeting on achieving the meetings' stated purpose. |
| 3. Collaborate with families to support student learning and secure needed services. | Teachers and intervention teams build positive and respectful collaborative relationships with families to support student learning. |
| 4. Use multiple sources of information to develop a comprehensive understanding of students' strengths and needs. | Teachers use data from multiple sources, such as formal and informal assessments, curriculum-based assessments, observations, and student work, to create a comprehensive learner profile of student strengths and weaknesses. |
| 5. Interpret and communicate assessment information with stakeholders to collaboratively design and implement educational programs. | Teachers understand and communicate assessment information to team members in order to collaboratively develop targeted goals. |
| 6. Use student assessment data, analyze instructional practices, and make necessary adjustments that improve student outcomes. | Teachers use ongoing formative data to monitor student progress, determine what is working and what is not, and adjust instruction accordingly. |
| 7. Establish a consistent, organized, and respectful learning environment. | Teachers establish age-appropriate expectations, routines, and procedures within their classrooms that are positively stated and explicitly taught and practiced. |
| 8. Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior. | Teachers provide ongoing goal-directed feedback to students as they work toward mastering their goals. |
| 9. Teach social behaviors. | Teachers explicitly teach social behaviors aligned to schoolwide expectations. If students do not know how to perform a skill, it should be directly taught. We recommend explicitly teaching academic behaviors as well as social behaviors. |
| 10. Conduct functional behavioral assessments to develop individual student behavior support plans. | Creating behavior plans and conducting functional behavior assessments is a process all teachers at Tier 3 should understand. (You can find more detailed information regarding functional behavior assessments in chapter 6, page 119). Behavior goals include teaching the student a prosocial replacement behavior. |
| 11. Identify and prioritize long- and short-term learning goals. | Teachers use grade-level essential standards, assessment data, learning progressions, and other assessment information to make decisions about individual goals. |
| 12. Systematically design instruction toward a specific learning goal. | Planning includes determining the skills and concepts necessary to achieve the identified goal and developing a clear path for student mastery. |

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| 13. Adapt curriculum tasks and materials for specific learning goals. | Teachers assess the individual needs of students and how they best learn. They select and adjust curriculum materials to maximize the opportunity for student success on the learning target. |
| 14. Teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies to support student learning and independence. | Teachers teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies. These strategies support memory, attention, and self-regulation. Student goal setting and self-monitoring of progress are important to both learning and independence. |
| 15. Provide scaffolded supports. | Teachers use various types of verbal, visual, or physical assistance that supports students in performing skills they have not yet mastered. They gradually remove support as students master learning and become independent. |
| 16. Use explicit instruction. | Teachers use explicit instruction to teach new skills. They model concepts or skills students need to master the content. They use examples and non-examples, highlight information, and remove extraneous information and other strategies to explicitly teach, model, and enhance student learning. |
| 17. Use flexible grouping. | Teachers use various grouping strategies to teach specific goals or learning targets. Students may be in same or mixed ability groups based on the goal. Groups are used to target instruction for specific learning needs, foster collaboration, support varying abilities, and enhance vocabulary and comprehension. |
| 18. Use strategies to promote active student engagement. | Teachers use a variety of strategies to promote active engagement. Strategies such as connections to real life, various grouping strategies, and technology are approaches a teacher might use to increase engagement. |
| 19. Use assistive and instructional technologies. | Teachers evaluate and use instructional technology and assistive technology to promote student learning and independence. |
| 20. Provide intensive instruction. | Teachers match the intensity of instruction to students' needs. They use grouping, systematic instruction, and frequent feedback as students learn. |
| 21. Teach students to maintain and generalize new learning across time and settings. | Teachers use specific techniques to help students generalize and maintain learning over time. Teachers use strategies such as material reviews, practicing new skills in multiple environments, and using numerous examples and opportunities for practice in initial instruction. |

Source: Adapted from McLeskey, J., Barringer, M.-D., Billingsley, B., Brownell, M., Jackson, D., Kennedy, M., et al. (2017, January). High-leverage practices in special education. Arlington, VA: Council for Exceptional Children. Accessed at <http://cedar.education.ufl.edu/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/CEC-HLP-Web.pdf> on August 11, 2019.