



# The Occupational Therapist's Handbook for Inclusive School Practices

*By Julie Causton Ph.D., Chelsea Tracy-Bronson M.A.*

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**The Occupational Therapist's Handbook for Inclusive School Practices** By Julie Causton Ph.D., Chelsea Tracy-Bronson M.A.

A great occupational therapist is a key success factor in your inclusive school—OTs are on the front lines every day, making critical decisions that help students access the curriculum and fully participate. This is the friendly, down-to-earth survival guide OTs need to deliver their important services effectively as part of an inclusive school team. Packed with practical guidance and tips, examples that relate directly to an OT's daily practice, and first-person insights from seasoned OTs, this guidebook is key to helping students develop new skills in key areas, from motor skills and mobility to academic achievement and friendships. All new OTs should read this book before their first day in an inclusive school—and veteran OTs will find it invaluable for ensuring that supports are delivered in the least restrictive environment.

## **STRATEGIES THAT HELP OTs:**

- collaborate with other members of the school team
- choose and use environmental, behavioral, social, and academic supports that help students succeed
- stay focused on strengths and abilities rather than disability
- use an RTI framework to deliver appropriate levels of support
- match supports to students' specific strengths
- avoid "the Velcro effect" and support student independence
- facilitate peer supports and friendships
- resolve challenging behavior in gentle, positive ways
- keep expectations high for all students

**PRACTICAL MATERIALS:** Tools and checklists to help organize team meeting notes, choose student supports, define team roles and responsibilities, support participation of nonverbal students, presume competence, and more.

Click here to watch a recording of Dr. Causton's webinar - The Role of the Paraprofessional in the Inclusive Class

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### **Editorial Review**

#### **Review**

“This highly readable book gives occupational therapists the tools to be powerful team members in advancing inclusive education opportunities for students with and without disabilities.”

(Dr. Jacqueline Thousand)

#### **About the Author**

**Julie Causton, Ph.D.**, is an expert in creating and maintaining inclusive schools. She is an associate professor in the Inclusive Special Education Program at Syracuse University. She teaches courses on inclusion, differentiation, special education law and collaboration. Her published works have appeared in such journals as *Exceptional Children*, *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, *Journal of Research in Childhood Education*, *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, *Behavioral Disorders*, *Studies in Art Education*, and *Equity and Excellence in Education*. Julie also works with schools and districts directly to help to create truly inclusive schools.

Chelsea Tracy-Bronson, M.A., is a former elementary educator who has focused her career on bringing inclusive opportunities to all. She is an Assistant Professor in the Special Education Program at Stockton University. She has a master's degree from Teacher's College at Columbia University and is in the Special Education doctorate program at Syracuse University. She works with districts and schools to redesign services to create inclusive special education and related service provision. Her research and professional interests include curriculum design that allows access for all, differentiating instruction, educational technology, supporting students with significant disabilities in inclusive classrooms, and inclusive related service provision.

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#### **Chapter 5 – Rethinking Students: Presuming Competence**

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