

### **Supporting Students with NF1 in the Classroom: Checklist**

The following checklist is designed to help support students with Neurofibromatosis Type 1 (NF1) in the classroom based on different learning and behavioural challenges they could experience. Suggestions from making a more accommodating classroom to social considerations for students is provided. With the right support and encouragement, students with NF1 can thrive.

#### **Supporting Visual Perception**

*Students can have difficulty processing visual information*

- Format assignments for easier reading:
  - Use highlights or bold text
  - Use word blanks
  - Use graph or lined paper
- Seat the student closer to the board
- Allow computer or word processor usage for written assignments
- Ensure learning material is not cluttered and is well-spaced

#### **Supporting Language Challenges**

*Students can have difficulty understanding language and expressing themselves*

- Use pictures, visual prompts, or actions
- Play games that promote language (iSpy, Pictionary, Scrabble)
- Give hints if the student is struggling to find a word
- Ensure patience when waiting for a student's response

#### **Supporting Fine Motor Skills**

*Students can have difficulty controlling precise movements*

- Agree on the neatness expectation of the student's handwriting
- Engage in fine art activities such as making collages, finger painting, and colouring
- Encourage playing with building blocks, clay, and puzzles
- If applicable, look for cues ("I hate writing") to improve certain areas of the student's skills

#### **Supporting Gross Motor Skills**

*Students can have difficulty controlling large movements*

- Focus on fitness and non-competitive activities
- Encourage repetitive motion sports such as swimming or track and field
- Encourage playing on the trampoline and playground equipment
- Ascertain if the student can participate in an individualized PE program

### **Supporting Executive Function**

*Students can have trouble organizing info, time, and behaviour to complete tasks*

- Provide extra support in organization through an aid or peer tutor
- Create schedules or routines for classes
- Train students in planning tools such as calendars and agendas
- Support the student in organizing homework and assigned projects
- Break projects down into smaller tasks and use checklists

### **Supporting Attention Difficulties**

*Students can have attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) or autism spectrum disorder (ASD)*

- Give extra time for certain tasks
- Modify exams and assignments to test knowledge, not attention span
- Give short and concise instructions
- Allow movement breaks
- Break large tasks into manageable, smaller ones
- Maintain eye contact during verbal instruction
- Help the student find areas that they excel in
- Be understanding and adjust the workload to the student
- Be in contact with the parents to be aware of strategies that have helped the student before

### **Supporting Social Skills**

*Students can have trouble with social interaction and communication*

- Plan playdates or activities with peers:
  - Prepare the student for the activity
  - Plan the activity and allow the student to be in charge of what they want to do
  - Limit the length of the playdate
  - Ask for feedback
- Be aware of students experiencing social isolation or bullying:
  - Educate class in a general setting about NF1 if granted consent
  - Be aware of the student's behavioural changes
  - Reduce isolation through class discussions or team activities
  - Build confidence through effort-based praise

### **Support Using an Individualized Educational Plan (IEP)**

*Students can use formal (IEP) or informal accommodations*

- Detail the student's strengths and weaknesses
- Identify the specific area where the student needs help in
- Create an outline of measurable goals and strategies to achieve goals
- Identify who (educator, student, or parents) will do what by when and why
- Consistently communicate with parents to create well-aligned support strategies