

Guidelines to team-teaching

Guidelines to team-teaching: working together effectively

In the classroom context, the mainstream class teacher has the first and last line of responsibility. It is important to discuss and establish consistency in the following areas when establishing a collaborative team-teaching model.

Teaching methodologies (Key methodologies are set out in Section 5: Teacher Guidelines, Primary School Curriculum, 1999)

- The methodology should be decided and agreed upon by all partners from the outset. During the programme, there should be regular checks between the support teacher /s and the mainstream class teacher to help maintain clarity and ensure a common sense of purpose.
- There should be open discussion, following a lesson, in order to affirm aspects which are working well and to identify aspects which may require some improvement.
- Consistent language should be used, particularly, in relation to the language of instruction. This is particularly important if there are more than two people involved in the team-teaching arrangement.

Planning meetings

- Regular, short planning meetings should be held throughout the programme.
- A chairperson should be assigned, and an agenda set, in order to maintain focus.
- The programme content, methodologies and homework (where appropriate) should be reviewed regularly.
- Aspects which are working well and aspects which require improvement should be discussed and reviewed regularly.
- The progress of all children should be reviewed regularly, particularly children in receipt of learning support and/or language support.
- The targets in the IPLPs and/or language programmes for these children should be a determining factor when devising a programme of work for team-teaching.

Classroom management

- There should be consistency and a shared responsibility between teachers in dealing with any discipline issues.
- Classroom rules may need to be clarified, for example, toilet permission, leaving the classroom, working in groups, locating and replacing materials, means of requesting help and addressing the teacher.
- Teachers should know which part of the classroom they are to operate from.
- There should be clarity regarding what resources should be used and by whom, for example, blackboard, whiteboard, computer and manipulatives.
- There should be a shared, realistic expectation of noise levels.
- There should be a consistent method of recording what has been covered, for example, how it will be recorded and who will record it.
- There should be a common approach to time management, for example, whose responsibility it is and how it will be managed.
- The working groups should be established prior to the team-teaching programme, for example, ability groups, mixed-ability groups, special interest groups, specific need/strength groups, same first language groups and random groups.
- These groups should be monitored and reviewed regularly. They may need to be changed in order to reflect the changing needs of the children.

Homework

- A consistent routine around homework should be established, where appropriate.
- Decisions regarding who sets and checks homework should be agreed from the outset.
- Consideration should be given regarding whether the homework should be differentiated to suit the varied stages of development and levels of ability in the class.