Suggestions for Teachers, from Parents

Occasionally, parents ask us for suggestions of what kinds of things can be done in the classroom to best adapt the educational environment for the child with prosopagnosia. Here are a few suggestions that parents had for teachers based on their own experiences...

♦ Hand out papers in a directed way
  o “[The] teacher can say ‘Joe, please give one piece of paper to everyone in the class’, but [the] teacher cannot say ‘Joe, please give this paper to John, [or the] teacher can say ‘John, please come and get the paper from Joe.” - Parent w/ 7-year-old

♦ Clear Directions with Visual Cues
  o “[If the teacher says, ‘Go sit with Abby’... my son might sit with Claire.” – Parent w/ First Grader
  o “Provide hints in a manner that is discreet (“Cindy, why don't you join our friend Jeff, who looks so nice in his blue shirt today”) Be cautious not to single [the student] out.” - Parent w/ First Grader
  o “Do not ask her to join another child, ask them to join her (‘Eleanor, why don’t you sit here? Great, you’ve found a spot next to Jody!”) - Parent w/ First Grader

♦ Grouping students
  o “Indicate classroom groups by color or object [rather than an individual’s name.]” – Parent w/ 14-year-old
  o “Consider creating a group that is diverse: hair, size, ethnicity.” – Parent w/ First Grader

♦ Dress in a predictable way
  o “The two staff members going [on the field trip] were both female, of similar height and with similar hair color and styles – so they both wore colorful hairbands (the padded sort that go over the top of the head and behind the ears) each with their name on.” - Parent w/ 18-year-old
  o “Color-coded or other identification markers on ID for teachers (sticker of art palette for art teacher etc.)” - Parent w/ First Grader

♦ Student Placement:
  o “Ensure that your kid exits [the lunchroom] before their friends from other classes, or at the same time with certain friends from their own class.” – Parent w/ 7-year-old
  o “Meet at the slide if you like chasey’ – [T]he same kids might go there and your kid is more likely to meet [or find] their friend.” - Parent w/ 7-year-old
  o “The teachers usually have him sit next to the same person every class and make sure he notices what that person specifically is wearing each day he comes to class.” - Parent w/ 10-year-old

♦ Take care of bullying quickly
“Bullying stamped on very quickly before it goes from the individual to the class.”  – Parent w/ Secondary School Student

Name tags on desks or pinned to uniforms

“Some of his teachers have implemented nametags for everyone to support him in recognition. This has been especially helpful in his karate class where everyone wears uniforms.”  – Parent w/ 10-year-old

 “[My son] is in a community theater group and the director is having the other actors he stands next to on stage wear a bandana on their arm until our son gets a better sense for where he should stand physically on the stage (since he cannot just pick out the child he is supposed to go stand next to.)”  – Parent w/ 10-year-old

Plan for more one-on-one activities or small groups

“His teachers have also found that our son does better working with one other student rather than in a group of four or five and have he and his partner always meet in the same classroom location to work.”  – Parent w/ 10-year-old

“For the first time in 18 months of social skills group, my son learnt the names of the 3 boys in the group with him. They had tried various strategies for a while, but the one that worked involved muscle memory [and] rhyming. [T]he children patted their knees in time, then chanted their name then another boy’s name. The next boy had to join in without missing a beat, and say his name and someone else’s name. My son managed this game! First time ever. 18 months. 3 other kids. Amazing.”  – Parent w/ 7-year-old

Printing Photos of Classmates

“On a geography field trip, [my son] was given a sheet of photos of all the students on the trip, so he could refer to it if necessary.”  – Parent w/ 18-year-old

“They print photos of classmates for [us] which is great but I confess that by mid year we throw them out because we STILL haven’t learnt more than 8 of the 20 kids in the photos, and it just becomes negative trying to do something and failing each day.”  – Parent w/ 7-year-old

“I asked the teacher for pictures of the children in class, so we could practice recognizing them at home. That helped my son a lot. Even though clothes and hairstyles change, it at least gave him a place to start and in a classroom with a finite number of people he was able to recognize most of his peers.”  – Parent

“I have a daily schedule where we post the pictures of the teachers that she will see that day, kids that sit nearby her, kids that are in her reading/math group. Staff emails with updates of seating arrangements or changes in general schedule. We also have advocated for nametags to be on desks for as long as possible.”  – Parent w/ First Grader
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