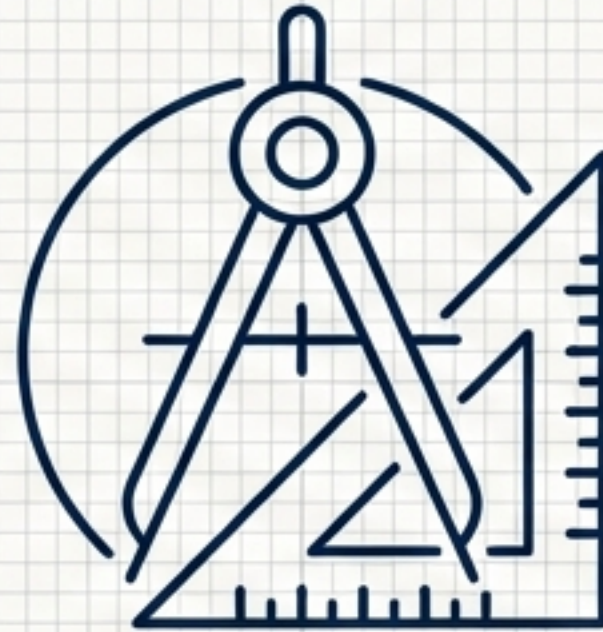


Building the Inclusive Classroom: A Guide to Supporting Students with HIE

An Empowerment Guide for Educators





Educators play a pivotal role in creating a future of possibility for every learner.

This guide is designed to empower you with the understanding, strategies, and collaborative tools to build a classroom where students with Hypoxic-Ischemic Encephalopathy (HIE) don't just attend, but truly thrive. We will move from understanding the foundation to designing a blueprint for success.



HIE is a brain injury from oxygen deprivation at birth with widely varying effects.



Hypoxic-Ischemic Encephalopathy (HIE) occurs when there is a limited flow of oxygen to the brain before, during, or shortly after birth. The impact is unique to each child, ranging from mild developmental delays to significant physical and cognitive impairments. Understanding this diversity is the first step toward effective support.

Mild Delays

Significant
Impairments

Students with HIE navigate a unique set of daily challenges in the classroom.



Mobility Issues

Limited motor control or difficulty with movement. This can make tasks like handwriting slower and more challenging.



Communication Barriers

Challenges in expressing needs or understanding complex verbal instructions.



Sensory Sensitivities

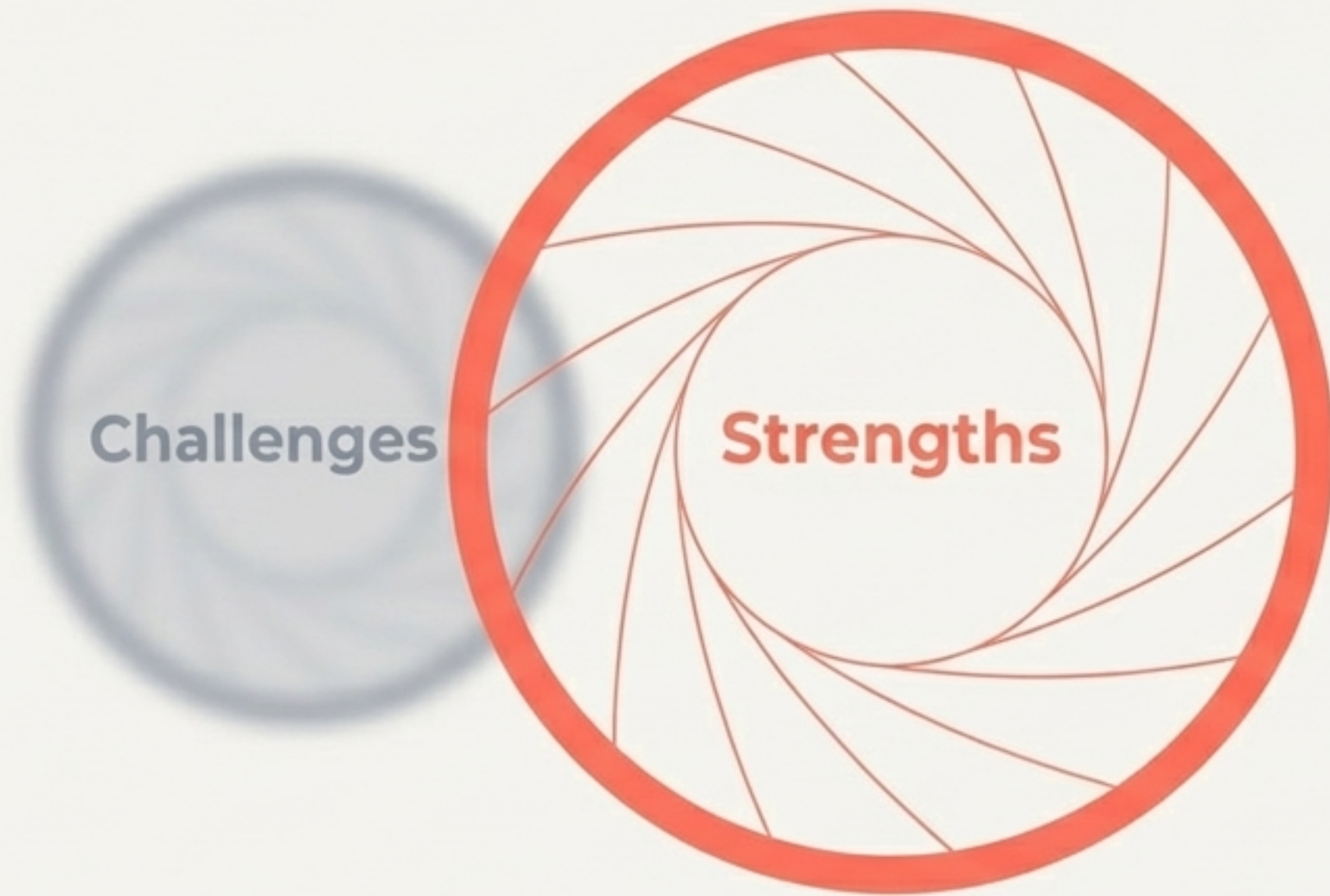
Discomfort or distraction from classroom noise, bright lighting, or certain textures.



Learning Retention


Struggles with memory, processing speed, or grasping abstract concepts.

Our goal is a transformative shift from focusing on challenges to unlocking potential.



While students with HIE may face cognitive delays or motor difficulties, they also bring immense **resilience, creativity**, and diverse perspectives to the classroom.

A **strength-based approach** focuses on what a student *can* do, building confidence and fostering a true love of learning.



“An inclusive classroom is more than just a learning space—it’s a community where every child feels valued and supported.”

This blueprint provides the plans for building an inclusive classroom.



1. Designing the Environment

Strategies for adapting the physical and sensory layout of your classroom.



2. Adapting Your Methods

Techniques for instruction, assignment design, and technology integration.



3. Building Your Team

A plan for collaborating effectively with families and specialists.

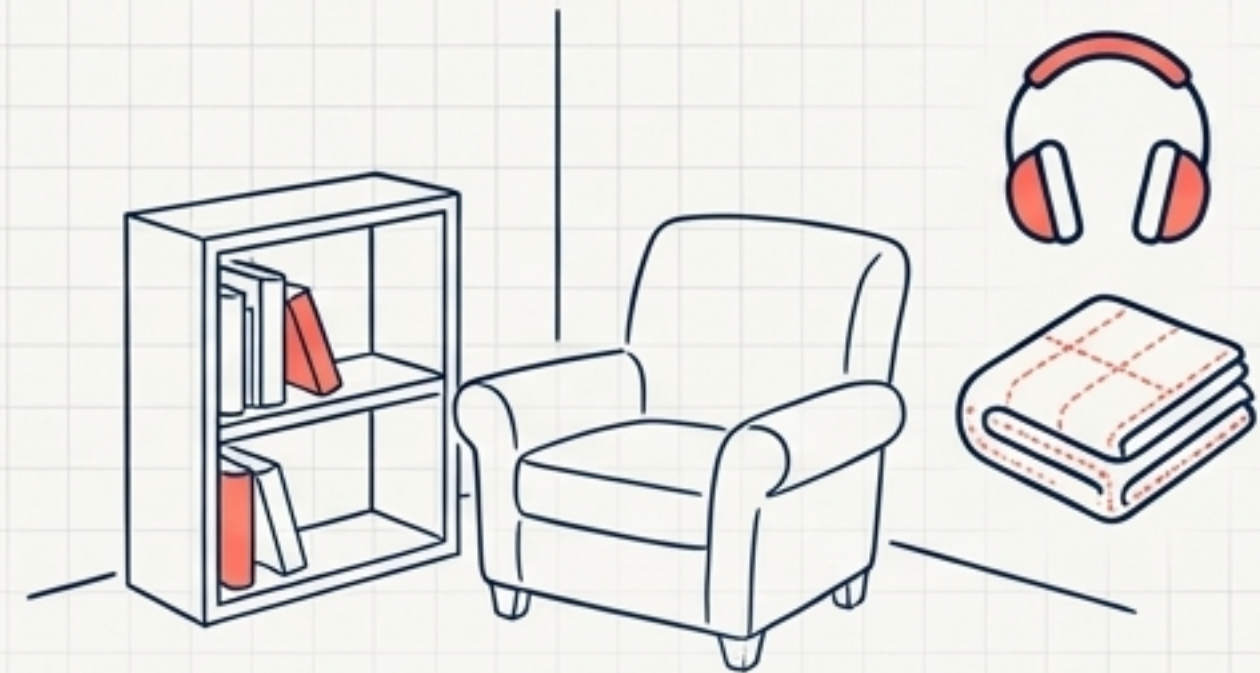
A thoughtfully designed classroom environment removes physical and sensory barriers.

Flexible Layouts



- Ensure wide, clutter-free pathways for mobility devices.
- Provide varied seating options like supportive chairs or adjustable-height desks.

Sensory-Friendly Spaces



- Create quiet corners with tools like noise-canceling headphones or weighted blankets.
- Use neutral, calm lighting and minimize loud, sudden sounds.

Creative teaching adaptations and technology empower diverse learning styles.

Adapted Teaching Methods



- Use visual aids like charts, diagrams, and pictures to reinforce verbal instructions.



- Break complex tasks and projects into smaller, more manageable steps to build momentum and reduce stress.

Leverage Technology



- Utilize text-to-speech software to support students with reading challenges.



- Explore educational apps designed to promote learning, communication, and independence.

Strength-based teaching integrates student passions to build confidence and engagement.

1



2



3



Observe Interests

Actively identify what a student excels at or enjoys, whether it's storytelling, problem-solving, music, or art.

Incorporate Passions

Intentionally design lessons and activities that integrate these interests to boost motivation.

Adapt Assignments

Offer flexible ways for students to demonstrate knowledge.

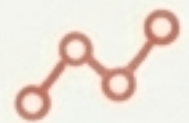
Example: Allow an oral presentation or a digital slideshow instead of a traditional handwritten report for a student with motor challenges.

Strong partnerships with families and specialists create a consistent network of support.

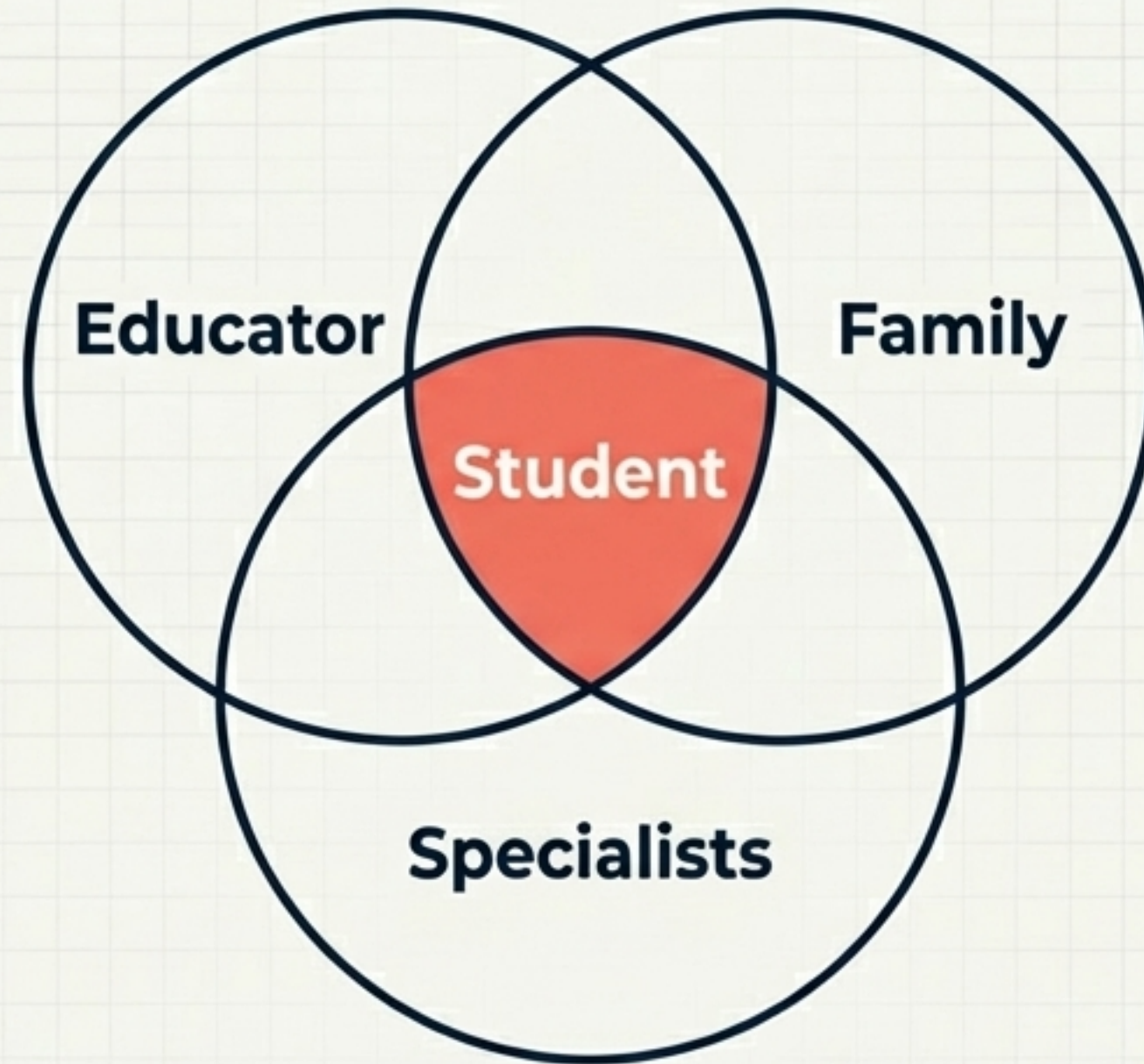
With Families



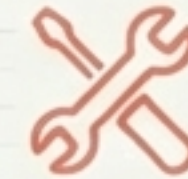
- Establish regular, open lines of communication (e.g., progress notes, check-ins).



- Actively leverage parental insights—they are the experts on their child and can share strategies that work at home.



With Specialists



- Consult with occupational and speech therapists for tailored tools and techniques.



- Use Individualized Education Program (IEP) meetings to align all classroom and therapeutic goals.

Educators foster trust by acknowledging the challenges families face as they advocate for their child.



Families of children with HIE often navigate complex educational, medical, and sometimes legal systems. While teachers are not legal experts, they can provide powerful emotional reassurance.

Creating a classroom environment where parents feel heard and supported encourages them to explore all available resources with confidence.

An inclusive culture is built through intentional routines that cultivate empathy.



Cultivate Peer Support

Implement buddy systems, cooperative learning projects, and have open discussions about kindness and differences.



Use Inclusive Routines

Design visual schedules so everyone knows what to expect. Assign meaningful classroom roles based on individual strengths.



Celebrate All Success

Make a point to highlight and celebrate achievements and milestones for every student, no matter how small, to reinforce a positive and growth-oriented environment.

Your Master Blueprint for an Inclusive Classroom

ENVIRONMENT



Flexible
Layouts

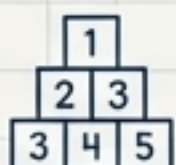


Sensory-
Friendly
Spaces

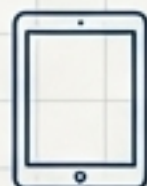
METHODS



Visual
Aids



Break
Down Tasks



Leverage
Tech

APPROACH



Observe
Interests

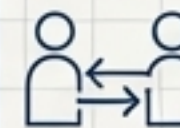


Incorporate
Passions



Adapt
Assignments

TEAM



Partner
with
Families

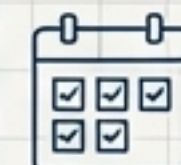


Coordinate
with
Specialists

CULTURE



Peer
Support



Inclusive
Routines



Celebrate
Success

Inclusive practices empower every student to unlock their full potential and **shine**.

A classroom that embraces diverse needs and fosters collaboration benefits all students. By combining knowledge with intentional design and a commitment to community, you transform your classroom into a space of growth, possibility, and belonging.



*Together, we can create classrooms that celebrate diversity, champion inclusion, and empower every student to **shine**.*