



The Inclusive Schooling Co-Teaching Planning Playbook

*50 Practical Ways Teams
Make Time for Planning*

HOW TO USE THIS PLAYBOOK

Co-teaching works best when teachers have time to collaborate. But in most schools, schedules are packed with instruction, meetings, supervision duties, and unexpected interruptions. Finding time to plan together can feel like one more challenge in an already full day.

The teams that make co-teaching work don't wait for perfect schedules. They find small, practical ways to build collaboration into their routines.

This playbook brings together **50 practical strategies used by co-teaching** teams to make time for planning, communication, and problem-solving.

Some ideas involve small scheduling adjustments. Others rely on **simple routines, quick check-ins, or shared digital tools.**

You don't need to use all 50.

Instead, consider this playbook a **menu of possibilities.** Choose one or two strategies that fit

CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR TEAMS OR PLCS

Leaders and facilitators can also use this playbook to start discussions about how schools support co-teaching.

Consider asking teams:

- Which of these strategies already happens in our school?
- Which strategies would be easiest to try?
- Which ones would require leadership support?
- How might better planning time improve student access and participation?
- What would one additional hour of collaboration each week allow your team to do?

“Try This First”

If you're not sure where to start, try one of these simple routines:

- Schedule one 30-minute weekly planning block
- Hold a 5-minute check-in twice a week
- Use a shared planning document
- Identify one lesson each week to co-plan together

10 WAYS TO DECIDE WHAT ACTUALLY NEEDS A MEETING

1. *Use the Talk vs. Type rule, if it's quicker to say than type, meet.*
2. *Save meetings for student problem-solving conversations.*
3. *Use comments in shared documents instead of meetings.*
4. *Keep a shared planning "parking lot" list.*
5. *Tag urgent items with "urgent" or "priority."*
6. *Record 60-second voice messages instead of scheduling a meeting.*
7. *Use AI tools to draft lesson ideas before meeting.*
8. *Bring student work examples to focus discussion.*
9. *Use a weekly meeting agenda template.*
10. *End every meeting with one clear next step.*

10 WEEKLY PLANNING HABITS THAT MAKE CO-TEACHING WORK

1. *Protect one weekly planning block.*
2. *Schedule two five-minute check-ins during the week.*
3. *Plan the next five days, not the entire unit.*
4. *Start with the hardest lesson.*
5. *Divide preparation tasks between teachers.*
6. *Use a shared lesson template.*
7. *Plan differentiation together.*
8. *Review student work for five minutes each week.*
9. *Create a backup strategy for lessons.*
10. *Celebrate one small win each week.*

10 WAYS SCHOOLS CAN HELP TEAMS FIND PLANNING TIME

1. *Align planning periods for co-teachers.*
2. *Protect one weekly collaboration block.*
3. *Use part of PD time for team planning.*
4. *Provide occasional substitute coverage.*
5. *Reduce supervision duties.*
6. *Create grade-level planning teams.*
7. *Encourage short weekly check-ins.*
8. *Provide shared digital planning platforms.*
9. *Recognize planning as instructional work.*
10. *Ask teams what actually helps.*

10 CREATIVE WAYS CO-TEACHERS CARVE OUT TIME

1. *Plan during independent student work time.*
2. *Meet for 10 minutes before school.*
3. *Hold hallway planning huddles.*
4. *Combine classrooms occasionally.*
5. *Invite a specialist to lead a lesson.*
6. *Use specials time strategically.*
7. *Walk and talk while planning.*
8. *Use advisory or homeroom time.*
9. *Plan during assemblies or school events.*
10. *Replace long meetings with short virtual ones.*

10 WAYS TEAMS STAY CONNECTED WITHOUT MEETING

1. *Share a digital planning folder.*
2. *Comment directly in lesson plans.*
3. *Use messaging apps for quick updates.*
4. *Send photos of student work.*
5. *Record quick voice notes.*
6. *Use collaborative whiteboards.*
7. *Maintain a shared to-do list.*
8. *Use AI tools for lesson brainstorming.*
9. *Schedule five-minute video check-ins.*
10. *Use a shared weekly planning template.*

TURNING IDEAS INTO ACTION

Use the questions below as a quick conversation starter to help your team turn ideas from this playbook into action.

1. Where can we protect time to collaborate?

Identify one existing moment during the week that could become a consistent planning check-in.

2. What planning conversations matter most?

Decide which topics require face-to-face time and which can be handled through shared documents or quick messages.

3. How will we stay connected during the week?

Choose one simple routine that helps you communicate regularly.

4. What is getting in the way of planning together?

Name one barrier and identify a small adjustment that could make collaboration easier.

5. What is one strategy we will try this week?

Select one idea from this playbook and test it for the next couple of weeks.