



Etiquette for Interacting with Students with Disabilities

- *Remember that the student is a person first, not the disability.* Relax and communicate as you would with any other student in a manner and tone appropriate to his or her age.
- *Speak directly to the student, instead of to a guide or interpreter.*
- *Allow students with disabilities to be independent.* It is okay to offer assistance with a door or another task, but be prepared to accept “no” for an answer. If your offer is accepted, wait for instructions on how best to assist the student.
- *Avoid being overly accommodating.* This may be perceived as patronizing. Do not assume that the student cannot participate in an activity.
- *Do not make assumptions about a student’s abilities based on their disability.* Every person with a disability is unique, and accommodations and strategies must be determined on an individual basis.
- *Take care not to single out the student in the class.* Offer to discuss accommodations in private during office hours.
- *When communicating with a person who is deaf or hard of hearing, speak at a normal volume and pace.* Do not over-emphasize your lip movements. This actually makes speechreading more difficult.
- *During class discussions, offer visual cues to students who are deaf or hard of hearing and auditory cues to students who are blind.* This can be done subtly by pointing to and calling the name of the student with a question or comment. If you do not know the name of the students in your class, ask them to state their name before making a comment or asking a question.