

LITERACY INSTRUCTION FOR STUDENTS WITH LOW INCIDENCE DISABILITIES

Remember: the idea that children are too physically, too cognitively, or too communicatively disabled to benefit from literacy experiences is not supported by current research (Koppenhaver, 1991).

1. Literacy skills allow us to make sense of symbols. Literacy instruction must be individualized and match the student's communication system.
2. All students must receive literacy instruction appropriate to their needs and communication systems.
3. A blended curriculum focuses on FUNCTIONAL skills and ACADEMIC SKILLS. Good programming includes instruction in all these areas. Communication skills are some of the most functional skills that we can teach.
4. Assistive technology is the vehicle for increasing literacy and communication skills. AT promotes meaningful participation in school, community, and school routines.
5. Literacy instruction for children who are typically developing begins at birth. Learning to read, speak, and listen are skills that develop simultaneously.

Basic strategies to promote literacy for all:

- Provide a print-rich environment
- Read aloud to students using age-appropriate materials
- Give students print materials (paired with communication symbols) and observe their responses
- Expose students daily to multiple forms of literacy materials (books in print, software, audio-tapes)
- Make and read and re-read language experience types of stories
- Use recipes
- Read signs around the building (put communication symbols with signs)
- Create a library of student's favorite books and materials (age appropriate)
- Encourage re-readings of favorite materials
- Look at books together, pointing out pictures, asking questions, answering questions, matching with symbols
- LABEL THE CLASSROOM and student's belongings (words, pictures, tactile cues)
- Provide exposure to writing instruments
- Use written and picture schedules for classroom and student routine