

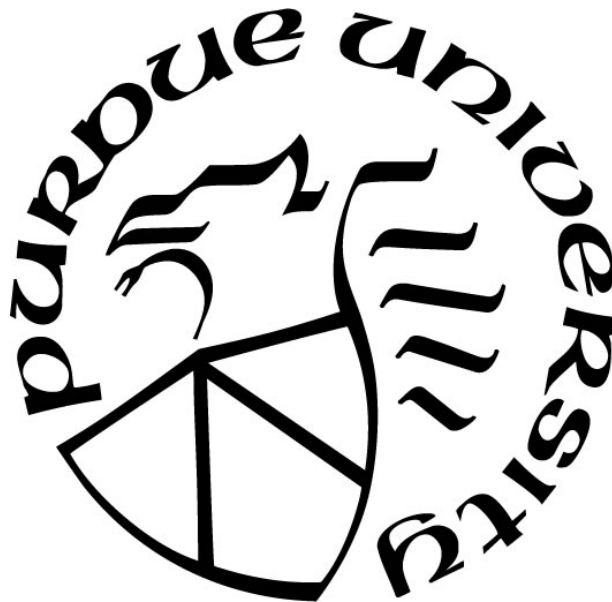
**TEACHING DAILY LIVING SKILLS TO MIDDLE SCHOOL STUDENTS
WITH MILD DIABILITIES**

by
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This special project is dedicated to my parents, Rob and Jana, and to my husband, Julian.

I truly could not have completed my years of graduate school and this special project without the love, encouragement, and support you all gave me. Thank you for always pushing me to do my best and never letting me give up.

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ABSTRACT

Students who have disabilities often face many difficulties throughout their lives and are not always given the same opportunities to learn important daily living skills as their peers. Most research in this area does not account for the need to teach daily living skills to students with mild disabilities, and instead is focused on teaching these skills to students with severe disabilities. In this study, the methods for teaching daily living skills are examined and skills that should be taught to middle school students with mild disabilities are discovered. Key findings from this study indicate that there are many daily living skills that are not being taught to students with mild disabilities, teachers do not often have the time to teach these skills, and there is a lack of resources for teaching daily living skills to middle school students with mild disabilities. The handbook created from this study aims to fill part of the gap by sharing suitable methods for teaching daily living skills and providing a checklist of daily living skills to teach to the students.

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Students with mild disabilities who spend time in the special education settings often encounter many challenges. They do not always have the same ability to learn skills as their typical peers. This includes not just academic skills but also social skills and daily living skills. If there was more of a push for teaching daily living skills in the school setting it is likely that students with disabilities would acquire a higher quality of life. Research shows that there are multiple instances in which students with mild disabilities do not have the skills that would prepare them for life as an adult (Stone-MacDonald, 2012). By not being taught these skills, students with mild disabilities become dependent on others throughout high school and into their adult life. Utilizing certain techniques and interventions can help alleviate or even eliminate some of these daily struggles and increase independence. One way that teachers can make a positive difference in the life of a student with a disability is to teach daily life skills, which will help the student become more prepared for high school life and even adulthood.

Significance of Project

This project is significant because it describes the importance of teaching daily life skills to students with mild disabilities and share best practices in this area. After being taught these skills students may be more prepared and feel more comfortable with the transition to high school. This project provides teachers with guidelines to teaching daily living skills to their students. By using this handbook teachers will have additional methods available to them to help in the teaching of daily life skills. Teachers may be able to find resources they need and identify

additional skills that their students may need to be taught in order to achieve a more successful high school education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate what daily living skills are currently being taught to students with mild disabilities in middle school settings to prepare the students for high school. It also evaluates current evidence-based practices being used and which practices have been viewed as effective, to offer ideas and methods for teaching these skills in a handbook for teachers. Based on the findings from the research a handbook was developed that includes some of the most important skills to teach and strategies for teachers to utilize when teaching daily living skills to their students.

Research Approach

Elements of both qualitative and quantitative research are be used in this study. The qualitative research methodology was used to gather thoughts and understandings from the participants of the survey. Due to the style of question, some of the responses to the survey required a numerical analysis and a quantitative research methodology was used. Information was obtained by requesting response to a survey. Other questions in the survey had an open-ended style, allowing participants to share their thoughts which needed a qualitative research method to analyze. The survey asked teachers about daily living skills and their thoughts on how these skills should be taught in the classroom especially when preparing students, with mild disabilities, for high school. The questions used in the survey came from information found in peer reviewed scholarly articles on the subject matter. This survey was be conducted in a confidential and anonymous manner to protect the participants and the information gathered.

Literature Review

What are Daily Living Skills?

Most students who do not have any type of mild disabilities do not need the focused education on daily living skills because they are normally skills that they are able to acquire just by being in their environment, the skills come easily because they are things they do every day without much thought. Schools also do not focus on teaching daily living skills to all students, because of the push for developing academic competency. However daily living skills may need to be taught directly to students with mild disabilities. Some examples of critical daily living skills are knowing how to read a map, find and apply for jobs, manage money, and how to use a calculator (Rich-Gross, 2014). Other skills and areas that students with mild disabilities may struggle with are social skills, functional communication skills, self-accountability, housekeeping, and health and safety skills (Bouck & Joshi, 2012). For students with mild disabilities these skills do not always come easily and take practice and routine to learn and be successful.

Methods for Teaching Daily Living Skills

One study, by Shepley, Spriggs, Samudre, and Elliot (2017), done on teaching daily living independence focuses on using a video activity schedule with middle school students. In this study the researchers chose an affordable application for the iPad for four students with intellectual disabilities to use. The concept of this application allowed the students to play and pause videos on how to complete daily living skills on their own. The end goal was that students would be able to independently learn new skills through self-instruction (Shepley et al, 2017). Other researchers have also found that by using technology students are able learn vocational skills and become less reliant on the adults in their lives (Cullen & Alber-Morgan, 2015).

A study by Brady, C. Honsberger, Cadette, and T. Honsberger (2016) found that if students worked on their daily living skills with a peer of a similar age there would be more success and the student may even master the skill sooner. For this study an image with coordinating text was used to prompt each step. The authors did also mention that this could be technology included to create another method of prompting (Brady et al, 2016). A similar study that also used images paired with text showed that students could be successfully taught how to complete a task and attain the teacher's attention while self-monitoring (Rouse, Everhart-Sherwood, & Alber-Morgan, 2014).

Methodology

Participants and Setting

Participants of this study are general education teachers and special education teachers who interact with students in the middle school setting. This research was conducted at a rural middle school which serves students in 6th, 7th, and 8th grades. There are approximately 625 students in the school and 36 teachers.

Recruitment and Data Collection Procedures/Methods

Participants were recruited through an email requesting them to respond to an optional survey about daily living skills that need to be taught to middle school students before they enter high school. The survey consists of Likert scale questions, multiple choice questions, and short answer questions. There are no questions asking for information that would potentially identify the teacher or any students. This survey was made available to the teachers by clicking on a link provided in the recruitment email, and all surveys were conducted anonymously. Once surveys were completed the results were kept in a password protected digital file folder.

Data Analysis Procedures/Methods

When the completed surveys were received, the researcher compiled the answers for analysis. The information gained through the completed surveys were categorized, supported with existing literature, and used to create a handbook with resources to aid in teaching proper daily living skills to mild disability students in middle school settings.

Timeline

Recruitment emails were sent out to survey participants after the school's Thanksgiving break. Once the initial recruitment emails containing the survey were sent out the participants had two weeks to respond. When the completed surveys were received, the information was analyzed by the researcher and a handbook created for teachers. The results of this survey are shared in Chapter 4.

Outline for Development of the Special Project

The handbook for teachers was created through this special project for middle school special education teachers who teach daily living skills to their students and help prepare them for their high school education. The handbook includes evidence-based strategies for teaching daily living skills. This handbook should be used with middle school students with mild disabilities but can be adapted to any skill level, so that all students are prepared for high school. In addition, this handbook may also be adapted for students in other age groups depending on their skill development.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

In this review of literature, the reader will discover more on the current practices of teaching daily living skills. It will include information on the importance of teaching these skills, what skills are considered to be daily living skills, current methods used for teaching daily living skills, and which daily living skills are commonly taught in the classroom. When beginning the process of finding scholarly articles to use I was looking for articles that were specific to teaching daily living skills to students but found that only gave me results of teaching students with more severe disabilities. To find past research related to my topic I used Google Scholar and the ERIC (Educational Resources Information Center) database. To limit articles and other resources to only the most recent and relevant information I only searched for articles that were published between 2010 and 2020. Search terms that were used included: daily living skills, teaching life skills, basic daily living skills, functional life skills, teaching students with mild disabilities, evidence-based teaching practices, teaching middle school students with mild disabilities, and living skills for middle school students. I had to broaden my search more and be less specific searching for daily living skills to find information on what skills then searching for teaching methods used with students who have mild disabilities. By breaking up my key words into smaller phrases and not specifically focusing on a specific age range while creating searches I was met to a much wider net of possibilities that gave more information to be included in this literature review.

Research Questions

- What are the essential daily living skills that need to be taught to students with mild disabilities to prepare them for high school?
- What evidence-based practices are commonly used to teach daily living skills to students with mild disabilities?
- Do teachers find current evidence-based practices for teaching daily living skills effective?

Importance of Topic

Students with mild disabilities who spend time in the special education settings often encounter many challenges. They do not always have the same ability to learn skills as their typical peers. If there was more of a push for teaching daily living skills in the school setting it is likely that students with disabilities would acquire a higher quality of life. Research shows that there are multiple instances in which students with mild disabilities do not have the skills that would prepare them for life as an adult (Stone-MacDonald, 2012). By not being taught these skills, students with mild disabilities become dependent on others throughout high school and into their adult life. Utilizing certain techniques and interventions can help alleviate or even eliminate some of these daily struggles and increase independence. One way that teachers can make a positive difference in the life of a student with a disability is to teach daily life skills, which will help the student become more prepared for high school life and even adulthood.

Definition of Terms

Daily living skills: Stable (2013) explains daily living skills as activities that are completed at home, work, school, and various other settings. These may include skills such as

preparing food and general hygiene, which need to be completed on a normal basis. Daily living skills also includes any other skill necessary for independence (Duncan et al, 2018).

Students with mild disabilities: For the purpose of this research students who have mild disabilities will include students with at least one or more of the following: autism spectrum disorder, learning disabilities, speech and language impairment, attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, emotional disorders, and/or behavioral disorders (Holzberg et al, 2019). While there are other similar disabilities that may be considered to be mild disabilities in other cases, these are the only ones that will be focused on throughout this research.

Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD): according to the CDC (2020), ASD is a developmental disability that affects a person's social and communication abilities. It also commonly causes the person to have behavioral problems. People with ASD learn new skills in different ways than most other typically developing individuals. Some people with ASD may appear to be gifted in certain areas or subjects but need a lot of additional help in other areas of life.

Learning Disorder: the CDC (2020) states that a child who has a learning disorder may face difficulties in several areas of learning. Due to the learning disorder these children often feel frustrated because they often try hard but do not see success in their learning. It is not uncommon for children with learning disorders to also have an emotional or behavioral disorder.

Speech and Language Impairment: according to the CDC (2020) speech disorders include problems with forming words or sounds and difficulty speaking smoothly. Language delay, which is when understanding and speaking of language develops slower, also falls into this disability. Other language disorders such as Aphasia and Auditory Processing Disorder are

included. Disorders that affect reading and writing are not uncommon in children who have a Speech and Language Impairment.

Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD): the CDC (2020) states that ADHD is a neurodevelopmental disorder that is generally diagnosed during childhood and continues as the child ages into an adult. Common issues children with ADHD face are difficulty paying attention, inability to control impulses, and are over-active.

Emotional/Behavioral Disorder: according to Sec. 300.8 (c) (4) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (2017) Emotional Disturbance had negative effects on a child's education. Children with Emotional Disturbance may experience difficulty forming positive relationships, have inappropriate thoughts and feelings, and may experience depression or unhappiness regularly.

Daily Living Skills

For students without mild disabilities, daily living skills are not skills that truly need to be focused on throughout their schooling. While they should be incorporated into the classroom setting for all students to learn, most students are able to learn these skills by being in their living environment, and do not require much teaching. However, these skills may need to be taught directly to students with mild disabilities. Some examples of critical daily living skills are knowing how to read a map, find and apply for jobs, manage money, and how to use a calculator. One thing that the author did make sure to note was: "With the opportunity to experience real life skills, students can feel an investment in their future" (Rich-Gross, 2014, p. 132).

Other skills and areas that students with mild disabilities may struggle with are social skills, functional communication skills, self-accountability, housekeeping, and health and safety skills (Bouck & Joshi, 2012). For students with mild disabilities these skills do not always come

easily and take practice and routine to learn and be successful. In this study by Bouck and Joshi (2012), they examined the idea of using a functional curriculum for teaching subjects such as “vocational education, community access, daily living, financial, independent living, transportation, social/relationships, and self-determination” (p. 140). These are all skills that some students with mild disabilities need more assistance with before they can become successful and complete them independently later in life.

Importance of Teaching Daily Living Skills

Since it has already been established that daily living skills are the skills that are truly necessary to complete tasks and activities throughout each day it is evident that these skills are important. In the article by Chiang et al. (2017), the authors state, “given that acquiring appropriate life skills is crucial to students with and without disabilities, both general and special educators should be responsible for life skills instruction and schools should allow teachers to have enough time to teach life skills” (p. 1114). This statement reaffirms that teaching daily living skills needs to be done in all environments and that all students should have access to these teaching regardless of if they have disabilities or not. There may be some students with no disabilities who struggle with certain daily living skills because they are not exposed to them in their current living environment.

Bouck (2017) examined the educational outcome of students with mild disabilities and found that they were not as prepared for leading independent lives after high school as they could have been if other routes had been taken during their educational experience. The author found that there is a lack of research on the subject of students with mild disabilities and that a majority of the research seemed to be focused on moderate to severe disabilities. Students with mild disabilities would benefit from vocational training, community-based instruction, and other

similar daily living skills learning experiences that students with more severe disabilities tend to always see as a part of their curriculum.

Current Methods for Teaching Daily Living Skills

Most current methods for teaching involve the use of technology to teach the skill but are then adapted in multiple different ways to best serve the needs of the student. One study, by Shepley, Spriggs, Samudre, and Elliot (2017), done on teaching daily living independence focuses on using a video activity schedule with middle school students. In this study the researchers chose an affordable application for the iPad for four students with intellectual disabilities to use. The concept of this application allowed the students to play and pause videos on how to complete daily living skills on their own. The end goal was that students would be able to independently learn new skills through self-instruction. Other researchers have also found that by using technology students are able to learn vocational skills and become less reliant on the adults in their lives (Cullen & Alber-Morgan, 2015). In the research done by Cullen and Alber-Morgan (2015) they identified previous trials with technology mediated learning and the student's ability to self-prompt while utilizing the technology.

A study by Brady, C. Honsberger, Cadette, and T. Honsberger (2016) found that if students worked on their daily living skills with a peer of a similar age there would be more success and the student may even master the skill sooner. For this study an image with coordinating text was used to prompt each step. The authors did also mention that this could include technology to create another method of prompting (Brady et al, 2016). A similar study that also used images paired with text showed that students could be successfully taught how to complete a task and attain the teacher's attention while self-monitoring (Rouse, Everhart-Sherwood, & Alber-Morgan, 2014). Both of these methods give alternatives if technology is not

the preferred method of instruction but could still be adapted to include technology or additional supports or prompting levels as needed for each student.

Ayers, Mechling, and Sansosti (2013) present research on how advancements in mobile technology can assist with life skills and independence in students with intellectual disorders. This study mentions the fact that students need to first be able to use and understand the piece of technology before being able to use and learn from it. The study concludes that by using mobile technology teachers will be able to work more efficiently and the students are given the opportunity to learn skills that will allow them to be more independent. The authors also note that it is extremely important to understand what the student's strengths and weaknesses are with regards to technology and their needs.

Domire and Wolfe (2014) reviewed how video prompting helps teach daily living skills to students with disabilities. One idea posed in this article is that by using video prompting new skill can be taught more precise because the same video using the same method can be viewed numerous times in order to learn a skill. The authors also state that if teachers give students access to video prompting models then the teachers will have time to focus on other students. By using video prompting students learn tasks by learning small parts at a time rather than by using video modeling which teaches the entire task all at once. It is also noted that the students were better able to follow along with the prompts if the person in the video was similar to themselves.

Another study focused on a portion of the elderly population with mild cognitive impairments and activities of daily living such as finances, transportation, housekeeping, hygiene, medication, and technology. For this population and in this more medical setting the activities of daily living are split into two groups: basic and instrumental. The basic skills are those needed to complete everyday activities such as bathing and toileting. Instrumental skills are

activities such as shopping and using public transportation. The authors found that there seemed to be the most success in completing all activities of daily living skills when the person was involved in the whole process. If the activity they were learning was how to use public transportation, then the subject was part of every step of the process, meaning they decided where to go, when to go, what to do, found how they would get there, etc. (Jekel et al, 2015). Since this research is related to reteaching activities of daily living, which are very similar to the daily living skills taught to middle school students, it can be adapted to the younger generation and in the school setting.

Daily Living Skills to Teach in Middle School

Skills taught in middle school are hopefully ones that will stay with the student for the rest of their life and help them be successful. According to Chiang et al. (2017), “These skills can be grouped into five areas, including: self-care and domestic living, recreation and leisure, social interaction, employment, and community participation” (p. 1113). This same article also shares important daily living skills to be taught throughout the student’s middle school and high school education. These skills include “Read and understand common signs, Count change, Get to places outside the home, Buy things at a store, Fix own breakfast or lunch, Do laundry, Tell time on a clock, Look up telephone numbers/use telephone, Straighten up own room” (Chiang et al, 2017, p.1117). Students that were the focus for this research were middle school and high school students with autism, but the life skills provided are also ones that students with mild disabilities may need to still learn in order to become self-sufficient in these skill areas.

Another article by Belva and Matson (2013) that examines daily living skills in adults with disabilities shows what skills need to be focused on earlier in life so that as adults the knowledge is hopefully retained and used. This study is based off a list of daily living skills

provided in the Vineland Adaptive Behavior Scales survey that parents or caretakers answered on behalf of the target individual with a disability. Skills that were found to have the most need of being taught earlier in life were skills such as, cleaning home, self-care (specifically maintaining fingernails), ability to perform simple repairs, sewing skills, budgeting, planning and preparing meals, laundry, understanding a checking account, and the ability to notify others about illness. These skills were singled out from a list of around 100 other skills that had a low response rate, meaning the target individuals were unlikely to be able to complete most of these skills on their own. It was also noted that even if the adults with disabilities were able to complete these tasks, it was unlikely that they were completely independent, they generally needed reminding from another that the task needed to be completed at certain times (Belva & Matson, 2013).

Cameron and Cook (2013) studied teacher's goals and expectations for students with mild disabilities in the classroom and found several topics and skills that seem to only be taught to general education students. These researchers found their evidence by contacting teachers who teach students with mild and severe disabilities in inclusive settings. The skills the authors found were not often taught to students with disabilities included: "(a) following rules and procedures, (b) learning responsibility and good work habits, (c) developing skills for adult life, (d) actively participating in class (e) acquiring academic or vocational skills, (f) learning course content (g) developing critical thinking, and (h) completing homework assignments" (p. 25). These skills are all ones that every person should be taught throughout their education regardless of their ability. Without being taught these skills students with disabilities will be lacking essential skills that will aid them in any future career, trade or further education that they may decide to participate in after their schooling.

This section of research is where the greatest deficit in previous studies has been found. When attempting to find previous research on what life skills to teach in the middle school setting specifically for students with mild disabilities there did not seem to be much information meeting these requirements. Most research that has been conducted on teaching daily life skills is geared towards students with autism or other more severe disabilities. Regarding the age group that is focused on in this current research there were very few articles that also focused on middle school students, most were focused teaching life skills to high school students or older adults.

Previously Created Handbooks

One of the most relevant previously published series of books is called “Lifeskills in Action” which includes a few books geared towards students to help teach important daily living skills. Two of these books teach important skills that have been discussed previously throughout this paper on titled *Doing Household Chores/ Keep it Clean (Living Skills)* and *Smart Grocery Shopping/ Shop Smart (Living Skills)* (Gardner & Gray, 2016). Just by reading the titles alone it can see that these books are dedicated to teaching specific skills to students or anyone else who hopes to learn the skills. Both books are written so that the learner might be able to learn these skills on their own without much aid from another. All books in this series are written at a first-grade readability level and the words are larger with optimal spacing and few sentences on each page so as not to overwhelm the reader. These books also include a flipside which has a fictional story to aid in teaching the reasons for doing the certain skill or what consequences made be in store if the task is not completed, which helps provide the learner with examples and situations that these important life skills will be used (Gardner & Gray, 2016). While this series does seem

to be practical and helpful for teaching living skills, they may not be the most ideal resource when faced with teaching students in a classroom setting.

Another relevant workbook that was found is *The Practical Life Skills Workbook* (Leutenberg et al, 2009). This workbook is interactive and meant to be completed by the learner in order to discover more about the life skills they need to work on more to become more successful, though it can be adapted for a teacher to use with a student to identify life skills. Since this workbook would be easily adapted so that teacher can use it with students it is a viable option to use in a classroom setting. The issues with this workbook are that it is somewhat outdated and not necessarily geared towards middle school students.

The book *Teaching Students with Moderate and Severe Disabilities* by Browder et al (2020) is another resource example that can be used when teaching daily living skills to students with disabilities. This book was obviously created to use with students with more moderate or severe disabilities versus that students with mild disabilities that are the focus of this research. In this book many topics are covered throughout the chapters but there is only one chapter dedicated to teaching daily living skills to students. There are a few other chapters that may be relevant to the daily living skills depending on the needs of the student and what skills are being focused on at the time (Browder et al, 2020). These examples of previously published books prove that there is a need for another resource meant to be used in classroom setting while teaching middle school students with mild disabilities.

Findings from Literature Review

By searching for information on teaching daily living skills to students with mild disabilities it is clear that many researchers have found success in using technology to teach these skills. However, even with the advancements in technology there should still be research

being done on teaching methods not utilizing technology. Not every school or student has access to technology or has the ability to use it and be successful. Due to a majority of previous research relating to teaching daily living skills using technology and they were focusing on children with moderate and severe disabilities it was necessary to expand my search to include other age populations and those with mild disabilities in particular and how they learn daily living skills.

As explained by Bouck (2017), there seems to be a gap in research for students with mild disabilities when it comes to ensuring they are receiving proper educational services for succeeding in life after high school. Throughout the entire research process the researcher also came across the same issue of mostly finding information on teaching daily living skills to students with severe disabilities when it is evident that students with mild disabilities also benefit from learning daily living skills throughout their educational experience. The researcher aims to fill a part of that gap by finding the best methods for teaching daily living skills, and what skills to teach to middle school students with mild disabilities so that they are then prepared for high school.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The following chapter describes the methodology that was used by the researcher throughout the process of this study. Approval to conduct this study was gained by completing the IRB application forms through Purdue University. Using the online system to complete the study approval process, my application was first certified by the principal investigator before it was approved by the Purdue IRB team in order to move forward with my study. The CITI program training on human research that is required by the Purdue University IRB in order to perform this research was previously completed. This training was completed on social behavioral research investigators and key personnel. See Appendix E for copy of this certificate.

Additional measures were taken to ensure that all recruitment and contacting of participants and others involved in the process were completed digitally due to the global pandemic happening at the time of this study. As a result of the current COVID-19 guidelines in the area where this research was done there was no direct contact conducted throughout this study's completion. Contact with participants and all those involved in the study approval process was done using email and surveys were sent out digitally.

Research Methodology

Elements of both qualitative and quantitative research were used to complete this study. Qualitative research methodology was used in order to gather thoughts and understandings conveyed by the participants in nine of the questions asked in the survey, using this method best represents their answers in the proper context. There are, however, eight questions in the survey that required answers in the form of multiple-choice selections, therefore, a quantitative research

methodology was used to tabulate, analyze, and interpret the data. Using both qualitative and quantitative methods of research strengthens the validity of the study. By using both methods this study provides well-rounded results with a focus on the larger picture of what is happening in the classroom when teaching daily living skills to middle school students with mild disabilities.

The survey used in this research was designed to be something that teachers would be able to easily and quickly respond to while still give answers that benefits this research. The questions asked in the survey are all questions that led to answers to the original research questions posed in this research. By asking teachers to respond to the survey the researcher found answers to the following research questions. 1.) What are the essential daily living skills that need to be taught to students with mild disabilities to prepare them for high school? 2.) What evidence-based practices are commonly used to teach daily living skills to students with mild disabilities? 3.) Do teachers find current evidence-based practices for teaching daily living skills effective? With teachers responses to the survey, it was possible to develop and handbook for teaching daily living skills to middle school students with mild disabilities.

Research Design

This survey was separated into two sections, the first asked questions to ascertain demographic and the second section contained the needs assessment survey questions which further this research. In the first section of questions, participant demographics were established from the teachers who chose to participate. These questions asked about the teacher's gender, their time spent teaching, grade levels taught, and what type of education they have. Additionally, this section questioned whether the teacher had any special education training or

schooling to further their teaching. See Appendix A for a copy of the needs-assessment survey questions.

The first question of the needs assessment survey simply asked the teacher if he or she incorporates the teaching of daily living skills into their lessons. Moving on, the second question was open-ended to gauge the teacher's knowledge on daily living skills and how they relate to students who have mild disabilities. The next two questions asked the teacher about what daily living skills they teach in their classrooms and what skills the teachers believe students should be taught at the middle school level. Questions five and six were used to determine what methods are commonly being used in the classroom to teach these skills, with question six specifically focusing on technology. The final open-ended question of the survey asked the participant to share any additional information about things they wish they could do for their students, in terms of helping them or teaching them more daily living skills, before they leave the teacher's classroom for the last time.

For the last five questions of the survey, Likert scale answering methods were used to discover whether teachers felt they have adequate access to teaching materials or know how to gain access to them. These last few questions also addressed teacher's confidence in their ability to teach daily living skills and if they believe their students will be prepared for life after middle school. There was also a question asking teachers if they feel they are able to identify the daily living skills that their students need help with or need to be taught.

Participants and Setting

Participants of this study were middle school general and special education teachers. There were 36 teachers that were contacted to participate in the survey. The teachers who chose to participate in the survey were all middle school teachers who interact with 6th-8th grade

students on a daily basis. Of the teachers who chose to participate in the survey, 10 (47.62%) were male and 11 (53.38%) were female, giving almost equal representation from each gender. The average amount of years spent teaching for the 21 participants is 18.14 years, with the least amount of years teaching at 5 years and the most at 32 years of teaching experience. The level of education that the participants hold includes 9 teachers with master's degrees and 12 with bachelor's degrees, additionally, of the 21 participants there were 8 that stated they did have additional special education training or schooling.

The middle school where this research was completed serves the needs of approximately 625 middle school students, of these students about 92% are Caucasian. Students at this school are divided equally at 50% female and 50% male. About 42% of students at this school qualify for free and reduced lunch and are considered to come from low-income households.

Data Sources

Information was attained by requesting middle school teachers to response to a survey. The survey asked teachers about daily living skills and their thoughts on how these skills should be taught in the classroom especially when preparing students who have mild disabilities for high school and life beyond. The questions used in the survey came from information found in peer reviewed scholarly articles on teaching strategies for students with disabilities.

Data Collection Procedures

Participants were recruited through and email requesting them to respond to a survey about daily living skills that need to be taught to middle school students before they enter high school. This email was sent to the participants by the school's principal in order to avoid any sense of potential coercion if it had been sent directly to the participants by the researcher. The

survey consists of Likert scale questions, multiple choice questions, and short answer questions. There are no questions asking for information that would potentially identify the teacher or any students. This survey was made available to the teachers by clicking on a link provided in the recruitment email, and all surveys were conducted anonymously. As the surveys were completed all responses were secured in the Qualtrics database, which was only accessible by the researcher and the principal investigator. When the allotted time to complete the survey had passed all information gained from the participants was saved in a password protected digital file that only the researcher and principal investigator were able to access. These steps were taken in order to ensure that all participant responses were kept confidential and secure.

Data Analysis

Data analysis occurred once the given amount of time to respond to the survey had passed. The survey questions were then divided into two sections: questions analyzed using quantitative methods and questions that were analyzed using qualitative research methods. From there the results were entered into charts or graphs to show evidence. Survey questions which required a written response were then compared to each other to identify commonalities and outliers. Once all surveys had been completed, responses for each question were grouped together to identify methods for teaching daily living skills, how teachers understand daily living skills, and what daily living skills need to be taught to middle school students.

Description of Special Project

Over the years there have been other manuals, handbooks, or other teaching resources that have been created to teach daily living skills or simply teaching students with mild disabilities. However, there seems to be a gap that this study aims to fill by finding the skills that

middle school students with mild disabilities should be taught during school and what methods seem to work the best to teach these skills to the students. Other similar resources that were discovered were not meant for this population based on the age or disability that is the focus of this current research.

With results from the survey and previous research into this subject a handbook was created that can be utilized by any teacher to assist with the teaching of daily living skills in the middle school setting. The handbook can be used by special education teachers to ensure that their students are able to perform all necessary daily living skills before they move on to high school but can also be adapted for use with other grade levels and students who do not have disabilities but still need the additional support with learning daily life skills. By providing a checklist of general daily living skills that should be taught and attained by the students during their middle school years, teachers will be better able to ascertain their student's abilities and where they need more assistance. This handbook, and it's checklist, should be used throughout the student's entire middle school education and should also prove useful when the student is transitioning into high school to ensure all needs are being met once the transition has been made for better continuity of care.

Format of Special Project

This handbook for teachers was created for the special project was made for middle school special education teachers who often teach daily living skills to their students and help prepare them for their high school education. The handbook includes evidence-based strategies for teaching daily living skills as well as recommendations of what skills should be taught to the students during their middle school education. This handbook should be used with middle school students with mild disabilities but can be adapted to any skill level, so that all students are

prepared for high school. In addition, this handbook may also be adapted for students in other age groups depending on their skill development.

Timeline of Special Project

Recruitment emails were sent out to survey participants at the end of November 2020 with the request that all participants who chose to complete the survey finish before the middle of December 2020. Once the initial recruitment email containing the survey was sent out the participants had two weeks to respond, a reminder to complete the survey was sent out after one week. After the allotted time to complete the survey past the survey was closed, the information was analyzed by the researcher, and a handbook created for teachers. Once all the surveys were completed and organized the data was analyzed at the end of January 2021. From the findings of the data the handbook was created and drafted in March 2021.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS OF NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Introduction

A needs assessment survey was necessary for this research to gauge current teacher's thoughts and ideas on teaching daily living skills to middle school students with mild disabilities. This needs assessment survey had a return rate of 44% from the 36 teachers it was sent out to. The questions asked in the survey came from information gained throughout the literature review process of this research. By asking current teachers to participate in the needs assessment survey the goal was to ascertain the skills to be taught during middle school, the best methods for teaching these skills, and if the methods for teaching daily living skills to students with mild disabilities effective. The responses to the survey also provided the foundations for a teacher handbook created during this project. This project and handbook will offer teachers, both general education and special education, a handbook to teaching daily living skills to their students. A complete transcript of the participants' responses can be found in appendix B.

Needs Assessment Survey

The first five questions that are asked in the needs assessment survey were used to gather demographic information on the teachers who chose to participate in the survey. Demographics that needed to be established for the needs assessment survey are gender, number of years spent teaching, level of education attained, grade levels taught, and whether they had additional schooling in special education. These questions were important to this research in order to identify if there were correlations between the participant's demographics and their thoughts on teaching daily living skills.

The next eight questions were asked to really get an understanding of how teachers perceive daily living skills. Participants answered whether that teach daily living skills and how they define daily living skills, to understand the teachers' knowledge on this subject. Teachers were also asked which skills they teach within their classroom, and also what skills they believe are most important to teach during the middle school years. In this section of the survey the participants identified what type of teaching methods they have used to teach daily living skills in their classroom and if they use any specific type of technology to help teach these skills. The last of these eight questions gave the participant a chance to share anything additional they wish they could do or provide to their students before they move on to high school.

In the final five questions that were included in the survey teachers were asked to rate whether they agree or disagree with several statements regarding teaching daily living skills. These statements aimed to gauge if teachers feel they are able to identify skills to teach, have access to appropriate teaching materials, have been appropriately trained, believe their students will succeed, and if they think their methods of teaching daily living skills are successful. Participants gave information about whether teachers are prepared to teach daily living skills and feel that the methods they use to teach are effective.

In order to group the responses to the survey into themes the original research questions were used to develop the categories. The section on daily living skills in the classroom came from the questions in the survey that were used to find the answer to the research question: What are the essential daily living skills that need to be taught to students with mild disabilities to prepare them for high school? The section on methods for teaching daily living skills in the classroom was created from the survey questions meant to find the answer to the research question: What evidence-based practices are commonly used to teach daily living skills to

students with mild disabilities? Grouping the survey results into these categories, shows that the survey was able to answer the research questions that guided this special project.

Demographic Information

This needs assessment survey was sent out to 36 teachers and 21 returned surveys were completed within the first two days that the link to the survey had been made available to the participants. Of the teachers who chose to participate in the survey, 10 (47.62%) were male and 11 (53.38%) were female, giving almost equal representation from each gender.

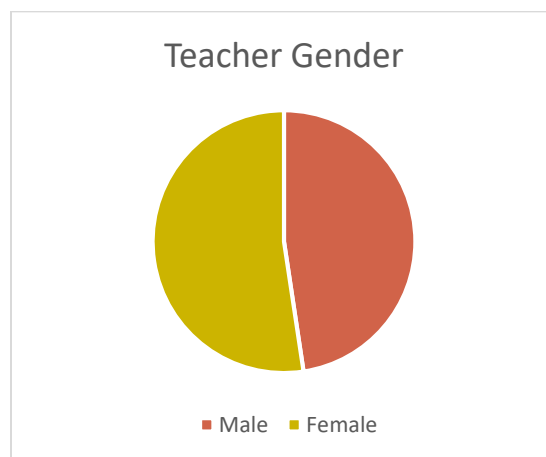


Figure 1: *Answers to Demographic Question 1 of the Needs Assessment Survey*

The average amount of years spent teaching for the 21 participants is 18.14 years, with the least amount of years teaching at 5 years and the most at 32 years of teaching experience. By the survey participants having an average of 18.14 years teaching it validates the responses because these teachers have had multiple years of experience teaching skills to their students, giving them the knowledge about methods that work for teaching and skills they see their students needing to be taught during their middle school years.

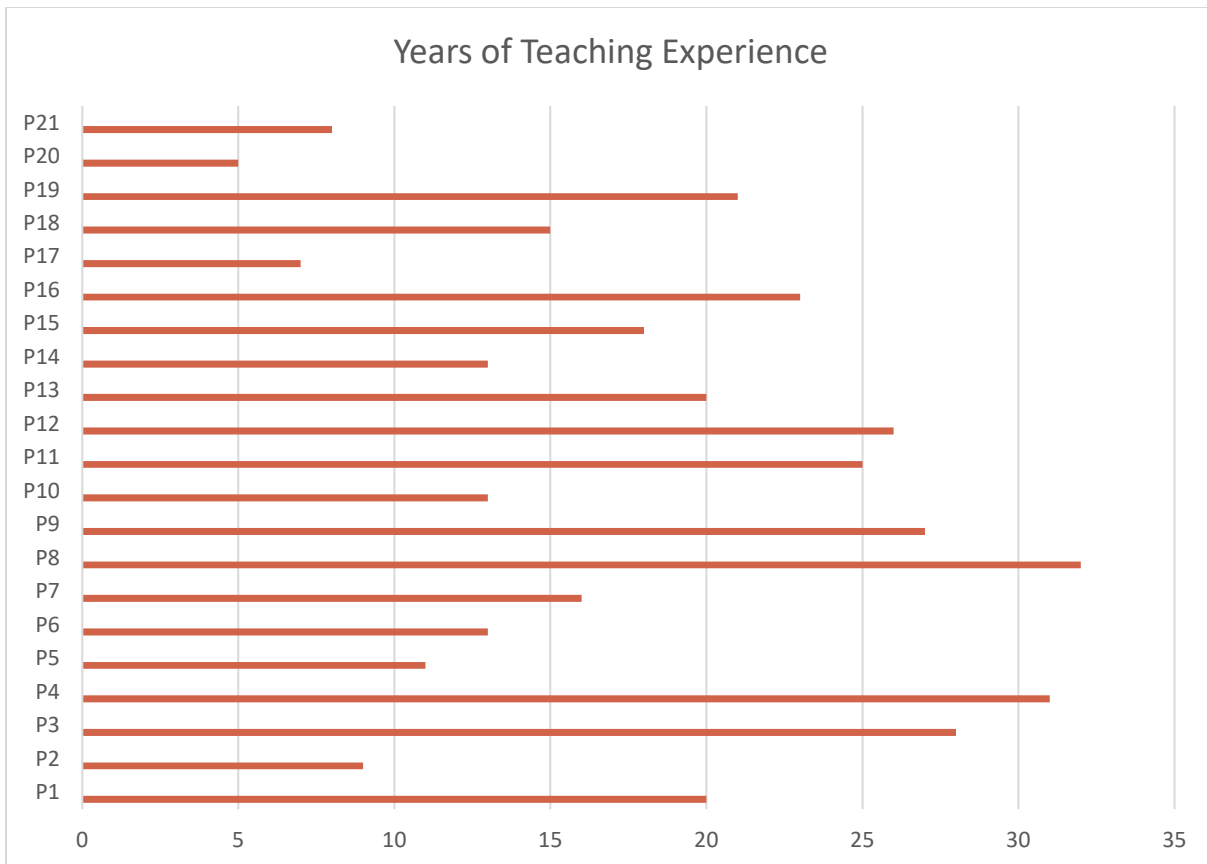


Figure 2: *Answers to Demographics Question 2 from the Needs Assessment Survey*

The participants' level of education includes 9 teachers with master's degrees and 12 with bachelor's degrees. Additionally, of the 21 participants, 8 of them that stated they did have additional special education training or schooling. The school that the participants teach at, enroll students in grades 6-8, and the teachers reported that 29.79% teach sixth grade students, 36.17% teach seventh grade students, and 34.04% teach eighth grade students. These results show that the teachers who chose to participate have experience teaching various grade levels.

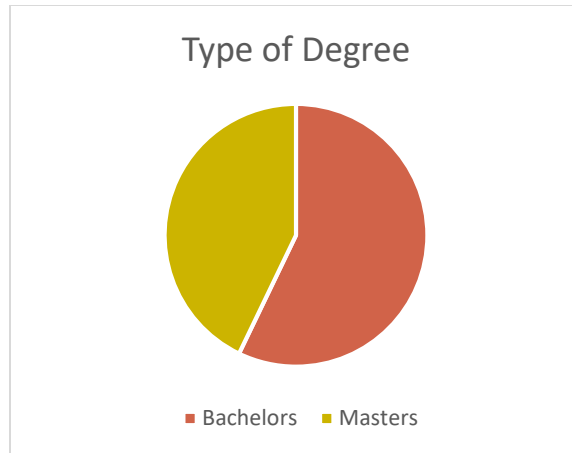


Figure 3: *Answers to Demographics Question 4 from the Needs Assessment Survey*

Daily Living Skills in the Classroom

Six of the participants did not continue to answer the questions after they responded to the demographic questions, leaving 15 participants for the remainder of the survey. When asked “Do you teach or incorporate daily living skills in your classroom?” 11 (68.75%) participants shared that they do teach these skills. The participants were also asked “How would you define daily living skills for students with mild disabilities?” Most participants defined daily living skills as the skills that all people need to engage in day to day activities and to function appropriately in society. There was one response the indicated that the skills are ones used only to function around the home. A few participants defined daily living skills as skills needed in order to take care of oneself such as grooming skills. One notable response defined daily living skills for students with mild disabilities as skills that we (teachers) take for granted and assume everyone knows how to do. These responses show that a majority of teachers do understand what daily living skills are and what they mean to students with mild disabilities.

The participants were asked “What daily living skills do you teach within your classroom?” providing a list of daily living skills that are often teach in classrooms. Even though

in a previous question the teachers were asked if they teach daily living skills in the classroom and five teachers stated that that they did not, when answering this question only three teachers stated that they did not teach any daily living skills in their classroom. They were then asked, “What daily living skills do students with mild disabilities need to learn during middle school?” These questions gave a large list of daily living skills that are being taught in classroom and they should be taught in classrooms. The responses for this question are outlined below in Table 1.

<i>Daily Living Skill identified by survey participant</i>	<i># of participants who currently teach this skill in their classroom</i>	<i># of participants who believe this skill should be taught to the target population</i>
<i>Communication/Social</i>	6	5
<i>Following Directions</i>	2	-
<i>General Hygiene</i>	1	7
<i>Goal Setting</i>	2	1
<i>Growth Mindset</i>	1	-
<i>Job/Work</i>	-	1
<i>Organization</i>	3	2
<i>Personal Finance</i>	3	5
<i>Planning</i>	1	4
<i>Preparing Meals</i>	-	4
<i>Problem Solving</i>	3	1
<i>Recreational</i>	-	1
<i>Responsibility</i>	1	1
<i>Safety</i>	1	2
<i>Self-Advocacy</i>	-	3
<i>Teamwork</i>	8	5
<i>Time Management</i>	2	1
<i>Using Technology</i>	2	-

Table 1: *Outline of Teacher Responses to Questions 8 and 9 of the Needs Assessment Survey*

When the participants were given the chance to share their thoughts on what else they wish they could do for their students before they move on to high school, nine teachers offered their thoughts and opinions. The participants were asked, “Is there anything else you wish you could do for your students, in terms of teaching daily living skills, before they move on to high

school?” Several responses to this question indicate that teachers wished they could teach their students more but they often do not have enough time in the class period or the school year in order to teach other skills. Other responses show that teachers wish there would be more parent involvement and support to help the students learn materials and skills. Teachers wish that there were ways to teach their students to be self-reliant and share with them methods for finding proper assistance when needed later on in life. It is also noted that the teaching of job skills needs to be started sooner than high school due to the fact that high school involves taking many other classes and places other demands on students.

One participant responded to this question with several thoughts and opinions to answer this question:

Bring back home economics, small engines, and hands-on classes. The curriculum is filled with paperwork, writing, and reading. We have gone too far one way. The current classes are leaving out the students' interests, talents, and fun. We need to be able to teach students to be functional in all areas of their life. All students need to have classes that are rewarding to them. In life, many people are successful without all of this bookwork. Because there is so much reading and writing, the students are losing interest, liking school less, and struggling to find classes that they really like. We are losing kids before they even get to high school. All schools need to be a place where all students can experience success. Pushing all students onto a common curriculum with high standards with deeper levels of understanding, is not best for all. Why are we ignoring the research on cognitive development. These students are developing at different rates, now more than ever, due to many life experiences and natural growth. We can still have high

expectations for all with a curriculum that allows for flexibility of development. This one size fits all curriculum is not working.

This response indicates that there are more issues with what is being taught to students than just the daily living skills that are the focus of this current research. The thought from this participant does share similar ideas with what has been said in previous research about what should be taught to students in school. The participant quoted above has 25 years of experience teaching and has a master's degree. With such experience and education level it is likely that he has had a large amount of experience and knows how students performed in school when it was more common to have home economics, engine classes, and other hand-on classes that were mentioned. This response shows that students with mild disabilities are not the only students that need to be taught daily living skills during their middle school years. Having a disability should also not necessarily mean that the student should not be allowed to enjoy their coursework or gain additional skills from their classes that they will use throughout the rest of their lives.

At the end of the survey teachers' responses to the question "I am able to identify what daily living skills need to be taught" showed that a majority of teachers were able to identify these skills. 27% of teachers stated they strongly agree and 53% stated that they somewhat agree. However, there were two participants (13%) who neither agreed nor disagreed that they knew what skills to teach and one teacher stated they were not certain on what skills to be taught. See Figure 4, for the responses to the statements: "I have access to all the materials I need in order to teach daily living skills" and "I have been appropriately trained to teach daily living skills or know how to find more information". No teacher chose 'Strongly agree' for both the statements.

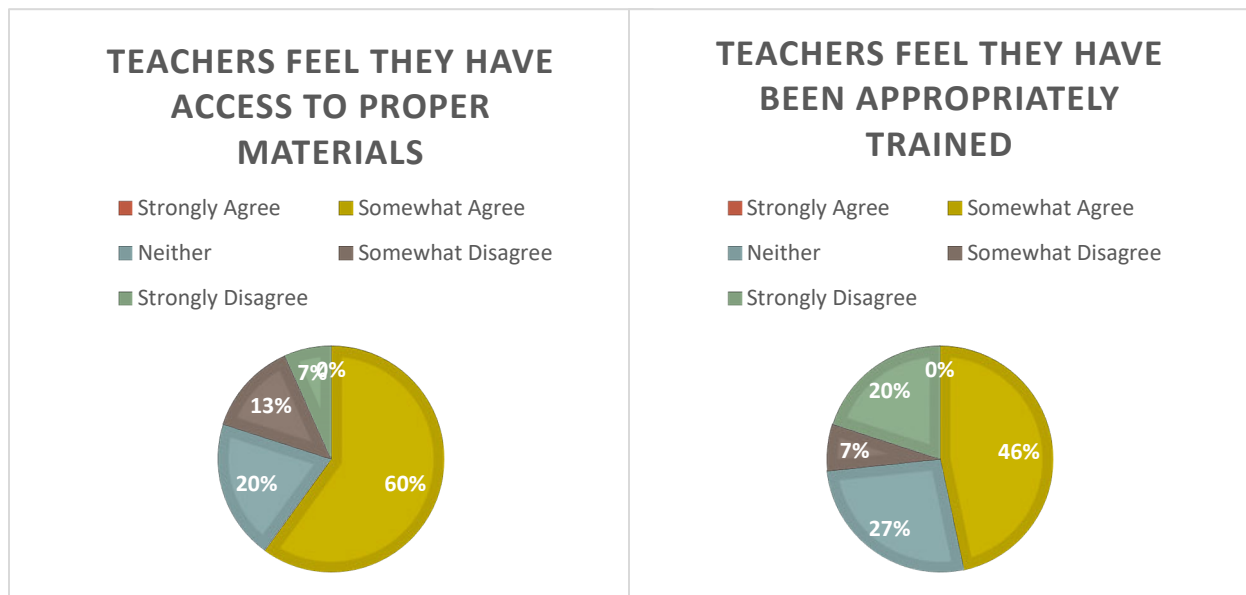


Figure 4: Responses to Rating Questions 14 And 15 from The Needs Assessment Survey

From the information gained through the questions about daily living skills in the classroom, it is evident that teachers do have a good understanding of what daily living skills are. It is important to note the discrepancies between the skills that are currently being taught in the classroom and the skills that teachers think should be taught in the classroom. This discrepancy is most likely due to the lack of time and resources available to include teaching these skills during class time. Teachers do think they are able to identify what skills to teach but do not always feel they have been appropriately trained or have access to the proper materials. It is a great thing to know what to teach but if the teacher does not feel comfortable to teach these skills based on their training or available materials it does not benefit the student.

Methods for Teaching Daily Living Skills

Common evidence-based strategies for teaching daily living skills to students with mild disabilities were provided in the needs-assessment survey with instructions for the participants to indicate which strategies the teachers are using in their classrooms. Teachers were asked to “Check all evidence-based practices used in your classroom to support teaching daily living skills” and the responses to this question are displayed in Figure 5. One of the participants who stated that they use other strategies shared that they often teach through music, but the participant did not go into further detail about the type of music or how they use the music. Two participants, who also stated that they do not teach daily living skills in their classroom, did not respond to this question. Additionally, the teachers were also asked whether they use technology to teach daily living skills, and 40% of the participants stated that they did use technology to teach these skills. When asked to describe the technology, those who did use it stated that they use videos, computer work, online collaboration documents, and online agendas.

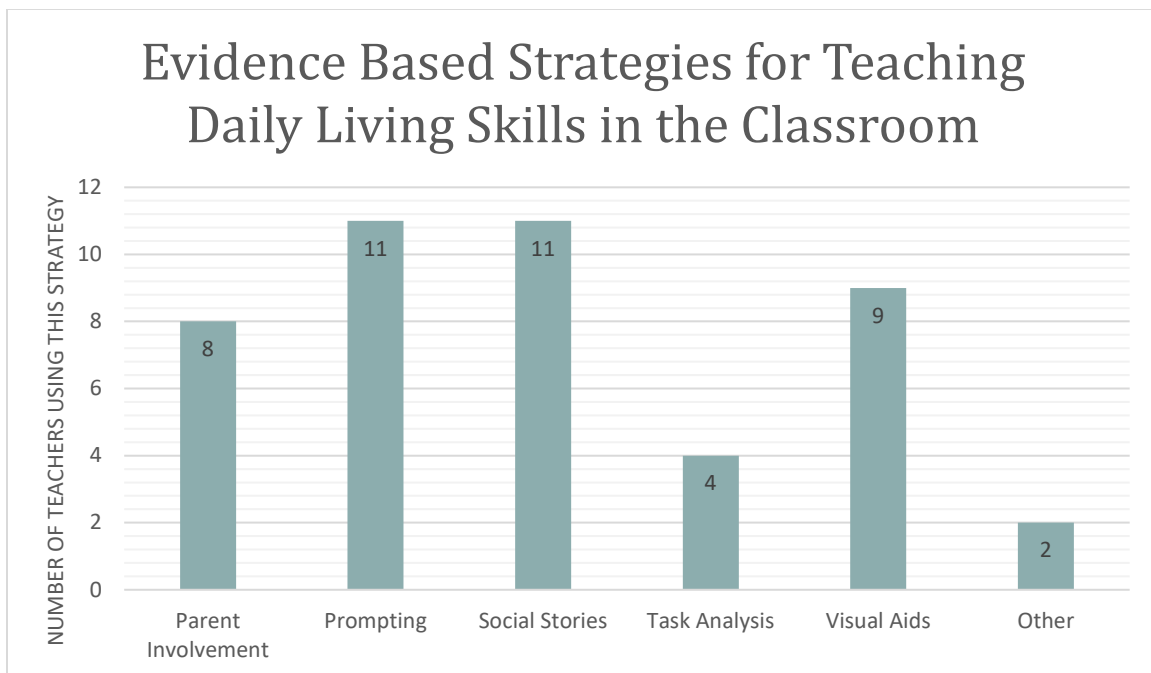


Figure 5: *Answers to Question 10 from the Needs Assessment Survey*

When asked to use a rating scale to respond to the statement: “I am confident that I have taught my students everything that they need in order to succeed in life after they move on from my class” 47% stated that they neither agree nor disagree with the statement. There was one teacher who did respond that they somewhat disagree that they are confident in what they are teaching to their students. 47% of the teachers who completed this survey indicated that they are able to teach students to succeed in life after middle school.

Even with over half the teachers who participated in this survey stating that they disagreed or neither agreed nor disagreed to the statement about their confidence in teaching their students to succeed in their future lives, 86.66% of teachers later stated that they believe their methods of teaching are successful. Eleven teachers (73%) stated that they somewhat agree that their methods of teaching daily living skills are successful, and two teachers (13%) responded that they strongly agree with this statement. Two teachers (13%) that responded that they neither agree nor disagree to the statement.

With these answers, the probable conclusion is that teachers believe their teaching strategies to be successful but do not necessarily think they are able to teach their students all of the skills they need for them to succeed in life after they move on from the middle school setting.

Summary of Results

These results show that most teachers who chose to participate do have a good understanding of what daily living skills are and that the methods they use to teach them are seen as successful. It appears that the item that is lacking is the time to teach daily living skills in the classroom, or they may not have access to simple activities that can be easily and quickly taught alongside their other daily lessons in the classroom. The participants did provide many daily living skills that they teach in their classroom, but the skills they do currently teach and the skills

they believe should be taught to middle school students with mild disabilities are not the same skills. This means that the students who may go to some of these general education classrooms are not being taught skills that they will actually need in order to participate and function independently or efficiently in the society.

While six participants did stop taking the survey after the first section, with the remaining 16 participants, it still gives a 44% response rate to the entire survey. With several open-ended questions included in the survey there were times for the teachers to provide more details about their thoughts and understandings about teaching daily living skills to middle school students with mild disabilities.

CHAPTER 5. HANDBOOK

Skills for Success

A guide to teaching daily living skills to middle school students with mild disabilities.

Created by Megan Grothaus

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About the Author

When I was younger, I always told people I was going to be a middle school teacher when I grew up, but for one reason or another I decided to take a different route when choosing my major for college. After receiving my undergraduate degree in Human Services in 2017 I found myself working in the field of Applied Behavior Analysis where I discovered my love for working with children who have disabilities. I always figured I would go back to school at some point to further my career but was not quite sure which direction I wanted to go. I only knew that I wanted to continue to work with children. In 2018 I finally found the pathway that I wanted to follow and started working towards a master's degree in Special Education. I came to realize that if I had gone to college for teaching right out of high school, I probably would have never discovered my passion to be a special education teacher.

I am now finishing up my first year as a middle school essential skills teacher and cannot imagine doing anything else with my life. Starting off my first year of teaching during a global pandemic has definitely not been an easy task, especially while finishing graduate school, but I really hope that now I am ready for anything that life throws in my way. With all of the ups and downs that have happened throughout my journey to teaching I feel so blessed to have an amazing support system of family, friends, teachers, co-workers, and even students by my side to encourage me and help keep me sane!

-Megan

Disclaimer

This handbook was created based off of several months' worth of research on effective methods for teaching daily living skills in the classroom. The research also includes information gained through a survey of current middle school teachers about how they incorporate daily living skills in their classrooms and lessons.

While the goal of this project was to create a resource that will make teaching daily living skills easier for special education teachers and general education teachers, this handbook may not meet the needs of every teacher or every student. When creating this book, I tried my best to use the information that I gained throughout my research to make the resource that I wish I had available when teaching daily living skills to middle school students with mild disabilities.

The activities and other teaching methods included were chosen and created with the hope that the target population would find them interesting, helpful, and engaging. Some skills included in this book may not be necessary skills to teach to certain students, or there may be other skills that your students need to be taught based on their needs.

I do hope that this book does give guidance for every user, whether they are special education teachers who frequently teach daily living skills to their students, or general education teachers just trying to better incorporate daily living skills into their lessons. This handbook is not intended to be "one size fits all" and neither should a student's education. Use the whole book, or bits and pieces of the book, or modify the resources for your needs.

Recommendations for Use

Welcome to Skills for Success! I hope you will have as much fun using this handbook as I did while creating it. When putting together the pieces and parts of this handbook I did my best to include all the ideas and information I wish I had when I first started teaching and focusing on daily living skills. My goal was to create a resource that would make the teaching process easier for the teacher and the learning process more fun for the student.

If you are looking for a resource that will help you teach the daily living skills that your students will need in order to succeed in school, at home, and in the community, then you are in the right place.

This book was created for special education teachers to use with their middle school students who have mild disabilities but can of course be adapted however you choose or need to teach students of any age or ability.

Before beginning to teach daily living skills I suggest that you use the Skills for Success Checklist to identify skills to focus your lessons on. You can, of course, simply choose a skill to work on with a student or class without completing the checklist. Depending on your teaching situation, you can use the checklist to identify skills for just one student or a whole classroom, whichever works best for you as the teacher. At different times throughout the school year it may also be beneficial to go through the checklist again with your students to keep updated information on which skills to focus on.

The skills on the checklist and included in this book are only a fraction of the skills that your students need in order to be successful in the future. As you may already know, each student needs to learn different skills and they all learn in different ways. This book does not assume that all students will learn the skills with the provided methods but hopefully it will give them a start. The teaching

methods provided in this book were identified as effective teaching strategies by other teachers (my study participants) who commonly teach daily living skills with their students.

It is intended that these daily living skills can be taught to your whole class, in small groups, or with single students. Most of these skills can be easily incorporated into your daily lesson plans or will only take a few minutes out of your lesson.

The daily living skills included in this book are divided into three categories:

- Skills for Success in School
- Skills for Success at Home
- Skills for Success in the Community

All the skills included are ones that every person needs in order to be successful. The skills and methods are geared towards middle school students with mild disabilities since these students are often the ones that may not pick up on these skills as naturally as their peers. Even though only one category is dedicated towards skills that students need for succeeding in school, it does not mean that the others do not need to be or cannot be taught in the school setting. Some of your students may not have access to learning these skills in the home and community settings, therefore, as a teacher, it may fall on you to ensure your students are able to succeed in every aspect of life.

I hope that this book gives you another helpful resource for teaching daily living skills to your students. Good luck and happy teaching!

Section 1:

Overview of Daily Living Skills

- What are Daily Living Skills?
- Who Needs Daily Living Skills?
- Why Teach Daily Living Skills?
- How to Teach Daily Living Skills?
- Daily Living Skills Checklist

What are Daily Living Skills?

Daily living skills are exactly what they sound like, they are the skills that all people need in order to function successfully in life and society. Stable (2013) explains daily living skills as activities that are completed at home, work, school, and various other settings. These are skills that many people take for granted, but without them no one would know how to or be able to live independently or succeed in life. People who have never worked with others who have disabilities most likely have not even taken a moment to ponder about this topic. Daily living skills are skills that are generally learned just from being exposed to these skills from a young age and picked up progressively as people become more and more independent.

The phrase daily living skills covers a wide range of skills that are needed throughout life. Skills included are the basics like bathing and using the bathroom, but also extend to preparing food and understanding personal finance.

Who Needs Daily Living Skills?

Everyone needs these skills to be independent and successful in life. Most students are learning these skills on their own or are being taught in their homes by their parents, but there are some students that are not able to learn these extremely essential skills in this way. Students who have disabilities are often not given the same chance to learn daily living skills as their peers. These students will need more structured and focused teaching to obtain these skills.

The teaching of daily living skills to students who need them should begin at a young age and will likely continue into as they get older based on their needs. Without being taught daily living skills, students who lack them will most likely be dependent on parents or other aids in the community to help them succeed. As teachers, we hope that all students are able to succeed in life regardless of their ability, therefore, there needs to be a focus on these skills throughout their schooling.

For the purpose of this book the group that is focused on are middle school students with mild disabilities. Middle school is such an important time in every students' life, it is the time that all students are changing and discovering new aspects of life, and their time in middle school even more difficult if they lack these daily living skills.

Why Teach Daily Living Skills?

As stated earlier, daily living skills are skills that all people need but all people may not be able to learn them as easily as others. Students, especially those with mild disabilities, may not always be in the correct environment in order to learn these skills. Most students are learning daily living skills without even noticing that they are or how important these skills are for their success. Students with disabilities are more likely to need extra support when learning to be independent in their daily living skills.

For special education teachers, teaching daily living skills is something that is probably done on a regular basis. It can be difficult to find the right strategy for teaching these skills or discovering which skills are the most important to teach their students. By ensuring to teach students the daily living skills teachers are giving their students a better chance at being independent and successful later on in life.

General education teachers do not always have the advantage of knowing which skills their students need to learn. These teachers work with many students throughout a school year and may not have the time to fully understand the students' needs outside of the curriculum they are mandated to teach. It is very important for these teachers to incorporate daily living skills into their lessons. By incorporating a daily living skill into the lesson for the day it may intrigue students more and will definitely give them more exposure to the skills they will be using all through their lives.

How to Teach Daily Living Skills?

There are many methods and strategies out there recommended for teaching daily living skills. Once again, it needs to be said, each teacher and each student are different, what works for some may not work for others and no two students are alike. Each teacher will also have their own preferred methods of teaching, which may be different from the methods provided later throughout this book. It is important to understand how the students learn best and do everything possible to ensure that multiple methods for teaching are used so that all students have a chance to learn every daily living skill that they will need.

Common methods for teaching daily living skills include:

- Technology and applications
- Peer mentoring
- Providing visual aids
- Social stories
- Task analysis
- Parent involvement

In this book the teaching strategies that will be focused on are the ones that do not include the use of technology. There has already been so much research done with technology and daily living skills but very little when technology is not an option for teaching these skills.

Depending on the type of class or students that are being taught these skills may be taught to a whole class at a time, to small groups, or to individual students. If teaching to a whole class some students may not truly be able to grasp the skill being taught, but this may be the only way for general education teachers to incorporate daily living skills into their lessons. For special education teachers who are most likely working more with the students who have mild

disabilities it may be more possible to teach these skills in smaller more individualized settings. By teaching in a smaller group or individually the teacher will be able to get a better understanding of what daily living skills each student needs to learn and how they are progressing on skills they are working on.

Daily Living Skills Checklist

In the checklist included bellow are many daily living skills that have been identified by current teachers as important skills that every student needs for success. These skills are just a fraction of the skills that students will need, and these are just the ones that have been identified as skills to ensure middle school students are able to complete. This checklist will give teachers a baseline of known skills for their students and leave the teacher with a list of skills that may need to be focused on throughout the school year.

It would be a good idea to use this checklist at the beginning of the school year to identify what skills to touch base on throughout the year. Use this checklist as often as needed to assess what skills should be taught.

(This following checklist was created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey the author conducted regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Daily Living Skills Checklist

Class/Student: _____ Date: _____

Skills for Success in School

- ☐ **Teamwork-** I can work with a group of students to complete schoolwork or project
- ☐ **Goal setting-** I can set goals for my day, week, and future
- ☐ **Using technology-** I can successfully use technology needed to complete schoolwork
- ☐ **Time management-** I can get schoolwork done on time and I understand how long activities will take to complete
- ☐ **Organization-** I can keep my belongings organized so that I can find things when I need them
- ☐ **Communication-** I can effectively communicate with others to express my thoughts and feelings, I am also able to ask for help when I need it
- ☐ **Growth mindset-** I can stay positive even when things are not going my way and I am struggling
- ☐ **Following directions-** I can follow directions the first time they are placed and do not often need them repeated

Skills for Success at Home

- ☐ **Hygiene-** I know when it is time to shower, brush teeth, and wear deodorant
- ☐ **Preparing food-** I am able to make myself snacks and simple meals when I am hungry
- ☐ **Shopping-** I can make lists of items that I need and know how to find them and pay for them

- ☐ **Recreation-** I know how to spend my down time, I have hobbies and activities that I like to do
- ☐ **Housekeeping-** I can help keep the house clean, I can do dishes, clean table, put items where they belong, keep my room clean, sweep floors, etc.
- ☐ **Grooming-** I know when I need to get my hair cut and can keep my nails trimmed

Skills for Success in the Community

- ☐ **Personal finance-** I can count money, understand costs, budget money, and save
- ☐ **Problem solving-** I can easily find solutions to my problems or know where to go for help
- ☐ **Safety-** I know my personal information (address and phone numbers), I know what to do when there are emergencies and how to follow the rules of the community I live in
- ☐ **Planning-** I can plan out my day and future events
- ☐ **Responsibility-** I know what things I am responsible for and understand consequences for my actions
- ☐ **Self-advocacy-** I am able to make sure I get the things and help I need in order to succeed
- ☐ **Job skills-** I can make a resume, know how to find jobs, and know how to interview for jobs

Notes:

Section 2:

Skills for Success in School

- Teamwork
- Goal setting
- Using technology
- Time management
- Growth mindset

Teamwork

"Teamwork makes the dream work," this is a phrase originally said by John Maxwell that is now said very often in life and it is extremely true. All students need to have the ability to work as a team even if they generally prefer to work alone. Teamwork is also a skill that can be transferred to almost anything the student ends up doing in their life. Being able to work with others is something that is just part of life and there is really no way of getting around it.

Teamwork can be very difficult to teach especially when students are not willing to work with others. You most likely will not be able to teach a student about teamwork by giving them a lecture and making them take notes while learning about it in the classroom. Teamwork should be taught in the natural environment. Give you students group projects and make sure that each person in the group has a specific job. The project should be one that cannot be completed without working with the other group members.

Lets Get Started...

Before beginning a group project be sure to talk to your students about the benefits of working in a group:

- It will create less work for an individual student
- Students get to be social in the classroom
- When working with others you will have more fun than by yourself
- Students may be able to build lasting relationships with other students who they may not have known well before

Students who typically struggle more in the group environment may need additional supports to help them understand the reasons for needing to work in a group. One option for teaching teamwork is by using a social story, a teaching tool created by Carol Gray, to find out more information on social stories visit <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/>. Try using a social story like the one included

below to help your students better understand why teamwork is an important skill that they will need all throughout their life. If after having a conversation about teamwork and using the social story the student is still facing difficulties understanding this skill try making the teamwork more fun for the students. Use games and puzzles that will force the students to work together while having fun.

(This following social story was created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Interactive Social Story for Teamwork:
Read the following paragraph with your student(s) then decide how the story will continue. Continue reading the next part of the story based on how the student(s) choose.
Today is the day we start our group project in science class. I have been dreading this day since the project was announced last week, I generally do not like to work in groups because I don't always know what to say or feel like even in a group setting the others do not let me participate. The teacher just told the class that we all have to work in groups, and we do not even get to choose which group we are a part of. Before dividing into out project groups, we reviewed the reasons why teamwork is so important and I guess they do make sense and working in a group really shouldn't be that difficult, I just always feel so uncomfortable. The teacher said that if we do not pull our own weight with a group, we will be forced to complete the whole project on our own. Maybe I should just not do any work with whatever group I get put with so that I can just complete the project on my own, then I won't have to deal with working in the group.

What does the student choose to do?		
Work with the group to complete the project	OR	Not do any work with the group and complete project alone
<p>I decided to work with the group to complete the project. I figured it would make my life easier because it would mean less work for me. I was really nervous when I first joined my group because I did not know the other students very well and was concerned that they would not really let me participate. One of the first things that happened once we got going on the project was everyone sharing their thoughts on what we should do for the project. I was really surprised that they let me give my opinion, normally no one wants to hear from me. We actually ended up using a few of my ideas to complete the project. As a group we decided who would do which parts of the project and made sure we all understood what we needed to do for the day. The next school day every group member had completed their part of the project and we were able to put all of our pieces together. We ended up finishing a day early so we spent the next day talking and getting to know each other. I even think I made a new friend.</p>		<p>When the teacher put me in a group I chose to just sit in the back and do nothing. At one point one of the students must have said something to the teacher because at the end of class she came up to me and told me that due to my lack of effort in the group I would have to complete the project on my own. Since I had not done anything during the science class, I really needed to make sure I got started on it when I got home after school. At home I realized that there were three fairly large parts to this project and that I had to have it all done two days later. I stayed up really late that first night because I could not decide what to do for each part of the project. The next day in class while other groups were putting their individual parts together, I still had two parts to finish without any help. That night I stayed up late again because the project was due the next day and I would not have much time to work on in during class. I was able to finish the project in time, but I definitely did not do the best. It turns out I missed a rather important step that made me lose a lot of points for my grade. I went home that day and went straight to bed.</p>

Don't Forget...

Teamwork is not something that comes easily to all students but hopefully by giving them examples of how teamwork can really make completing a project easier and will give the students a better understanding of its importance.

Depending on the students you are working with they may also need coaching on how to behave socially when working in a group. It may be necessary to provide guidelines for the student on how to make sure they are truly doing their part in the group. You could provide the following steps to working in a group as part of the directions for an assignment or post them on the board so that the students have a visual.

(The following steps were created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Steps students should complete when working in a group:

1. Introduce yourself and get the names of all group members if you do not already know each other
2. Make sure that everyone understands the end goal of the project
3. Each member should have a chance to share their thoughts and opinions on what should be done to complete the project
4. Decide on what the final product will look like, taking everyone's thoughts and incorporating them
5. Choose who will do what and when their part needs to be completed
6. Make sure all group members know how to contact each other if there are problems

These guidelines are just a sample of what may be presented to the class when working on a group project. You could definitely change the rules depending on the project and the students. Hopefully by giving your students these supports when working on an assignment that requires teamwork the students will do better when working with a group and choose to work in groups when there is an option to do so.

Goal Setting

All students should be able to set goals for themselves. When thinking about setting goals adults know that everyone sets little goals for themselves every day, sometimes not even knowing that they are setting them. We tell ourselves today I will go grocery shopping or today I will finish the book I have been reading, and these little goals that we probably do not even think of as being goals for our day. When teaching a student to set goals, start with the little things to get an idea of what it means to set a goal.

There can be a variety of goals. Students may want to set academic goals or goals that will allow them to do something they enjoy. They may want to be the best player on their sports team, so make that a goal, walk through the steps towards achieving the goal. As a teacher you need to make sure that your students are able to set goals that they will be able to achieve. Do not let them set a goal that will not be possible to meet, but still keep in mind that students need to be able to dream.

Let's Get Started...

When first introducing goal setting to the students have them start with a simple goal that they should be able to accomplish in that same day. Maybe they have a goal to be on time to all of their classes that day or complete all their schoolwork at school instead of having to take work home. Talk with them about the steps that they will have to take throughout the day in order to make achieving the goal a possibility.

Once students have grasped the concept of setting small goals that can be completed within the day have them work on setting goals for the week, month, and school year. A student may desire to be on the school's honor roll for the year. If this is the case, make sure they understand what sort of things the

student will need to make sure they are doing on a daily basis so that this may be a possibility.

Along with setting goals it may also be necessary to discuss what to do if they are not able to meet the goal that they set. Sometimes goals may be extended or modified to make sure the student still has a chance to achieve the goal. If the student does not meet the goal, they may need emotional support to move on and keep going. Make these times a learning experience and discover the reasons why the goal was not met. Was there enough time? Did the student really commit to the goal? Were there other obstacles that interfered with the goal?

The following chart gives an example of how to have students set their goals and keep them organized. Have students complete something similar and keep it with them to help keep them on track for achieving their goals. The following chart includes goals for the day, week, and month but could easily be changed to include more long-term goals if the student is ready to take on the challenge. Make sure you check over what the student has set as goals so that you are aware of them and can help make sure they are meeting their goals.

(The following student goal organizer was created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

My goals	Steps to take the achieve my goals
My goal for the day: I will make it on time to all of my classes today.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Know when classes start and end• Know what materials I need to bring to each class• Keep an eye on the time during passing period• Walk straight to class
My goal for the week: I will turn in all my assignments on time this week.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Know when assignments are due• Write down assignments in my agenda• Set aside time to work on assignments

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on assignments while I am at school • Make sure I know everything that needs to be done to complete each assignment
My goal for the month: I will keep my bedroom clean this month.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Put laundry where it belongs • Pick up room every night before going to bed • Put belongings away instead of making piles and leaving them out • Throw away trash • No eating in the bedroom

Reward Time!...

Some goals may have built in rewards that the students will get once they achieve their goal, but if they do not it is beneficial to give the student some sort of reinforcement for completing their goal. Depending on the student you may have them choose what sort of reward they should get if they are able to achieve their goals in the allotted time. Obviously, some students may need more assistance with achieving their goals than others, but once they really start working on setting their own goals and completing them it almost becomes a game and they will be so excited when they win.

Using Technology

Students will most likely be using technology throughout their whole lives. With the way that the technological world is expanding all students need to know how to use all basic kinds of technology. Most students probably have access to a computer or some type of tablet, but not every student know how to use it properly in order to be successful.

Before You Get Started...

It is important to take the time to make sure that each student know how to use whatever technology they use often. This can be a difficult task, especially if students are all using different devices. There are so many things that a person can do with a computer or tablet and teachers should not be expected to teach students how to fluently use their devices. The best that teachers can do is make sure that they are giving students the chance to understand their computers. Make using their devices part of the lesson so that students get more chances to use the device.

It seems a lot of the time schools give students a device that they are supposed to take care of and use for schooling but do not give them time to make sure they know how to use it. As adults, any time we get a new computer, tablet, or phone the first thing we do after turning it on is go through all the settings and explore. If adults do this, why shouldn't students be given time to explore and understand their devices?

There are some instances where schools offer computer classes so that the student can learn how to use their devices better, but these classes are not always available for all students, if they are even offered at all. Oftentimes, these classes are considered electives or specials and students who have mild disabilities may not even get the chance to be involved in the class due to the other classes they go to in order to support their educational needs.

Let's Get Started...

In order to help teach all students these skills use the provided list of basic technology skills to find out what your students know and what they need to know when using their devices. Once you know what skills your students need to learn it will be simple to quickly slip a skill or two into whatever lesson is being taught. Do not try to teach all the skills all at once, as that method will likely result in information overload and the students may not end up retaining what was taught. Being exposed to a few skills at a time allows the student to truly understand and not get confused.

(This following checklist was created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Basic Technology Skills Checklist for Students	
	Knows how to turn on device
	Knows how to shut down or restart device
	Knows how to adjust volume and brightness
	Knows how to open all Microsoft Office applications
	Knows how to properly save documents
	Knows how to search for an item on the computer
	Knows how to connect to internet
	Knows how to send an email
	Knows how to attach documents to an email
	Knows how to keep device updated with current software
	Knows how to look at multiple applications at the same time
	Knows how to adjust battery settings to save battery when not plugged in
	Knows how to use text to speech software
	Knows how to use speech to text software
	Knows how to find and open internet browser
	Knows how to download documents from the internet

	Knows how to print
	Knows how to search the internet
	Knows how to find specific websites
	Knows how to zoom in and out
	Knows how to identify legitimate websites
	Knows how to keep device clean
	Knows how to delete unimportant files
	Knows how to keep device charged
	Knows how to bookmark frequently used websites
	Knows login information for device and websites
	Knows how to access school's website and education platform

There are a lot of items on this list, but each has their importance. Depending on the type of devices that the students use and what they use them for they may not need all off these skills or there may be more skills that need to be added onto the list. Teaching students to be able to use their devices on their own brings them one step closer to teaching students to be more independent.

Time Management

Some adults still struggle with time management. If students were taught time management during their education, then they would be more successful with this skill as an adult. The hope is, that by making sure students learn time management skills while in middle school they will be able to use these skills in high school, college, and later on into their careers, helping them become more successful in whatever they do in life.

For some student's time management comes naturally because of the drive or focus they have to succeed. For other students you may be able to drill them again and again about managing their time better, but nothing will ever seem to work. A lot about time management has to do with the goals that the students have set for themselves. If the students are not pushing themselves to succeed, then there will be a lesser chance of success.

Regardless of students being motivated they still need to have a proper understanding of time management. Another factor that comes into play is making sure your students are able to understand priorities. A student may have a great sense of time and know how long certain tasks will take to complete, but if they do not know how to prioritize the most important activities, like completing their homework, then they will always seem to be running behind.

Let's Get Started...

When teaching time management to students first have them start creating a schedule for their day. Make sure they even include the little things because we all know the little things tend to add up. Once the students think they have completed their daily schedule have them find a partner and compare to see what things they may have forgotten, the students might be amazed at how many things we end up doing each day. If you have also noticed that the students are struggling with prioritizing their daily activities have them go through

their schedule with a highlighter and highlight everything that absolutely must be completed during the day.

While this activity may not instantly give every student the ability to manage their time, it will give them a good look at what they tend to spend their days doing and the importance of each activity. The students may start to understand that maybe the two hours they normally block out every day to play video games could be much better spent, and if they would cut that time back they would get more sleep or be able to finish all of their school work on time.

Don't Forget...

We all know that students learn their behavior from the behaviors that they observe. To make learning time management skills easier students need to have a role model to look up to who does use their time wisely. This is where parent involvement really comes into play, but unfortunately, some students may not have parents who are good role models for time management. If a student is struggling with their time management skills one of the first things to do is let the parents know and hope that they will be able to help the student learn the skill.

An example of a schedule that teachers could have their students create is provided below.

(The following example of a student's daily schedule was created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Time Management Daily Schedule

6:00 Wake up, take a shower, and brush teeth

6:20 Get dressed for school

6:30 Eat breakfast

6:45 Pack up bookbag

7:00 Wait for school bus

7:15 Arrive at school and go to class

11:15 Lunch time

2:30 Get on school bus to head home

2:45 Arrive at home and make a snack

3:00 Relax and watch TV

4:00 Work on homework

5:00 Do chores

5:20 Play video games

6:30 Eat dinner with family

7:00 Play video games

9:00 Get ready for bed

The daily schedule on the above has been created from the viewpoint of a student. The items and activities that absolutely have to be completed throughout the day have been highlighted. Some may have highlighted more item on this list. There may even be some students who highlight the video game time because to them it is an extremely important part of their day. Teachers need to help the students understand that while it may seem important to the student, it may be something that can be put off if there are more important things to do with that time. To help the students build on their time management skills they need to understand when to adjust their schedule to fit with the demands of the day.

Growth Mindset

Teaching students to have a growth mindset is basically trying to take a student with negative mindset and turn them into a student who always looks at things from a positive point of view. Carol Dweck (2016) created this concept to help change the way people think about their talents and abilities. This can be an extremely difficult to teach with certain students. Some students may be so stuck in their negative ways of thinking that one wrong step means that they are failures. It also does not help when some of these students come from backgrounds where they have been picked on and criticized for the things that they do. However, there are some students that will pick the idea of having a growth mindset very easily.

This is another skill that students are most likely to learn by watching the adults around them. If the adults that the student is around often display a growth mindset then the student is more likely to pick it up. The same way that if the adults the students interact with frequently are negative, then the students will also have a negative mindset.

Let's Get Started...

When teaching this skill to your students think of the phrases that your students often say when things are not going their way, or they are struggling to learn a new skill. Look at these phrases and figure out if they are positive or negative statements. Unless your students have already had a focus on making sure they are living with a growth mindset they are most likely going to be saying things like "I can't do this," "I am stupid," or "this is too difficult." Work with them on taking those statements and turning them into growth mindset statements.

The following are examples of the negative phrases that students may use frequently with suggestions on how to turn them into positive phrases using a growth mindset.

(The following example was created by the author based on research by Carol Dweck (2016) and teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Negative Phrase	Growth Mindset Phrase
I can't do this	I will keep trying my best
I am stupid	What am I forgetting?
This is too difficult	I don't understand this yet
I keep making mistakes	I can learn from my mistakes
I did enough	Did I do my best work?
I am just going to give up	I can try other methods

Make learning about having a growth mindset a fun classroom activity. Have students come up with the negative phrases that they know they always say when things get difficult. Then have everyone work together to come up with growth mindset options for each phrase. Turn having a growth mindset into a long-standing classroom activity. Watch your students and catch them being positive the same way you focus on catching students being good, instead of pointing out all of the bad behaviors. Reward students who stay positive during the difficult moments.

Don't Forget...

Keep reminding your students constantly about staying positive in all situations that they are in. If everyone in the students' lives are being positive they are likely to start being positive as well. As with many other of the daily living skills students will learn them by seeing their role models do these skills.

Section 3:

Skills for Success at Home

- Hygiene
- Preparing food
- Shopping
- Housekeeping

Hygiene

There is only so much that teachers can do when teaching hygiene skills to their students. This is a skill that will mostly fall on the special education teachers to work on, though there may be instances where a general education teacher might be teaching these skills, especially if it is a gym or health class. Hopefully the middle school students you are working with already have basic hygiene skills and have parents or guardians that see to their cleanliness on a daily basis.

For some students, middle school will probably be the time they are transitioning from bathing a few times a week to needing to bathe every day. This is also the time that students are discovering the need to wear deodorant all the time especially if they participate in a gym class or sports. Regardless of their age students tend to always need reminders or when they should be washing their hands. The unfortunate thing is that some students are not always aware when they smell bad and other students who do smell them may not be kind when telling them they are in need of a shower. Students may also need help understanding that there is only so much that a body spray can do to make them smell better and when they use too much spray people around them may become irritated by the overwhelming smell.

Let's Get Started...

Teaching a student about hygiene could be a very delicate topic and needs to be done in the correct way to avoid embarrassing the student. You do not want to talk to a student in front of the rest of the class and tell them that they need to be cleaner. There may also be obstacles at the child's home causing the student to be unable to stay clean. Maybe the water was turned off or they ran out of soap and do not have the money this week to buy more. These reasons for not being clean can be very difficult and heartbreaking to deal with for both the student and the teachers that know of this situation. Teachers always

hope that their students have access to everything they need but that is not always the case. Before talking to a student about their hygiene habits be sure to understand the home life.

Some students may need a set of guidelines to help them better understand when they should be completing some common hygiene skills. If your student is struggling with hygiene skills use the chart below or create your own list specific to the student and brainstorm ideas together on when and how often the hygiene skills should be completed.

(The following hygiene guide was created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Hygiene Habit	How often to be completed
Take shower or bath	Every day
Brush teeth	At least twice a day
Floss teeth	Once a day
Put on deodorant	Once a day and as needed
Wash hands	Various times throughout the day
Wear clean clothes	Every day

Don't Forget...

Depending on the student needing help with their hygiene skills this list could look different, this list just gives a starting place for additional brainstorming. Sometimes one of the hardest things to teach is when to wash hands. There is no set time throughout the day for washing their hands. There are tasks that students complete at various times throughout the day which might necessitate washing hands. Use the following list and brainstorm other ideas with your students to identify the times to wash their hands.

(This following list was created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Times to wash hands:

- After using the bathroom
- Before eating food
- After blowing nose
- After coughing into hands
- After recess/gym
- When they look dirty
- After picking their nose

An issue that many teachers may have is helping students understand that just because hand sanitizer is available does not mean it should be used all the time. In most instances it is better to wash hands than use the hand sanitizer. If you have students who would rather use sanitizer than wash their hands remove the sanitizer so they are forced to wash. For those students who constantly feel the need to have their finger in their nose, create a signal or quietly make them go wash their hands. They might get rid of this habit through repeated reminders to wash.

Use the following scenarios to start up a conversation with your students about their hygiene habits. Hopefully the students will start noticing moments like the scenarios in real life and will know how to respond.

(The following scenarios were created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Hygiene Scenarios to Start Conversations

1. You came home from a two-hour long basketball practice and really just want to relax but are all sweaty and smelly. What should you do?
 2. During recess you were playing flag football and got a little dirt on your hands, you wiped the dirt off on your pants and really don't see it on your hands anymore. What do you do?
 3. You go to the bathroom and when you go to wash your hands you find that there is no more soap. What should you do?
 4. During class you start sneezing a lot, you get up and use a tissue on your nose and hands, there is no snot on your hands from sneezing? What should you do?
 5. You go to put on your favorite shirt for school, but it was wadded up on the floor and does have an odd smell, you really want to wear the shirt to show your friends. What do you do?
-

Preparing Food

The struggle with teaching students to prepare food is that there are no opportunities during the school day to teach this skill. Occasionally there are home economics classes that the student can be a part of to learn some of the basics of preparing food, but this is not always an option. Many schools now do not even have classes where students can learn these skills. Learning how to prepare food is a skill that all students in a school need, not just the students with disabilities.

Due to the curriculum that is required to be taught in the schools teaching children how to prepare food often falls on the parents. There may be many reasons why parents do not or cannot teach their children how to prepare their own food while at home. There are some parents that simply choose to do everything for their student. In some instances, a student may have parents who are not around during mealtimes to show them how to cook. Another possibility is that the parents just do not cook and always go to restaurants or get takeout for their meals.

Whatever the reason for not being able to learn this skill at home it is still an extremely important skill that all students need to have. To teach this skill in a school it is easier to focus on the student being able to prepare their own snacks that they might eat at home. If there is no kitchen or someplace similar in your school to teach this skill that presents another challenge. There are still some food items that students may be able to learn to prepare in school without access to a kitchen which will be shared later in this section. If there is no way of being able to teach students to prepare food, it can be something that is discussed in class. Talk with your students about what types of food make good meals or snack and about the types of food they should not be eating a ton of even if they are delicious.

Let's Get Started...

Below are ideas for teaching students to prepare food in classrooms that do not have kitchen tools and classrooms that do. The ideas provided are all very simple snack items that will give students an introduction to what it is like to prepare food.

(The following list of ideas for preparing food was created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Preparing food with access to a kitchen	Preparing food without access to a kitchen
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Grilled cheese• Pancakes• Jello• Muffins• Personal Pizza• Fruit parfait• Mac and cheese• Popcorn	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Peanut butter sandwich• Cheese and crackers• Apple slices with caramel or peanut butter

However, if you are teaching students to prepare food make sure they are part of the whole process so that they will truly understand what goes into planning a meal or snack and actually making the food. When first presenting the idea of preparing a snack or meal with your students remember that this skill is being taught to them so that they are more independent. Try following this process when teaching students to prepare their own food:

(This following process was created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Preparing Food:

1. Tell the students what they will be making and have them create the ingredients list
2. Next have the students make a list of all kitchen items that will be needed to prepare the food
3. Once the students have a correct list of ingredients and kitchen items have them try to figure out the steps for making the food
4. At this point it is an option to incorporate another daily living skill by having the students use their computer or tablet to search for a recipe to follow so that they can see how correct their lists and steps were, you could also provide them with a pre-selected recipe
5. Have the students make any necessary changes to their recipe
6. When actually preparing the food make sure that it is the students who are running the show, you should just be there as support

If it is not at all possible to actually prepare food with the students while at school, another option for teaching this skill is to incorporate the steps above into a writing assignment. Have the students choose any type of food they would like to learn how to make and write about the ingredients and steps. While this skill may be one that is more difficult to incorporate into the lesson or day, it is possible, and students will learn an essential daily living skill.

Shopping

Shopping is another daily living skill that can be difficult to teach at school because it is normally a task that is completed outside of the school day. This is also another situation where the skill is very important to know how to do but often times the students' parents are the ones taking care of the shopping and not involving their student. Unless community-based instruction is taught during school it is unlikely that teachers will actually be able to take students shopping and teach the skill in the natural environment.

With all the technological advances that have been made and the ability to order groceries online it is still possible to teach a student how to shop. It may not be possible to make it feel like really shopping in a store because they will not get to walk around aisles but by being able to shop online students will learn how to keep to a list and a budget when shopping. The great thing is that from the comfort and controlled environment of a classroom it is basically possible to shop for anything. Teachers can help their students learn how to shop for groceries, clothing, and all other essential or fun items.

Let's Get Started...

With basically every grocery store and retailer having an online platform to sell their products teachers can create shopping lessons without having to worry about not having the ability to leave the classroom. There are so many different shopping activities that students can do while on their computer. Some of the activities will also give them additional opportunities to work other daily living skills like planning, organization, and preparing food.

(This following list of example activities for shopping was created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Online Shopping Activities:

- Grocery Store shopping
 - Have students make a list of a few items they would like to buy from the grocery store and have them go to the grocery stores website to find the cost
 - Teach students about different prices by giving them a list of products that would have several brands and have them find the most expensive and the cheapest, then decide what they would buy
 - Have students plan out all their meals for the day then send them to the online store to “buy” them
 - Give students a budget to adhere to then “buy” groceries for the week
 - Let the students go crazy and “buy” all the things they would ever want for a whole week and watch them be shocked when they total up how much money it would cost
 - Give students a list of general items that you would find at any store (Meijer, Walmart, etc.) and have them compare the costs for the similar items
 - If the website shows where to find the item in the store, have the students create their shopping list and organize it by how they would walk through the store
 - Show students how to find coupons for the items on their shopping list
- Clothing store shopping
 - Have students create a list of clothing they want or need
 - Choose at least two popular clothing stores and have students compare prices for shirts, pants, socks, etc.

- Have students search for the most popular new clothing item (they definitely have one and it is probably expensive) to find the price, then have them search for the “knock off” or “off brand” product and decide which is better
- Make sure to also show students where to find the deals or coupons while shopping

These activities are very engaging for students and will give them a better understanding of the things their parents do when shopping. These could all also be done individually or with groups if the students are not quite ready to try on their own. Before doing any of these activities make sure to give the students some time to simply explore the shopping websites to get a feel of where everything is located and how to use the site. For all of the activities listed above there are endless ways to modify them based on the students who will be completing the activity. When first starting to try out the online shopping start out small with only a few items then work up towards the students being able to complete “shopping” for an entire week.

Don't Forget...

Remember that depending on the student's home life they may have never done grocery shopping before. This is not a skill that can be taught in one day especially if there are only a few minutes to incorporate it into a lesson. If there are students who really need to experience some sort of real shopping that allows them to choose and pay for an item, consider creating a classroom store. Reward students with “money” for good behavior, staying positive, helping others, good grades, etc. and then let the students purchase items they need like pencils, erasers, breath mints, small candies so that students can understand the purchasing process.

Housekeeping

Everyone needs to know how to clean, but sadly not everyone gets the chance to learn. This is one skill that a lot of students struggle with, even students without disabilities. Depending on the living situation a student may never be expected to clean, and therefore they never learn to clean properly. There are also a lot of parents who have children with mild disabilities that never give them the chance to clean because they do not have the desire to teach the child or they do not think the child can be trusted to clean.

There are several housekeeping skills that can be taught at school and others can be discussed with the students. With some students they will be excited to learn this new skill and be able to help out, but there will be some that do not understand why they would need to learn how to clean when normally all the cleaning is done for them. As middle school students, there are many housekeeping tasks that they should be able to be doing on their own or with little supervision. Take time to let your students think about all the housekeeping that is done in their home to keep things clean and tidy, have them come up with a list of ways they are helping around the house or want to learn so that they can help.

(This following list was created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Housekeeping tasks that middle school students can do:

- Vacuum/sweep floor
- Unload and load dishwasher
- Laundry (wash, dry, fold, and put away)
- Clean tables
- Clean windows/glass
- Take out the trash

- Put away belongings
- Clean bathrooms (counter, sink, shower, and toilet)
- Wash dishes by hand
- Clean bedroom

Let's Get Started...

When it comes to teaching about housekeeping it is best to keep it realistic with the student. As long as the students are given the chance to learn how to properly clean there is no reason why they should not be able to complete these housekeeping tasks. Based on the list above there are several skills that can be taught at school, the only skills that would be difficult to teach are doing the dishes and cleaning the bathrooms. After identifying all of the housekeeping tasks that should be completed the next step is to discuss how often each of these tasks should be completed. Create a chart like the one below when brainstorming with your class, later, you can give the completed chart to students who might benefit from having a visual aid to keep track of their housekeeping tasks.

(The following housekeeping chart was created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Housekeeping Task	How Often Completed
Vacuum/sweep floor	At least once a week
Unload and load dishwasher	At least twice a week, depends on family size
Laundry	At least once a week or as needed
Clean table	At least once a week
Clean windows/glass	At least once a month
Take out the trash	At least once a week or as needed
Put away belongings	Every day
Clean bathrooms	At least once a week

Wash dishes by hand	At least once a week or as needed
Clean bedroom	At least once a week

Remind students that as long as these tasks are done on a regular basis, they will not be very difficult. It is when the dishes aren't done for two weeks or the bathroom hasn't been cleaned in a month that these tasks become daunting and more bothersome. If the students can learn to do a little bit of housekeeping every day, they will not find themselves in the situation where they end up spending the whole day cleaning.

Section 4:

Skills for Success in the Community

- Personal finance
- Safety
- Job skills
- Self-advocacy

Personal Finance

The first step to teaching personal finance is making sure that all students are able to count money. You can teach budgeting and financial stability all day but if the student has not yet mastered the skill of counting money it will not mean a lot. Take some time before you get started in on budgets and other personal finance skills to ensure that students are fluent or at least have a basic understanding of counting money.

Let's Get Started...

Once students are able to count money, start talking to them about budgeting and saving to become financially stable later in life. Some may think that middle school is too early to start teaching these skills, but when working with students who have mild disabilities it is important to start teaching these skills early so that they have enough time to learn them before the students are expected to complete them independently. The more that students can learn about these daily living skills while still in school the better that will handle the transition out of school and into society.

(This following example of personal finance skills was created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Personal Finance Skills for Students:

- Understand the common process for opening up a bank account
- Know the difference between credit and debit
- Be able to budget money for housing, food, and all other necessary bills
- Understand consequences for not paying bills
- Know the importance of having money set aside in their savings accounts

When beginning to teach budgeting and paying bills, do some research on the average costs for housing, utility bills, and food based on the area you live and

teach in. Also, find an average wage that students out of high school may be earning in your community so that the students have an estimated income to work with while making a budget. Additionally, if the students are able have them complete research on the salary for a job that they would like to have so that they can see how far the money will go. By being able to use the salary of the job they wish to have in the future, the students will most likely be more engaged in this activity.

Don't Forget...

Nowadays, it is not uncommon for people to never have cash on them and instead rely on their debit or credit cards. With this situation it becomes extremely important that students understand that they either need keep to a detailed record of their income and spending, or they need to be checking their actual bank account on a regular basis to know how much money they have to be spending. This definitely makes keeping track of money easier for students that are not quite fluent with counting coins and bills because they only have to look at the numbers. Below is a simple and quick activity that could be easily incorporated into a morning routine or math class.

(This following personal finance activity was created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Balancing Account Activity with Income and Expenses	
Instructions: At the start of every week (or as often as you like) give students the Bank Account page with a starting balance. Every day each student should pick a random expense strip and deduct that amount from their bank account. Some strips may state they received a bonus income but should draw another strip until they receive an expense.	
Expense or Bonus Strips (cut and place in jar)	
Gas bill \$45.86	Out to eat \$12.54
Electric bill \$72.90	Water bill \$37.13
Cable bill \$24.99	Internet bill \$48.65

Grocery shopping \$81.66	New video game \$29.87		
New shoes \$32.68	Streaming service bill \$17.96		
Go to the movies \$27.59	New clothes \$63.12		
Bonus \$45.00 draw again	Bonus \$22.00 draw again		
Bonus \$3.00 draw again	Bonus \$15.00 draw again		
Bonus \$62.00 draw again	Bonus \$31.00 draw again		
Sample's Bank Account Beginning Balance: \$453.87			
Income or Expense Description	+ Income	- Expense	Balance
Internet bill		\$48.65	\$405.22
Bonus	\$3.00		\$408.22
Go to the movies		\$27.59	\$380.63
Electric bill		\$72.90	\$307.73
Cable bill		\$24.99	\$282.74
Bonus	\$22.00		\$304.74
Bonus	\$15.00		\$319.74
Grocery Shopping		\$81.66	\$238.08
Ending Balance			\$238.08

Safety

Safety skills are one of the most important skills that everyone needs to know. Without having safety skills students will constantly be at risk when they are out in society. There is a very wide range of information that should be taught to students in order for them to be safe in life and the community they live in. It is the hope of every teacher and parent that when their student goes out into the community they are able to be independent and safe.

(The following list of safety skills was created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Safety Skills for students:

- Understand road/street signs
- Know who community helpers are
- Know their personal information (address, phone number, emergency contact)
- Able to call 911
- Know what to do if there is an emergency at home
- Know what to do during an emergency in the community
- Understand not to give out personal information to strangers
- Able to use crosswalks and sidewalks
- Knows how to identify a dangerous situation
- Knows the basic rules and laws of being in public

Let's Get Started...

Talk through all these skills with your students, these are not just skills that they will be using when they are done with their schooling, there are probably many of your students who are going out in public by themselves already. For students who are often alone at home make sure they understand the things that they

should not be doing when by themselves, like answering the door to strangers, and that they have a plan in place if there would be some sort of emergency where they needed to get out of their house. When teaching these skills to students it is important that there is parent involvement, especially when teaching students what to do when there are emergencies in their home.

Teaching safety skills can also tend to be a delicate subject just because it is not always possible to know how students will react to these topics. In some instances, students may become agitated or over stressed when discussing emergency situations. It is also possible that some of the students have previously had experiences with emergency situations and the conversation may bring up upsetting memories. Talking about all these different skills and rules for being in the community may even frighten some students. Before jumping in and teaching students about all the safety skills stated above give the students the chance to explain what they already know. Let the students lead the conversations about these skills.

(These following safety scenarios were created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Safety Scenarios to Start Conversations

1. You are at home by yourself and someone keeps knocking on your door, you were not expecting anyone to be coming over. What do you do?
2. You are out on a walk after school to get some fresh air. You come to a crosswalk and the pedestrian signal says not to cross but you do not see any cars on the street. Do you cross?
3. You walked to the gas station near your house for some snacks, while you were inside a person you don't know starts talking to you. Being polite, you answer him, then he starts asking personal questions and wanting to know if you want a ride home. What do you do?
4. Your mother told you to be back home by 4:30 from your trip to the library. You lost track of time and it is already 4:25 and takes about 15 minutes to walk back home. What should you do?

5. You went shopping with your dad and got separated from him when he went to the bathroom and now cannot find him. You do not have a cellphone with you. What do you do?

While some of these scenarios may be upsetting to the students it is best to talk things out in a safe environment so that if something similar would happen to the student, they will be better prepared to react appropriately.

Don't Forget...

One problem that may come up when teaching some of these skills is that most of your students may have their own cellphone. While it is great that they have a phone to contact people when necessary it can also be problematic because they most likely do not have some important phone numbers memorized since they can normally access them on their phone. Make sure your students know how to adapt in all emergency situations if they do not have their cellphone.

Remember that all these safety skills that have been listed in this section may not be the skills your students need depending on the type of community that you live in. There may be additional skills that need to be taught based on the students' needs and the community. Make sure to involve parents to discuss some of the safety skills they would like their students to learn based on their family situation.

Job Skills

Depending on the students that you teach some may be ready to have some job skills training. For middle school students it may not be the time to get into teaching specific job skills for all of the different jobs that these students could have once they are able to have a job, but it is time to start teaching them the basics of what it means to have a job and how they would go about trying to find a job. Some students may desire to have a job when they are in high school and they need to be taught the importance of maintaining a balance between work and school, with school being the priority. During this section the focus will be on teaching students the skills that they will likely need if they choose to have jobs during high school.

Let's Get Started...

(This following list of job skills was created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Job Skills to Work on with Middle School Students:

- Make sure they understand what types of jobs are going to be available for them based on education levels
- How to find a job
- How to apply for a job
- How to fill out an application
- Basic expectations of having a job
- Responsibilities that they may have at a job
- How to interview for a job

Many students may really want to have a job but may not truly understand the commitment that they will need to make. Once the students are able to attain a job, they also need to make sure they are taking the right steps to ensure that they keep the job. Having a job will require students to have a strong grasp on

many of the daily living skills presented in this book. Teachers need to do their best to make sure the students' dreams of having jobs can be a possibility by teaching them all daily living skills.

When teaching students about the jobs that will be available to them as high schoolers make sure they understand that they will not be looking for full time jobs that could support a family. Most likely the jobs that they are going to find are jobs at stores and fast-food places. Jobs that students have while they are in high school are not going to be glamorous but there will definitely be some jobs that are better than others. Students also need to know that any job they find needs to come second to their schooling. Another important aspect of having a job is making sure that they will have reliable transportation to get them to and from the job. The student may need to learn how to ride public transportation in order to get to their job.

Use the following activity or something similar to help your students understand the process of finding a job and making sure it is a possible job for their specific situation.

(This following job search activity was created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Middle School Job Search Activity

1. Provide the students with the guidelines for high school students (how many hours can they work and when, do they need a work permit)
2. Have students use the internet to search for available jobs in their community
3. Once the student finds a job have them verify that it is a job they qualify for based on age and education
4. If the job posting has specific hours or shifts make sure they are hours the student can be working
5. Have the student find a printable version of the job application (since a lot of application are online only now it may be necessary to have a basic application for students to fill out)

6. Assist the students with how to fill out an application properly
7. Conduct a mock interview process with the students based on the job they found. Make sure they know how to answer common interview questions.

Once this activity has been completed and students seem to understand the process, start working on identifying the basic skills and responsibilities that come with having a job.

(The following rules of employment was created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Help the students understand the rules of employment:

- Showing up to work on time
- Following directions from supervisor
- Wearing proper work clothing
- Proper etiquette when sick or cannot go in for scheduled shift
- Speak to supervisor with respect
- Always have transportation to and from work

Don't Forget...

Obviously, all jobs will have their own set of rules and will hopefully come with some sort of employee handbook, but students need to understand these basic and transferable rules before entering into a new job. Having a job is a very big responsibility, especially for a high school student, so it is best to prepare students for this step as much as possible.

Self-Advocacy

One of the true signs of being independent and successful is being able to self-advocate. Without this skill students may always be dependent on their parents or other care givers in some way. While it may be difficult to truly teach these skills simply because it is not always possible to know what the students' futures hold for them, teachers must make sure their students know what they need and how to get it.

Let's Get Started...

In the classroom and everywhere else at school teach the students to be independent. If the student can do it, they should be doing it. There are some students who constantly ask for teachers or even other students to do things for them, but if they are never doing things for themselves, they will never learn to be independent. Students need to know how to ask for help but they also need to know when they really do not need the help and should just try on their own. Before stepping in to immediately help a student with a problem let them struggle with it for a little while and see if they come up with a different way to approach the problem. Do not intervene unless they have directly asked for help but do give the student reminders that they can ask for help whenever they need it. By doing this it teaches students that they need to be responsible for knowing what they need and how to ask for assistance when in need.

Self-advocacy is definitely not a skill that can be taught in one day, and it may not even be a skill that can be taught in one school year. Students are also not expected to instantly be successful adults once they are done with school, and need to know that there are many supports within every community that will give aid to those who need it. For students with mild disabilities there are generally many programs that will be available to them as adults. Do some research on programs in your community that may be able to support your

students once they are older. The more you know about supports within your community the better you will be able to teach your students. An option for teaching students about self-advocacy is by using a social story, a teaching tool created by Carol Gray. To find out more information on social stories visit <https://carolgraysocialstories.com/>. Try using social stories like the one below to show students the benefits of advocating for what they need.

(This following social story was created by the author based on teacher responses to a survey regarding teaching daily living skills in the classroom.)

Interactive Social Story for Self-Advocacy:
Read the following paragraph with your student(s) then decide how the story will continue. Continue reading the next part of the story based on how the student(s) choose.
Thomas has been dreaming about being out on his own for so long now. He started his search for the perfect housing arrangement a long time ago and finally found the perfect apartment to rent. This new apartment is only a five-minute drive from his work and when there is good weather he can walk or ride his bike to work. For the first several months living on his own everything was going very well but now it seems each new week there is a new problem to handle and Thomas does not always know the solution to the problems. First, the dryer stopped working so he has to hang dry all of his clothing after washing it. The next week a new neighbor moved in next door and they are constantly playing extremely loud music even at night when Thomas needs to be sleeping. Now the air conditioning does not seem to be working, at least it is nice out this week but next week is supposed to be 87 degrees outside. Thomas talked to his mom about all of these things going on at the apartment and she said he should contact his landlord to get everything fixed. Thomas likes to take care of problems by himself and does not like asking for help.

What does the student choose to do?		
Continue to fix problems on his own	OR	Contact the landlord to get things fixed
Thomas decided to fix the problems on his own. He did some research and was able to figure out what was wrong with the air conditioner, so he went out and bought the parts and had it fixed before the weather got really hot the next week. While he was out shopping, he saw a clothes drying rack to solve his problem with the dryer, it would take longer to dry his clothes but at least he was able to find his own solution. As for the new noisy neighbor, at this point Thomas has gotten used to the loud music and if it gets too irritating, he put ear plugs in. His mom told him that the landlord would have fixed all these problems, but Thomas was proud of himself.		Even though contacting his landlord was awkward and he hates asking for help Thomas was very proud of himself for doing it. Only two days after contacting his landlord someone had come out to fix the air conditioner and the dryer. The neighbor was still playing his music really loud during the day but was not playing it after 9pm. The landlord thanked Thomas for letting him know about the new neighbor. By telling his landlord what he needed Thomas was able to save his own time and money and also speak up for his needs.

Don't Forget...

Once students graduate and are adult members of society, they need to be able to speak up for themselves to get what they need. In order to do this, students must understand what things they need to be successful. Students will learn what they want and need from life by being exposed to the real world as much as possible while they are growing up and being taught all of the daily living skills they need in order to succeed.

Thank You

I hope that this book gives all teachers new ideas on how to incorporate daily living skills into their classrooms and lessons. Remember that all students need all skills and teaching students to be successful needs to be the number one priority for all teachers.

CHAPTER 6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this project was to discover which daily living skills need to be taught during middle school to students with mild disabilities and what methods are best for teachers to use when teaching these skills to their students. Through this research, common teaching methods were identified as well as the daily living skills that are being taught to students. As a result of this research a handbook was created to give teachers an additional resource when teaching daily living skills in their classrooms.

In addition to the literature review that was completed to seek information, a needs assessment survey was also created and sent to current teachers to complete. By gaining insights from current middle school teachers it was possible to better understand what teachers know about teaching daily living skills and how they implement these in their classrooms. The questions asked in the needs-assessment survey were written to gain additional answers to the original three research questions: What are the essential daily living skills that need to be taught to students with mild disabilities to prepare them for high school? What evidence-based practices are commonly used to teach daily living skills to students with mild disabilities? Do teachers find current evidence-based practices for teaching daily living skills effective? With the answers to all of these questions a handbook was designed with the purpose of making it easier for teachers to come up with ideas on what skills to teach during their lessons and methods to help their lesson be more effective for their students. The handbook is to be used as a tool by special education teachers who are teaching daily living skills to their students on a regular basis but can also be used by any teacher needing an additional resource to teach these skills.

The results from the needs assessment survey prove that many teachers understand what daily living skills are and have many thoughts on which skills should be taught to their students

with mild disabilities while that are in middle school. Some of the daily living skills that the teachers who participated in the assessment listed as skills needed to be taught did follow what had been listed in earlier research. The teachers also identified that most do teach, or try to teach, daily living skills in their classrooms but often run into time limitations. Another piece of information that was gained from the survey was that even though teachers may have a general idea of which daily living skills to teach their students they also do not feel that they have access to the proper materials for teaching the skills.

Strengths of the Handbook

By creating this handbook it is intended that teachers will have access to lists of daily living skills to teach to their students with mild disabilities, ideas for incorporating these skills into their lessons, and methods for tracking their students' progress related to the skill. This handbook is recommended for special education teachers who more commonly teach these skills and work with students who need to be taught daily living skills but is still written so that general education teachers can adapt and use if teaching some of these skills. In addition to any teacher being able to use this handbook as a resource, it can also be easily adapted to teach daily living skills to any student who needs to work on the skill not just students who have mild disabilities.

Limitations of the Study and Handbook

A limitation that came from this study is that some participants who chose to begin the process of completing the survey did not fully complete the survey, by skipping certain questions or stopping halfway through the survey. Also, of the teachers who participated in the survey, most were general education teachers who may not always ensure that there is a focus on teaching daily living skills in their classrooms. Other factors that may have affected the survey is

the stress due to the COVID-19 pandemic that has created havoc for the whole world. Teachers are particularly affected because of demands made on them to alter the way they provide instruction to their students and needing to be even more flexible than before so that their students still have a proper education. The pandemic has also impacted the way that students learn causing teachers to struggle to meet the needs of each students. Given all of the additional challenges throughout the school year, the 44% response rate to the needs assessment survey is very impressive.

The previous research that had been done on this topic indicated that the use of technology is extremely valuable to the teaching of daily living skills to students with disabilities, in the needs assessment survey many teachers also indicated that they often use technology to teach in the classroom but did not indicate certain programs like those used in previous research (Ayers et al, 2013). This could be a result of the current global pandemic which caused some teaching to be completed virtually. The handbook itself also has its limitations due to the way it was designed. While teachers can use the handbook to adapt it to their own needs, there is only so much that could be included in the handbook. There are many daily living skills listed throughout the handbook with the resources on how to teach them to students, but there are still many skills that may be considered daily living skills that the students may need to be taught. Even if certain skills are not mentioned in the handbook it may be possible that teaching the skills may be similar to teaching another skill that is listed in the handbook. Another limitation to the book is that what works as a teaching method for one teacher may not work for another, meaning there may be some teachers who commonly teach daily living skills but to not find the handbook to be helpful. Another limitation that is commonly overlooked is that while this handbook does provide resources for teaching many daily living

skills, current teachers may not have the time to dedicate to finding and reading a new handbook about teaching daily living skills. During the current global pandemic, most teachers are just trying to get by with what they know due to the additional duties they may have during this school year.

Recommended use for the Handbook

It is recommended that special education teachers use this handbook as a reference when teaching daily living skills to their students with mild disabilities. The teachers can use the included checklist of skills to identify which skills the student has mastered and which skills the student may need to focus on more. The social stories, conversation starters, and checklists provide teachers with new ways to teach the daily living skills that their students need in order to succeed in life. As previously stated, this handbook is also made to be simple for general education teachers to use when incorporating daily living skills into their everyday lessons. Any of the skills included in this handbook can be adapted for use with any student regardless of their learning ability, it is not something that can only be used with middle school students with mild disabilities.

Implications for Future Studies and Practices

From this study it is found that there is a gap in research on teaching daily living skills to students with mild disabilities. More research needs to be done on this topic especially regarding teaching these skills if using technology is not a viable option for the teachers or students involved. Such research is critical because many students with mild disabilities slip through the cracks in the process of transitioning to high school and post-secondary settings. They are often unprepared to meet the demands of college or workplace. Daily living skills such as time

management, scheduling, organizing their daily routines, punctuality, ability to manage their finances, and age-appropriate socialization skills are often not incorporated into the curriculum, because the focus is predominantly on academic skills.

While this handbook does create a valuable resource to teachers who commonly teach daily living skills, it does not solve all the problems that teachers run into when attempting to teach these skills in their classrooms. From this positive beginning, other teachers can expand and explore new ways of implementing a daily living skills curriculum for the students who need additional help with these skills.

Personal Reflection

As I was researching and completing this handbook my main desire was to create something that would make teaching daily living skills easier for teachers. In my current position I often find myself teaching daily living skills to my students who have a variety of needs. Not only did I want to create this handbook for others, but also for me to use daily in my teaching. By having access to other teachers' ideas and methods that they have used for many years I hope to have created something that takes all the information and pulls it all together, putting it in one place for anyone to access when needed. I also hope that by giving other teachers access to the findings and ideas for teaching daily living skills, it would not only take some stress off of the teachers but to help their students succeed.

When creating this handbook, I definitely felt as though so much more could have been added if I had unlimited time to continue to work on the book. After going through all the information that I gathered from my research and the survey results and including them in the handbook I still felt there were so many skills that could have been included if more research had been done and more time was available to work on the handbook. I did my best to create a

comprehensive handbook, given the time constraints of grad school and teaching full time, as deadlines had to be met. My hopes are to revisit this handbook often, adding in new skills and new ideas to expand it so that it becomes the handbook that has it all. There are many daily living skills mentioned in the handbook and having more would benefit more teachers and in the long run help even more students learn the daily living skills that they will need to succeed in their future lives.

APPENDIX A. NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY

Thank you for participating in this survey. The purpose of this study is to investigate what daily living skills are currently being taught to students with mild disabilities in middle school settings to prepare the students for high school. This survey will be conducted in a confidential and anonymous manner to protect the people and the information gathered. Your responses will add to the body of knowledge in this area.

Demographic Questions

1. Gender?
 - a. Male
 - b. Female
 - c. Prefer not to answer
2. Years of experience?
3. Grade level(s) taught?
4. Type of school/degree?
5. Have you received any additional training of schooling in special education?

Needs Assessment Survey

6. Do you teach or incorporate daily living skills in your classroom?
 - a. Yes
 - b. No

(Kivunja, C. (2015). Teaching students to learn and to work well with 21st century skills: Unpacking the career and life skills domain of the new learning paradigm. *International Journal of Higher Education*, 4(1), 1-11.)

7. How would you define daily living skills for students with mild disabilities?

(Rich-Gross, D. A. (2014). Maximizing the Potential of Our Youth with Intellectual Disabilities: Rethinking Functional Curriculum. *Journal of the American Academy of Special Education Professionals*, 132–140.)

8. What daily living skills do you teach within your classroom?

(Bouck, E., & Joshi, G. (2012). Functional Curriculum and Students with Mild Intellectual Disability: Exploring Postschool Outcomes through the NLTS2. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 47(2), 139-153.)

9. What daily living skills do students with mild disabilities need to learn during middle school?

(Chiang, H. M., Ni, X., & Lee, Y. S. (2017). Life skills training for middle and high school students with autism. *Journal of autism and developmental disorders*, 47(4), 1113-1121.)

10. Check all evidence-based practices used in your classroom to support teaching daily living skills:

- a. Parent involvement
- b. Prompting
- c. Social Stories
- d. Task Analysis
- e. Visual Aids
- f. Other – please describe _____

(Chiang, H. M., Ni, X., & Lee, Y. S. (2017). Life skills training for middle and high school students with autism. *Journal of autism and developmental disorders*, 47(4), 1113-1121.)

11. Do you use digital technology to teach daily living skills within your classroom? If yes, please share what technology you use.

- a. Yes - _____
- b. No

(Cullen, J., & Alber-Morgan, S. (2015). Technology Mediated Self-Prompting of Daily Living Skills for Adolescents and Adults with Disabilities: A Review of the Literature. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 50(1), 43-55.)

12. Is there anything else you wish you could do for your students, in terms of teaching daily living skills, before they move on to high school?

(Stone-MacDonald, A. (2012). Preparing Children with Developmental Disabilities for Life in the Community: A Tanzanian Perspective. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 47(3), 255-268.)

Likert Scale Questions

13. I am able to identify what daily living skills need to be taught.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

(Chiang, H. M., Ni, X., & Lee, Y. S. (2017). Life skills training for middle and high school students with autism. *Journal of autism and developmental disorders*, 47(4), 1113-1121.)

14. I have access to all the materials I need in order to teach daily living skills.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

(Van Laarhoven, T., Kraus, E., Karpman, K., Nizzi, R., & Valentino, J. (2010). A comparison of picture and video prompts to teach daily living skills to individuals with autism. *Focus on Autism and Other Developmental Disabilities*, 25(4), 195-208.)

15. I have been appropriately trained to teach daily living skills or know how to find more information.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

(Oyler, C. (2011). Teacher preparation for inclusive and critical (special) education. *Teacher Education and Special Education*, 34(3), 201-218.)

16. I am confident that I have taught my students everything that they need in order to succeed in life after they move on from my class.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Disagree
- e. Strongly Disagree

(Stone-MacDonald, A. (2012). Preparing Children with Developmental Disabilities for Life in the Community: A Tanzanian Perspective. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, 47(3), 255-268.)

17. I believe that the methods I use to teach daily living skills to my students are successful.

- a. Strongly Agree
- b. Agree
- c. Neutral
- d. Disagree

e. Strongly Disagree

(Yuen, M., Lee, Q. A., & Chung, Y. B. (2020). Meaning in life, connectedness, and life skills development in junior secondary school students: teachers' perspectives in Hong Kong. *Pastoral Care in Education*, 1-17.)

APPENDIX B. NEEDS ASSESSMENT SURVEY RESULTS

Question 1: Gender?

Participant 1	Male	Participant 8	Male	Participant 15	Female
Participant 2	Male	Participant 9	Female	Participant 16	Male
Participant 3	Female	Participant 10	Male	Participant 17	Male
Participant 4	Female	Participant 11	Male	Participant 18	Female
Participant 5	Female	Participant 12	Female	Participant 19	Female
Participant 6	Male	Participant 13	Male	Participant 20	Female
Participant 7	Male	Participant 14	Female	Participant 21	Female

Question 2: Years of teaching experience?

Participant 1	20	Participant 8	32	Participant 15	18
Participant 2	9	Participant 9	27	Participant 16	23
Participant 3	28	Participant 10	13	Participant 17	7
Participant 4	31	Participant 11	25	Participant 18	15
Participant 5	11	Participant 12	26	Participant 19	21
Participant 6	13 years	Participant 13	20	Participant 20	5
Participant 7	16	Participant 14	13	Participant 21	8

Question 3: Grade levels taught?

Participant 1	8th grade	Participant 12	6th grade,7th grade
Participant 2	6th grade,7th grade,8th grade	Participant 13	8th grade
Participant 3	6th grade,7th grade,8th grade	Participant 14	
Participant 4	6th grade,7th grade,8th grade	Participant 15	6th grade,7th grade,8th grade
Participant 5	6th grade,7th grade,8th grade	Participant 16	6th grade,7th grade,8th grade
Participant 6	6th grade,7th grade,8th grade	Participant 17	6th grade,7th grade,8th grade
Participant 7	7th grade	Participant 18	7th grade
Participant 8	6th grade,7th grade,8th grade	Participant 19	6th grade,7th grade,8th grade
Participant 9	6th grade,7th grade	Participant 20	7th grade,8th grade
Participant 10	6th grade,7th grade,8th grade	Participant 21	6th grade,7th grade,8th grade
Participant 11	8th grade		

Question 4: Type of school/degree?

Participant 1	Masters	Participant 12	BS El Ed and 1-9 math
Participant 2	Masters	Participant 13	Secondary Math
Participant 3	BS	Participant 14	Educational Specialists
Participant 4	IPFW/Masters	Participant 15	public/bachelor
Participant 5	BS	Participant 16	Masters
Participant 6	P.E.	Participant 17	Special Ed

Participant 7	elementary education with middle school science endorsement	Participant 18	Bachelor's
Participant 8	BM and MS	Participant 19	Masters in Elem. Ed.
Participant 9	Masters in Administration	Participant 20	Bachelor's
Participant 10	B.A.	Participant 21	Masters
Participant 11	Public, BS & MA		BS El Ed and 1-9 math

Question 5: Have you received any additional training or schooling in special education?

Participant 1	No	Participant 8	No	Participant 15	No
Participant 2	No	Participant 9	Yes	Participant 16	Yes
Participant 3	No	Participant 10	No	Participant 17	Yes
Participant 4	Yes	Participant 11	Yes	Participant 18	No
Participant 5	No	Participant 12	Yes	Participant 19	No
Participant 6	No	Participant 13	No	Participant 20	No
Participant 7	No	Participant 14	Yes	Participant 21	Yes

Question 6: Do you teach or incorporate daily living skills in your classroom?

Participant 1	Yes	Participant 8	Yes	Participant 15	No
Participant 2	Yes	Participant 9	No	Participant 16	No
Participant 3	Yes	Participant 10	Yes	Participant 17	
Participant 4	Yes	Participant 11	Yes	Participant 18	
Participant 5	No	Participant 12	Yes	Participant 19	
Participant 6	Yes	Participant 13	No	Participant 20	
Participant 7	Yes	Participant 14	Yes	Participant 21	

Question 7: How would you define daily living skills for students with mild disabilities?

Participant 1	Routines...things you do everyday on a daily basis.
Participant 2	Positive Social Interactions, ability to complete mosts tasks but with some modifications.
Participant 3	Basic everyday skills that one needs to function in the world
Participant 4	Any skill that would help students succeed in everyday life
Participant 5	Skills that help students take care of themselves.
Participant 6	Being responsible for yourself in terms of showing up on time, doing what is asked/expected of you and being a good, respectful person
Participant 7	Daily living skills are behaviors and characteristics that help an individual function in society or a work setting.
Participant 8	I would take a student from where he/she is and what background he/she has and try to build on those skills.
Participant 9	Day to day activities that are done at home.
Participant 10	Being able to do every day tasks to the best of their ability.
Participant 11	functioning with peers using lifeskills

	self grooming skills safety
Participant 12	Not confident I know the answer to this one... Skills needed to live independently or with minimal assistance(?)
Participant 13	
Participant 14	A skill that is necessary or desirable to participate in everyday life and fosters independence.
Participant 15	Skills that are necessary for daily living; likely, they are things that we take for granted that we know how to do
Participant 16	Day-to-day skills assume I need to learn to survive in the real world and function.
Participant 17	
Participant 18	
Participant 19	
Participant 20	
Participant 21	

Question 8: What daily living skills do you teach within you classroom?

Participant 1	Hygiene, Responsibility, Communication. Caring
Participant 2	Positive Social Interactions, Growth Mindset, Teamwork
Participant 3	getting along, cooperation, listening, group setting
Participant 4	Everything from hygiene to balancing checkbooks.
Participant 5	Not much.
Participant 6	I try to teach all of the above in my classroom
Participant 7	communicating with others sharing responsibility when doing tasks time management problem solving skills
Participant 8	I mostly teach how to get along with each other, how to work together, and try process repercussions of decisions.
Participant 9	I do not normally teach daily living skills in my classroom unless something needs to be addressed to the entire class.
Participant 10	Planning, Communicating with partners, working in small groups to achieve a goal, goal setting.
Participant 11	lifeskills & safety
Participant 12	Organization Cooperation Basic money Computer safety
Participant 13	
Participant 14	As a teacher I taught Econ and we did a unit on personal finance. The students enjoyed learning about credit cards, savings, paying bills, and health insurance. We also worked on collaborative learning groups with foster working as a team to achieve a group goal. Also, we focused on thinking skills, problem solving skills, setting goals, and using technology.

Participant 15	I help students be organized
Participant 16	None
Participant 17	
Participant 18	
Participant 19	
Participant 20	
Participant 21	

Question 9: What daily living skills do students with mild disabilities need to learn during middle school?

Participant 1	Communication and taking responsibility
Participant 2	Positive Social Interactions, Growth Mindset, Teamwork
Participant 3	work in group setting, getting along, patience, listening
Participant 4	Social skills, personal space, telling time, counting money
Participant 5	How to bath properly because of increased body odor, how to cook, etc.
Participant 6	I think learning to respect themselves and others is a big one, but just general day to day functioning in society, and that is for all students not just those with disabilities.
Participant 7	communicating with others sharing responsibility when doing tasks time management problem solving skills
Participant 8	I have very little contact with students having mild disabilities due to the nature of my class.
Participant 9	Hygiene would be the most common. Many students without disabilities need this taught as well.
Participant 10	Planning, Communicating with partners, working in small groups to achieve a goal, goal setting.
Participant 11	All students need all skills. All students are capable of learning living skills. If a student needs a skill, then the school needs to offer it. Unfortunately, many of the classes that focuses on daily living skills have been eliminated from the curriculum and defunded by the state.
Participant 12	Organization Cooperation Basic money Computer safety Dressing/undressing, meals/nutrition, housekeeping, laundry
Participant 13	
Participant 14	Self care, prevocational skills, daily living skills, functional reading, functional math, community based instruction, recreational skills, shopping skills, cooking and laundry, work related behavior.
Participant 15	*recognizing when a task needs to be done *tracking what needs to be accomplished *coming up with a plan for accomplishing tasks

	*organizing yourself and determining what tasks are priorities *seeking assistance and advocating for yourself *finding compensatory skills for areas of struggle
Participant 16	Money Making food There address and phone Social interactions
Participant 17	
Participant 18	
Participant 19	
Participant 20	
Participant 21	

Question 10: Select all evidence base practices used within your classroom to support teaching daily living skills.

	Response	Other-Please Specify Text
Participant 1	Parent Involvement, Prompting, Social Stories, Task Analysis, Visual Aids	
Participant 2	Prompting, Social Stories, Visual Aids, Other - Please describe	Music
Participant 3	Prompting, Social Stories, Visual Aids	
Participant 4	Parent Involvement, Prompting, Social Stories, Visual Aids	
Participant 5		
Participant 6	Parent Involvement, Prompting, Social Stories	
Participant 7	Task Analysis, Visual Aids	
Participant 8	Parent Involvement, Social Stories	
Participant 9	Prompting, Social Stories	
Participant 10	Parent Involvement, Prompting, Social Stories, Task Analysis, Visual Aids	
Participant 11	Parent Involvement, Prompting, Social Stories, Visual Aids	
Participant 12	Parent Involvement, Prompting, Social Stories	
Participant 13		
Participant 14	Parent Involvement, Prompting, Social Stories, Task Analysis, Visual Aids	
Participant 15	Prompting, Visual Aids	
Participant 16	Other - Please describe	
Participant 17		
Participant 18		
Participant 19		
Participant 20		
Participant 21		

Question 11: Do you use digital technology to teach daily living skills within your classroom?

	Response	Please Specify Text
Participant 1	Yes - please specify	Agenda, videos, etc.
Participant 2	Yes - please specify	I will use videos to portray positive examples
Participant 3	No	
Participant 4	Yes - please specify	Canvas, Google
Participant 5	No	
Participant 6	No	
Participant 7	Yes - please specify	Group collaboration documents and discussion tools
Participant 8	No	
Participant 9	No	
Participant 10	Yes - please specify	Canvas/working on their computers
Participant 11	No	
Participant 12	No	
Participant 13		
Participant 14	Yes - please specify	
Participant 15	No	
Participant 16	No	
Participant 17		
Participant 18		
Participant 19		
Participant 20		
Participant 21		

Question 12: Is there anything else you wish you could do for your students, in terms of teaching daily living skills, before they move on to high school?

Participant 1	I wish I had more time to cover many of these skill, but time is not on our side! :(
Participant 2	
Participant 3	I feel I cover the basics
Participant 4	More pathways to job placement in a position that fits the interests of the student
Participant 5	
Participant 6	The high school is a big place, so the more they are self reliant the better. There are a lot of avenues to get assistance, but sometimes they aren't communicated as well as they should be so, for me, self reliance is big.
Participant 7	I wish there were more authentic applications and activities we could incorporate to give all students more exposure to daily living skills.
Participant 8	I wish we could impress on the Parents the importance of their children's education and help them be more supportive.
Participant 9	I wish I had more time in class for these skills, but just getting through state standards for my class takes all of my time.
Participant 10	

Participant 11	<p>Bring back home economics, small engines, and hands-on classes. The curriculum is filled with paperwork, writing, and reading. We have gone too far one way . The current classes are leaving out the students' interests, talents, and fun. We need to be able to teach students to be functional in all areas of their life. All students need to have classes that are rewarding to them.</p> <p>In life, many people are successful without all of this bookwork. Because there is so much reading and writing, the students are losing interest, liking school less, and struggling to find classes that they really like. We are losing kids before they even get to high school. All schools need to be a place where all students can experience success. Pushing all students onto a common curriculum with high standards with deeper levels of understanding, is not best for all. Why are we ignoring the research on cognitive development. These students are developing at different rates, now more no than ever, due to many life experiences and natural growth. We can still have high expectations for all with a curriculum that allows for flexibility of development. This one size fits all curriculum is not working.</p>
Participant 12	
Participant 13	
Participant 14	Teach more executive functioning skills.
Participant 15	
Participant 16	
Participant 17	
Participant 18	
Participant 19	
Participant 20	
Participant 21	

Question 13: I am able to identify what daily living skills need to be taught.

Participant 1	Somewhat agree	Participant 12	Somewhat agree
Participant 2	Somewhat agree	Participant 13	
Participant 3	Somewhat agree	Participant 14	Strongly agree
Participant 4	Somewhat agree	Participant 15	Strongly agree
Participant 5	Neither agree nor disagree	Participant 16	Somewhat disagree
Participant 6	Strongly agree	Participant 17	
Participant 7	Somewhat agree	Participant 18	
Participant 8	Somewhat agree	Participant 19	
Participant 9	Neither agree nor disagree	Participant 20	
Participant 10	Somewhat agree	Participant 21	
Participant 11	Strongly agree		

Question 14: I have access to all the materials I need in order to teach daily living skills.

Participant 1	Somewhat agree	Participant 12	Neither agree nor disagree
Participant 2	Somewhat agree	Participant 13	
Participant 3	Somewhat agree	Participant 14	Somewhat agree

Participant 4	Neither agree nor disagree	Participant 15	Somewhat disagree
Participant 5	Neither agree nor disagree	Participant 16	Somewhat agree
Participant 6	Somewhat agree	Participant 17	
Participant 7	Somewhat agree	Participant 18	
Participant 8	Strongly disagree	Participant 19	
Participant 9	Somewhat disagree	Participant 20	
Participant 10	Somewhat agree	Participant 21	
Participant 11	Somewhat agree		

Question 15: I have been appropriately trained to teach daily living skills or know how to find more information.

Participant 1	Somewhat agree	Participant 12	Neither agree nor disagree
Participant 2	Somewhat agree	Participant 13	
Participant 3	Somewhat agree	Participant 14	Somewhat agree
Participant 4	Somewhat agree	Participant 15	Strongly disagree
Participant 5	Neither agree nor disagree	Participant 16	Strongly disagree
Participant 6	Neither agree nor disagree	Participant 17	
Participant 7	Neither agree nor disagree	Participant 18	
Participant 8	Somewhat disagree	Participant 19	
Participant 9	Strongly disagree	Participant 20	
Participant 10	Somewhat agree	Participant 21	
Participant 11	Somewhat agree		

Question 16: I am confident that I have taught my students everything that they need in order to succeed in life after they move on from my class.

Participant 1	Somewhat agree	Participant 12	Somewhat agree
Participant 2	Neither agree nor disagree	Participant 13	
Participant 3	Neither agree nor disagree	Participant 14	Somewhat agree
Participant 4	Somewhat disagree	Participant 15	Neither agree nor disagree
Participant 5	Neither agree nor disagree	Participant 16	Strongly agree
Participant 6	Strongly agree	Participant 17	
Participant 7	Somewhat agree	Participant 18	
Participant 8	Neither agree nor disagree	Participant 19	
Participant 9	Neither agree nor disagree	Participant 20	
Participant 10	Somewhat agree	Participant 21	
Participant 11	Neither agree nor disagree		

Question 17: I believe the methods I used to teach daily living skills to my students are successful.

Participant 1	Somewhat agree	Participant 12	Somewhat agree
Participant 2	Somewhat agree	Participant 13	
Participant 3	Somewhat agree	Participant 14	Somewhat agree
Participant 4	Somewhat agree	Participant 15	Neither agree nor disagree
Participant 5	Neither agree nor disagree	Participant 16	Strongly agree

Participant 6	Strongly agree	Participant 17	
Participant 7	Somewhat agree	Participant 18	
Participant 8	Somewhat agree	Participant 19	
Participant 9	Somewhat agree	Participant 20	
Participant 10	Somewhat agree	Participant 21	
Participant 11	Somewhat agree		

APPENDIX C. RECRUITMENT LETTER

Dear Teachers,

I am a current graduate student at Purdue University Fort Wayne. I am working on completing my Master's in Special Education and am requesting your assistance with my research, which is a vital component in finishing my degree.

I am inviting you to participate in a needs assessment survey about your knowledge on teaching daily living skills to students with mild disabilities. If you choose to participate in the research, please respond to the questions in the survey linked below. This survey is optional, and all information will be kept confidential. No personal or identifying information will be gained from this survey about you or your students. This survey should take you no longer than ten minutes to complete and will benefit my research. The School principal has given me his approval to conduct this survey.

Participation in this survey is voluntary. You may choose not to participate in the survey, without consequences to you. If you choose to participate in the research, please click this [link](#) to be directed to the survey

I greatly appreciate your time and participation in taking the needs assessment survey. Please do not hesitate to contact me with any questions at (260) 446-6888 or grotm01@pfw.edu. You may also contact my professor, Dr. Rama Cousik, at (260) 481-6003 or cousikr@pfw.edu.

Thank you,

Megan Grothaus

APPENDIX D. SUPPORT LETTER

Date: 11/16/2020

Re: Letter of Cooperation For [REDACTED]

Dear Rama Cousik:

This letter confirms that that I, as an authorized representative of [REDACTED] allow Rama Cousik and Megan Grothaus access to conduct study related activities at the listed site(s), as discussed with the Principal Investigator and briefly outlined below, and which may commence when the Principal Investigator provides documentation of IRB approval for the proposed project.

- **Study Title:** Teaching Daily Living Skills to Middle School Students with Mild Disabilities
- **Study Activities Occurring at this Site:** An electronic survey will be distributed to site employees who are teachers.
- **Site(s) Support:** The school will provide space to conduct study activities, and a computer to receive the survey responses via Qualtrics Purdue and store in a secure folder on Purdue Fort Wayne One drive.
- **Other:** The survey responses will be accessible only to Rama Cousik, PI and Megan Grothaus.
- **Anticipated End Date:** The study is likely to conclude by March 1st 2021.

I understand that any activities involving compliance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), or other applicable regulations at this site must be addressed prior to granting permission to the Purdue University researcher to collect or receive data from the site. I am authorized to make this determination on my organization's behalf.

We understand that [REDACTED]'s participation will only take place during the study's active IRB approval period. All study related activities must cease if IRB approval expires or is suspended. If we have any concerns related to this project, we will contact the Principal Investigator who can provide the information about the IRB approval. For concerns regarding IRB policy or human subject welfare, we may also contact the Purdue University IRB at irb@purdue.edu (www.irb.purdue.edu).

[REDACTED]	November 16, 2020
Signature	Date Signed
[REDACTED]	Principal

APPENDIX E. TIMELINE

<u>Date to be completed</u>	<u>Section</u>
September through October	Continue searching for peer reviewed scholarly articles and take notes on all articles
September 23, 2020	5 page proposal to the committee
Mid October	Survey Questions Finalized
October 21, 2020	IRB Proposal Finalized
End of October 2020	Introduction Completed
November 2020	Participant Recruitment
November 4, 2020	First 5 pages of Literature Review
November 18, 2020	First 5 pages of Methodology
Mid November 2020	Survey/Interviews Distributed
December 2, 2020	Draft of Final Project
December 18, 2020	Final Project
December 2020	Collect all data from surveys
January 2021	Organize and begin data analysis
February 2021	Data Analysis
March 2021	First Draft
April 2021	Final Revision
April 2021	Submission

APPENDIX F. CITI TRAINING COMPLETION CERTIFICATE

		Completion Date 19-Feb-2017 Expiration Date 18-Feb-2022 Record ID 22080037
This is to certify that:		
Megan Grothaus		
Has completed the following CITI Program course:		
Human Research	(Curriculum Group)	
Group 2.Social Behavioral Research Investigators and Key Personnel	(Course Learner Group)	
1 - Basic Course	(Stage)	
Under requirements set by:		
Purdue University		
		 Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative
Verify at www.citiprogram.org/verify/?w425acfd1-bf15-4cb3-9455-2a21987f80d5-22080037		

APPENDIX G. IRB APPROVAL

IRB-2020-1471 - Initial: 1. COVID-19 EXEMPTION MEMO

irb@purdue.edu <irb@purdue.edu>

Wed 11/18/2020 12:28 PM

To:

- mgrothau@purdue.edu <mgrothau@purdue.edu>;
- rcousik@purdue.edu <rcousik@purdue.edu>

This Memo is Generated From the Purdue University Human Research Protection Program System, [Cayuse IRB](#).

*****THIS LETTER IS BEING ISSUED DURING THE FACE TO FACE RESTRICTION ON HUMAN SUBJECTS RESEARCH STUDIES RELATED TO COVID-19. THIS DOCUMENT SERVES AS PROTOCOL APPROVAL FROM THE HRPP/IRB, BUT DOES NOT PERMIT FACE TO FACE RESEARCH UNTIL AN APPROVED UNIVERSITY COVID-19 RESEARCH SPACE SOP PERMITS RESEARCH OPERATIONS. ******

Date: November 18, 2020

PI: RAMA COUSIK

Re: Initial - IRB-2020-1471

Teaching Life Skills to Middle School Students with Mild Disabilities

The Purdue University Human Research Protection Program (HRPP) has determined that the research project identified above qualifies as exempt from IRB review, under federal human subjects research regulations 45 CFR 46.104. The Category for this Exemption is listed below. Protocols exempted by the Purdue HRPP do not require regular renewal. However, the administrative check-in date is November 17, 2023. The IRB must be notified when this study is closed. If a study closure request has not been initiated by this date, the HRPP will request study status update for the record.

Specific notes related to your study are found below.

Decision: Exempt

Category: Category 2.(i). Research that only includes interactions involving educational tests (cognitive, diagnostic, aptitude, achievement), survey procedures, interview procedures, or observation of public behavior (including visual or auditory recording). The information obtained is recorded by the investigator in such a manner that the identity

of the human subjects cannot readily be ascertained, directly or through identifiers linked to the subjects.

Any modifications to the approved study must be submitted for review through [Cayuse IRB](#). All approval letters and study documents are located within the Study Details in [Cayuse IRB](#).

What are your responsibilities now, as you move forward with your research?

Document Retention: The PI is responsible for keeping all regulated documents, including IRB correspondence such as this letter, approved study documents, and signed consent forms for at least three (3) years following protocol closure for audit purposes. Documents regulated by HIPAA, such as Release Authorizations, must be maintained for six (6) years.

Site Permission: If your research is conducted at locations outside of Purdue University (such as schools, hospitals, or businesses), you must obtain written permission from all sites to recruit, consent, study, or observe participants. Generally, such permission comes in the form of a letter from the school superintendent, director, or manager. You must maintain a copy of this permission with study records.

Training: All researchers collecting or analyzing data from this study must renew training in human subjects research via the CITI Program (www.citiprogram.org) every 4 years. New personnel must complete training and be added to the protocol before beginning research with human participants or their data.

Modifications: Change to any aspect of this protocol or research personnel must be approved by the IRB before implementation, except when necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects or others. In such situations, the IRB should still be notified immediately.

Unanticipated Problems/Adverse Events: Unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others, serious adverse events, and noncompliance with the approved protocol must be reported to the IRB immediately through an incident report. When in doubt, consult with the HRPP/IRB.

Monitoring: The HRPP reminds researchers that this study is subject to monitoring at any time by Purdue's HRPP staff, Institutional Review Board, Research Quality Assurance unit, or authorized external entities. Timely cooperation with monitoring procedures is an expectation of IRB approval.

Change of Institutions: If the PI leaves Purdue, the study must be closed or the PI must be replaced on the study or transferred to a new IRB. Studies without a Purdue University PI will

be closed.

Other Approvals: This Purdue IRB approval covers only regulations related to human subjects research protections (e.g. 45 CFR 46). This determination does not constitute approval from any other Purdue campus departments, research sites, or outside agencies. The Principal Investigator and all researchers are required to affirm that the research meets all applicable local/state/ federal laws and university policies that may apply.

If you have questions about this determination or your responsibilities when conducting human subjects research on this project or any other, please do not hesitate to contact Purdue's HRPP at irb@purdue.edu or 765-494-5942. We are here to help!

Sincerely,

Purdue University Human Research Protection Program/ Institutional Review Board
Login to [Cayuse IRB](#)

See Purdue HRPP/IRB Measures in Response to COVID-

19 <https://www.irb.purdue.edu/docs/IRB%20Covid-19%20Recommendations.pdf>

APPENDIX H. RESUME

MEGAN GROTHAUS

SPECIAL EDUCATION TEACHER

OBJECTIVE

My objective, as a special education teacher, is to provide an inclusive educational setting where students know they will always be safe and can be themselves. It is my hope to help all students reach their full potential and be successful in life.

EDUCATION

Purdue University Fort Wayne

August 2018 – May 2021
Master's Degree in Special Education

Indiana University Purdue University Fort Wayne

August 2013 – May 2017
Bachelor's Degree in Human Services
Dual minors in Psychology and Sociology

CERTIFICATE

Adult, Child, & Infant CPR & AED
Suicide Prevention Training

SKILLS

Growth Mindset
Focused on Inclusion
Positive Communication
Detail Oriented
Self-Starter

EXPERIENCE

August 2020 – Present

Essential Skills Teacher • [REDACTED]

Instruct students to achieve their educational goals. Teach focused classes on life skills for success. Worked with teachers and paraprofessionals to give students access to the education they deserve. Collaborate with parents to address their concerns for their student in and out of the classroom.

October 2019 – March 2020

Substitute Teacher • [REDACTED]

Followed plans prepared by classroom teacher to the best of my ability. Improvised plans for school subjects related to what student had been working on in the class when no plans were provided for the day. Provided alternate methods of teaching the same skill when students did not understand.

January 2020 – February 2020

Student Teacher • [REDACTED] • Special Education

Worked under the direct supervision of licensed special education teacher. Conducted reading groups with small groups of students within the same grade level. Worked one on one and in small groups on math, reading, social studies, and writing skills. Collaborated with other teachers, paraprofessionals, administrators, and parents.

September 2019 – November 2019

Practicum Student • [REDACTED]

Assisted with teaching of 6-8th grade students in the Applied Skills classroom. Went with students to general education classes. Led small group activities under the supervision of classroom teacher and paraprofessionals.

March 2017 – September 2019

ABA Therapist • [REDACTED]

Provide 1 on 1 therapy to children with autism under the supervision of a BCBA. Work with children on school readiness skills as well as functional living skills. Collect data on negative behaviors and current program goals. Assist with conducting assessments to create intervention plans. Provide feedback and suggestions to BCBA on current programming.

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