

## *Embracing Others' Perspectives*

Recognizing and wanting to hear others' perspectives is the key to an effective IEP team. When perspectives align, meaning there's agreement, that's reassurance that things are going well. When they don't align, things can get difficult, making it painful to hear and share others' perspectives. As Dr. David Johnson wrote in *The Importance of Taking the Perspective of Others*, to resolve conflict "a person must be able to hold all the opposing ideas, positions, and perspectives in mind at the same time." This idea of holding perspectives in mind means that we first need to hear them and seek to understand them so we can use this knowledge to move forward with a solution-focused mindset.

### The Value of Different Perspectives

As discussed in our [Snowflakes, Children, Classroom: Every One is Different](#) blog post, our differences are what make us unique and they are also what gives us our unique perspective. This reality also gives us an understanding of why perspectives can appear to be so different; they are different because we are different! By accepting this fact, we can get past the initial point of conflict where we too often seek to invalidate a perspective that doesn't agree with ours, and on to the meaningful, action-driven part where we find solutions at an intersection of all perspectives. Solutions that recognize all perspectives embrace the individualized nature of what makes special education work!

*"A little perspective, like a little humor, goes a long way."*

— Allen Klein

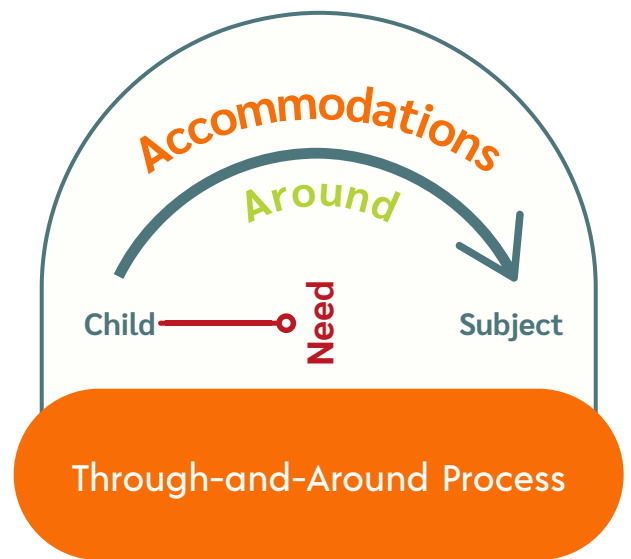
## New in Accomods

We are excited to share the newest addition to Accomods... *Social Skills Need Category*

We've added focus and adaptations in Accomods to support students who struggle with social skills. Learning is a social activity – skills such as listening to a teacher, sharing and hearing the perspectives of others, collaborating with a peer on a project, and lab group activities in science class all involve the use of social skills!

*What should we do when a child is demonstrating a need in the area of social skills?*

As we discuss in our [Through-and-Around Process](#), we should develop ways to work them through the need by teaching them and providing opportunities to rehearse appropriate social skills. Then, as we work to improve their skills, we should minimize the impact of this need by also supporting them around their social skills needs with the use of appropriate accommodations. Jump into [Accomods](#) now and explore ways to empower a child around their needs with our new Social Skills category!



## Featured Accommodation

B24 – [Avoid the use of sarcasm](#) – Sarcasm is a subtle mask for perspective because it doesn't provide clear communication and is easily misinterpreted!



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# Supporting Special Education Students Through Productive Parent-Teacher Partnerships

## Tell Me the Story: A Student Struggling in Silence

Ms. Rosie Garcia has built an incredible culture for learning in her 5th-grade science classroom, where students enjoy working in [learning groups](#) to complete engaging activities. In her classroom, learning groups consist of four members that take on the essential roles of timekeeper, resource manager, recorder, and manager. Generally, her students look forward to these weekly opportunities to put instruction to use during these engaging team tasks.



Danny is no exception. He loves science and is motivated to do his best. He appreciates Ms. Garcia's classroom and the opportunity to work with his peers. However, he struggles with writing tasks and feels like he disappoints his group when it's his turn to be the recorder. He accepts the responsibility and tries his best to capture good notes, but this attention while taking notes causes him to lose focus on the rest of the activity, so he constantly feels lost. He knows Ms. Garcia expects everyone to give 100% to the team, so he's not yet comfortable sharing his frustration.

One night Danny mentions this frustration to his parents at dinner. "Mom, I love science, but I don't do a very good job of taking notes when it's my turn to be the notetaker." He explains, "I can write down the ideas, but I'm trying so hard to write good sentences so my teammates can understand them that I lose track of what happens in the activity." Danny's mom replies, "Let me talk to Ms. Garcia and see what we can do!" Danny knows his mom has a good relationship with Ms. Garcia. He smiles and says, "Thank you," as he returns to eating his dinner.

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# What's the context:

## Parents Are Partners

The importance of an educational team can't be emphasized enough. Each person brings something different to a child's life. As the proverb says, "It takes a village to raise a child." Ideally, this village isn't full of people who are all the same or think the same way. I believe that the best thing education can do for a child is to lovingly expose them to a variety of mindsets and characters. This is because we all need to learn to live and work collaboratively with everyone – including those with different perspectives.

However, as children, our students may need help recognizing the value of this diversity. This is where a team that's full of productive partnerships is so important. Ms. Garcia should recognize that Danny may be comfortable sharing this input with his mother and, as such, be open to hearing the insight of her teammate when it's available. Likewise, Danny's mom should recognize that Ms. Garcia has specific reasons for her practices and not be judgmental when one seems to cause problems for her son. Productive partnerships like this ensure an effective education because everyone recognizes their role and values the diverse input from the different members.



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# Get to the Point:

## Parent-Teacher Collaboration Is Essential

The members of a child's instructional team should recognize that their diversity represents the strengths of what makes an effective education. However, we should also realize that this diversity may cause different challenges and levels of comfort for our students. By embracing a mindset of open communication, teams can establish productive partnerships that ensure an effective education.

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# The Story Continues:

## Finding Student Solutions Together

The next day Danny's mom sends Ms. Garcia an email asking her to give her a call when time permits. She adds a little detail about Danny's concern so that Ms. Garcia isn't put on edge by the request. At the end of the day, Ms. Garcia calls Danny's mom and genuinely listens to her concerns. Ms. Garcia appreciates that Danny was honest with his mom and that she was willing to bring them to her attention.

The team discusses a few ideas for improving Danny's ability to produce quality notes while respecting his desire to remain a valuable teammate. The team decides to utilize an accommodation, [L160- Permit student to complete classwork at home](#), allowing Danny to take rough notes during the activity. Then he will be able to work at home with the support of his parents to improve his abbreviated notes into complete thoughts for his peers. Ms. Garcia expresses her appreciation to Danny's mom and invites her to follow up in a few weeks to provide feedback on the planned adaptations. In the meantime, Ms. Garcia commits to [tracking the effectiveness of this adaptation](#) so she can share data with Danny's mom when they follow up.



### *Be action-driven...*

Productive partnerships involve recognizing and valuing the insight of each individual. Consider your most recent collaboration. Were you understanding and appreciative of the insight? What is one thing you will do to enhance parent-teacher collaboration and cooperation to better serve your students?



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