

# News Notes

A Newsletter for Teachers of Students with Significant  
Cognitive Disabilities  
Educational Equity for All



December 2015

## Managing Holiday Classroom Decorations

By Betsy Weigle | Classroom Caboodle

### *Holiday distractions derail learning*

If you had ADD or ADHD, how difficult would it be for you to focus on math if there were bats hanging in the corner during Halloween, or wrapped packages under a tree during Christmas? I mean, even I'd be tempted to start unwrapping packages, even if I knew they were empty!

There's a fine line between creating a classroom that is **welcoming and comfortable to children**, and creating a gigantic collection of visual distractions that change with the seasons. The key here is to:

1. Keep a lot of it out of your room -Decorate the hallway or doorway.
2. If it's in your room, keep it simple-Simplify what's in your room to make it special
3. Keep it away from your main instructional focus area- Keep the focus on learning

<https://classroomcaboodle.com/teacher-resource/holidays-in-your-classroom/>

alphabet  
**squish**



## Alphabet Squish

[http://www.icanteachmychild.com/alphabet-squish/#\\_a5y\\_p=805586](http://www.icanteachmychild.com/alphabet-squish/#_a5y_p=805586)



## 10 Items Every Special Educator Should Have In Their Classroom

Special Educators work hard to make sure that their students with special needs develop and grow during the school year. Special Education teachers encounter different challenges in their classrooms than general education teachers and therefore they need different tools.

Here are 10 great items every Special Needs teacher should have in their classroom.

1. Fidgets, Wiggle Seats, Therapy balls, Therapy bands
2. Highlighter strips/Reader trackers
3. Shaving cream, Sand, Rice
4. Timers
5. Visuals
6. Manipulatives
7. Posted Rules/Expectations
8. Reward System
9. High Interest – Low Level Reading Books
10. Technology

<http://www.friendshipcircle.org/blog/2012/11/20/10-items-every-special-educator-should-have-in-their-classroom/>

## Interactive Whiteboard Technology on Amazon.com



Audel Portable USB  
Interactive Whiteboard (IR  
Pen-based) by Audel

\$99.00

Portable USB Interactive Whiteboard: turn the wall into your computer's touchscreen immediately and make presentations easier and fun!

EDUCATIONAL  
EQUITY FOR ALL  
..... Giving kids what they need to succeed.

Tana Donaghy, President, Educational Equity For All  
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## FEATURED IDEA OF THE MONTH

# Playable Art - Ball



Specially designed connectors enable you to twist, bend, expand,

contract, and manipulate every-which-way, the beautiful, vibrant wooden beads. 20 fragments unite for polished perfection.

[https://www.fatbraintoy.com/toy\\_companies/beyond123/playable\\_art\\_ball.cfm](https://www.fatbraintoy.com/toy_companies/beyond123/playable_art_ball.cfm)

## TEACHING TIPS AND TRICKS-

### Teacher Tips for Dealing with the "Holiday Blues"

- Create a learning environment where students feel comfortable talking about their feelings and fears,
- Spend special talk time with students experiencing change of moods or behavior before a designated school closure,
- Talk to parents, IEP resource staff and other teachers to chart a student's behavioral change or change in learning engagement,
- Provide students with a detailed and consistent school plan of school work and projects that can be completed during the time off and make the learning plan fun,
- Acknowledge the student's feelings and use them as a constructive learning tool to address student's who may not be as vocal about having problems with school closure,
- Let students have something special in the classroom (i.e special book or class picture) that they can take home to care for during the holiday break or school closure,
- Give students a personalized calendar and mark the days on the calendar when school is closed and put stars on the first day back to give students anticipation for when school will reopen,
- Have students journal and reflect during their time away from the classroom,

[www.brighthubeducation.com/special-ed-inclusion-strategies/20111-holiday-stress-for-students-with-disabilities/](http://www.brighthubeducation.com/special-ed-inclusion-strategies/20111-holiday-stress-for-students-with-disabilities/)

## Muffin Tin Spelling Activity



## ALTERNATIVE AND AUGMENTATIVE COMMUNICATION



## Welcome to the AAC Institute Self-Study Program

The Self-Study Program (SSP) offers the opportunity to learn about various aspects of AAC that support the goal of the most effective communication possible for the individual. The courses allow individuals to work at their own pace. No fee is charged for our first four courses. There are no prerequisites. All AAC stakeholder groups can find value. All that is required is Internet access.

SSP courses are divided into modules. In general, each module is the prerequisite for the next module. Most modules are followed by a quiz. Each quiz must be passed (80% correct answers) before the following module can be accessed. At the end of each SSP course, the participant can choose to have a Certificate of Completion printed.

CEUs are available for all designated courses. Some courses are without charge. Some courses have a small fee. Course fees vary depending on the length of the course.

<https://aacinstitute.org/online-courses/>

## WEBSITES AND RESOURCES

<https://thejournal.com/articles/2014/06/30/flipping-the-classroom-for-special-needs-students.aspx>

<http://www.thedoctorstv.com/videos/special-needs-child-caged-in-classroom>

<http://www.disabilityscoop.com/2015/06/29/state-require-cameras-special/20420/>

## PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

### Literacy for All: In conversation with Dr. Caroline Musselwhite

These 11 video clips and related learning guides provide an opportunity to enhance and support teacher practice in the area of literacy for students with significant disabilities. Dr. Caroline Musselwhite is an assistive technology specialist with more than 30 years of experience working with children and adolescents with significant disabilities.

[www.engagingalllearners.ca/ip/conversation-with-caroline-musselwhite/index.php#0](http://www.engagingalllearners.ca/ip/conversation-with-caroline-musselwhite/index.php#0)

