

Don't Just Sit There – Do Something!

A guide to the effective deployment of Teaching Assistants.

The role of the Teaching Assistant is very important. The effective deployment of a TA can make the difference between a child succeeding or failing. Much of the Teaching Assistant's role is directed by the teacher, but an outstanding TA is also intuitive and responds to the needs of the children.

It is important that both teacher and Teaching Assistant work together with the aim that **all the children** in the class are **learning throughout** the lesson. Children should **make progress** through suitably **challenging** activities and **questioning**. Thinking time is good; down time is not.

Teacher	Teaching Assistant
Before the lesson.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tell your Teaching Assistant what the lesson is about and what you expect them to do. Perhaps give them a lesson plan. Have they got suitable resources? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure you know what the lesson is going to be about. Be clear about what you will be expected to do during the lesson. Do you need any resources?
During a lesson introduction.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a group who don't need this introduction – could the TA take a group straight away and get them going sooner? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduce the learning objective and success criteria (what are they learning and what do they need to do?) Check they know how to get on. Get them going quickly.
During 'whole class' or 'carpet' time.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know where you want the Teaching Assistant to be. Place children who might need support so that the Teaching Assistant can get to them easily. Don't expect a TA to keep children focussed when the time is too long or the activity is inappropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Concentrate on the children, not the teacher. You already know what the lesson is about! Sit next to the child or children who find it hard to listen or concentrate. Focus children, don't distract them. Model the behaviour you expect from the children.
Working with a child or small group.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Make sure the TA knows where to work with the child or group and what resources they will need. Ensure that the TA knows why they are working with a child or group and what support to give. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Know where you will be working with the child or group and what resources you will need. Know why you are working with the child or group – What support are you giving and why?
Helping children with their work.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communicate the learning objective with the TA (this is not the same as completing the task!) Communicate the success criteria with the TA – what will show that the children have learned something? Make sure the TA knows that learning takes precedence over completion of task. Have 'next steps' for learning available to the TA – they might need them. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask questions to check the child understands. Encourage the children to answer rather than answering for them. Make sure the child does the work, rather than you. Don't worry about the child finishing the task – it is more important that they understand the bit they have done. Ask questions to move children on. Go onto next steps if learning is secure.
During plenaries or a summing up.	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is there a group whose needs are different - could the TA give a differentiated level of plenary to a group? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Let the children tell you what they have learned or the problems they encountered. Use difficulties or misunderstandings as an opportunity to learn even more. Introduce next steps for learning.