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The Parent Connection: Creating a Partnership Between Home and School: A Review of the Literature

By Candy Allen

The relationship between school and home is often an awkward one. Parents are misjudged, teachers are misunderstood, and expectations at both ends are different. Throw in the challenges of special education, add a dose of miscommunication, and you have a recipe for a challenging school year! What can be done to prevent this and create a successful, working partnership between home and school? This paper explores five published articles that address different aspects of the parent perspective and involvement with hopes of shedding light on this essential piece to building a successful, collaborative relationship between home and school.

Reasons for Parent Dissatisfaction

There are many reasons why parents become dissatisfied with the educational system. Parents are found to be dissatisfied when teachers and school personnel have a limited understanding of their child's disability and the challenges that they face. Starr & Foy (2012) state that a "lack of teacher knowledge about the nature of Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) and effective interventions have been found to be major contributors to parent dissatisfaction" (p. 208). According to Starr & Foy, parents feel that teachers lack professional development training on ASD and behavior management techniques. As the numbers of students identified with ASD grows, so will the need for training that is based on the newest research.

Another contributing factor to parent dissatisfaction is the belief that there is ineffective communication and collaboration between the home and school. Valle (2011) discusses how in the past parents have been considered "passive recipients" of their child's educational information instead of a "contributing" member of the team (p. 186). Parents have also felt left out of the process because of special education terminology and the "incomprehensible jargon" that is used at meetings (p.186). This is a common problem with parents and unless they are truly knowledgeable of the special education language they are left feeling like they are not an active participant in the process.

According to the study by Mandic, Rudd, Hehir and Acevedo-Garcia (2012), parent understanding of the Procedural Safeguards is limited. The Procedural Safeguards, part of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 2004, are in place to ensure that parents have a right to be a part of any decisions regarding the education of their child. However, the readability of the written language in this lengthy document is at "excessively high levels" (p.200). Many parents are not able to comprehend this written material. This study suggests that parents may not be aware of their rights and choices they have if they are dissatisfied. This can also add to the disconnect between home and school.

Parents of children with disabilities face many challenges in their daily lives. Brown, Ouellette-Kuntz, Hunter, Kelley, Cobigo and Lam (2010) studied how the child's functioning level impacts a parent's perception of unmet needs, showing that children with ASD with both lower and higher functioning levels left parents with higher levels of unmet needs. Children with ASD with lower functioning levels are much more challenging because of their intense behavior needs which creates greater stresses on the family. These behavior challenges also affect the school environment causing stress and lack of understanding between the home and school. Children with higher functioning levels also leave parents with unmet needs because these children are more independent and may not be "receiving the support necessary to fully participate with typical peers in educational, social and other activities." (p.1302). This also affects the parent's perspective on how the school system is supporting their child.

Starr and Foy (2012) found in their research that a teacher's inability to manage student behavior led to increased dissatisfaction. Their findings also suggest that students with ASD may be suspended from school for behavioral issues at a higher rate than for students without disabilities. This points to the need for better awareness and understanding of ASD and behavioral strategies that should be used with these students.

Reasons for Parent Satisfaction

In the study by Starr & Foy (2012), teacher awareness and understanding of disabilities had a positive impact on a family's perception. Parents need to know that their child's teachers understand the many dynamics of disabilities and how it directly affects their child. Teachers need to continually learn about disabilities and improve their use of strategies and techniques to work with their student's unique needs. Paraprofessionals working with students with disabilities also need updated training to assist them in their daily work in the classroom. Asperger syndrome can be difficult to visually see in a student because they look very typical. Parents felt that when staff were aware of the diagnosis of Asperger's, they were more tolerant and helpful in creating a successful learning environment for their child (Starr & Foy, 2012). Regardless of the disability, there needs to be an appreciation of the challenges that families face and how teachers can assist.

When parents feel that there is effective communication and collaboration between the home and school, then parent satisfaction is improved. In research by Burke (2013) there is a direct correlation between family involvement and the success of students in school. Her findings suggest that training special education advocates to assist parents in their understanding of their rights, the terminology and ability to advocate for the student improves the success of the student and the collaborative environment between home and school.

How to Improve the Home/School Relationship

The literature suggests many strategies that can improve the home/school relationship. School staff needs to be conscientious of the use of special education "jargon" and be mindful that the parents might not be understanding the terminology (Valle, 2011). ESE Specialists should take the time to explain the Procedural Safeguards to the parents. Helping parents to understand this process will help them feel like everyone is on the same team for their child. Teachers and administrators need to encourage parent participation in the development of their child's IEP and recognize that parents are the best source of information. In her research, Burke states that when there is "significant parental involvement" in the IEP process the home/school relationship is improved and the child is "more likely to receive a free, appropriate public education (FAPE)" (p. 226).

Parents are their child's first teacher and have valuable input into effective strategies to use. Parents appreciate when teachers are interested and responsive to their perspective. This builds collaboration between home and school, and benefits the student because teachers are receptive to parent input regarding their child's abilities (Starr & Foy, 2012).

Teachers need to be more sensitive to the challenges that parents have faced with their child through the years. Their child's disability impacts much of their daily home life and whether it is functional levels, or the behavior needs of a child with ASD, the parents are struggling to make it all work. Teachers should not assume that behavior difficulties are all "discipline related" (Starr & Foy, 2012) and that upon analysis the behaviors can be attributed to a dynamic related to the child's autism. Proper training in behavior management techniques is important for both teachers and paraprofessionals and gaining a better understanding in this area will help lead to parent satisfaction.

One important factor in successful parent/school relationships is having staff that are "caring and conscientious" (Starr & Foy, 2012). Understandably, parents are more comfortable with their child's placement when they feel that the staff truly cares for their child. Trust and appreciation of each other's role in the life of the child helps to build confidence and respect in the teacher and the school.

Conclusion

Although the articles reviewed were presented with different approaches, they all point to the need for improved collaboration and understanding between parents and school. When parents are feeling left out of the process, chances are other areas will begin to show signs of disconnect. There needs to be a comprehensive approach to improving parent involvement which should include (1) teacher professional development on disabilities and behavior management strategies to improve their professional practice, (2) promoting a caring and conscientious climate at the school, (3) a desire to understand and appreciate the parent perspective, and (4) taking time to ensure that parents understand the terminology used and their rights for their child. When parents are involved and feel that they are part of their child's educational team both sides benefit and the child has the best opportunity for success.

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Positive Behavior Intervention to Improve Study Skills

By Janine Castro

Educators, and all school personnel, who are involved in a child's education, have a common goal; which is to improve the academic and behavior performance of all students. There are plenty of new strategies, and approaches that teachers can use daily to help students who struggle with behavior and academics. Many of these approaches include positive behavior interventions to improve students' study skills (McKevitt & Braaksma, 2008). Study skills are an important factor in students' success, especially as these students' progress from middle school to high school.

For some students who having behavioral and academic issues, academic success is impacted by their lack of basic academic skills (National Association of School Psychologist, 2002). Some students show behavior problems that may consume teachers and schools' resources tremendously (Sugai & Horner, 2002). Students who are confident in their academic abilities are more likely to stay on task and less likely to engage in disruptive behaviors (Alderman, 2008). Basic academic skills can be strengthened by implementing interventions focused on improving study skills (Yaeger & Walton, 2011).

Positive behavior interventions in and out of the classroom environment may reduce the behavior problems and their consequences that vary from getting distracted and causing disruption in the classroom and being excluded from the instructional time. Educators understand that study skills are part of the learning process that it may take students with disabilities years to fully grasp the process. The use of positive interventions may improve study skills and make the learning process easier.

The purpose of this study was to explore the effect of positive behavior supports on the study skills of students identified as EBD, IND and SLD. Educators understand the need for positive behavior support that may provide students with an easier transition in the learning process and reduce negative behaviors that impede learning the necessary skills to use the instructional time in a better way, this study may help them to be successful in the classrooms.

This study was conducted in a Miami Dade County Public Schools high school setting with special education students who were on a Special Diploma track and were using a modified curriculum and accommodations as stated in their Individual Educational Plans (IEPs). There were 15 total students in Grades 9-12 in the class and eight of them were chosen for the action research study. Their ages ranged from 14-22 years old. Most of the students' disabilities were Intellectual Disabilities (IND), Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD), and Emotional or Behavioral Disabilities (EBD). Two students were also identified as having Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), and one with Orthopedic Impediment (OI), and another one was English Language Learner (ELL).

In order to reinforce students' positive behavior, the teacher implemented different reward activities like: breakfast at the school cafeteria, a board game day, a movie day, an extra credit day, which meant students who made an effort to behave well and finished their classwork, received their grade plus extra credit in their classes for that day. They also received stickers, certificates, positive notes to parents, and tokens.

The special education teacher was responsible for collecting the data. The school principal was informed about this study being conducted at the school site.

Review of the Literature

There are several studies which show positive behavior intervention being successfully used in the classroom to reinforce student performance in the classroom. Using these interventions, students may improve their study skills. One of the most important components of this strategy is focusing on the students' positive aspects instead of the negative ones.

Teachers face many challenges, not only the responsibility they have as educators but the challenges of educating and managing students who have emotional and behavior disorders (EBD). According to the U.S. Department of Education, in 2012-2013, the U.S. served students ages 3 through 21; about 6% of those students were identified as EBD.

Positive Behavior Support: Strategies for Teachers

The use of positive behavior support (PBS) is a proactive approach to support and help students with challenging behavior. Before teachers initiate any PBS plan, there must be a collaborative team, a group of people who will support a student, gathering and evaluating information about the student's behavior, the team needs to be sure that parents and teachers view a proposed plan as appropriate and reasonable. There are many people who handle discipline trying to eliminate challenging behavior without looking or finding why the behavior occurs, PBS is different, because is based in finding out not only what, where, when and how the challenging behavior happens but also why. PBS purpose is not to eliminate the behavior; rather it is to understand why the student is behaving this way and how to replace it with a new desired behavior that will accomplish the same goal. (Mayer & Sulzer-Azaroff, 1996; Walker, Colvin, & Ramsey, 1995) There are some aspects involved in the use of these interventions; the first one is identifying the purpose of challenging behavior, second is teaching students the appropriate responses and when this happens reward the positive behavior. (Durand & Crimmins, 1992) The main goal is to minimize any disruption caused in the learning environment that will avoid students develop the necessary study skills they need in order to succeed in the school setting.

PBS is focused on classroom management, and the use of any strategy teachers can apply in their classes to make it possible for children to behave and learn. One of the biggest author's concerns is the teacher's recognition that a child behavior is determined by the teacher behavior. The use of rewarding principles to get the desired students behavior in some cases will not give any solution to the problem, thus the behavior can be changed if first, teachers reward appropriate behavior and withdraw reward following inappropriate behavior. Second, if the first method is not successful, the rewards should be strengthening, and finally if method fails the inappropriate behavior should be punished while the appropriate one is being rewarding.

Peer Influence in Children and Adolescents

Research in this area, supports the theory that peer pressure and relationships influence the behavior in youth. Research has found the desired behavior may be offset by unexpected peer influence in different settings. Youth behavior becomes more deviant under unrestricted interaction with deviant peers, (Thornberry & Krohn, 1997). Deviant youth are placed in settings where they are in direct contact with other deviant youth, which increases the undesired behavior.

The vast amount of literature researching the role of unusual peer influence on inappropriate behavior in adolescent lends support to the hypothesis that trusting company with deviant peers considerably increases the probabilities of individual delinquency for at least some kinds of adolescents. Further research needs to be conducting in this area as there is a need to understand in which conditions this occurs, and in which conditions peer influence is mostly produced and the interventions that need to be used to specifically manage youth behavior in groups. There is plenty of questions that need to be answered and still too much to learn about how and why deviant peers contribute to the development of delinquency, empirical evidence based on random assignment studies suggests that such processes, could, in fact, occur (Dishion & Andrews, 1995; Feldman, 1992) A conscious examination of intervention programs may provide a particularly rich context for better understanding the function of these process and how to intervene to avoid them.

The Impact of Positive Behavior Intervention Training for Teachers

The impact of positive behavior intervention focuses in the relationship between behavior management and students' achievement, and the importance of training teachers in positive behavior intervention techniques. The study was conducted in three K-8 schools with similar student populations and the three of them are characterized by low academic achievement, a high percentage of novice teachers and high teachers request for transfers or retirement

The relationship between behavior management and student achievement has been studied for a long time. Teachers' education programs must recognize the importance of training new teachers in positive behavior intervention techniques. Novice teachers show lack of techniques to create an effective learning environment and maximize students' performance, even though some teachers may have knowledge about what strategies to use they may not know how or when to implement them. The basic need of a beginner teacher is to understand that the deficit or excessive behavior interventions might stablish norms that can design the whole class and individual intervention will reinforce the desired behavior in the classroom improving students' performance. Teacher organization which includes daily routines is also essential to promote discipline and encourage students to learn and function in school setting (Polloway, Patton & Serna, 2001). To give a solution to one of the biggest problem in the schools, disruption of instructional time due to behavior problems, all school staff and personnel who are involved in the children education was trained focusing on behavior management procedures and the use of positive behavior intervention. Plenty of techniques were taught in this program, such as: identifying classroom rules and procedures, reinforces, positive interventions, rewards, helping teachers to change their approaches. The program empowers teachers to create classroom with a safe, and friendly environment where children will feel secure and self-confident to challenge themselves and go over their hard academic assignments and change the inappropriate behavior. In a liable classroom teacher will use positive behavior interventions to maintain the learning process in a consistent manner.

As a result of professional development program, great changes in the three schools were noted, Data shows students behavior change dramatically; teachers treated children with boundless respect, faculty showed less stress, team work among teachers and paraprofessionals functioned in a more regularly and productive manner, sub teachers noticed the positive changes in students' behavior, the whole school communicate, participate and interact in the program.

The findings in this program, which is the impact of positive behavior intervention, proved what teachers and researchers have mention about teaching in a classroom, that classroom management is a requisite to create successful students academically and the use of less time in correcting disruptive behavior will result in the use of more time for academic instruction, the findings in this study is supported in the literature: "Effective classroom management is required if students are to benefit from any form of instruction, especially in inclusive classrooms where students display a wide range of diversity [Jones & Jones, 2001)]" (Smith, Polloway, Patton & Dowdy, 2004, p. 42).

The use of this school-wide approach and the training of all the personnel have impacted in a great manner the school climate and improve students' behavior, allowing teachers use their time to help students accomplish their goals and be successful.

Teachers' referrals were basically due to poor academic performance, but half also include misbehavior as one main reason for referral. Teachers referring students having a disability and being eligible to receive special education services was about 90% (Gottlieb, Gottlieb & Trongone, 1991) Teachers referrals were not distributed evenly, as one eighth of the teachers made two-thirds of all referrals (Gottlieb & Weinberg, 2000). Principals and administrators' motivation was if teachers were taught effective behavior management strategies, they would use them and eventually reduce the numbers of referral and there would be a tremendous reduction in the special education population in the schools.

Factors That May Improve Student Motivation

One of the key factors educators target as a very important one is motivation. During the learning process, very few things can be done if students are not motivated; motivation occurs when these five ingredients are together: student, teacher, content, method/process, and environment (Olson, 1997; Williams & Williams, 2011). Several questions may appear when teaching is in process, which of these ingredients to use? When? How, what is the best strategy to motivate a student? The importance of choosing and trying not all, but the appropriate ones is based on teacher's self-observation, educators could watch their behavior to understand and use motivation in a better way.

Some theories explain why people are motivated by reward, stimulus, influence, incentive, or just the desire that cause a person to act, desire to increase power, prestige, recognition, and the overheads or effort to achieve results (DuBrin, 2008)

A motivated student is easy to recognize as participates in the classroom activities, is engaged most of the time, answer questions promptly and seems to be happy in the classroom setting. The five key ingredients that impacts student's motivation work together, are correlated and maximize students' performance. Teachers must be prepared, knowledgeable, well trained, dedicated, and inspirational. The content must be accurate, and reach each one of the students' needs in the present and future also. The process must be interesting, beneficial, encouraging, and provide students with the tools they need in real life. The environment needs to be as personalized as much as possible, to empower students in a positive way. To optimize motivation students must be exposed to motivating experiences and variable on a regular basis, which means students should have different sources of motivation in their daily learning process in the classroom (Palmer, 2007; Debnath, 2005; D'Souza & Maheshwari, 2010)

Literature about students' motivation also mentioned, the more comfortable students feel in themselves and with their classmates, the easier is to concentrate and achieve their goals, this way emotional literacy has a positive impact on students' achievement, behavior, and workplace efficiency. Teacher can create and model essential skills and learning behaviors including self-awareness, empathy, managing feelings, motivation, and social skills, which means instructors should stand firm, relate positively with students, and provide support, constantly self-improving and observing techniques that should not be only pedagogical but also on the social and emotional dynamics of the student-teacher relationship (MacGrath, 2005; Lammers & Smith, 2008; Wightin, Liu, and ROvai, 2008)

The studies discussed in this literature review support the use of positive behavior strategies for students who are identified as EBD, lack motivation, or present consistent behavioral problems that disrupt classroom instruction. All the strategies to motivate students must be used as often as possible, there is not a unique strategy to motivate and encourage students, and there is not a single and complete theory that explains it. New understanding, new ideas can be translated into the classroom, and as it was mention before the five key components must be functioning all the time during the teaching and learning process in order to motivate students. Another important aspect is educators must observe themselves and evaluate to promote motivation (Williams & Williams, 2011).

Action Plan (methods)

Name: ███████████	**School**: ███████████

Research Question(s):

How effective is the use of positive behavior interventions to improve reading skills for students with special needs?

Intervention: *Describe the intervention you will implement to accomplish the outcomes you seek for your students?*

The use of positive behavior intervention may help students improve their ability to focus on tasks and improve their study skills.

Before implementing this intervention, the teacher had to find out why the behavior occurred, and when and how the challenging behavior happened. Then students were taught the appropriate response (desired behavior) and rewarded for the positive behavior. When the student reached his or her main goal, which was to minimize any disruption caused in the classroom or learning environment, and focus on their study skills, the intervention continued and students were reward with verbal praise, stickers, certificates, positive notes, and tokens to reinforce the students' positive behavior.

The use of positive reinforcement intervention was implemented during instructional time in the classroom for nine weeks.

Data Collection: *Describe the specific approaches you will use to collect data before, during, and/or after your intervention. You need to "triangulate" your data; thus, you need at least 3 different data sources (e.g., tests, observations, interviews). Also, be specific about what each data source measures (e.g., you are using a test that measures reading comprehension or using observation to tally bullying behaviors). Next, describe the type of data that you obtain with each source (e.g., scores from a test of subtraction facts or a frequency of bully events observed).*

Data Source 1: Before applying my intervention, I met with the students' teacher (three teachers in my unit) to analyze students behavior, especially the ones who had a serious problem. After identifying the students with behavior problems, I gave the class a worksheet to be discussed in the classroom asking about the consequences of having a disruptive behavior, and asked them to express themselves about it. During instructional time, I observed them and took notes of when and how the disruptive behavior started. The intervention was implemented for six weeks, after this period of time, based on teacher's observation; students behavior was compare and find out if improvements were made.

Data: Students behavior was observed and data was collected to determine if there was an improvement in students' behavior. If the desired behavior occurred after the intervention was applied, then the intervention was successful.

Data Source 2: During the nine weeks of intervention, I encouraged students to behave properly and use their time to perform the best they can during instructional time. I recorded the times students' behavior was disruptive. The observations were conducted in the classroom for 30 minutes daily.

Data: Event recording/ Latency recording.

Data Source 3: The teacher asked students to self-reflect about their behavior and complete a worksheet about behaviors that they should have in the classroom and school facilities. Then after three weeks I asked them to do the same and compare their behavior in the last three weeks and finally at the end of the nine weeks I asked them to complete a worksheet about their behavior in the school and compare the last and the first week.

Data: Latency recording: This allowed the teacher to time how long it took the students to start a behavior or skill after a stimulus (e.g., when they behaved well, the teacher praised them) was presented.

Time Line (use separate form): *The Time Line must include length of intervention and when materials (if needed) are prepared, when persons are notified and/or permissions are sought, and when you plan to collect all data – be very specific.*

Time line

Tasks	Timeline	Resources
Notification to the school Principal Informed parents about the study	October 2016	E-mail
Met with my team to explain about the study and collecting data	December 2016	Meeting, sharing the implementation of positive reinforcement in the classroom. Action Plan, Methods, timeline, discussing about teachers support.
Self-monitoring/reflection Worksheet given to my class to collect baseline data Observed students' behavior for frequency of disruptive/inappropriate behaviors Implemented intervention: Discussed with the class about intervention being implemented and what rewards they will receive. At the end of the week, asked reading teachers for students' academic grades and the students point sheet results.	Week of January 9, 2017 Week of January 17, 2017	Self-monitoring Worksheet Pencils, sheets of paper. Data collection forms, teacher observation. Student rewards
Collect weekly observation data on frequency of inappropriate behaviors At the end of every week, ask reading teachers for students' academic grades Every 3 weeks, students completed self-monitoring worksheets	Weeks of January 24-February 24	Data collection form Self-monitoring worksheet

Post intervention behavior observation Gave students final student self-monitoring worksheet Obtained grades from reading teachers	Week of February 27, 2016	Data collection form Self-monitoring worksheet

Findings, Limitations, Implications

Data Analysis

The data collected for this action research study were analyzed interpreted using various different approaches. After meeting with the unit teachers and identifying students with behavior problems, the frequency on inappropriate behavior was recorded, during pre and post intervention, then was compared to find students improvement. A second data source was during the intervention; students were orally encouraged to behave well and their behavior was recorded in the classroom during 30 minutes.

Students were given a first self-reflect questionnaire with questions regarding their behavior in the classroom and school facilities and they completed it every three weeks and finally at the end of the study. The collected data in these questionnaires were compared during the whole process, finally students academic progress report was reviewed and compared at the end of the study with the grades students had before using intervention.

Findings

The findings on this study support the research found before initiating the intervention. Research supports the use of positive behavior intervention for special education students with varying exceptionalities (Yaeger &Walton, 2011). This intervention incorporates daily positive behavior during daily instruction, proving the desired behavior have occurred and students have reach their main goal, which is minimizing disruption caused in the classroom and focusing on their study skills. Improvement in the students' behavior was notable. The reward systems (based on their behavior) have proved to be a very useful tool; students were eager to gain rewards and the disruptive behavior decreased as the intervention was implemented.

Positive behavior interventions were brought to the students in this study by using different resources like rewarding students verbally, with stickers, certificates, positive notes, call to parents to inform about the good behavior, and finally a fieldtrip to the Youth Fair. Supplementary, this study has considered how students were able to perform better in the classroom and school facilities,

This information provided an understanding of how each type of data have helped to answer the research question provided before the study:

Teachers' Meeting. During the pre and post meeting most of the teachers' input were about the intervention and how it will be used during instructional time, most of the responses from teachers in the post meeting were very similar, showing the process and the changes in students' behavior, as most of them have improved.

Table 1

Classroom Behavior Observed During the Study

STUDENTS	Students disruptive Behavior Occurs before intervention	*Days 1*	*2*	*3*	*4*	*5*	Students disruptive Behavior Occurs during intervention	*6*	*7*	*8*	*9*	*10*	*11*	Students disruptive Behavior Occurs After Intervention	*12*	*13*	*14*	*15*	*16*
#1		+	++	++	+	+		+	+	o	+	o	o		o	o	+	+	o
#2		o	+	+	+	++		o	+	o	+	o	+		+	o	+	o	o
#3		++	+	++	o	+		+	o	+	o	o	+		+	+	o	o	o
#4		++	++	++	++	++		+	+	++	+	o	+		+	o	+	o	+
#5		o	o	+	o	+		o	o	+	o	+	o		o	o	o	o	o
#6		+	+	+	+	+		+	o	+	o	o	+		o	o	o	+	o
#7		++	o	++	o	++		o	+	o	+	+	+		+	+	o	o	+
#8		++	++	++	++	++		++	+	o	+	+	+		+	o	+	+	+

None 0, Sometimes + (1-2 times), Excessive ++ (3 or more times)

Student's Self-reflection Questionnaire. Students' questionnaires were collected and analyzed. According the results, most of students noticed changes in their own behavior in the classroom and school facilities. It was critical the cooperation of the other two teachers in the unit, and after the intervention the desired behavior was perform not only in the classroom, but also in the other school facilities, fortunately this was happening.

Table 2 shows students' responses to the pre and post questionnaire. Students showed a notable increase in appropriate behaviors. Some of the positive behaviors were their spam of attention improved during the instructional time; students were more capable to follow instructions before, during, and after academic classes. Some of them helped their classmates in situations when disruption could occurred, for instance during the transition from class to class, they waited for the bell, and then left the classroom, instead of standing next to the door before the bell rang. During the group work, students showed on-task behavior and cooperated to finish the activity.

Table 2

Pre and Post Responses on Students' Questionnaire

Students	#1	#2	#3	#4	#5	#6	#7	#8
Do you understand school and classroom rules?	Pre - yes Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-no	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes
Do you follow teachers' instructions when first time given?	Pre- no Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-no Post-no
Do you ask for help when need it?	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes
Do you realize when you are not behaving appropriate in the classroom?	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes
Does inappropriate behavior occur most of the time?	Pre-no Post-no	Pre-no Post-no	Pre-yes Post-no	Pre-yes Post-no	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-no Post-no	Pre-yes Post-no	Pre-yes Post-no
Do you try to correct your behavior?	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes
Do you believe you can correct your behavior?	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes
Does your teacher help you to improve your behavior in class?	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes
Do you behave inappropriate in other places?	Pre-yes Post-no	Pre-no Post-no	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-no	Pre-no Post-no	Pre-yes Post-no	Pre-no Post-no	Pre-yes Post-no
Do other students help you to improve your behavior?	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes
Do you find easy to improve your behavior?	Pre--no Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-no Post-no	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes	Pre-no Post-yes
Do you think behaving better will improve your grades?	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes	Pre-yes Post-yes

Student Point Sheet and Tokens. The point sheet was incorporated as a positive reinforcement during the intervention and it was recorded weekly for each student. This strategy was intended to support teachers, and students with challenging behavior; they were given a point sheet to be graded by the teacher at the end of each period of class, for instance if the student was on time, and had a good behavior he/she won two points per block, at the end of the day, they had a chance to win ten points. At the end of each week the point sheet was given to the teacher and students, who had won at least six or more points each day, receive incentives, such as: stickers, breakfast, game boards, and call to parents to let them know about the good behavior, they also had the opportunity to be a teacher's aide. Students showed a desire to get incentives, they were prompted to be on time in each class and be on-task, as they knew they would receive an incentive by the time the period of class ended, the number of students who were late decreased. The data show an increase of the desired behavior in class since the intervention occurred; it also showed an overall increase of tokens, which were earned from the beginning to the end of the positive behavior intervention. Figure 1 bellow shows the graph created to display data.

The students' tokens were used as a positive reinforcement during this intervention, teachers reward at the end of the week students who showed the desired behavior, and the result showed an overall increase in tokens earned since the beginning to the end of the intervention. Teachers made note of students who won them and was recorded weekly. In table 2 improvement in behavior showed. Table 2 shows the improvement in behavior and Figure 1 shows the number of tokens earned weekly.
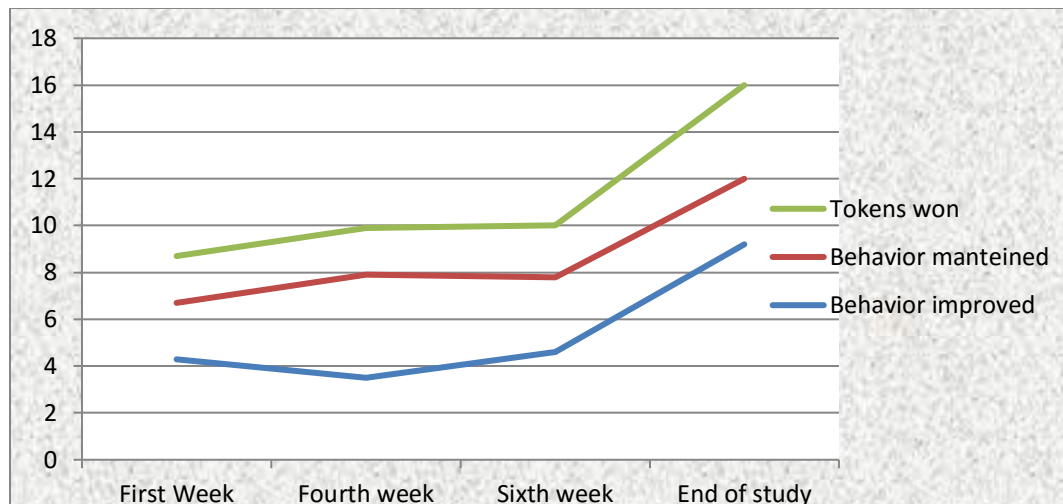

Figure1. Number of students' tokens earned weekly.

Anecdotal Records, Teacher Checklist and Journal. These data collection forms were extremely important to the teacher; they were a source to analyze the improvement made during the study. There were some days when intervention did not work as expected, after reviewing the data, the results show the use of positive behavior intervention proved to be an excellent method for this group of students, as a result there are many positive changes in the students' behavior. The students are aware of the consequences of behaving as expected. Most of them were eager to start the classroom activities and learn in a relaxing and inviting environment. Additionally, according to teachers' input and grades report, students who have received positive behavior intervention as a reinforcement, were more likely to improve their study skills rather than those who only have teachers' support. Figure 2 below show the graphs created to display data. Importantly, most students showed in improvement in their grades for their reading classes. This supports the idea that positive behavior supports can motivate students to improve their study skills, and this may help them earn better grades.
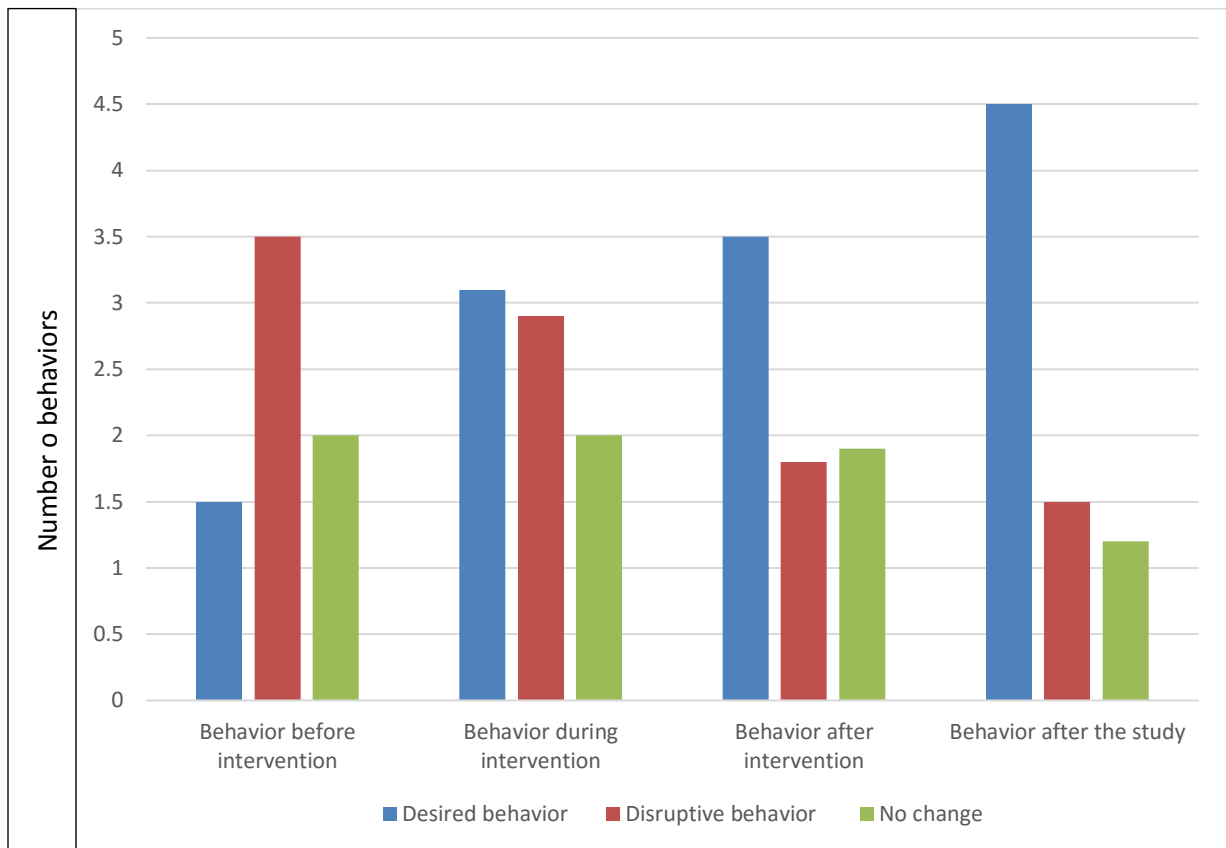
Figure 2. Comparison of improved behavior before, during and after the study.

Table 3

Students' Reading Grades

Students	Students Grades Before Intervention			Students Grades During Intervention			Students Grades After Intervention		
	week 1	Week 3	week 5	Week 1	week 3	week 5	week 1	week 3	week 5
#1	Z	C	C	B	C	B	B	A	B
#2	Z	C	C	A	B	B	A	B	A
#3	C	Z	C	C	C	B	B	B	A
#4	C	C	C	C	B	B	B	B	B
#5	C	C	Z	Z	C	B	B	B	A
#6	B	Z	B	C	B	B	B	B	A
#7	Z	Z	C	B	B	B	B	B	A
#8	C	Z	C	B	C	B	B	B	A

Limitations

This study was conducted in a high school with special education students who were on a Special Diploma track and were using a modified curriculum and accommodations as stated in their Individual Educational Plans (IEPs), the study was conducted with the purpose to improve these students' behavior, but it did not suggest using these strategies will work all the time with any students with special needs. Learning styles were diverse and each student have a unique way of learning, based on their culture, likes and dislikes, and their physical, intellectual or sensory disabilities. The purpose of this study was not to take a broad view for other classes.

The intervention had others limitations such as students' participations, attendance and interruptions due to school activities and meetings, nevertheless the research centered on the same theme, based on students' performance and abilities. Parents were cooperative and most of them showed support and got involved, but here were some cases when circumstances out of my control, the cooperation did not occur as expected.

Implications

Students who participated in this research, have started using a self-reflective handout, where they can record their daily behavior progress, other teachers in the unit are using the point system and have added

some of the strategies and rewards in their daily teaching, as a result, students are more confident and feel motivated to learn. The use of positive behavior intervention showed an improvement in students' behavior and study skills, classroom teachers should consider using these strategies to help students stay on task and possibly improve their academic grades.

Dissemination

This study results have been share with students in the unit, the program specialist in the school and special education teachers and with graduate students at Florida International University (FIU). The results have also been shared with a former colleague who is now working with the Ecuadorian education minister. The study will be shared with faculty members who are interested in the results and also in using strategies to improve students' behavior in the classroom.

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Appendix A

Student Self-Reflection Questionnaire Sample

Name: ~~████~~   Date: 1-9-17

Students self-reflection Questionnaire

Answer yes or no to the following questions.

Do you understand school and classroom rules?	Yes
Do you follow teachers' instructions when first time given?	No
Do you ask for help when need it?	No
Do you realize when you are not behaving appropriate in the classroom?	- No
Does inappropriate behavior occur most of the time?	No
Do you try to correct your behavior?	No
Do you believe you can correct your behavior?	No
Does your teacher help you to improve your behavior in class?	Yes
Do you behave inappropriate in other places?	Yes
Do other students help you to improve your behavior?	No
Do you find easy to improve your behavior?	No
Do you think behaving better will improve your grades?	Yes

Appendix B

Student Point Sheet Sample

Points: Total of 10 points
2- Attendance/Promptness
2- Engagement in class
2- Listening skills
2-Preparation
2 – Following classroom rules /school rules
DATE: ____/____ to ____/____

Student Name	BLK 1	PASS	BLK2	PASS	BLK3	LUNCH	PASS	BLK4	DISMISSAL	BONUS	TOTAL

Appendix C

Students' Token System

Student name	Week 1 (Stickers)	2 Breakfast	3 (teacher's aide)	4 (20 minutes-computer break)
# 1				
#2				
#3				
#4				
#5				
#6				
#7				
#8				

Appendix D

Administrative consent for action research

██████████

███████████████

As I explained to you earlier, I will be conducting a study in my classroom as part of completing my master's degree. The study is based on observation to reinforce positive behavior in order to improve study skills, the positive intervention to be used, will include praising students or giving them stickers, tokens, certificates, and a field trip to the Youth Fair.

The participants will be my students and myself who will conduct the study.

Thank you.

████████████

███████████

████████

████████████████

████████████████

Appendix E

Thank you note to the principal

████████████

To:

████████████████

Dear ██████████

I want to thank you for all the support and help I have received to conduct the study in my classroom, in order to complete my master's degree at FIU.
I am very pleased to inform you the results of the study were very satisfactory, the students' behavior improved tremendously. The teachers in the IND unit have been using positive reward, tokens and finally we took our class to the Youth Fair.

During our meetings we discussed about all the positive changes, and how the children are more confident to learn in a safe and relaxing environment, it was a very rewarding experience for all of us.

Once again thank you very much,

Sincerely

███████████

SPED. Teacher
Room # 617

████████████████

Some people go into teaching because it is a job.
Some people go into teaching to make a difference………. Harry K. Wong

Using Augmentative Communication to Teach Non-Verbal ASD Students to Communicate

By Chelsie Madiedo

Background

Augmentative and Alternative Communication methods are very effective when working with non-verbal ASD children. According to American Speech Language Hearing Association, "Augmentative and Alternative Communication methods (AAC) includes all forms of communication (other than oral speech) that are used to express thoughts, needs, wants, and ideas. We all use AAC when we make facial expressions or gestures, use symbols or pictures, or write" (American Speech Language Hearing Association, 2017). "There is evidence that children diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorder often have restricted verbal communication" (Bedwani,2015). Therefore, communication methods are imperative for non-verbal students. When researching the effectiveness of one of the AAC Programs (LAMP), eight children that were limited with communication skills previously showed gains after using the Program LAMP for a total of five weeks.

Secondly, non-verbal students have difficulty expressing their needs and wants on a daily basis with their natural voice. "Children require the use of augmentative and alternative communication to help them communicate" (King, 2012). However, there is a problem, since using AAC as far as a form of communication, is especially difficult. "One way that has seemed to help is by providing peers with knowledge and skills on how to interact with children who use AAC, and has produced positive results" (King,2012).

Case Study

Next, an experiment on a four -year old boy who had autism and used an AAC device, both in school and home, were investigated. "According to the experiment, the child's mother was taught to use 4 naturalistic teaching strategies that incorporated a picture exchange communication system during 2 typical home routines" (Nunes,2007). According to the data and the baseline data that was collected, it showed the increase in the child's initiations and responses when using the PECS system.

Different Forms of Augmentative Communication Devices

Furthermore, children usually demonstrate frustration or irritability when they are not able to communicate effectively. "Identifying and using suitable communication enhancement and augmentative and alternative communication supports is essential to achievement of positive outcomes for these learners" (Simpson,2012). "A critical component of the AAC device assessment process is to match the amount and kind of language in the user's brain to the amount and kind of language available in a particular AAC device so the individual can generate language as efficiently and effectively as possible" ("Types of AAC Devices,"n.d.). Augmentative communication devices are broken down into three categories low tech, hi tech and symbols. The augmentative communication I have used in my classroom is PECS. PECS stands for Picture Exchange Communication System. PECS is a modified applied behavior analysis program. Although PECS was not created as a speech program, some non-verbal children picked up speech with the program. After researching all the different augmentative and alternative communication methods I feel that PECS is the most reliable and affordable method to use with non-verbal children.

Language Representation in AAC Systems

When figuring out what AAC device or system you will be implementing with the child you first need to see where the child is linguistically. "Success in life can be directly related to the ability to communicate. Full interpersonal communication substantially enhances an individual's potential for education, employment, and independence. Therefore, it is imperative that the goal of augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) use be the most effective interactive communication possible**.** Anything less represents a compromise of the individual's human potential" (Hill, 2017). There are three basic methods of language representation single meaning pictures, alphabet based systems, and semantic compaction. "With single meaning pictures, each picture means one word. Alphabet-based systems include spelling, word prediction, and letter codes. Semantic compaction (Minspeak) is the only patented system and is based on multi-meaning icons"(Hill,2017).

Outcomes

Testing the effectiveness of both the devices and services is imperative. "Outcome measures are objective criteria, usually developed during the assessment and recommendation process that can be used to judge the effectiveness of both devices and services" (Hill,2017). Therefore, the language representation method determines if the outcome is achievable and observable. The goal is for the child to be able to communicate using this device on a regular basis.

AAC and Behavior

Implementation off AAC devices can decrease unruly behaviors. Since the child has a way to express themselves they can engage in positive social interaction with peers or adults. Majority of the problematic behavior in the ASD population is caused because the child is not able to express themselves verbally and gets frustrated. Since the frustration builds up overtime so do the negative behaviors and emotions. According to a study 103 children participated in a study addressing behavior and communication. "The 103 children who participated were six years old or younger, had developmental delays, and engaged in destructive behaviors such as self-injury. The core procedures used in each study were functional analyses (FA) and FCT conducted by parents with coaching by the investigators. The overall results of the projects showed that the FA plus FCT intervention package produced substantial reductions in destructive behavior (M = 90 %), which were often maintained following treatment" (Wacker, Schieltz, Berg, Harding, Dalmu, Lee,2017).In conclusion, when a child finds an AAC system or device that suits them it becomes a great relief. The decrease in problem behaviors is due to the increase in being able to communicate effectively.

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About the Author

My name is Chelsie Madiedo and I am currently a graduate student at Florida International University. I graduated with my Bachelor's Degree in Early Childhood and was Summa Cum Laude of my class. Education has always been a very big part of my life. I am currently seeking my Master's Degree in Special Education with an Autism Endorsement at Florida International University. Once I graduate I plan on getting a specialist and doctorate degree specializing and concentrating in Autism. I am currently teaching an Autism Level 2 classroom with three students one who is non-verbal. I have definitely found that using augmentative communication devices and supports really helps the child be able to communicate more efficiently. I hope you enjoy reading my article.

Parental Satisfaction: Issues with Special Education and Possible Solutions

By Louris Otero

Introduction

Parent Satisfaction with the current education system and programs for children with Autism Spectrum Disorder varies. Most of the literature suggests that parent satisfaction is mostly high. But a careful review of the literature also implicates that changes can be made in the areas of teacher training, parent communications to increase parent involvement and increased funding for families with unmet needs in an effort to further improve parent satisfaction. There are issues with the readability of parental safeguards and a lack of general knowledge about ASD. There is yet another concern for parents who view caring for their disabled child as a major burden, and the lack of support services as a child ages out of the system. All is not lost, however. Researchers have found possible solutions as the following review of the literature confirms.

Parental Satisfaction: Issues and Solutions Emerge

Star and Foy (2010) conducted a survey of 144 parents of children on the autism spectrum with the purpose of delving into the level of satisfaction parents experience with the education that their child is receiving. Various research questions were addressed including: how fear and resentment is perceived, which factors contribute to their child's suspension from school, level of satisfaction with their child's education, how parents perceive that their child's school is able to maximize their child's education, and finally, what the long term goals are for their children (Star and Foy, 2010). The researchers placed notices in the newsletters of autism support groups asking for volunteers for the study. Researchers discovered that most of the families had children in younger children. The average age of the children was 8 years. The article cited that a survey of 106 open-ended and Likert- type questions was used; both satisfied and dissatisfied participants responded.

The themes that emerged from the survey responses were as expected and were in line with the themes that emerged in in a similar study conducted in 2006 also by Starr and Foy. Parents reported dissatisfaction stemming from low expectations, lack of knowledge about ASD, lack of collaboration and parent communication, and lack of knowledge of the educational program (Star and Foy, 2010). They also reported that the lack of teacher education cause their child to be suspended from school for perceived aggressive behaviors (Star and Foy, 2010). Most suspensions were unofficial or "voluntary" as parents were asked to take their children home when they exhibit undesirable behaviors. Resentment was the most commonly cited negative attitude. The parents reported that teachers resented having an autistic child in their class and the time and effort that the autistic child demanded (Star and Foy, 2010). Most parents reported being dissatisfied with how the education system was meeting their child's needs (Star and Foy, 2010).

The one solution that kept coming up in parent's comments was the need for teacher education (Star and Foy, 2010). Parents repeatedly cited that improved teacher education would all but eliminate many of the emerging issues (Star and Foy, 2010). One family stated that they would deal with the same issues year after year because teachers were not aware of their child's disability, they would have to educate the teachers and be the experts in the room (Star and Foy, 2010). Another family suggested that a school-wide seminar is offered annually to help educate the teachers as to evidence-based practices and autism spectrum disorder in general (Star and Foy, 2010).

Finally, most parents expressed future goals as wanting their child to be as independent and happy as possible (Star and Foy, 2010). The limitation of this study is in its sample. Most students were young and male. The sample was small and lacked diversity. Although the sample was small, it was interesting that only one parent chose not to respond to open-ended questions with comments (Star and Foy, 2010). Furthermore, it would be interesting to see the study duplicated with a greater sample of the population along with greater cultural diversity.

Issues with Readability and Parental Safeguards

Mandic, Rudd, Hehir and Acevedo-Garcia (2010) obtained the procedural safeguards from all 50 states including the District of Columbia in an effort to evaluate them using the SMOG readability formula. The purpose of this study was to determine the reading level needed in order to comprehend the procedural safeguards. Mandic, et al. (2010) used the data from the 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy to estimate the level of literacy among parents aged 24-49 (Mandic, et al. pp. 198). The authors determined that more than half of the safeguards were written at a college reading level and another 39% were written at a graduate or professional reading level (Mandic, et al. pp. 198). Only a scant 6% were written using a high school reading of the level of 10-12th grade (Mandic, et al. pp. 198).

The authors determined that their findings were consistent with previous studies by Fitzgerald and Watkins (2006) which also found that procedural safeguards are written at levels thought to be unnecessarily high. This study by Mandic, et al. found the procedural safeguards to be written at even higher levels than what Fitzgerald and Watkins found. The result being that families' rights are being neglected because of the reading proficiency necessary in order to comprehend the procedural safeguards.

This study by Mandic, et al. has several limitations. One limitation being that only a sample of the document was used to determine readability. Another was that parent involvement was not measured as a result of poor readability. Finally, this study did not take into account support from advocacy groups that are possibly made available to parents of children with disabilities.
The implications are that procedural safeguards need to be understood not just by parents of all educational backgrounds, but by student self-advocates. Additionally, parent involvement may be adversely affected by a parent's inability to make sense of their rights and responsibilities. Finally, the recommendation set forth in this study is simple. Procedural safeguards should be written in plain language. Language should be easy to understand, read and use. Safeguards should be written using short sentences and common everyday words that anyone without a college education is able to read (Mandic, et al. pp. 201)

Parental Involvement and the Pre-Referral Process

In an article about parental involvement in the pre-referral process by Chen and Gregory (2010), the question of how much parental involvement in the pre-referral process is discussed and dissected. Chen and Gregory start out by explaining that PITS (Pre-referral Intervention Teams) or group problem-solving models, and RTI are widely used in place of the discrepancy model as a response to inappropriate referrals of minority students. The reasoning is that working in teams of professionals offers the best most comprehensive model for collaboration between professionals and parents. The literature suggests that although parents may be invited to participate in the pre-referral process, few actually attend (Wilson, Gutkin, Hagen, & Oats, 1998). Furthermore, 2 other studies suggest that when parents are involved, parents seem more satisfied with their child's progress and even felt that their child was more successful because the intervention plan met their child's needs. (McNamara, Telzrow, &DeLamatre, 1999). This study seeks to consider the influence of parental involvement by hypothesizing, as previous studies suggest, that the level of parental involvement can be used to predict parent satisfaction, the number of special education evaluations, and alignment between PIT interventions and the child's presenting problems (Chen & Gregory, 2010).

The participants included 88 elementary school cases during the 2005-2006 school year. Of the 88 cases, 51 were male and 37 were female. Demographically, 69% were white, 21% were black, 8% were Hispanic, 1% were Asian, and 1% was unknown. The cases were reliably coded (Chen & Gregory, 2010). A total of 129 records were collected, while 88 were determined as eligible and subsequently reliably coded while intercoder reliability was established (Chen & Gregory, 2010). Independent measures such as race, gender, and parent involvement were evaluated (Chen & Gregory, 2010). Additionally, coders evaluated to the degree to which parents reported implementing the PIT interventions that the team recommended using a 3-point scale – 0 = no implementation, 1 = poor quality implementation, and 2 = high-quality implementation (Chen & Gregory, 2010). The records were evaluated for dependent measures such as intervention alignment, the frequency of special education evaluations, and missing data (Chen & Gregory, 2010).

The study determined that parents were present during initial and follow-up meetings in 43% of the cases. Parents were not present for either meeting in 14% of the cases. The results of parent involvement and intervention implementation were "significantly and positively correlated" (Chen & Gregory, 2010). Findings showed that parent involvement positively affected the level of parent satisfaction and the quality of interventions implemented in the home (Chen & Gregory, 2010). Parents may offer unique insights, perspectives and information to the PIT team making the collaborations more valuable and effective (Chen & Gregory, 2010). Additionally, the likelihood of referrals for special education evaluations was fewer in cases where parent involvement was high (Chen & Gregory, 2010).

The limitation of this study are several including a lack of data regarding parent behavior during PIT meetings, a lack of independent verification of parent implementation, parent demographic information was not collected, and the sample group of participants was very small.
The implications of this study were also interesting. The study demonstrated that the potential for influence by the parents during the PIT process can be significant and positive. Districts and schools should encourage parents to attend meetings by extending invitations early and often. It should be suggested that this study is conducted in the future using a larger, more diverse sample size, and parent demographics such as income, education, familiarity with the process and behavior should be taken into account.

Issues with Unmet Needs

In the article Beyond an Autism Diagnosis: Children's Functional Independence and Parents' Unmet Needs by Brown, Ouellette-Kuntz, Hunter, Kelley, Cobigo & Lam (2010), the authors attempt to draw a comparison between the level of independence of a child with Autism Spectrum Disorder and the parents' unmet needs (Brown, Ouellette-Kuntz, Hunter, Kelley, Cobigo & Lam, 2010). The study sets out to determine how functional independence, parent perception of the impact of ASD on the family, needed services is associated with unmet needs (Brown et al., 2010, p. 1292). Unmet needs are defined as the cost of private therapies, the limited, publicly-available school-based supports such as occupational, physical, or speech and language therapies, the cost of adaptive technology, and the age restrictions on certain services (Brown et al., 2010,). Functional independence is determined by a child's overall adaptive skills such as self-help, ability to communicate and socialize, and the frequency and severity of undesired or challenging behaviors such as self-injury, non-compliance, or inappropriate vocalizations (Brown et al., 2010).

The participants were a cross-section identified from two separate Canadian epidemiologic and autism research databases. (Brown et al., 2010). The participants were gathered via a telephone call or mailings. The criteria for participation included parents or legal guardians of school-aged children between six and 13 years of age who had been diagnosed with ASD, Asperger's disorder, or pervasive developmental disorder - not otherwise specified. Each participant filled out the Family Needs Questionnaire (Siklos and Kerns, 2006), the Scales of Independent Behavior-Revised (Short Form) (Bruininks et al. 1996), the Impact on Family Scale (Stein and Jessop, 2003), and other forms for the purpose of collecting information about family characteristics.

The other characteristics measured were gender, age, grade level, ASD diagnosis, the presence of any comorbidities, use of medications, behavior or attention problems, and time since diagnosis was made. The parental characteristics gathered were marital status, income, education, changes in employment because of having to care for a child with ASD, having another child with ASD, and location of residence (Brown et al., 2010, p. 1294).

The study by Brown et al. (2010) found a "linear relationship between functional independence and unmet needs" (p. 1299). This means that the more functionally independent a child is, the fewer unmet needs the parents reported, and conversely, the more functionally dependent a child with ASD is the more parents reported unmet needs. This also depended on whether the family felt that caring for their child was burdensome. If the family did not feel that caring for the child was a burden, they reported fewer unmet needs and vice versa. Also, families with older children, grades 4-8 appeared to have greater unmet needs than those with younger children in grades 1-3. This could be because the needs of younger children were provided for through the school system, and as children get older, fewer services are offered through the school system.

The major limitation of this study was the low response rate of the participants and the number of characteristics analyzed. The study also found that parent perception of burden has a greater impact on reported unmet needs. The major implication of this finding results in perhaps signaling a need to devote greater resources to families whose children present a greater burden because their ability to be functionally independent is less. Finally, because perceived needs are fundamentally subjective, perhaps further research may be valuable in the area of "unmet need bias" (Brown et al., 2010, p. 1301).

Professional Development, EBPs, and Implementation

Implementation Science, Professional Development, and Autism Spectrum Disorders by Odom, Cox, and Brock (2013) in conjunction with the National Professional Development Center on ASD seeks to provide evidence that the use of implementation science with regard to professional development in the area of evidence-based practices in programs designed specifically for students with ASD increase positive results and family satisfaction. The authors seek to show that by using implementation science to enhance a program by increasing the adoption of EBPs by educators in their classrooms student goal attainment and progress will increase (Odom, Cox, & Brock, 2013).

The authors define implementation science as a system of features including: "(a) high-quality materials that describe and document the practices to be implemented, (b) early and joint planning by a team of professionals, (c) availability and quality technical support, (d) assessment of implementation readiness, and (e) unique contextual variables" (Odom, Cox, & Brock, 2013, p. 235). There is an exploration phase where professionals seek out information regarding the innovation that is to be implemented and share information with adopters about the appropriateness and feasibility of implementation. Next, the installation process begins whereby adopters prepare to implement the innovation by securing personnel, seeking institutional support, reviewing materials and making sure that personnel is cooperative and interested, and providing necessary training (Odom, Cox, & Brock, 2013). The following phase is *initial implementation*. This phase entails that personnel begins to use the innovation (Odom, Cox, & Brock, 2013). The final phase of implementation science is *full implementation* when the innovation becomes the standard of practice (Odom, Cox, & Brock, 2013). At this point, the initial team may reduce its role in the implementation site to promote sustainability of the innovative standard of practice (Odom, Cox, & Brock, 2013. The progress is monitored using the Evidence-Based Individualized Program for Students with Autism or EBIPSA (Odom, Cox, & Brock, 2013). The EBIPSA scale measures established goals for students with ASD using assessments, family and student priorities, and teacher knowledge and skill using a 5-point scale: +2 (much more progress), +1 (more progress than expected), zero (expected level of progress), -1 (less progress than expected), and -2 (lowest rating for expected level of progress) (Odom, Cox, & Brock, 2013, p. 236).

The NPDC model of implementation science was used with five evaluation questions in mind to determine improvements in quality of program: increase use of EBPs by practitioners, student progress toward EIP goals, positive change in family satisfaction, and ability of states to establish and maintain professional development programs (Odom, Cox, & Brock, 2013, p. 242). The model of implementation science was used during 3 school years in 58 school programs (12 preschool, 23 elementary, 12 middle, and 11 high schools) (Odom, Cox, & Brock, 2013). Program quality was measured using the Autism

Program Environment Rating Scale or APERS (Odom, Cox, & Brock, 2013). Implementation was measured in two ways, teachers completed the Evidence Based Practice Inventory twice a year (Odom, Cox, & Brock, 2013). Then, implementation team member conducted observations and prepared checklists with the EBPs used with the students in the classroom (Odom, Cox, & Brock, 2013).

According to the study, the data showed a significant increase in the average number of EBPs used by practitioners (Odom, Cox, & Brock, 2013). Additionally, individual student progress was measured at 98% and 79% goals were met or exceeded (Odom, Cox, & Brock, 2013). Finally, family satisfaction was measured using a 5-point scale. High levels of family satisfaction were attained before implementation leaving little room for improvement, but the survey did show a small increase in spite of the ceiling effect (Odom, Cox, & Brock, 2013).

Implementation science as professional development system of identifying goals and materials, identifying personnel and committing resources, and support of ongoing coaching has been shown to improve results in attaining EIP goals of targeted students, and should be used a model for research as outlined by the NPDC (Odom, Cox, & Brock, 2013).

Conclusion

Several issues emerged during the review of the literature with general parent satisfaction. Parent involvement made a significant difference in parental satisfaction. The likelihood of high parental satisfaction depends on how much parents are involved in the pre-referral process, in the implementation of interventions and in the participation of IEP meetings and planning. Another significant finding was teacher knowledge. Parent felt like many times they were the only experts in the room, and perhaps better or *enlightened* professional development would help as the NPDC suggests. Finally, the most telling and perhaps suggestive variable is the question of burden. Does the family perceive that caring for their disabled child is a burden on them and the family? It is clear from the research presented that families and educators need to be increased support in areas that should be obvious to casual observer – teacher education, parent involvement, support of families who bear the burden of caring for their child with ASD.

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Louris Otero has been teaching first grade for 14 years at Carrollton School of the Sacred Heart in Miami, Florida. She is currently pursuing her MS in Special Education with an endorsement in Autism from Florida International University. Ms. Otero has been happily married for 20 years and is the mother of two teenagers, Serena, 18 and Justin, 16. This is her second publication.

Parent Advocacy and Involvement for Children with Disabilities

By Ashley Randall

Parents and families serve an important role in the academic success and achievement for students. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), recognizes and emphasizes the benefits of parent involvement and participation in a child's education. It is important for parents/guardians to be involved in their child's academic career in order to be advocates for them, and ensure they are receiving all they need. However, many barriers may exist that may hinder parent involvement and advocacy. When barriers are addressed, and teacher- parent partnerships are made, research shows that students' can have greater success in school. When parent involvement is absent or limited, students with disabilities are vulnerable to receive inadequate and inappropriate services (Burke, 2013.)

Understanding Their Rights

One of the first steps to advocacy and increased parent involvement, is the process of parents understanding their child's rights, and their rights as parents. However, there continues to be issues as the laws mandated by IDEA are not always followed properly. IDEA legally mandates opportunities for involvement. These are discussed in the "procedural safeguards." The procedural safeguards are what guarantee parents the rights to share in decision making with the school, regarding identification, diagnosis, evaluation, placement, services, individualized educational planning, and transition to adulthood (Garcia, D., Hehir, T., Mandic, C., Rudd, R., 2012) The notice must be written in a language that is understandable to the public, and must be provided in the native language of the parent. An underlying issue, rests in the fact that many times procedural safeguard documents are not written in understandable language. According to the study completed by Garcia, et al. the procedural safeguard documents are written at excessively high levels. More than half of the procedural safeguard documents scored in the college reading level range, and almost 40 % scored in the graduate or professional range (Garcia, D., Hehir, T., Mandic, C., Rudd, R., 2012) It is imperative that procedural safeguard documents are written in a language that parents can understand. When this is done, parents have a better understanding of what their child needs, and can provide more input, thus resulting in a stronger and more effective partnership between parents and educators.

Training Advocates

As parents gain a better understanding of their child's rights and their rights as parents, they can be more prepared to become advocates for their children. However, there is so much that parents may not be able to understand while speaking with educational professions. Furthermore, parents may not know the right questions to ask, or who to ask. A total of 70% of parents of children with disabilities believe that their child loses services because they do not know their rights (Burke, 2013.) Therefore, having an advocate, who understands and is knowledgeable in special education laws and practices can prove to be extremely helpful for parents who need or want the extra support.

Highly qualified, well trained advocates, can help parents feel secure that their child is receiving appropriate educational services. Burke explored two advocacy training models, reasons why parents may need advocates, and the consequences of special education advocacy trainings. The two training models examined were the: Special Education Advocacy Training (SEAT) and the Volunteer Advocacy Project (VAP.) The purpose of SEAT was to create a formal curriculum to train non-attorney advocates. Trainees participated in 115 hours of classroom instruction and 115 hours of practicum. The coursework was carried over a 4 month period. The practicum was facilitated by an attorney or a special education advocate. Although trainees demonstrated mastery in the seven competencies after the course/field work, several lessons learned from the study still need to be addressed. The training for the SEAT program is rigorous, and therefore may discourage underrepresented groups from participating.

Furthermore, more formative and summative evaluations need to be done to examine the effectiveness of the trainings. SEAT offered insight into training special education advocates, though, more research is still needed.

VAP is similar to the Parent Leadership Support Project (PLSP) and uses the basic premises of the PLSP training. VAP requires criterion for admission and after graduation from the program, the trainee will advocate, at no charge, for four families. VAP has expanded to 6 sites as individuals become more interested in becoming advocates. (Burke, 2013.)

Both trainings are a great start to train advocates. More research and studies need to continue as different programs are studied and implemented in order to be sure individuals are being properly trained to assist parents with the many barriers they face during their child's special education course. Many issues still need to be addressed such as how to expand the programs (Burke, 2013.) Burke suggested that a subfield of special education advocacy be a necessity in research. As parents continue to need more support in navigating the special education process for their children, VAP and SEAT have become great first steps in improving the parent-school collaboration efforts.

Advocacy for Autism

Children with exceptionalities must have the access to an appropriate education, accommodations, and resources. (Foy.J, Starr, E. 2012.) As reviewed throughout the literature, many parents may not know accommodations and resources available. It is evident that children with autism have broad complex needs (Brown et al. 2011). A study completed by Foy and Starr (2012), explored parent perspectives concerning the education of their child with autism. Data was collected through survey responses. Surveys were coded in order to protect confidentiality, and were sent to parents of 168 children with autism. When surveys were retuned, parent's comments were transcribed using only the assigned code for identification purposes. Survey responses concluded that parents whose child had been suspended, was due to the inability of school staff to deal with the child's behavior. Furthermore, about 42% of the parents expressed the need for teacher education and knowledge as an outstanding need. The study, which was completed in Ontario, Canada, found that many parents feel as though they are the only experts in regards to their children with autism. This is in contrast to how many parents here in the U.S feel. It is evident that schools need to take parent views into consideration. It is important for the child, regardless of their disability, that both the parent and the teacher feel confident and educated about the child's needs as well as the processes that the child goes through.

Brown et al. (2011) explored the relationship between children's functioning and the parents' perceived unmet needs. Ninety-seven families of children with autism were included in the study. A questionnaire, scales, and various other measures were used in the study. The study found that families of children with low functioning independence had an increased risk for unmet needs while the families of children with high functional independence had reduced risk for unmet needs. Due to many limitations to the study which include low response rate, and age, more research is needed to find evidence of parent's needs. However, given the current evidence, it is clear that many families may have difficulty coping with their child's disability and have numerous unmet needs regarding their child. Due to an increase in prevalence of autism, it is important that parents receive the necessary resources and information to better assist their child. Assisting parents with becoming advocates for their children, and becoming knowledgeable in resources available, will benefit the child and the family.

Prereferral Process

According to Chen and Gregory (2010), little is known about parent's involvement during the prereferral process. However, parental involvement and advocacy continues to be integral to the development of special education services. (Chen, W., Gregory, A. 2010). The study hypothesized that greater amounts of parental involvement would predict greater alignment between the prereferral intervention team (PIT.) Eighty-eight PIT cases from the 2005-2006 school year were included in the study. Unique identification codes were used during the process, and parental involvement was measured by two codes: parent present at meeting, and parent implementation of interventions. The results of the study found that the

involvement by the parents was notably high. Parents were present during the initial and follow up meetings, and were actively involved in implementing PIT interventions. The findings of the study showed that "greater parental participation was related to higher process quality in the form of better alignment between PIT interventions and the target child's problems…" Chan and Gregory expressed that parent advocacy is one possible mechanism that can explain results in the study.

When parents attended Pre-referral meetings, there was a decrease likelihood of referral for special education services. Thus, parent involvement shows an increase positive outcomes and support for students with disabilities.

Conclusion

The literature and current research show that many parents feel inadequate at ensuring their child is receiving needed special education support (Burke 2013). Parent advocacy, and training advocates to assist parents, to help parents during the rigorous process, is a key factor to ensuring the child's success. Parent involvement in their child's education has been proven to assist the child's academics in many ways. It is important for educators and those in education to assist parents with becoming knowledgeable in special education services. Further research should be completed, and more programs such as VAP and SEAT should be implemented in order to train individuals and parents to become advocates for their children. As parents continue to become more involved in their child's education, advocacy for the child is increased, and the child can maintain greater success throughout their education.

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About the Author

My name is Ashley Randall. I graduated from Florida International University with my bachelor's degree in Early Childhood Education in December 2014. I was hired right after graduation in a Pre K ESE Intensive classroom. I have been teaching in that room ever since. During my internship I fell in love with special education and I knew it was the classroom I wanted to teach in. Shortly after graduating I began looking for masters programs to continue my education and learn all I can about special education. I began my Masters at Florida International University in August 2016. It is a one year program and I will graduate in August 2017 with my masters in Special Education w/ Autism endorsement. I love working with and teaching students with autism. It is my passion to continue working with this population of students

Effectively Preparing Educators and Staff to Empower Diverse Students Within an Inclusive Classroom Setting

By Mary Samour

Abstract

Reading various works of literature surrounding culturally and linguistically diverse students, I felt there was a need to identify how educators could grow within a multicultural curriculum. Reviewing how students are placed in special education or early intervention services either at a delayed point in time or not at all due to certain factors takes away opportunities for students. These barriers need to be addressed in the education and political system.

When preparing educators to work with students, research states that educators are not prepared to work with special needs nor culturally and linguistically diverse students in an inclusive classroom. Educators are entering the field with little experience or knowledge on how to effectively teach diverse students. We must also look at how school staff is dealing with this through their professional development.

The responsibility when analyzing and supporting the child's needs, through looking at these areas, comes from the teacher. The teacher is accountable for gaining the families trust, communicating, and working in partnership with the family of the student; educating not only the student but their family as well. Based on research, parent-teacher collaboration is an evidence based practice that most teachers are not effectively using when working with culturally and linguistically diverse students or special needs students who are in an inclusive classroom. This area of concerns stems from disproportionality being the result of teachers not knowing how to teach a diverse set of students.

As in Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory, when teaching a child/student we must look at all the systems of the child meaning the family, school, and environment. Environment and family play a role in the child's overall well-being and development; various systems make an impact on the over or under representation of minority students. Minority students are disposed to being at risk for areas such as "cognitive, academic, and behavioral functioning therefore increasing the likelihood that they will be referred to early intervention services," (Morgan, Farkas, Hillemeir & Maczuga 2012).Knowing this data, federal legislation is trying to provide services to overidentified groups of children within the ECSE/EI umbrella.

In the study, *Are Minority Children Disproportionately Represented in Early Intervention and Early Childhood Special Education* by Morgan et al., they grouped together 48-month-old children who had prior delays. The study shows that children who are black or Asian are disproportionately underrepresented in Early Intervention or Early Childhood Special Education. Providing high quality care and/or early intervention services to at risk children greatly increases their development later in life. The U.S Department of Education provides funding for both Part B and Part C of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. These funds are distributed to provide early intervention (EI) or early childhood special education (ECSE) for children with disabilities or developmental delays. Findings show that there is a disproportionate representation of racial-ethnic minorities within the EI or ECSE system.

Potential factors such as socio-economic status, child's gender age and ethnicity and family's primary language were possible reasons why there was an underrepresentation of racial-ethnic minorities in EI services or ECSE. The results were unclear according to the researchers hypothesized theories on why there was an over-underrepresentation. The findings however did suggest that racial-ethnic minorities were less likely than Whites to be evaluated and diagnosed as having communication, attention or learning problems (Morgan et al., 2012)

In another study that supports the underrepresentation of minority students in EI or ECSE services, it states that children of immigrants are less likely to receive special education intervention services but show increasing risk of language or learning delays as the school years continue because of English as a second language program in the early grades. Teachers are less likely to refer students to early intervention or special education services between first and third grade. From third grade to fifth grade there is an increase which then shows an overrepresentation of minority students in the special education classroom (Hibel &Jasper 2012). The timing of the intervention services correlates to the previous study by Morgan et. al., in that there is a short window of opportunity to really benefit and change the development of the child in the early years so that their future is less filled with services or socioemotional difficulties. The services are provided later in school because of the emphasis made by teachers to place students in ESL classes, later discovering the need for services because of learning delays. These delays are result of the prioritization of the English language above all other academic areas. Hibel and Jasper make a point to look at the timing in which children of immigrants are placed in special education or referred to early intervention services.

There are possible reasons for delaying special education services to minority students that Hibel and Jasper discuss when focusing on why educators delay this referral. Possible reasons include: mainstream and ESL education are less expensive, stigma and reduced opportunities to learn for misplaced students in special education classroom, special education teachers may be less capable of teaching culturally and linguistically diverse students. Staff and educators minimize these potential risks by delaying the diagnosis of learning disabilities until they can assess the student in English. The limitations to their findings include information about teachers, school, staff and school district (Hibel & Jasper 2012). In relation to the other studies, there is potential evidence of the lack of teacher and staff education when supporting culturally and linguistically diverse students.

Educators whether special education teachers or mainstream classroom teachers must be effectively prepared to teach diverse students. In doing this, teachers are to be collaborators with families and conduct their own research and reflection on how to best support the students in their classroom. One approach presented by Gimber, Desai & Kerka (2010) is the social justice approach in which teachers are prepared through partnering with community organizations to become advocates for their community. Providing professional development in the areas of urban teaching, and understanding sociocultural, economic, and political factors that play a role in the students' lives while reflecting on their own cultural (Gimber et al., 2010). Urban schools collaborating with universities can bring effective change in the way student teachers are taught about supporting diverse students.

In the case study of *Addressing the Achievement Gap and Disproportionality Through the Use of Culturally Responsive Teaching Practices* (2012) Angela Griner and Martha Lue Stewart explore different models and practices based on participants of teachers, stake holders and community members. Each group of participants created practices on what they thought was culturally responsive. Through the different models, the Delphi Study was prominent because in collaboration with researchers and educators provided tools for school staff to use when addressing culturally responsive practices. Overall the tool that researchers created is intended to be used as a reflective tool when thinking about how to work with culturally diverse students. Changing the beliefs of teachers during preservice is too big of a risk when thinking about possible outcomes. The study discusses the term dissonance when talking about trying to change beliefs of teachers. A possible outcome would be that teachers avoid dissonance by changing their beliefs completely or disregarding them. These types of responses are hypocritical to the very point that staff is trying to make which is accepting the differences of others while supporting their learning and having a positive image of the child.

From the article by Jacqueline Jordan Irvine (2012) reveals that from studies teachers feel they are not adequately prepared to teach culturally and linguistically diverse students. In her article, she discusses how teachers refer minority students more than White students for behavioral more than academic issues. She refers to one study in her article that stated teachers' perception of African American students as disruptive. This gap in cultural understanding leads to misplacement of minority students in special education classrooms leading to inaccurate referrals and funding in the context of school funding. The article dives into how teachers communicate with diverse families and how educators need more training in understanding the differences in accents, dialect, and mode of communication that diverse families prefer. Irvine gives four culturally responsive pedagogy for special education teachers. First is to develop meaningful relationships with students while having high expectations and a positive image of the child.

Interactions determine the learning outcomes for students, positive teacher-student interactions develop a trusting relationship in which the teacher then creates empowering support for the student to learn and grow. Engaging and motivating students is another culturally responsive practice that requires teacher preparation, research, and intentional planning for students that challenges their thinking and at the same time scaffolds what they already know. Another practice is using effective learning resources, that connects with students' ethnic and cultural background. Lastly, using family and community engagement as a learning tool for teachers to prepare and understand their students in return building more positive interactions and giving a chance for teachers to promote and build engaging activities for students to learn from.

Based on the pedagogy, Irvine aligns her belief in these practices with research from other studies. Disproportionality among minority students in the special education field was another common theme in her article as she discusses how minority students are disproportionality represented.

In conclusion, culturally and linguistically diverse students are being misrepresented among their peers. Teachers are not adequately trained how to teach diverse students in an inclusive classroom. Minority students are not referred to early intervention services or special education classrooms until later which in turn disadvantages students learning and progress. Preparing teachers to effectively work with diverse students takes staff and researchers to form culturally responsive pedagogy that meets the needs of the community and its students.

A partnership among schools and communities is an essential relationship in creating a multicultural curriculum that meets the needs of diverse students. Interactions, relationships, and expectations create learning outcomes depending on how educators use these three areas to support their teaching. Based on the literature, I believe that schools should set culturally responsive pedagogy according to what their community needs are. Preparing teachers to create a multicultural curriculum and to be able to assess, empower and connect with students is something that policy makers and universities have yet to build on when thinking about diverse students.

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I work at the United Way Center for Excellence in Early Childhood in Miami, Fl. The work that I do there as an infant-toddler teacher inspired me to continue my education. I am currently a graduate student at Florida International University studying Special Education. My goals and passion in life, is to make impactful changes in my community and advocate for all children to have access to high quality education.

SPECIAL EDUCATION LEGAL ALERT

Perry A. Zirkel

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This latest monthly legal alert summarizes two recent federal appellate court decisions that are significant as illustrative of two continuing lines of litigation—(a) peer harassment under Section 504/ADA, and (b) eligibility under the IDEA. The format follows the usual format of a two-column table, with highlights (on the left) and general practical implications (on the right). For automatic e-mailing of future legal alerts, sign up at perryzirkel.com

In *Doe v. Columbia-Brazoria Independent School District* (2017), the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld the dismissal of the Section 504 and ADA peer harassment claims of a student with a disability due to the lack of a sufficient causal connection, i.e., the requirement that the alleged discrimination be based on the student's disability.	
The factual allegations of this case were sketchy, including that (a) the student received services under Section 504 that resulted in a location separate from the classroom for testing or study, and (b) another male student sexually assaulted him in the bathroom. His Section 504 and ADA claim was that this "isolation due to disability" put him in a vulnerable position for the assault. However, the court concluded that the disability-discrimination connection was not sufficiently clear and direct.	While focusing in this case on the third essential element, the appeals court recited the three successive prerequisites for a Section 504/ADA peer harassment claim: • the student has a disability (as defined under this pair of statutes) • the district denied the student the benefits of its programs, services, or activities • this denial was based on the student's disability
This decision is officially published, meaning that it has high precedential weight, but is only binding in the states in the Fifth Circuit—Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas. Moreover, in the same case, the court also upheld dismissal of the alternative federal claims, here based on Section 1983 (in connection with the Fourteenth Amendment equal protection and due process clauses) and Title IX (due to male-on-male sexual assault).	Beyond its specific factual and jurisdictional contours, this decision illustrates the broader and continuing line of litigation based on bullying of students with disabilities, which implicates possible claims under IDEA FAPE, state law (e.g., negligence in relation to anti-bullying statutes), and Section 504/ADA. The liability claims under Section 504/ADA generally have the strongest basis for potential liability for money damages but face high hurdles in terms of not only the aforementioned prerequisites but also deliberate indifference, bad faith, or gross misjudgment.

In *D.L. v. Clear Creek Independent School District* (2017), the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals upheld upholding district's determination that high school student who had an

IEP for emotional disturbance (ED) based on diagnoses[1] of pervasive developmental disorder NOS, depression, anxiety, and ADHD no longer needed special education. The determination at issue was in April of the student's junior year after the district exited him in compliance with applicable IEP procedures during his sophomore year based on the need prong and, during the intervening period, (a) very good grades, attendance, and behavior, and (b) an independent educational evaluation (IEE) that concluded that he continued to meet the criteria for ED.

The parents' first claim was that the district overlooked the IEE. In response, the court concluded that the district met its obligation to "consider" the IEE and that the expert opinions of the child's teachers on the need for special education "are especially instructive as they spend more time with students than do outside evaluators."	In general, outside experts, such as physicians, may well be experts about the underlying diagnoses; however, the focus here was on the ultimate eligibility prong, the need for special education, for which school district professional staff have expertise based on both their specialization and their familiarity with the child "in situ."
The parents' second claim was that their child's disability was undetectable to the untrained eye, thus making teacher observations unreliable. The court concluded that the teachers had detected the student's ED in the original determination establishing his eligibility and the case law supported their reliability for such determinations.	This court's disposition of this second claim shows the importance of the relevant evidentiary record and the applicable case law. It is also another reflection of the general, but certainly not absolute, judicial deference to school authorities.
The parents' third claim was that the district's challenged determination as based solely on academics. The court found instead that the IEP team considered the student's academic, behavioral, and social progress.	This claim and conclusion serve as a reminder of the continuing blurred boundary not only between the academic and other dimensions but also—per the September 2016 legal update— between special and general education.
The parents' final claim was that the district should have looked not only at the student's present need but his subsequent needs. In response, the court ruled that the team is responsible for what it knew or had reason to know at the time of the determination.	This frame of reference shows the extension of the so-called "snapshot approach" from the formulation of IEPs to the evaluations of eligibility. Here, the student had a disastrous senior year, but the court observed that the parents failed to identify "any information the District should have, but did not, consider that indicated [his] success was likely to be short lived."
This appellate decision, although form the same three-state circuit, is not officially published. Nevertheless, it is significant in terms of its rather representative facts, claims, and conclusions.	The case had a potentially overlapping child find claim for the student's senior year, but the Fifth Circuit upheld the decision that the parents had forfeited this claim by not raising it in their original complaint.

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[1] Illustrating the more complex background that the court noted but did not find pertinent here, the student's wide array of previous diagnoses, including, for example, Ehler-Danlos syndrome, IBS, mitral valve prolapse, POTS, and OCD.

Buzz from the Hub

To access all links from this edition of Buzz from the Hub, visit
http://www.parentcenterhub.org/buzz-june2017-issue1/

Our New Website and New Products

We have a new website! Redesigned, refreshed, reorganized, and full of new resources, the Parent Center Hub 2.0 is meant for you. Visit, explore, find great resources to use in supporting families and youth and in your systems advocacy efforts.

Our design of parentcenterhub.org is a direct response to Parent Center feedback, focus group input, involvement in user testing, and much more. Thank you to all involved in the redesign process. You bring to life the meaning of "user-centered" and "user-driven."

CPIR is pleased to launch three new products along with the new look and action of the Hub.

Best Practices in Outreach

Developed by a working team of Parent Center staff from all around the country, *Best Practices in Outreach* brings together high-quality resources on outreach that the working team recommends as highly useful and highly relevant to Parent Centers. Includes sections on conducting outreach to Hispanic, African-American, Native American, and multicultural communities.

Brief for Parent Centers on FAPE

Parent Centers can use this new CPIR brief with staff, volunteers, or Board members who are new to the disability field or who wish to deepen or refresh their understanding of the term "free appropriate public education" (FAPE) and what is involved in making FAPE available to children with disabilities. The brief is designed to expand on OSEP's *Dear Colleague Letter on Free Appropriate Public Education*, released November 16, 2015.

Key Definitions in IDEA | A Reference List for Parent Centers

FAPE, IDEA, IEP, LRE, "child with a disability", "special education", "related services" … these key terms in IDEA are essential for disability stakeholders to understand. CPIR's new reference list starts with how IDEA defines these (and other) key terms and then identifies where to find CPIR family-friendly resources in English and Spanish that are useful in understanding the terms and their impact on children with disabilities. A handy training and reference tool for staff!

Drexel

To learn more click on the image above or - Click here

Latest Employment Opportunities Posted on NASET

Learning Specialist

Teaneck, NJ

Job Category: Faculty

Description:

Private girls high school seeks learning specialist to work with students in remediation. Hours mid-morning to afternoon dismissal at 5:15, Monday - Thursday, and Fridays 9-1. Interested candidates should please forward resumes to kahanr@maayanot.org

Contact:

Principal: Mrs. Rivka Kahan   kahanr@maayanot.org

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Special Ed / ICT / Teacher (3rd or 5th Grade)

Long Island City, NY

Job Category: Elementary School Teacher

Description:

Curriculum and Planning - Collaborate with colleagues in developing purposeful, rigorous, and engaging daily and long-term plans aligned to standards and in regularly revising these materials. Create, administer, and analyze meaningful and frequent assessments from which re-teaching is planned.

In the Classroom, maintain a productive, safe, and disciplined learning environment in which teaching points, process charts, and student work are clearly displayed. Uphold all school policies within the classroom. Infuse VOICE values, rigor, and joy in lessons. Integrate feedback and goal-setting into lesson delivery. Provide the differentiation and accommodations needed for the growth and success of all students. Model strong written and verbal skills. Go above and beyond to ensure that all students are meeting appropriate standards. Review and comply with the guidelines of students' IEPs, follow IDEA reporting requirements, and provide information about student performance and services received.

Communication and Collaboration - Fully embrace VOICE's mission and values and promote them to students, parents, and colleagues. Collaborate as part of an interdisciplinary team coordinating all instructional activities with grade-level teachers, coaches, and other teachers. Proactively seek assistance or advice when faced with challenging teaching situations. Maintain positive relationships with and support the learning of all staff members.

Appropriately give and receive feedback to/from students, parents, faculty, staff, and administration. Keep parents well-informed of student performance and progress.

Professionalism and Work Day Expectations - Fully participate in all school and grade-level meetings, designated school functions outside of school hours, and opportunities for individual and school-wide professional development.

Skills and Characteristic

- Deep belief in VOICE's mission, vision, and values. Unwavering commitment to the high academic achievement of all students.
- Flexibility, exemplary written and verbal communication, and outstanding critical thinking skills. Willingness to give and receive feedback to facilitate the growth of both students and faculty.
- Unwavering humility, perseverance, and kindness.
- Flexibility and willingness to serve students with and without IEPS in a variety of settings, including as a classroom teacher, as a co-teacher in an ICT class, and/or in small group settings.

Educational Background and Work Experience

- Bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university
- Possess or in the process of obtaining New York State teaching certification or licensure
- Experience with and interest in working with high needs students

Compensation and Benefits:

Compensation is competitive and based on experience. We offer a comprehensive benefits package, including participation in the *TransitChek* program and partial reimbursement for monthly commuting expenses, gym reimbursement, cultural enrichment reimbursements, participation in the Teachers Retirement System pension program, frequent access to baked goods, and many opportunities to get to know your VOICE colleagues!

How to Apply:

Please submit an electronic application (including a VOICE-specific cover letter and resume) at
https://voicecharterschool.tedk12.com/hire/index.aspx

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High School SpEd Teacher (Los Angeles, CA)

Los Angeles, CA or Panorama City, CA

ABOUT US:

At Bright Star Schools, students achieve academic excellence, accept responsibility for their futures, and embrace school as family. We offer students the opportunity to develop their unique talents and ambitions in a supportive, collaborative environment, so they are prepared for college and career, and to lead purposeful, fulfilling lives.

All seven of our Bright Star Schools serve students in urban Los Angeles areas. Across all Bright Star schools, over 85% of our students are enrolled in the National School Lunch Program, the educational benchmark for poverty. Our goal is to empower students to break free from the cycle of educational and economic poverty. We prepare our scholars to be lifelong learners and leaders to discover ways to create positive change for themselves, their families and their communities. All of our students participate in a program that features rigorous academics and rich life experiences. Our students thrive academically and socially because our core operating principles, which include high expectations, attention to detail, clearly defined standards of accountability, and continuous improvement, provide a framework for success.

Bright Star Schools will comply with the California Charter Schools Act with respect to teacher certification. All certified teachers teaching core subjects, and uncertified teachers teaching non-core subjects, will comply with subject matter competency and all other requirements of the No Child Left Behind Act. Teachers will help develop and implement the curriculum. All teachers report to the Principal.

Bright Star Schools is an equal opportunity employer.

Requirements:

We are seeking an Inclusive Specialist (Special Education) Teacher for our site located in Koreatown, Los Angeles, CA. This position is part of Bright Star School. For the full job description: https://www.paycomonline.net/v4/ats/web.php/jobs/ViewJobDetails?job=24544&clientkey=71557366A45D2000802E75F50A1406F6

Salary and Benefits:

Salary: BSS salary is based on experience and education. See here for the scale.
Status: Full Time
Start Date: An exceptional candidate will assume a full time role no later than July 2017.
Location: Los Angeles, CA or Panorama City, CA

Benefits:

- Health
- dental
- vision
- STRS retirement matching, life insurance, short-term disability, optional 403b plan, sick and vacation paid time off, and holidays.

Other Benefits:

- Laptop
- No-Cost New Teacher Development Program for those with a preliminary teaching credential
- Instructional Leaders as Principals
- School Connectors to support with family engagement and communication

Contact:

Leslie Nguyen, Talent Manager - LNguyen@brightstarschools.org

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Special Education Teachers- All Areas

Stafford, Va

Job Category: Special Education Teacher

Description:

Stafford County Public Schools is actively seeking qualified applicants for Special Education Teachers in All Areas. Please visit our website to learn more about our opportunities and benefits.

Stafford County Public Schools (SCPS), a growing and vibrant school system of nearly 28,000 students and 31 schools. Located midway between Richmond, Va., and Washington, D.C., the school system welcomes students and families from 103 countries of birth who speak 47 native languages. SCPS' singular focus is to inspire and empower students, no matter what their background, to reach the same destination: success in further education, work and citizenship.

Requirements:

Hold or be eligible for a valid teaching license which meets Commonwealth of Virginia requirements with specific endorsement in the area to which assigned.

Contact:

Please visit our website at www.staffordschools.net to learn more about our school division and to submit our on line application.

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Inclusive SpEd Instructional Coordinator

Los Angeles, CA (Traveling between seven schools)

Description:

The Inclusive Education Instructional Coordinator will work closely with the Director(s) of Inclusive Education, Lead Inclusion Specialist Teachers (ISTs), School Psychologists, and school site administrators to plan and execute a comprehensive improvement plan to increase student achievement for our students with special needs. The Instructional Coordinator is also responsible for supervising the development/ implementation of IEPs and service delivery model within the Koreatown cluster (RKMS and RKHS). The Instructional Coordinator must take a hands-on approach to improving instruction through working with groups and individual educators (General Educators and Special Educators) from the system-wide level to the classroom level in order to directly improve differentiated instruction and increase student learning. This may include observing lessons, providing specific feedback, sharing research-based strategies and resources, modeling lessons in classrooms, helping teachers: plan instruction, creating system-wide policies and procedures, and facilitating professional development.

Requirements:

Please see here for the full list of job requirements:

https://www.paycomonline.net/v4/ats/web.php/jobs/ViewJobDetails?job=24781&clientkey=71557366A45D2000802E75F50A1406F6

HOURS: Full-Time

COMPENSATION/BENEFITS:

Status: Full Time, position will be on a teacher calendar, but will resume work 3 weeks before Summer PD begins

Location: Los Angeles, CA (Traveling between seven schools)

Benefits:

- Health
- Dental
- Vision
- STRS retirement matching
- Life insurance
- Short-term disability
- Optional 403b plan
- Sick & vacation paid time off, and holidays.

Start Date: July 2017

Salary Range: Dependent on Experience

Report to: Director(s) of Inclusive Education

Contact: Please email Talent Manager, Leslie Nguyen, with any questions. EMAIL - **LNguyen@brightstarschools.org**.

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Special Education Preschool Teacher

Longview, WA

The Longview School District has an opening for

SPECIAL EDUCATION PRESCHOOL TEACHER – BROADWAY LEARNING CENTER

1.0 FTE for the 2017-2018 School Year (2 positions available)

CLOSING DATE: Open until filled

SUPERVISOR: Building Principal

QUALIFICATIONS:

1. Bachelor's degree or post-graduate work in early childhood education. Master's degree preferred.

2. Valid Washington State teaching certificate with a special education endorsement. Early childhood special education endorsement preferred.

3. Demonstrated understanding of research-based instructional strategies and assessment practices that support effective instruction.

4. Recent successful experience working with educators in demonstrating and modeling effective instructional strategies and assessment practices.

5. Demonstrated knowledge of needs of diverse learners and strategies for addressing these needs.

6. Understanding of appropriate local and state standards.

7. Maintain integrity of confidential information relating to students, staff and district patrons.

8. Evidence/demonstration of use of technology to enhance student learning or willingness to learn.

9. Demonstrated organizational skills and commitment to follow through on tasks.

10. Demonstrated ability to establish and maintain excellent working relationships with students, teachers, school administrators, support personnel, and community members.

11. Demonstrated ability to effectively communicate orally and in writing.

ESSENTIAL JOB FUNCTIONS:

1. Lead teacher for special education preschool classroom serving three an four year old children with a range of communication, social-emotional, and physical developmental delays, including those with autism spectrum disorder.

2. Plan, develop and implement individualized educational plans for students with developmental learning needs, using early childhood standards and adopted early learning curriculum, preschool math and literacy priority standards and specially designed instruction.

3. Meet district, state, federal timelines and legal requirements related to assessment, IEP design, and Child Outcomes Summary Reporting.

4. Create and modify structure of classroom to meet the needs of the current students.

5. Guide instructional content and monitor individual student progress as member of building data team.

6. Create instructional materials (with modifications to meet individual needs).

7. Create visual systems for classroom (schedules, PECS, social stories).

8. Team with SLP and OT, and extended day autism team to provide services to students with social communication disabilities.

9. Extend professional learning about trends and practices through training with district autism support assessment and planning tool (SCERTS).

Classroom/Program Consultation and Support

1. Provide training and supervision, and modeling to

classroom Para educators in the delivery of appropriate

communication, physical, and social interventions,including toileting and feeding programs.

2. Provide training and supervision to Para educators in the delivery classroom behavior management systems including 1,2,3, Magic.

3. Actively participate in building Professional Learning Community (PLC) Data Team, presenting individual and classroom data for monitoring and adjusting instructional interventions.

4. Participate in weekly building curriculum planning meetings.

Parent Connections

1. Provide support and information to parents through initial and conference home visiting, at least three times each year.

2. Support school-home communication through newsletters and phone calls.

3. Plan and participate in four (2-4) parent education nights and family events, as determined by annual building plan.

4. Assist with the design and modification of instructional and behavioral support materials to be used at home.

5. Attend and participate in district-wide kindergarten transition event to support students and families.

Community Connections

1. Collaborate with building Head Start/ECEAP teachers in the design of learning opportunities for students to interact with typically developing peers.

2. Serve 2-3 typically developing students in each session to provide peer modeling for students with special education needs.

3. Prepare and deliver kindergarten transition reports to receive elementary buildings in spring of each school year.

WORKING CONDITIONS / PHYSICAL REQUIREMENTS

1. May be required to travel between buildings and occasionally attend workshops and conferences with the region or state.

2. Required to work flexible hours and schedule which may include some evenings. Expected to prepare classroom for the start of school and prepare workspace or room for summer cleaning after the last day of school.

3. Classroom/office environment which includes frequently walking, occasional lifting, and bending, stooping, kneeling and keyboarding.

TERMS OF EMPLOYMENT:

Contract Term: 180 days

Salary: Based on the 2016-17 state salary schedule. Additional compensation based on Longview Education Association Agreement with the Longview School District.

Benefits: Medical, dental, vision and other board approved benefits.

APPLICATION PROCEDURE:

Current LEA, please submit updated resume, cover letter and 3 confidential professional references.

Apply online at www.longviewschools.com, and provide the following documents electronically:

- Electronic application
- Electronic Resume
- Scanned copies of University or college transcripts. Original transcripts will be required if hired.
- Scanned copy of current teaching certificate and teaching endorsements
- Scanned copies of state assessments (West B, West E, Praxis I&II)
- Three (3) electronic references

Applications will be accepted until filled by a qualified applicant.

The Longview School District is a Drug & Tobacco Free workplace.

Immigration Reform and Control Act Requirement: New employees will be required to complete an INS 1-9 form and must provide proof of employment eligibility.

Disclosure Statement and Background Check: Pursuant to RCW 43.43.830 through RCW 43.43.840, new employees will be required to complete a disclosure form indicating any convictions of crimes against persons as listed in the law. In addition, a background check based on fingerprints will be requested from the Washington State Patrol and the Federal Bureau of Investigation.

Job Sharing: Pursuant to RCW 28A.405.070, the district will accept applications from individuals wishing to share a position.

NOTICE OF NONDISCRIMINATION

The Longview School District is an Equal Opportunity district in education programs, activities, services, and employment. Longview School District does not discriminate on the basis of sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, veteran, or military status, sexual orientation, gender expression or identity, disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal. We provide equal access to the Boy Scouts of America and other designated youth groups.

If you have a physical or mental disability that causes you to need assistance to access school facilities, programs, or services, please notify the school principal. This district endeavors to maintain an atmosphere free from discrimination and harassment. Any person who believes he or she has been discriminated against should contact the school principal. In addition, the following district employees, located at 2715 Lilac Street, Longview, have been designated to handle questions and complaints of alleged discrimination: Title IX Coordinator and Civil Rights Compliance Coordinator: Ron Kramer, Director of Human Resources, (360) 575-7004, rkramer@longview.k12.wa.us; Section 504/Student ADA Coordinator: Rod McHattie, Director of Special Services, (360) 575-7008, rmchattie@longview.k12.wa.us

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Teaching in New York City

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New York City, NY

Job Category: Full Time Teaching

DESCRIPTION:

The New York City Department of Education is looking for bright, motivated, and dedicated teachers who are passionate about sparking opportunity for all students. With over 1,800 schools and 1.1 million students, New York City provides endless opportunities for you to hone your craft and build your career.

Whether in Coney Island or the South Bronx, our team of exceptional educators is passionate about urban education and is fiercely committed to success for all students. Our schools range in size (from 200-4,000 students) and are as diverse as our students and the neighborhoods we serve, allowing you to choose a school community that fits your needs as an educator. And with more than 200 innovative partnerships with leading arts, science and cultural organizations around the city, you will never run out of ways to expand your curriculum and pique students' interest.

New York City public schools are committed to fostering curiosity and confidence in all students, and jumpstarting the next generation of innovators, leaders and citizens. Now is your chance to help us make that happen.

COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS:

New York City public schools offer competitive starting salaries ranging from $54,000 to $81,694, based on prior teaching experience as well as your undergraduate and graduate education.

You may also become eligible for additional income through a wide array of incentives and school positions that will stretch and challenge you as an educator. You might earn additional grants by teaching in a select, high-need school as part of our Teachers of Tomorrow program, or by helping your colleagues develop in one of our many teacher leadership roles .

REQUIREMENTS:

To apply to teach in New York City, candidates must first meet the following requirements:

- Possess or be on track to earn a New York State Department of Education (NYSED) teaching certification by the start of the 2017-18 school year. If you are not already NYSED-certified, there are several ways to obtain certification .
- Complete an online teacher application at TeachNYC.net

Learn more about our application requirements and deadlines and apply to teach in New York City today!

APPLY:

http://teachnyc.net/?utm_source=job-board&utm_medium=job-posting&utm_campaign=2017-applications&utm_term=Spark&utm_content=Naset

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Special Education Specialist

Multiple Locations

Description:

The primary responsibility of the Special Education Specialist is to provide instruction and other related services to Special Education students. The Special Education Specialist will also facilitate diagnostic assessment including administration, scoring and interpretation. Will review and revise IEP's as needed. Will support instruction in reading, math, and written language for students, tutor individual and small groups of students, administer and score academic testing, write individualized education plans and support other academic programs as needed. The Special Education Specialist will work under the leadership of the Program Specialist and the Director of Special Education. This position will be available to provide direct instruction to students 6 hours a day.

Essential Functions include, but are not limited to the following:*

- Provide instruction to students with special needs and identified learning disabilities in a special education program.
- Tutor individual and small groups of students, reinforcing language and reading concepts.
- Administer and score individual and group tests.
- Schedule IEP meetings, coordinating schedules with parents, general education teacher(s), administrator, and all appropriate special education staff.
- Conduct IEP meetings.
- Communicate and coordinate special needs evaluation and testing with speech teacher, psychologist, and other service providers.
- Communicate with parents regarding individual student progress and conduct.
- Maintain progress records and record progress toward IEP goals.
- Record progress within the independent study program.
- Perform other duties in support of the Special Education Specialist program.
- Support other academic programs offered within the independent study program.

Various openings in Burbank region, San Gabriel region, Victor Valley region, Inland Empire region, San Bernardino region, and San Juan region.

Knowledge, Skills and Abilities Required:

- Special Education Specialist Certificate or ability to obtain Mild/Moderate Certificate.
- Ability to teach students of grades K-12.

- Ability to work with children of all ages.
- Ability to understand, adopt, and support the independent study program, concepts and their philosophies.
- Ability to organize and present ideas effectively in oral and written form.
- Ability to make skillful decisions.
- Ability to work under pressure and meet deadlines.
- Ability to operate a PC computer, word processor, copier, FAX, and other office machines.

Education and Experience:

- BA/BS Degree
- Valid California Teaching Credential in Special Education (Mild/Moderate)

Contact:

Nehia Hearn
Human Resources Assistant
Direct: 626) 204-2552 Fax: 626) 685-9316
nhearn@ofy.org

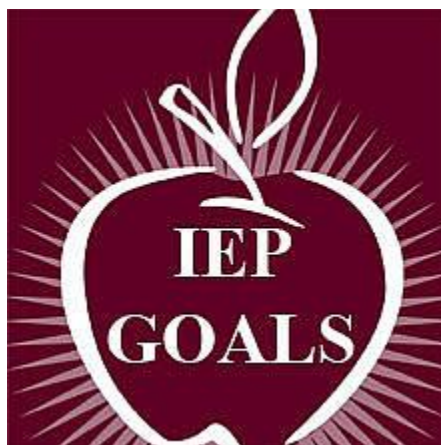*********************************

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Acknowledgements

Portions of this month's *NASET's Special Educator e-Journal* were excerpted from:

- Center for Parent Information and Resources
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- National Institute of Health
- National Organization on Disability
- Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration
- U.S. Department of Education
- U.S. Department of Education-The Achiever
- U.S. Department of Education-The Education Innovator
- U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
- U.S. Department of Labor
- U.S. Food and Drug Administration
- U.S. Office of Special Education

NASET Application for iPad and iPhone

To learn more click on the image above or - Click here