Classroom Strategies and Techniques for Students with Tourette Syndrome

Managing Tourette Syndrome or a Tic Disorder in the classroom requires knowledge and understanding. These are the key elements to creating an accepting and supportive educational environment. When school personnel have information about Tourette Syndrome (TS), students have greater opportunities for success. This resource, while not all-inclusive, provides strategies that will help you develop compassionate and effective supports.

Mutual respect, communication and trust will facilitate effective strategies and techniques, as well as play a positive role in the student’s learning. REMEMBER that students with TS do not want to be out of control and may have difficulty using appropriate strategies “in the moment.”

**For Tic Symptoms**

* **Provide a separate test location** with time limits waived or extended.
* **Educate other students** who come into contact with a classmate with TS. Contact your local chapter to see if a Youth Ambassador is available to provide a peer in-service. If not, a video of a Youth Ambassador presenting to a class is available on the Association website.
* **Provide a safe place**– Some students benefit from a specific place (as well as a back-up in case this is not available), where a student may release symptoms.
* **Give breaks out of the classroom**, as it can be helpful to have a change in settings; e.g., the bathroom, the drinking fountain, a real or made up errand.
* **Brainstorm possible solutions with the student**– if tics are socially inappropriate (spitting, swearing, touching people inappropriately), and unless the child is very young, help the student think of different ways that they can express his or her tic (e.g., a student may suggest or agree to spit into a tissue as a solution).
* In certain instances, students may be receiving specific clinical therapies outside of the school such as Comprehensive Behavioral Intervention for Tics (CBIT) or other types of therapies. Such treatments **may require very different classroom approaches**. In these cases, the child, family, or practitioner would engage the teacher and school directly.