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Top 10 tips for new teaching assistants

At [Axcis](#), we help many people to find work as teaching assistants (TAs) in schools. But if you're new to the role, it may seem a little daunting at first – so what tips can help you?

Here are our key tips for new TAs.

1. Be friendly and approachable – this might sound obvious, but you need to be friendly, supportive and approachable. This applies to both fellow staff and students. Think about the impression you are creating... being approachable and proactive is a huge part of being an effective TA.
2. Find out about the students you're working with – to be an effective teaching assistant, you'll need to find out as much as possible about the students you are supporting. This might include reading their Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCP's), speaking to class teachers and the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO) to figure out what motivates them, what stresses them and how you might best provide support.
3. Enhance your special educational needs or disabilities (SEND) knowledge. If the students you work with have special educational needs (and it's likely that they will), then make sure you understand the conditions they have. There is lots of information out there about types of special needs and how to effectively provide support so read up if you want to do the best job possible. Our [SEND resources](#) section of the blog is a great place to start! At Axcis, we also run regular CPD training events which may help you. Check out our [events diary](#) to find out what is coming up.
4. Find out about the school behaviour policy – if you are supporting children who exhibit challenging behaviour, you'll need to be familiar with the school policy on behaviour management. There may be a whole-school approach which you should be using. It is also worth speaking with the classroom teacher about this to find out what their advice is.

5. Work closely with parents and carers – guidance regarding EHCPs tells us that parents, carers and other healthcare professionals should be working closely together to support children with SEND. You should make a point of finding out how your role plays into this and communicate with other professionals and parents as appropriate about the progress and development of the children you are working with.
6. Be prepared to help with personal care and medical needs where necessary – some teaching assistants will support children who have personal care and medical needs. This might include helping with feeding, going to the toilet or administering medication. Do your best to go into school with the mindset that you'll tackle any task required with positivity and enthusiasm.
7. Attend meetings and training – schools may ask you to sit in on meetings or attend training sessions. Even if you feel that this is outside of your contracted hours/job description, you should try to attend these sessions. Not only could they provide you with useful skills and information to enhance your own career, they could also help you to ultimately provide better, more effective support for the children you work with.
8. Be flexible – although a school may hire you with a specific child/group of children in mind, you could be asked at any time to alter your remit and help elsewhere in the school. You'll need to remain positive when faced with changes like this as schools are under constant pressure to deploy staff in the most effective way possible, and this may include moving you around on a moment's notice.
9. Go above and beyond – doing things outside of your contracted hours, such as helping with sports clubs, school plays or musical performances are what will make you stand out from the crowd.
10. Stay calm! The last tip I'd like to offer is to remain calm. Schools can be stressful environments at times, and it can be easy to allow yourself to become stressed. This can negatively affect both your own performance and the progress of the children you work with.