



1. Do not call them kids. Our athletes range from age 2 to 78+!
2. Think about using simpler language and slowing the pace at which you speak down a little bit. Make sure you are clear. Our athletes have an intellectual disability of varying degrees, but they are not all necessarily all hard of hearing – speaking louder won't make them understand you better.
3. Many of our athletes need to know ahead of time what will happen. As you go through your procedures, describe what you will be doing now, and perhaps the next one or two steps that will follow as well.
4. Treat them as you would your peers. Do not speak down to them. They love a good joke, tease or challenge just like we do.
5. Draw boundaries. Do not allow them to get away with bad behavior. This is when you need to be the authority figure – they will be respectful.
6. Ask them their thoughts and allow them to answer – don't put words in their mouths.
7. Ask if you can help them before acting and assuming they actually need help.
8. Expect to get a lot of questions. Many of our athletes are very curious about what you are doing and also just about you. If the questions get too invasive, it's okay to say "I'm not comfortable with answering that."
9. Have fun and enjoy their candor! Be prepared for their bluntness. Our athletes are very honest.
10. Be enthusiastic, upbeat and professional. And if it's overwhelming, it's also okay to ask for a break to reset where your mind is.