Introduction- Section 1:

This Manual of Inclusive Practices supports general education teachers in delivering appropriate instruction to students with disabilities in inclusive elementary classrooms. It bridges general and special education by addressing five disability categories: Specific Learning Disabilities, Emotional/Behavior Disorders, Mild Cognitive Impairments, ADHD (Other Health Impaired), and Autism. This shared framework equips educators with practical tools to effectively support diverse learners.

Successful inclusion depends on strong collaboration between general and special education professionals. General education teachers bring expertise in curriculum and instruction, while special education teachers offer specialized knowledge of disabilities and required adaptations. Sharing a common vocabulary and resources supports this partnership. This manual promotes collaboration so all instructors can meet the unique needs of every student.

Section 2: Disability Categories

Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)

Specific Learning Disabilities are neurological disorders that impact the brain's ability to receive, process, store, and respond to information. Students with SLD usually have average or above-average intelligence but demonstrate a significant gap between their potential and academic performance. These disabilities are not caused by visual, hearing, or motor impairments, intellectual disabilities, or cultural factors. Common types include dyslexia (reading difficulties), dysgraphia (writing difficulties), and dyscalculia (math difficulties).

In the classroom, students with SLD may struggle with tasks that require rapid processing of auditory or visual information. Activities that rely on silent reading can be challenging, as students may focus on decoding rather than comprehension. Copying notes from the board may

also be difficult due to visual-motor integration issues. These students may seem disorganized, forgetful, or unmotivated, which can result in incomplete homework or avoidance of tasks that highlight their difficulties, such as reading aloud.

To support students with SLD, teachers should provide accommodations in all core subjects. In Reading/Literature, offer audiobooks or text-to-speech tools so students can access content without decoding barriers. For Written Language, use speech-to-text technology or a scribe to help students demonstrate understanding, even with spelling or handwriting challenges. In Math, permit calculators for reasoning-based problems and use graph paper for number alignment. In Sciences, provide guided notes or graphic organizers to organize complex ideas. In the Social Sciences, use alternative assessments, such as oral presentations or projects, instead of written essays.

Emotional/Behavior Disorders (EBD)

Students with Emotional/Behavior Disorders exhibit behaviors that differ significantly from age norms and disrupt their own learning or that of others. They may struggle to form relationships, display inappropriate behaviors or emotions, or experience persistent unhappiness or depression. Behaviors may be externalizing, such as aggression or non-compliance, or internalizing, such as withdrawal or anxiety.

The primary implications for the classroom are disruption to the learning environment and difficulty with social interactions. In the classroom, students with EBD may disrupt the learning environment and have difficulty with social interactions. Group work and cooperative projects can be challenging for individuals with limited social skills or low frustration tolerance. Unstructured times, such as transitions or recess, often increase the risk of conflict.

These students may avoid work due to fear of failure or perfectionism, and activities requiring sustained focus or public speaking may trigger anxiety or acting-out behaviors. The student's personal interests help build confidence.

For Written Language, allow journaling as a valid writing activity to express emotions or use sentence starters to reduce the "blank page" anxiety. In Math, break work into smaller chunks (e.g., doing 5 problems at a time) to prevent feeling overwhelmed. In Sciences, use hands-on experiments with clear, designated roles to provide structured social interaction. In Social Sciences, allow students to work in a "safe space" or a calm corner when studying historical texts to reduce environmental distractions and social stressors.

Mild Cognitive Impairments (MCI) / Intellectual Disability

Mild Cognitive Impairment, classified under Intellectual Disability, involves significant limitations in intellectual and cognitive functioning, including reasoning, learning, and problem-solving, as well as adaptive behavior. Students with MCI typically have IQ scores between 55 and 70. They learn more slowly than their peers and often struggle with abstract thinking, generalization, and information retention.

Students with MCI often struggle with abstract concepts and multi-step instructions, especially when there are no concrete examples. Lecture-based activities or those requiring implicit understanding are challenging. They may have difficulty transferring skills to new contexts and often find tasks involving inference or metaphor difficult because of their concrete thinking.

Accommodations for MCI must focus on simplifying and visualizing information. In Reading/Literature, use adapted texts with simplified vocabulary and picture symbols to support comprehension of main ideas. For Written Language, provide accommodations for MCI that

simplify and visualize information. In Reading/Literature, use adapted texts with simple vocabulary and picture symbols. For Written Language, provide sentence frames or fill-in-the-blank notes. In Math, use concrete manipulatives before introducing abstract numbers.

The sciences offer pictorial directions for lab procedures. In Social Sciences, emphasize key vocabulary and functional life skills, such as reading community signs or maps. They may wander off-task, have difficulty sustaining focus, and be disorganized (inattention), or they may move constantly, tap their hands or feet, and struggle with self-control (hyperactivity-impulsivity). These behaviors are persistent and occur in multiple settings, such as school and home.

ADHD (Attention-Deficit/Hyperactivity Disorder)

ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder marked by an ongoing pattern of inattention and/or hyperactivity-impulsivity that interferes with functioning or development. Students may exhibit wandering off task, difficulty sustaining focus, and disorganization (inattention), or they may move about constantly, tap hands or feet, and struggle with self-control (hyperactivity-impulsivity). These behaviors are persistent and occur in multiple settings, such as school and home.

ADHD affects a student's executive functioning—the ability to plan, organize, and complete tasks. Students will find long-term projects, lectures without visual aids, and repetitive seatwork difficult to manage. They may frequently lose materials, forget homework, or blurt out answers during discussions. Transitions between activities can be chaotic. The gap between what the student knows and what they can produce is often considerable due to these performance deficits.

Effective accommodations for ADHD frequently involve movement and structure. In Reading/Literature, allow the student to use a "reading window" or tracker to isolate lines of text and reduce visual distraction. For Written Language, use graphic organizers to help the student plan their thoughts before writing to avoid disorganized output. In Math, allow the use of graph paper to keep numbers aligned and reduce errors caused by messiness. In Sciences, incorporate active learning strategies that allow students to physically move or manipulate objects throughout lessons. In Social Sciences, provide a visual timeline of events to help students understand the sequence of history and support organization and memory.

Autism

Autism is a developmental disability that significantly affects verbal and nonverbal communication and social interaction. Students may engage in repetitive activities, resist changes in routines, and have unusual sensory responses. Intellectual abilities vary widely, but many students struggle with understanding that others have different thoughts and perspectives.

Students with Autism may struggle with social demands in the classroom, such as group work, interpreting nonverbal cues, or understanding sarcasm. Changes in schedule or unexpected events can cause distress. Sensory sensitivities to noise, light, or textures may lead to overload and meltdowns. Open-ended or unstructured activities can be especially challenging.

Accommodations for Autism should emphasize structure and sensory regulation. In Reading/Literature, use Social Stories to explain character motivations or social situations. For Written Language, provide clear visual prompts and checklists for paragraph structure. In Math, use visual schedules or first/then boards to indicate how many problems to complete before a break. In the sciences, allow the use of soundproof headphones during loud activities. In Social

Sciences, explicitly teach perspective-taking using concrete charts to compare different viewpoints.

Section 3: Internet Resources

1. The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC)

- Website: exceptionalchildren.org
- Summary: As the leading international professional organization for special educators, the CEC provides standards, ethics, and advocacy for students with disabilities. It offers general education teachers access to evidence-based teaching strategies, professional development webinars, and journals dedicated to improving educational outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities.

2. Understood.org

- Website: understood.org
- Summary: This organization focuses on supporting the 70 million people in the U.S. with learning and thinking differences, such as ADHD and dyslexia. It provides parents and teachers with practical tools, such as the "Through My Eyes" simulation, to help them understand the daily challenges their students face and how to offer effective support.

3. The IRIS Center

- Website: iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu
- Summary: Operated by Vanderbilt University, the IRIS Center offers a vast library of free, evidence-based instructional modules and case studies. These resources allow teachers to learn at their own pace about specific topics like classroom behavior management, accommodations, and differentiated instruction for students with disabilities.

4. Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR)

- Website: parentcenterhub.org

- Summary: CPIR serves as a central "hub" of information for the network of Parent Training and Information Centers across the nation. It offers family-friendly articles and fact sheets on specific disabilities, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), and how parents can participate effectively in their child's education.

5. Intervention Central

- Website: interventioncentral.org

- Summary: This website provides teachers with free tools and resources to implement academic and behavioral interventions in the classroom. It allows educators to generate custom progress-monitoring graphs and find specific strategies to support students struggling with reading, math, or behavior before they fall behind.

6. Reading Rockets

- Website: readingrockets.org

- Summary: While primarily a literacy initiative, Reading Rockets offers extensive resources specifically for teaching struggling readers and students with learning disabilities. The site provides research-based strategies, classroom activities, and expert advice to help educators identify and support children with reading difficulties.

7. LD OnLine

- Website: ldonline.org

- Summary: LD OnLine is a comprehensive website dedicated to learning disabilities and ADHD, featuring articles by leading experts in the field. It provides educators and

parents with up-to-date information on legal rights, instructional strategies, and the transition from school to the workplace for students with learning differences.

8. Do2Learn

- Website: do2learn.com
- Summary: This resource offers thousands of free pages of social skills activities, behavior regulation guides, and learning games. It is particularly useful for teachers working with students with autism or behavioral disorders, as it provides printable picture cards and visual schedules to structure the learning environment.

9. PBIS World

- Website: pbisworld.com
- Summary: PBIS World is a dynamic online tool that connects student behaviors (such as "disruptive" or "unmotivated") directly to tiered interventions and supports. It helps teachers quickly identify the function of a behavior and provides immediate, data-driven strategies to address it within a Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports framework.

10. Autism Speaks – School Community Tool Kit

- Website: autismspeaks.org
- Summary: This specific toolkit is designed to provide helpful information to all members of the school community, from general education teachers to bus drivers. It offers strategies to increase learning and positive social interactions for students with autism, promoting an inclusive school culture.

Section 4: Annotated Bibliography

Al-Ghani, K. I. (2008). *The Red Beast: Controlling anger in children with Asperger's syndrome. Jessica Kingsley Publishers.*

This illustrated book helps children with Autism and Emotional/Behavior Disorders understand and manage anger by personifying it as a "Red Beast." The story teaches strategies such as deep breathing and counting, making it a valuable resource for social-emotional learning.

Carey, B. (2012). 47 *Strings: Tessa's special code*. **Little Creek Press.**

Written by a mother for her son, this book explains Down Syndrome (Mild Intellectual Disability) to young children using the metaphor of a "special code" for the extra chromosome. It emphasizes difference rather than deficit, fostering empathy and encouraging classmates to see the person beyond the disability.

Cook, J. (2005). *My mouth is a volcano*. **National Center for Youth Issues.**

This book addresses impulsivity and interrupting, common in ADHD and some behavioral disorders. Through the character Louis, it teaches children techniques for managing their thoughts and waiting their turn, supporting classroom discipline and social skills.

Mosca, J. F. (2017). *The girl who thought in pictures: The story of Temple Grandin.* **Innovation Press.**

This biography introduces elementary students to Temple Grandin, a renowned scientist with Autism. It shows how her unique visual processing, once a challenge in school, became her professional strength. The book highlights the value of diverse minds and perseverance, encouraging students to see neurodiversity as a talent.

Polacco, P. (1998). *Thank you, Mr. Falker.* **Philomel Books.**

In this autobiographical story, the author shares her struggle with dyslexia (Specific Learning Disability) and the bullying she faced in elementary school. The story highlights the pivotal role of a teacher, Mr. Falker, who recognizes her disability and provides patient, specialized support. This book helps build empathy and motivates students who struggle with reading.

Rudolph, S., & Royer, D. (2015). *All my stripes: A story for children with autism*. **Magination Press.**

This story follows Zane, a zebra with Autism, who worries his "autism stripe" is all others notice. His mother helps him see that he also has stripes for honesty, curiosity, and caring. The book is an excellent resource for teaching self-acceptance and helping students understand the experiences of peers with Autism.

Sotomayor, S. (2019). Just ask!: *Be different, be brave, be you.* **Philomel Books.**

Written by Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor, this book follows a diverse group of children as they build a community garden. Each child has a different ability or disability—including ADHD, Autism, dyslexia, and diabetes—and shares how they navigate the world. The book encourages children to "just ask" about differences, promoting conversation and reducing stigma.

Armstrong, T. (2012). *Neurodiversity in the classroom: Strength-based strategies to help students with special needs succeed in school and life*. **ASCD.**

This book challenges the traditional deficit-based model of special education and urges educators to focus on students' strengths. Armstrong covers five categories of neurodiversity, including ADHD, autism, and learning disabilities, and offers strength-based strategies for each. It is a valuable resource for teachers seeking to create a more inclusive classroom.

Greene, R. W. (2014). *Lost at school: Why our kids with behavioral challenges are falling through the cracks and how we can help them* **(2nd ed.). Scribner.**

Dr. Greene presents a model for understanding and supporting students with Emotional/Behavior Disorders who display challenging behaviors. He argues that "kids do well if they can" and that behavioral issues result from lagging skills, not willful defiance. The book provides a collaborative problem-solving framework for teachers and parents to resolve conflicts and build student skills.

Rief, S. F. (2016). *How to reach and teach children and teens with ADD/ADHD* **(3rd ed.). Jossey-Bass.**

This comprehensive guide offers general education teachers practical techniques and interventions for students with ADHD. It covers classroom management, study skills, multisensory instruction, and parent partnerships. The book serves as a "go-to" manual for implementing effective accommodations and modifications in daily classroom routines.

Section 5: References

- American Psychiatric Association. (2013). *Diagnostic and statistical manual of mental disorders* (5th ed.). https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.books.9780890425596
- Autism Speaks. (n.d.). *School community tool kit*. https://www.autismspeaks.org/tool-kit/school-community-tool-kit
- Center for Parent Information and Resources. (n.d.). *Disability fact sheets*. https://www.parentcenterhub.org

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2022). *Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD)*. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. https://www.cdc.gov/ncbddd/adhd/

- Council for Exceptional Children. (n.d.). *Special education professional standards*. https://exceptionalchildren.org/standards

- Do2Learn. (n.d.). *Disabilities: Strategies and accommodations*. https://do2learn.com

- Intervention Central. (n.d.). *Behavioral interventions*. https://www.interventioncentral.org

- LD OnLine. (n.d.). *Educators: Instructional strategies*. http://www.ldonline.org

- PBIS World. (n.d.). *Tier 1 interventions*. https://www.pbisworld.com

- Reading Rockets. (n.d.). *Helping struggling readers*. https://www.readingrockets.org

- The IRIS Center. (n.d.). *Iris resource locator*. Vanderbilt University. https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu

- Understood.org. (n.d.). *Through my eyes*. https://www.understood.org

- Vaughn, S., Bos, C. S., & Schumm, J. S. (2018). *Teaching students who are exceptional, diverse, and at risk in the general education classroom* (7th ed.). Pearson.