

## Tips for Teachers

- Learn as much as you can about mental retardation. The organizations listed at the end of this publication will help you identify specific techniques and strategies to support the student educationally. We've also listed some strategies below.
- Recognize that you can make an enormous difference in this student's life! Find out what the student's strengths and interests are, and emphasize them. Create opportunities for success.
- If you are not part of the student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, ask for a copy of his or her IEP. The student's educational goals will be listed there, as well as the services and classroom accommodations he or she is to receive. Talk to specialists in your school (e.g., special educators), as necessary. They can help you identify effective methods of teaching this student, ways to adapt the curriculum, and how to address the student's IEP goals in your classroom.
- Be as concrete as possible. Demonstrate what you mean rather than just giving verbal directions. Rather than just relating new information verbally, show a picture. And rather than just showing a picture, provide the student with hands-on materials and experiences and the opportunity to try things out.
- Break longer, new tasks into small steps. Demonstrate the steps. Have the student do the steps, one at a time. Provide assistance, as necessary.
- Give the student immediate feedback.
- Teach the student life skills such as daily living, social skills, and occupational awareness and exploration, as appropriate. Involve the student in group activities or clubs.
- Work together with the student's parents and other school personnel to create and implement an educational plan tailored to meet the student's needs. Regularly share information about how the student is doing at school and at home.