

DIGNITY & DISABILITY PROFESSIONALISM


This post highlights considerations for being the best practitioner you can be while supporting children with disabilities.



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WHAT IS PROFESSIONALISM

Professionalism requires you to practice ethically within your skill set and to treat all individuals with dignity and respect.



Your professional behavior influences how children with disabilities are perceived by themselves and others.

The following considerations provided are derived from ethical codes developed by organizations for practitioners who support children with disabilities.

RESPECTFUL CONVRSATIONS

INSTEAD OF...

talking about or
referring to children
negatively in front of
them or other children

assuming children will
not understand what
you are saying

talking about your feelings
about a child or their
abilities without data to
support your conclusions

TRY THIS...

model how each child can
be treated as valuable and
important

set an example for how to
use kind words about all
children

use objectively collected
data to support
conversations about a
child's strengths and needs

CONFIDENTIALITY

Beyond the negative impact on the child's identity, talking about children with disabilities in front of others can violate the privacy of that child and their family.



Speak about children only with those authorized to know their information. Avoid talking about children in common areas to prevent unauthorized individuals from hearing the information.

KNOWING YOUR SKILL SET

Practicing within your skill set is best for the children you work with. Trying to use unfamiliar practices and procedures without supervision can result in harm for you and the child.

When you need to do something outside of your skill set, ask for support before practicing with a child or family. Support may include asking someone to supervise or coach you, roleplaying with a supervisor or mentor, asking for additional training or resources, etc.



Check in with yourself to understand your strengths and needs. Participate in ongoing professional development to maintain skills and acquire new ones.

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RESOURCES

Every Child Belongs

Working With Children With Special
Needs

Virtual Lab School: Professionalism

Division of Early Childhood Code of
Ethics

Professional and Ethical Compliance
Code for Behavior Analysts

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