

INCLUSION

Across Learning Environments



TALE Academy 

MODULE 3 - SESSION 1

More than 450,000 students



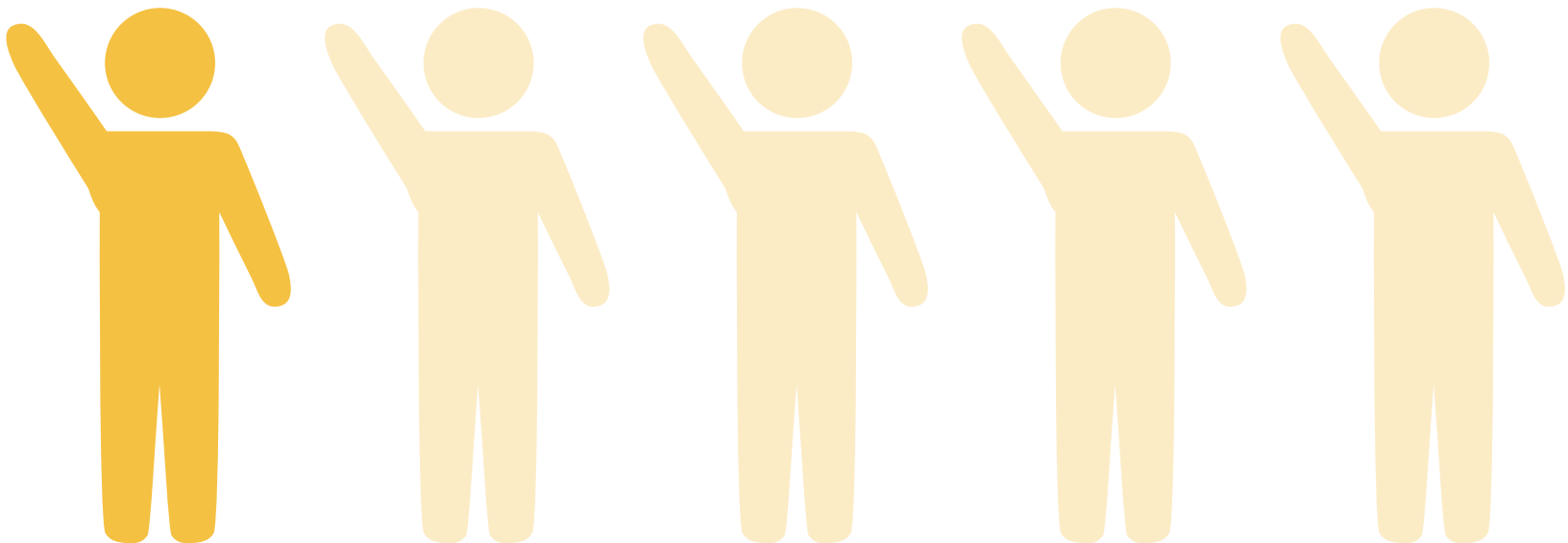
attending New York State's public schools have one or more disabilities for which they receive special education services.

To put that figure into perspective, 18%, or **almost one in every five students attending a New York State public school, has an Individualized Education Program (IEP)** to address a disability, impairment, or delay that impacts educational performance.



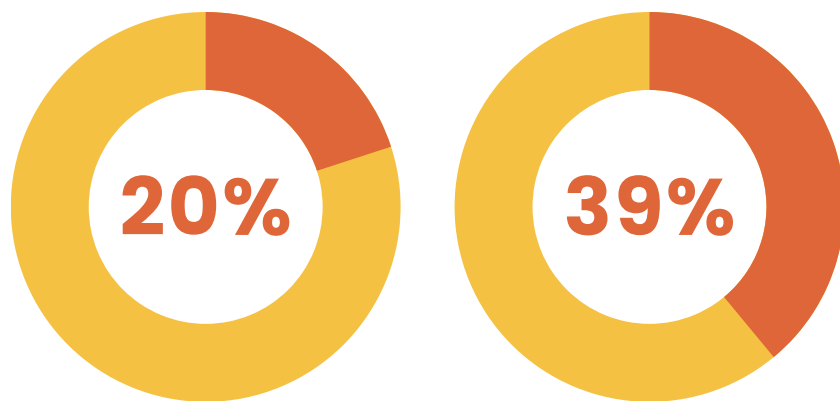
There are
14 disability
categories:

- Autism
- Deaf-Blindness
- Deafness
- Emotional Disturbance
- Hearing Impairment
- Intellectual Disability
- Multiple Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairment
- Other Health Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability
- Speech/Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Visual Impairment
- Developmental Delay



WHEN COVID HIT...

When COVID hit, students with disabilities were inordinately impacted as the services they received at their schools had to be modified. Everything from specialized classroom settings to small or one-to-one instruction, as well as therapies that required face-to-face interaction or specialized equipment, suddenly had to be reimagined and revised.



One survey of 1,500 families from across the country found that in spring 2020, **only 20% of parents reported that their students with IEPs were receiving the required services, while 39% reported that their students with IEPs were receiving no support at all.**

Teacher concern for their students with disabilities was acute. Dr. Danielle Kovach (current president of the Council for Exceptional Children's Board of Directors) shared with The New York Times that one night in spring 2020, she was working on quarterly IEP reports when she said to her husband, "I don't know where to go from here" and stopped work to cry. She gave voice to countless other educators – both special education and general education teachers – when she said,

"I'm so worried – am I giving them [her students] everything they need and doing everything I can do?"

She wasn't alone. In the weeks after the Council for Exceptional Children waived its membership fee, more than 20,000 new teachers, administrators, and aides joined the organization in order to access tools, resources, and online professional support for teaching students with disabilities.

In fall 2021, a little more than a year later, when the New York State Education Department (NYSED) asked teachers whether they agreed that they have the tools and skills necessary to address the needs of students with disabilities in hybrid learning environments, 50% of respondents "disagreed" or "strongly disagreed."

GO BACK TO MOVE FORWARD

The good news is that prior to the pandemic, educators, researchers, and policymakers were making strong advances in improving the training of and professional support for general education teachers. In New York State, we issued a Blueprint for Improved Results for Students with Disabilities that is guiding development and delivery of statewide resources.

This blueprint was built around seven guiding principles. While all seven principles are important, principles 3 and 4 are key to improving results for our students with disabilities.

1 Students engage in self-advocacy and are involved in determining their own educational goals and plan.

2 Parents and other family members are engaged as meaningful partners in the special education process and the education of their child.

3 Teachers design, provide, and assess the effectiveness of specially designed instruction to provide students with disabilities with access to participate and progress in the general education curriculum.

4 Teachers provide research-based instructional teaching and learning strategies and supports for students with disabilities.

5 Schools provide multi-tiered systems of behavioral and academic support.

6 Schools provide high-quality inclusive programs and activities.

7 Schools provide appropriate instruction for students with disabilities in career development and opportunities to participate in work-based learning.

*The **third and fourth** principles are particularly important for both general and special education teachers as they work collaboratively to plan, deliver, and assess instruction for students with disabilities.*

3

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4

Teachers provide research-based instructional teaching and learning strategies and supports for students with disabilities.

Teachers are providing research-based instructional teaching and learning strategies and supports for students as outlined in the fourth principle when they do the following:

Develop lessons that allow multiple entry points and multiple modes of engagement for students with diverse needs

Are knowledgeable and skilled in providing explicit instruction in academics and social emotional learning

Teach students strategies for self-regulated learning across content areas

Continually assess students' understanding of lessons to improve and target instruction to student needs

Consider and accommodate students' individualized needs for assistive technology devices and services

At the heart of principle four is the inclusive classroom. An inclusive classroom is a classroom that is intentionally designed so that students with disabilities, impairments, or delays can learn among peers without disabilities in age-appropriate general education settings.




A [2019 national report](#) issued by the National Center for Learning Disabilities and Understood.org found that even before the pandemic, only 17% of general education teachers felt "very well prepared" to teach students with mild to moderate learning disabilities.

Only 30% of general education teachers surveyed feel strongly that when they try their best, they can be successful with students with disabilities. **For inclusive classrooms to be effective in any learning environment – in-person, remote, or hybrid – general education teachers need sufficient training to educate their 1 in 5 students who have special needs.**

A FRESH START

In 2020, the National Center for Learning Disabilities and Understood.org, with funding from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, revisited the findings from their 2019 report to help teachers shift to emergency remote teaching for students with disabilities. They issued the [Distance Learning Toolkit: Key Practices to Support Students Who Learn Differently](#).

According to the toolkit, the first step that teachers can take in order to improve their ability to effectively educate students with disabilities is related to changing mindsets. Teachers need to adopt beliefs and attitudes about their teaching practice and their students that align with the following:

MINDSET	BELIEF	PRACTICES
 <p>POSITIVE ORIENTATION TOWARD INCLUSION</p>	<p>I believe students with mild to moderate disabilities can – and should – be taught alongside their peers in general education settings.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Create a classroom environment where all students feel welcome and valued, making it easier for students to learn• Take responsibility for teaching all of your students• Include flexible options and supports to meet students' needs and strengths• Hold high expectations for all students
 <p>STRONG SENSE OF SELF-EFFICACY</p>	<p>I feel that I can effectively teach my students with mild to moderate learning disabilities.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have a positive orientation toward inclusion• Spend extra time with students who are struggling• Motivate students who are disengaged• Not criticize students for errors
 <p>GROWTH MINDSET</p>	<p>By learning new skills and trying new strategies, I can help all of my students learn.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use teaching strategies that lead to increased engagement• Continuously reflect and improve on your teaching practices, actively seeking additional training or new strategies to try• Explicitly teach students problem-solving strategies

This third module of the TALE Academy is designed specifically for the general education teacher and focuses on how teachers can develop inclusive classrooms across learning environments.

In **Session 2**, we will dig into how universal design for learning (UDL) can help teachers address learner variability and create inclusive classrooms.

In **Session 3**, we will look at accessibility in digital learning and provide teachers with the basic tools to make learning environments perceivable, operable, understandable, and robust for all students, including those with disabilities.

Then in **Sessions 4-7**, we will focus on high-leverage instructional practices in special education that teachers can make portable across learning environments, such as explicit instruction, scaffolding, and flexible grouping.

And in **Session 8**, we will look at specially designed instruction and how general education teachers can effectively collaborate with special education teachers across learning environments.

Your Turn!



As you begin your journey to improve teaching across learning environments for students with disabilities, take a moment to reflect on your current mindset around teaching students with disabilities:

- Do you believe students with mild to moderate disabilities can – and should – be taught alongside their peers in general education settings?
- Do you feel that you can effectively teach your students with mild to moderate learning disabilities?
- By learning new skills and trying new strategies, do you believe you can help all of your students learn?

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About Us

The TALE Academy

The TALE Academy is a series of virtual learning experiences available to all New York State educators and offers a rich array of resources on topics related to teaching across learning environments (TALE). The TALE Academy is built upon the work New York State educators carried out during emergency remote teaching (ERT) throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and extends it toward the future. TALE invites educators to think beyond online learning to consider a broader perspective on teaching and learning that encompasses teaching across multiple environments (in-person, remote, and hybrid).

The Teaching in Remote/Hybrid Learning Environments (TRLE) Project

The TALE Academy is part of a broader New York State Education Department (NYSED) initiative known as Teaching in Remote/Hybrid Learning Environments (TRLE). In July 2020, NYSED was awarded funding through the United States Department of Education's Education Stabilization Fund-Rethink K-12 Education Models Grant to implement TRLE – a three-year project to build the capacity of teachers and educational leaders to effectively implement remote/hybrid learning for all students. Launched in the depths of the pandemic, the first phase of the TRLE project focused on getting resources to the field through partnerships with Boards of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) and school districts across the state. The second phase, which began in February 2022, focused on aggregating lessons learned and emerging teaching and learning strategies to address a broader field of practice: teaching across learning environments.

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