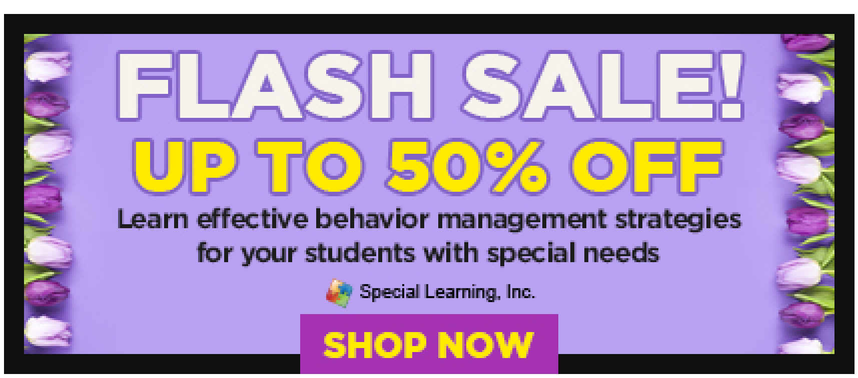
NASET Special Educator e-Journal

JUNE 2019

Table of Contents

NASET SPONSOR



Special Education Legal Alert

By Perry A. Zirkel
© May 2019

This month's update concerns issues that were subject to recent relevant court decisions and are of general significance: (a) the emerging fourth dimension of FAPE—capability to implement the IEP, and (b) the overlapping issues of the procedural and substantive dimensions of FAPE with LRE. Publications relating to both of these issues are available on my website **perryzirkel.com**.

In *R.F. v. Cecil County Public Schools* (2019), the Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals faced intertwined FAPE and LRE challenges to the IEP for a seven-year-old with severe autism and a rare genetic disorder. The IEP called for 13.5 hours in the general education classroom and approximately 17 hours in a specialized classroom. Instead, the parents sought placement in a private special education school. For procedural violations, they principally pointed to two proven actions of the special education teacher: (a) after the first three weeks in the school year, he gradually increased the hours in his specialized classroom without notice to the parents or an IEP meeting, and (b) he destroyed the raw data upon writing his quarterly progress reports even though the district policy was to maintain these data for two years. For LRE, the parents argued that the district provided most of their child's instruction in the special education classroom, where she was—unexpectedly to the district based on last-minute enrollment choices of other parents—the only child.

The Fourth Circuit rejected the parents' LRE argument, concluding that (b) although the child spent most of the time in a separate setting, the district provided her with multiple opportunities for interaction with nondisabled students; (b) the parents were effectively contradicting their claim by seeking a completely segregated setting; and (c) LRE inevitably overlaps or intertwines with FAPE.	This decision, which is officially published and binding in the 5 states of the Fourth Circuit (MD, NC, SC, VA, and WV), serves as a reminder of the individualized meaning of LRE in terms of *maximum* interaction with nondisabled students to the extent *appropriate*. For the "appropriate" interconnection, the court excused the 1:1 arrangement because it met the child's needs and "[the district] cannot be said to have denied [the child] a FAPE merely because fewer students enrolled [in the class than anticipated]."
The Fourth Circuit agreed that the teacher's unilateral action in changing the implementation of the IEP was a procedural violation but concluded that it did not have a harmful effect on the substantive rights of either (a) the child (in terms of	(a) Citing its gradual and individualized nature, the court concluded that the increased time in the specialized classroom was "reasonably calculated

the *Endrew F.* standard) or (b) the parents (in terms of meaningful participation in the IEP process).	to enable the child to make progress in light of [her] circumstances." (b) In the courts' view, this action did not constitute the requisite "significant" impediment to parental participation, because it went in the parents' desired direction and the IEP team met again in December.
The Fourth Circuit concluded that the teacher's destruction of the raw data was a violation of the district's, not the IDEA's, procedural requirements and that, in any event, the quarterly summaries sufficed in this case for their requisite opportunity for participation.	The Fourth Circuit is generally one of the least parent-friendly federal appeals courts in IDEA cases. Compare its procedural analysis, especially for the teacher's first action, with the Ninth Circuit's *M.C. v. Antelope Valley School District* (2017) ruling reported in the June 2017 Special Education Legal Alert

The bottom line is to avoid over-generalizing such LRE and FAPE issues, instead (a) focusing on the facts of the individual case, (b) considering your jurisdiction in relation to that of this court, and (c) engaging in proactive practices that differentiate and avoid such minimalist legal interpretations.

To top

In *Board of Education of Yorktown Central School District* (2019), a federal district court in New York addressed a tuition reimbursement claim arising from the district not having available at the start of the school year a special education class that met the specific size that the IEP prescribed. This claim illustrates the emerging fourth "face" of FAPE beyond procedural, substantive, and failure-to-implement: ability to implement the IEP.

In this case, the court concluded that the operative IEP was the June 2016 IEP, which provided for a special education class size of 12 students, rather than the October 2016 version, in which during the resolution session the district sought to change the specified class size to 15 students. Acknowledging, per the teacher's admission to the parents, that the district did not have available for the child a special education class at the start of the year limited to 12 student	The court reasoned that the parents relied upon the June 2016 IEP in making their decision to place the child in a private school for the coming year and seek tuition reimbursement. In the court's view, the opposite conclusion would have permitted the district to engage in "a 'bait and switch,' because the Parents did not consent to the modification and did not receive the October 2016 IEP with its revised class size recommendation until well after the beginning of the school year." For this operative IEP, the inability claim was rather clear.

<table>
<tr>
<td>amounted to the admission of the inability to provide the promised FAPE.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The district’s default argument was based on the “equities” step of tuition reimbursement analysis. More specifically, the district argued that the parents knew or had reason to know that the district intended to change the IEP’s class size and that they should have agreed to this change. However, the court concluded that “the record does not show the Parents understood the June 2016 IEP to recommend a [15-student] class size . . . . [; they] were under no obligation to agree to change the June 2016 IEP at the resolution meeting. … [and] there is no indication the Parents were uncooperative in the District's efforts to meet its obligations under the IDEA.”</td>
<td>This ruling is fairly typical of the equities analysis of judicial analyses in tuition reimbursement cases. If the district did not provide FAPE and the parents’ unilateral placement did meet the rather relaxed applicable substantive standard, courts often regard as within the broad bounds of reasonableness what the district perceives and proffers as inequitable on the parents’ part. In contrast, this case’s focus on the possible rectification at the resolution session is largely peculiar to the Second Circuit, which adopted in in R.E. v. N.Y.C. Department of Education (2012) what is generally regarded as an overly broad exception in addition to its rather complicated qualified four-corners approach to “retrospective evidence.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td colspan="2">This this case is one of the relatively few parental victories thus far in an increasing line of cases under the emergent fourth face of FAPE. It may become the example rather than the exception, depending on the crystallization of this evolving dimension. The courts’ response to claims that the facilities or staffing of the “school” are not capable of implementing the IEP bears careful monitoring, because it revisits appropriateness issues in a new way and also intersects with the problematic differentiation between “location” and “placement.” Yet, again, simply adhering to a trustworthy commitment to full implementation, timely IEP team adjustments, and prompt compensatory corrections avoids such legal complications.</td>
</tr>
</table>

Buzz from the Hub

All articles below can be accessed through the following link:
https://www.parentcenterhub.org/buzz-may2019-issue1/
https://www.parentcenterhub.org/buzz-april2019-issue2/

Hands-On Activity to Identify Your Child's Strengths

For this hands-on activity, parents and child will need some markers or crayons, scissors, and tape. The activity sheet guides families in identifying the child's personal strengths using simple statements such as "I am curious and creative" and "I can ask for help when I need it." Parents and child can also explore the child's strengths in academics, social skills, language, literacy, and math and logic.

5 Ways to Support Siblings in Special Needs Families

When one child in the family has needs that consume a lot of attention, restrict family activities, or generate a lot of concern, other children in the family feel an impact. Here are 5 steps parents can take to help children handle the challenges that come with having a sibling with a disability. There's also a companion article, ***Advice From Siblings of Special-Needs Kids***.

Coping With Incarceration | Sesame Street in Communities

The incarceration of a loved one can be overwhelming for both children and caregivers. It takes special effort to start important conversations and answer kids' questions. With love and support, the family can cope with the challenges of incarceration together. This resource page includes multiple articles and short videos featuring Sesame Street characters.

IEPs: Developing High-Quality Individualized Education Programs

This IRIS module details how to develop high-quality IEPs for students with disabilities. The module discusses the requirements for IEPs as outlined in IDEA, with implications of the Supreme Court's ruling in *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District*.

Best Practices in Self-Advocacy Skill Building

We've just updated this priority page on the Hub. Come here to learn more about self-advocacy; find resources for youth themselves; and find fact sheets, toolkits, and training materials on this subject. How about resources created within our very own Parent Center network? Materials in other languages? All here!

There's a Webinar, too!

CPIR hosted a 2015 webinar on self-advocacy skill building, featuring **Josie Badger** as the presenter. If you've never met Josie or heard her story in her own voice, here's your chance. Her story is riveting.

Your Journey to Self-Determination

This accessible, online series from CADRE provides short introductions to key concepts and skills needed to support students in becoming self-determined and engaging in one's educational planning. The 6 courses in the series highlight topics such as finding your voice, managing emotion and conflict, collaborative problem solving, and educational planning meetings. Materials include a facilitator's guide, handouts for youth, and student quizzes.

Promoting Self-Determination in Youth with Disabilities: Tips for Families and Professionals

Handy 1-pager! This resource is perfect to hang on your refrigerator, so you're reminded every day of the multitude of ways and moments parents and others have to promote the self-determination skills of their children.

To top

Lehigh University Section 504 Coordinators Institute – June 27–28, 2019

This two-day program provides the following legal and practical components for an up-to-date professional development experience:

- recent data and pertinent considerations for avoiding under- and over-identification of 504-only students - *Perry A. Zirkel, University Professor Emeritus of Education and Law, Lehigh University*
- a practical review of recent court decisions specific to P–12 students under Section 504 and the ADA, including those with overlapping IDEA coverage - *Julie Weatherly, School Attorney, Resolutions in Special Education, Inc.*
- a nuts-and-bolts session on effective forms and procedures that comply with the current requirements for identifying and serving 504-only students - *Lisa Hardcastle, Section 504 Coordinator, Clear Creek (Texas) Independent School District*

For information and registration go to: **https://wordpress.lehigh.edu/spedlaw/section-504-institute/**

To top

Mediating Parental Advocacy and the School District's Guidelines

By Karina Constantine

This paper will examine the idea of mediating and using parental collaboration as a tool to help teach parents to be better advocates for their children, while not breaking the district's guidelines. In the paper, five academic articles obtained from the modules within the "Working with Families of Students with Disabilities Through Collaborative Approaches" course, and Library. FIU.edu's social and psychological, and educational databases on the topic of teacher and parental advocacy, will be reviewed including:

1. Improving Parental Involvement: Training Special Education Advocates
2. In Parent's Voices: the Education of Children With Autism Spectrum Disorders.
3. Down the Rabbit Hole: A Commentary About research on Parents and Special Education.
4. Parents' Perspectives of Collaboration with School Professionals: Barriers and Facilitators to Successful Partnerships in Planning for Students with ASD.
5. Parent-Teacher Collaboration: Teacher Perceptions of What is needed to Support Students with ASD in the Inclusive Classroom.

While the research is varied, the data is overwhelming positive in regards to the positive effects of parental advocacy within the school system for children with ASD. Unfortunately, there is not a lot on district guidelines for teachers regarding advocating and helping parents learn how to advocate on their child's behalf, other than what is demanded and mandated by law. Even though research shows that schools believe in collaboration, communication and advocacy amongst the teachers, parents, and administration, teachers often find themselves stuck in the middle when helping a parent advocate for services, while the district often frowns upon it for whatever reason, whether economic or political.

Mediating Parental Advocacy and the School District's Guidelines

According to IDEA, children with disabilities are entitled to advocates, with the strongest and most powerful advocacy of course coming from the parent themselves. Unfortunately many parents, especially those from other countries, do not know their rights in regards to advocacy, and often culture and socio-economic barrier build resistance and fear inside these parents. Often these parents land up choosing not to use their rights to an advocate or advocating for themselves on behalf of their child and "without parental involvement, students with disabilities are vulnerable to receive inadequate and inappropriate services" (Burke, 2014, p. 225). Through research it is proven that parental collaboration and communication benefits the child and the school alike, and Burke (2014) solidifies this by stating that "Thirty years of research shows that greater family involvement in children's learning is a critical link to achieving high quality education and a safe disciplined learning environment for every student" (p. 226), yet often teachers are told to back off and not give too much information in an attempt for the economics or logistics to make sense. Sadly "parent participation rates are lower in special education programs than other compensatory programs" (Burke, 2014, p. 226) and there are many reasons for this. This review will take a look at the following concepts within five academic articles on the subject of mediating parental advocacy and the school district's guidelines:

Goals of Each Study in Relation to Advocacy
Barriers Studied and the Significance
Types of Research and Methods
Results and Data for Advocacy
Where the District Stands

In using the data from these research academic articles, the use of collaboration and parental advocacy, in conjunction with open communication, can be followed as per the rules and mandates of IDEA without a teacher having to get in trouble with their district.

Goals of Each Study in Relation to Advocacy

In "Improving Parental Involvement: Training Special Education Advocates," Burke (2014) analyzes the barriers that prevent possible parental advocacy and then compares two models for training special education advocates. Her research focuses on overcoming advocacy barriers while figuring out the best way to teach advocacy or as she puts it, "to develop, field-test and explore the feasibility of a special education advocacy program for nonattorneys to better meet the needs of families of students with disabilities" (Burke, 2014, p.228). The data from this study can help establish what barriers need to be overcome to help encourage parental advocacy while also providing data on two models of advocacy. In Schultz, Able, Sreckovic, and White's study (2016), the authors try to "gain an understanding of teachers' perceptions of helpful parental involvement and advocacy strategies for ensuring students' with ASD success in inclusive school settings" (p. 346) Since this study directly explores the perspective of teachers on the subject matter of advocacy, it is very beneficial in considering the possible solution to helping parents, while staying within district guidelines and federal mandates. Starr and Foy's (2012) study of advocacy, explores the subject from a parent's perspective, which can help teachers and administrators figure out how to overcome those barriers of communication by knowing what the parents expect, because the study "explores parents' perspectives concerning the education of their child with ASD" (Starr & Foy, 2012, p.208) in regards to many different areas which need to be advocated. Tucker and Schwartz's (2013) study is also from a parents' perspective, but more covers the idea of collaboration in advocacy and the conflict that occurs between parents of children with ASD and the administration. This study "provides more information to substantiate and describe the experience of parents during IEP collaborations, specifically with teachers and school administrators in supervisory roles" (Tucker & Schwartz, 2012, p. 6). This study is also beneficial in gaining knowledge as to what parents need and fear in order to help them become better advocates and more equitable team players and advocates. The last study by Valle (2011) focuses primarily on mothers and their narratives of how they feel, and the "challenge to the profession to raise and respond to ethical questions about our naturalized practices in alliance with parents" (p. 183). This study further assists and challenges teachers and administration to be ethical, follow the mandates of IDEA, and help advocate together as a team.

Barriers Studied and the Significance

In Burke's (2014) study, she mentions that "IDEA enables parents to advocate for their children with disabilities, several challenges make such advocacy difficult" (p. 225) including logistical issues such as transportation and child care to attend IEP meetings, feeling intimidated by the school because teachers and other educators tend to use educational jargon without considering that a parent might not know what those words or concepts mean, and financial burdens. These barriers are significant in helping teachers understand what needs to be overcome in order to collaborate and advocate together. Schultz, Able, Sreckovic, and White's study (2016) provides teachers ideas of barriers to collaboration, which include lack of communication, too much use of educational jargon, and language and cultural differences. This study is significant because it mentions that "research has demonstrated that parent involvement is strongly correlated with teacher invitations" (Schultz et al, 2016, p. 346) This strongly suggests that teachers have the power to make collaboration and advocacy positive between parents and the administration, and this is very significant on many levels. Starr and Foy's (2012) study discusses barriers from a parents' perspectives and these barriers include "lack of effective collaboration" (p. 211), lack of knowledge and lack of communication. This is significant in helping teachers understand parent's needs in learning how to advocate properly. Tucker and Schwartz's (2013) study also includes the discussion of barriers from the parents' perspectives, and these include leaders needing to prioritize collaboration, districts needing to provide teachers with proper resources and training, and communication in helping build parents confidence in teachers and the school system. This study tackles multiple areas to avoid barriers including "collaboration, supportive practices and professional behavior, conflict and resolution, service needs and educational and outcome priorities" (Tucker & Schwartz, 2012, p. 6). Lastly, Valle's (2011) study also discusses collaboration falling short of the "spirit of the law" (p. 186) and the lack of "cultural sensitivity" (p. 187) and the need for reliable sources of information. This once again is significant in helping overcome all barriers stopping parents, teachers and administration from communicating, collaborating and advocating together as one.

Types of Research and Methods

In Burke's (2014) study, two models of advocacy were tested. The first one was SEAT where trainees were expected to do 115 hours of classroom instruction and then 115 hours of field experience over a four month period. The second model, VAP, only involved 40 hours of classroom training but also came with reading assignments, articles, legislation and homework. Graduates of VAP also had to advocate for four families for free. More research has to be done to establish how effective these models have been, but they both provided a well-rounded curriculum for both parents and individuals just wanting to become advocates for special education. In Schultz, Able, Sreckovic, and White's study (2016), "thirty-four teachers who were general, special and related arts educators from two elementary schools, two middle schools, and two high schools participated in focus groups" (p.

346). The focus groups included interviews and case studies with lists of questions about parental advocacy and collaboration. The data was coded and a comparative method was used to put them into categories and domains. Starr and Foy's (2012) study used surveys with prepaid return envelopes sent to parents of 168 children with ASD who had volunteered for the study. The survey consisted of 106 questions that were open-ended. Parents were also invited to make additional comments if necessary. Responses were coded into emerging themes and frequencies of suggestions were calculated. Tucker and Schwartz's (2013) study involves an internet survey which incorporated a five-section framework including "a) collaboration, b) supportive practices and professional behavior, c) conflict and resolution, d) service needs, e) educational and outcome priorities" (p. 5). It consisted of 36 questions and quantitative and qualitative data was collected. Two local schools districts in Washington State were used and a total of 135 parents participated. Valle's (2011) study includes the narratives of "15 mothers of children with learning disabilities who represent diverse generations, races, classes, and cultures" (p. 185) and is very subjective to Valle's interpretation.

Results and Data for Advocacy

In Burke's (2014) study, barriers towards parental advocacy were discussed and two models were represented, but the article admitted that more research was needed in regards to learning to be a good advocate. As the article expresses, "we need intervention research to address the identified barriers to and evaluate potential solutions for effective parental involvement. Such research needs to focus on both the advocates themselves and the families of children with disabilities" (Burke, p. 232). The results of this study clearly indicate that although the barriers are clear, the solutions in helping build good advocates are not, and much more research is needed to solve this problem. In Schultz, Able, Sreckovic, and White's study (2016), "several issues related to teachers' perceptions of parent and parents' collaboration and advocacy activities focused on children's school success" (p. 348) were brought to the forefront including the idea of "over-involved" and "under-involved" parents and needing to find the balance between the two, and a need for advocacy through collaboration. The bottom line is that "parents need educators who are not only knowledgeable about their child's disability and evidence-based interventions, but who will collaborate and advocate with them in order to best support their child" (Schultz et al, 2016, p. 346) Starr and Foy's (2012) study also resulted in "demonstrating the lack of effective collaboration…and lack of knowledge" as playing a huge role in why advocacy is so lacking, and Tucker and Schwartz's (2013) study also reveals lack of collaboration, which they further prove to be the reason behind so many conflicts amongst parents and staff. As a matter of fact "maintaining regular contact, such as providing regular communication about progress, was rated highly by parents in the survey" (Starr and Foy, 2012, p. 5). Lastly Valle's (2011) study of mothers show collaborations as "dysfunctional" and who would rather use a "plurality of methodological frameworks" (p. 189) to move closer to where schools need to be.

Where the District Stands in Each Study

Unfortunately there are no actual guidelines from the district regarding a teacher's position when advocating with and for parents other than what is mandated by the IDEA law. The sad truth is that even though schools are encouraged and mandated to help parents advocate, teachers are often frowned upon for saying or helping too much and in all the beaurocracy, the fear of law suits sometimes outweigh the ethics. As Burke (2013) mentions, “a tremendous financial burden is placed on both schools and parents” when conflict arise and land up in court, which brings us full circle. My recommendation is that more research needs to be done on how teachers can help parents without stepping on the toes of their districts, and districts need to be clearer on their expectations of teachers regarding advocacy and parental collaboration.

References

Burke, M. M. (2014). Improving Parental Involvement: Training Special Education Advocates. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies,* 23(4), *225-234*.

Schultz, T. R., Able, H., Sreckovic, M. A., & White, T. (2016). Parent-Teacher Collaboration: Teacher Perceptions of What is Needed to Support Students with ASD in the Inclusive Classroom. *Education and Training in Autism and Developmental Disabilities*, *51*(4), 344-354.

Starr, E. M, & Foy, J. B. (2012). In Parents’ Voices: The Education of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Remedial and Special Education*, *33*(4), 207-216.

Tucker, V, & Schwartz, R. (2013). Parents’ Perspectives of Collaboration with School Professionals: Barriers and Facilitators to Successful Partnerships in Planning for Students with ASD. *School Mental Health*, *5:3-14*

Valle, J. W. (2011). A Commentary About Research on Parents and Special Education. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, *34*(3), 183-190.

To top

Oppositional Defiant Disorder Toward Adults and Oppositional Defiant Disorder Toward Peers: Initial Evidence for Two Separate Constructs

By Stephanie M. Estrada

Abstract

Oppositional Defiant Disorder is characterized by the act of defiance and disobedience at its core. In "Oppositional Defiant Disorder Toward Adults and Oppositional Defiant Disorder Toward Peers: Initial Evidence for Two Separate Constructs," further investigations of implications on the student and educators in the classroom are touched upon to debunk the controversial theory that ODD can simply be directed at an adult or authority figure. A qualitative study takes place to characterize signs and symptoms of the disorder recognized in communication with student peers, educators, and parents alike.

Oppositional Defiant Disorder Toward Adults and Oppositional Defiant Disorder Toward Peers: Initial Evidence for Two Separate Constructs

Research Problem

In "Oppositional Defiant Disorder Toward Adults and Oppositional Defiant Disorder Toward Peers: Initial Evidence for Two Separate Constructs," the focus centers Oppositional Defiant Disorder (ODD) and the implications it may have in the educational field. This specific disorder is a conduct of recurrent patterns of "negativistic, defiant, disobedient, and hostile behavior toward authority figures that persists for 6 months" (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 4th ed.,).

While mainly targeting adults, the typical description of ODD implies that this select style of behavior can also be directed toward peers and other like minds of similar age. The American Psychiatric Association deliberately identifies ODD as hostility that "can be directed at adults or peers and is shown by deliberately annoying others or by verbal aggression." There is a bit of vagueness regarding this disorder, essentially constructed of defiance towards authority, while the general description preaches hostility towards peers. Symptoms also reflect this rather hypocritical outlook, characterizing adults as the main target of Oppositional Defiant Disorder.

Furthermore, this article touches upon the concept of this unclear line drawn between ODD and adults versus peers. While the main principal of this is never directly stated, the piece weaves its way into explaining how this is pivotal knowledge to both the psychiatric and educational field. The pervasiveness of the general definition of ODD is what brought this article to light. The purpose of the study to follow was to identify a correlation between relationships between adults in peers, in turn producing adequate data to therefore comprehend implications on various emotional relationships through life.

A quantitative study may have been more appealing to the authors for this study's purpose solely because the wide range of individuals needed to be tested in order to confirm suspicions of outright defiance across ages and relationships.

While there is no designated theory that brought attention to this topic, the overall gap in definitions of Oppositional Defiant Disorder and the lack of social explanation led to the idea that it may go beyond defiance of authority in adolescent's lives.

Put simply, researchers took up the challenge of determining whether ODD toward kindergarten teachers and ODD towards peers represent two completely isolated constructs rather than one.

Measurement

Participants of this study consisted of a population of elementary students in small to medium sized communities based in Oregon with an estimated total of 1,478 to 137,893 individuals. These selected students attended schools that were already taking place in additional studies revolving evaluating intervention to reduce conduct problems and improving social skills among first graders; the former indicating a need for social reform, and numerous problems regarding behavior at these locations. A grand total of 23 schools participated in the initial screening, with the median of these students qualifying for free or reduced lunch (46%) and 50.6% being males.

For this particular portion of the screening, race and ethnicity were not collected, leaving a gap in data. Contrarily, of these students, 717 were requited to continue for the subsequent longitudinal portion of the study, and of this bit of sampling, 16% were Hispanic. No other ethnicity was reported, but race consisted of 90% Caucasian, 5% American Indian, 2% African American, and 1% Asian; 4% classified themselves as other.

Children were in kindergarten and rated by teachers using a brief questionnaire of social behavior. Children that were labeled with autism or other severe developmental delays were excluded from the sampling at the time. Moving forward, ratings were completed on 1,358 children from three individual cohorts; these groups were then divided into two samples for purpose of analysis. As a result, 824 children were recruited in the first two years of the study and 534 were recruited n the 3rd year of the study in various communities. Ratings were compiled by fifty individual educators, with each teacher rating between 8 and 51 children.

Means of testing students were administered through a shortened version of the Child and Adolescent Disruptive Behavior Inventory 2.3, which consists of 25 items, with items consisting of ODD towards peers and adults alike, with nine items geared towards the ADHD-HI subscale. Markings for this assessment were based on behavior displayed in the last month, and only in the school environment.

The Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) was used to evaluate the structural organization of ratings presented by teachers, and their concept of the eight ODD symptoms toward teachers and peers, and the nine ADHD-HI symptoms for kindergarteners. This served as a three-factor model (ODD-peer, ODD-teacher, ADHD), as opposed to the typical two-factor (ODD, ADHD).

While the children were often switched or dismissed, they posed as independent variables; the common factor simply consisted of ODD, or traits of Oppositional Defiant Disorder.

The measures used seem to be of ethical moral, but the fact that for a portion of the data race and ethnicity were not collected serves as a professional downfall. Additionally, students outside of the kindergarten level should have been tested, which would give a better feel whether peer and adult constructs are a problem at only certain ages. Supplementary, behavior was only considered in the past month and in the school environment, indicating the behavior may easily be a phase, lapse of judgment, or only present in the school setting as opposed to evident ODD which affects an individual across the board.

Research Design

For the purpose of this study, the Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was mainly used to evaluate structural organization of teacher ratings of ODD symptoms, by way of a three-factor model, broadening possibility of differentiating outcomes and isolating variables to create concrete evidence in the midst. The design followed 824 kindergarten participants for just over two years, in a multilevel modeling procedure in which data was clustered by the educator in order to obtain correct standard errors for the CFA procedures. This was found to be a necessary precaution as each teacher was accountable for rating multiple students.

Furthermore, the model comparison strategy was executed; the initial step included comparing several varying but plausible models.

Internally, there may be a threat to validity, as the measures of usage were repeated various times in an extensive fashion that may have muddled data, as previously noted. Externally, factors that may be a threat to procedures include the fact that participants may age, and in turn, grow out of the Oppositional Defiant Disorder. Similarly, these participants may develop new act-out behaviors they may not have exhibited in the past. This also reflects on the idea that this trial may not be valid or reliable, as it was tested with a singular age group and therefore may not be the best available data regarding Oppositional Defiant Disorder behaviors. With age, ODD may develop from mild to severe or vice versa, noticeably impacting study results and therefore validity and reliability. It is quite possible that the measure that was found suitable for the trial may not work for these participants with maturation.

Sampling

Ideally, the researchers presenting this article brought life to this concept with the intentions of studying students at-risk of developing Oppositional Deviant Disorder, or students who already suffered from the disease. The population consisted of 824 kindergarteners, a younger group that is more likely to present symptoms and not the actual labeled disorder yet. While the population was younger, and so showed room for intervention and avoidance of developing ODD, this study would have benefited more from students of differing ages, as it would showcase where symptoms progressively worsen or if certain qualities are unique to specific age groups. Children of more mature ages should have been represented in this study to further round-out data and grouping.

Sampling ensured that a variety of heritage and nationalities were represented, making for a diverse group of learners, or students. While some percentage of race was unaccounted for, as noted before, other accounts of evidence lead to the assumption that a broad group of individuals were noted throughout the study. Sampling was also consistent in that it relied on a sole age-group so that evidence could be concrete in the ages it was representing.

The specific type of sampling for this purpose falls somewhere between random and systematic, but not necessarily stratified. Sampling can be considered random in the sense that while kindergarteners were the subjects, specifics of learning abilities, disabilities, and race did not play a part in selection outside of the idea that many *may* be at risk for Oppositional Defiant Disorder. Contrarily, systematic sampling also took part in this research as all participants were kindergarteners, creating a homogenous population of sorts.

Typically, there may not be any disadvantages of these sampling styles pertaining to this study, but as noted before, a wider range of testing audience, specifically in varying ages, may have better suited the project and would have helped to hone in on age-specific symptoms. Hand-in-hand with this, external validity may be threatened in the case that varying age groups do not display the same symptoms, behaviors, or similar results as those states by this case.

Data Collection

Data were acquired through the use of a Confirmatory Factor Analysis, or CFA. Specifically, the program was designed to better evaluate the structural organization of ratings made by teachers of the eight varying Oppositional Defiant Disorder Symptoms toward peers and teachers, and the nine ADHD-HI symptoms present in children in the kindergarten classroom setting.

Observations served as the method of choice for researching purposes in this article. It was through observations that the AHDH and ODD behaviors were documented and analyzed. The advantage of the proposed method is that it allows for hands-on studying and for researchers to get up close and personal with participants. In addition to this method, a Confirmatory Factor Analysis was used to evaluate symptoms by educators through teacher ratings. This method may be classified as a questionnaire. Flaws in this method may lie in the idea that educators may have a misconstrued perception of students, and students may have a misconstrued perception of themselves. This specific method of data collection allows for assumptions, something very dangerous to action research. Contrarily, it also allows for less complex data collection and is simpler for those unfamiliar with typical research.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed by means of teaching ratings completed through the Confirmatory Factor Analysis. This analysis evaluated the structural organization of the teacher rating that were conducted throughout the study.

Analyzation of data was conducted through a three-factor model (ODD – Teachers, ODD-Peers, and ADHD-H). Typically, a two-factor model may be used, consisting of only ODD and ADHD-H, but the uniqueness of this study aimed to prove a distinction in ODD.

Results

When studying rate measures of problem behaviors, it is not unlikely to find items exhibiting substantial skew and kurtosis, the sharpness of the peak of a frequency-distribution curve. As this sample was "normative," the highest scores found were extremely rare, or outliers. In order to adequately code symptoms or act-out behaviors, responses that fit the profile of 2-5 times per day, 6-9 times per day, and 10 or more times per day were all coded as a 6, creating a wide band of data. A Confirmatory Factor Analysis of teaching ratings from the initial conducted sample with data that was clustered by the teacher and which all items were forced to load on one single factor. Researchers noted they believed this was not a good fit for the task at hand, most likely also implicating some data in turn.

This was followed by a two-factor model that tested ADHD-HI items in which all loaded on one factor, followed by the ODD items loading on an additional sole factor. Results showed that this proved to be a much better fit in specifics to the data that needed to be acquired in order to prove substantial to the project. Unfortunately, while effective, the model failed to show it was adequate for the overall fit of *all* complementary data. In turn, a three-factor model came into play, testing which items were allowed to load on respective factors of ADHD-HI and ODD to teachers, while specifically displaying ODD to peers. Once again, this specified model showed substantial improvement to those that preceded it, though it did not achieve HU and Bentler's (1999) standards of overall fit, pertaining to a systemic equation of validity.

As a result of these trials, the following tested whether correcting for anticipated method effects would likely improve the model's fit. A priori alternative model was able to free covariances of identical factors from the constraint when it must equal zero to account for the method effects that were tested. As a system of practice, this method allowed for certain items, such as those that fit "Argues with adults" and "argues with peers" to correspond more closely with each other than may otherwise allow.

Following statistics, researchers addressed this issue by means of freeing the covariance between all eight pairs of identical behavior items from zero but while also retaining the model constraint that they be assumed to equal each other at the same time. This served as a way to minimalize the opportunity to capitalize on chance, ensuring that the model only benefited from the main difference of these covariances from zero. Once more, significant and meaningful improvements resulted from these slight changes, and so the relationship between the three underlying factors was negligible at this point. However, this model still did not meet the requirements needed to achieve Hu and Bentler's (1999) standards for an overall appropriate fit.

An additional prior alternative model with a second method factor was then tested to account for the average influence of one item on another subsequent item. Authors addressed this by freeing covariances of each adjacent pair of items from equalizing zero but retaining model constraints that they be assumed to equal each other. From this, a grand total of 22 relationships were constrained with a single degree of freedom, including new instructions between certain items in the questionnaire. As a result, the relationship among the three factors remained virtually indifferent, but the model had now achieved Hu and Bentler's (1999) standards for an overall adequate fit of data.

Analyses of Sample 1 and Sample 2 followed suit, and likewise results, or conclusions, were reached at every step. The three-factor model resulted in a substantial improvement over the two-factor model, as it allowed for covariances between adjacent items and identically-worded items to also result in considerable improvements. Analyses of genders warranted a separate program rerun, and yet the same conclusion was reached; this replication also gave increasing confidence that the three-factor model was truly an appropriate, and reliable, fit.

These results solidified that "oppositional toward adults" and "oppositional toward peers" are distinct but correlated constructs and that both are distinct from HI. All of the following items loaded onto their hypothesized constructs in the system, which was further supported by the action of replication with the second sample, and gender reruns, of students. Tests of factor invariance would be needed in order to offer a more rigorous analysis of whether this structure is truly identical across genders.

Implications of the Findings

The authors came to the conclusion that "oppositional toward adults" and "oppositional toward peers" are distinct on their own but also correlate in constructs, and both stand aside from HI. These findings came about after multiple system reruns, and trials of two-factor and three-factor models that showed similar, if not exact, results for all demographics.

While the results seem to be deemed appropriate, it is important to note the possibility of data interference across multiple spectrums; data was transferred multiple times and could have easily been jumbled or incorrectly distributed across multiple test trials.

Notably, the CADBI (Version 2.3), a new and improved measure of disruptive behavior, holds new insight and offers promise as a useful assessment tool that may have a fine-milled and reliable distinction between Oppositional Defiant Disorder to teachers, and ODD to peers. This distinction may be useful in defining contexts in which need to intervene, and developing effective ways to do so earlier, as well as measuring the effects of such interventions.

The study also showcased procedures for addressing two method effects that may account for modest but significant variance. One procedure corrected items that tend to be influenced by the previous item ranked, displaying a crutch in evidence and validity. Another corrected the number of items that asked about identical behaviors that were directed towards peers and teachers. These corrections resulted in small, but noticeable, changes in the estimates of relationships among underlying, or more hidden, constructs though improving the overall model fit. Evidently, these procedures identify and account for method effects in analyzing questionnaire data without diminishing the practical implications for the measurement of three separate constructs.

Another limitation that is ever present, and has already been noted, is that measurements only included those of teacher ratings of kindergarten students. While understanding ODD qualities in children at a young age, and effective early interventions can serve as a deterrent of this disorder, this study does not offer a outlook on individuals who have developed and continue to suffer from the disability throughout teen years and adolescent. The authors have noted that additional research will be necessary in order to determine whether teacher ratings of children and parent ratings of children at different ages follow a similar pattern. Another limitation is that this case does not assess whether opposition to teachers and opposition to peers constructs have different correlations, follow varying development trajectories, or predict different outcomes.

Further research may incorporate two correlated but distinct constructs of oppositional to teachers and oppositional to peers so that there is the ability to learn which type of correlates, antecedents, and consequences they possess.

In the future, focusing on even more refined distinctions may be useful, such as honing on whether certain behaviors occur toward siblings and/or close friends or solely toward teachers and/or parents. Additionally, studying where proper social skills are exhibited, and to who, may be noteworthy. Most pivotally, targeting, or development, of a specific assessment with appropriate measures to gauge indifferences will be most effective in fine-graining research in this area of focus.

Personally, there is a lack of significance to the area of interest, as there are many threats to validity and reliability. Additionally, this article does not go into depth as to whether personality traits distinct to odd are more likely to decapitate or grow with maturation. It is also vital to note the amount of times it took to find a corresponding measure for the study, and that in itself proves an off-balance that exists somewhere in both the study and methods being used. While interesting in information regarding Oppositional Defiant Disorder towards other peers, there is not enough evidence to design strategies and preventions to avoid act-outs in the classroom.

Student’s Contribution

If this study were to be conducted again, I would ensure to include a wider ranging group of individuals. A possible example would be including teenagers aged 12-17 in one trial group, and a supplementary group of children aged 6-11. While this study primarily focused on a combination of act-out factors in kindergarteners it did not take into consideration how these behaviors my carry on, and possibly heighten with age, eliminating any true validity for the majority of children who suffer from Oppositional Defiant Disorder, regardless of age. Additionally, the concept of reliability may also be at stake, as the measurement used may not be reliable when working with focus groups of various ages.

The measurement of this study also proved to be rather inconsistent, as well as primarily non-effective; the study accounts for having to change methods as much as three times to truly reach an adequate measurement potential, showcasing the fact that data may have somewhere along the way became irrelevant or recorded wrongly.

Furthermore, significance of the study at hand was unclear and not concise whatsoever, leaving readers to wonder if the project was significant or not outside of the implications of finding. Based on the noted data and listings of complications, the trial appears to be insignificant, but there is no concrete way of telling due to the disorganization of the article. While numbers were present and even so excessive, they were not thoroughly explained throughout the course of the piece and created a somewhat murky study to navigate as both a reader and fellow researcher.

Contrarily, I would presume the final program chosen to run the testing numbers would suit for the task at hand, and so I would be sure to stick to this program in the case that it once more proves itself adequate and worthy of Hu and Bentler's standards.

If there may be anything that constitutes deleting, it may be the excessive information featuring the multiple models that were in need of improvement. While it is vital to know what does and does not work in regards to educational research, I felt that much of the article focused on finding the perfect model, rather than debunking that Oppositional Defiant Disorder applies only to students and authority figures in their lives (parents and teachers, mainly). The article fell flat and quickly became something much of a chore to read and did not feel as packed with information as it might have had if there was not so much emphasis on the various models that were executed prior to finding a suitable measure.

A way to solve the stated problem would have been to evidently delete the excess of information. More so, though, wouldn't think infringe on the honesty of the literary piece, though? It may, as once the trial began, everything that came as a result should have, and was, documented in the writing. The only suitable way to have avoided this altogether would have been in testing the various methods prior to running trials. The researchers could have gone about studying which models are noted for their authenticity among other key factors, and then chose one in lieu of this. That would have allowed for a smoother, much more efficient study and would have kept the article focused and concise. Instead, you are left with a piece that feels somewhat jumbled and unethical in pursuit.

To conclude, while this piece of literature serves as a fine move towards a breakout in Oppositional Defiant Disorder findings in relation to defiant traits in peers and authority figure, there is still extensive data analyzing that needs to be done in order to solidify any formal findings. In the future, the use of participants of varied ages and the sole use of a single measurement for this purpose may better serve the needs of research in order to meet the standards of finely defined data.

References

Taylor, T. K., Burns, G. L., Rusby, J. C., & Foster, E. M. (2006). Oppositional defiant disorder toward adults and oppositional defiant disorder toward peers: Initial evidence for two separate constructs. Psychological Assessment, 18(4), 439-443. doi:10.1037/1040-3590.18.4.439

To top

Supporting Individuals with Significant Disabilities: The Roles of a Job Coach

INTRODUCTION

The person who assists individuals with disabilities to find and maintain employment using supported employment services has been referred to by a number of different titles. This includes such titles as employment specialist, employment consultant, personal representative, job developer, job-site trainer, and job coach. Regardless of the title, a job coach wears many different hats when supporting an individual in finding and maintaining employment.

The most important roles are those associated with supporting an individual with a disability in finding "real work for real pay", while also providing valuable services to businesses (Wehman, Inge, Revell, & Brooke 2007). As such, a job coach has two customers: the individual with a disability and the employer who will hire the job seeker. These two roles require unique and different skills. A job coach must have the ability to represent the job seeker as a valuable asset to businesses while also being able to identify and facilitate the necessary supports for the individual to become a successful employee.

Some Community Rehabilitation Providers (CRPs) choose to divide these roles into two positions: one of job developer and one of job coach. This can be problematic in that the job developer may know the skills and needs of the individual with a disability, while the job coach may not fully understand the needs of the business. As such, CRPs must realize that splitting the roles of a job coach into multiple positions can create issues that need to be identified and resolved.

This fact sheet discusses the roles of job coaches who work in supported employment programs. The information is presented with the assumption that the job coach who is supporting the job seeker with a disability is also representing this individual to the business. Hopefully, job coaches will use this resource to assist individuals with disabilities in achieving integrated employment outcomes. Additional resources can be found online at VCU's CRP-RCEP website: http://www.crp-rcep.org.

Key Points

- Job coaches must be able to assist the jobseeker in identifying personal interests, which lead to a job of choice in the community.
- Job coaches must understand the business community and how individuals with disabilities ***add value*** to the workplace.
- Job coaches must identify workplace supports that assist the individual with a disability in becoming employed ***today*** instead of requiring the individual to ***get ready*** for a job ***someday***!

JOB COACH ROLES AND STRATEGIES

1. Is able to identify the individual's interests in order to facilitate a job/career of choice.

All too often, the labor market "drives" the job search rather than the job seeker's interests. Offering a job in food service, because these jobs are readily available, to an individual who does not want to work in food service is an example of the labor market "driving" job development. Of course there are specific businesses that exist within any given community and need to be considered. But, if a person is not interested in a particular type of work, he or she is less likely to be successfully employed for the long term.

Strategies: The job coach must get to know the job seeker by spending time with him or her in the community. Getting to know what "makes the individual tick" or makes him or her excited is important! For example, the job coach and the job seeker might go shopping, eat at a restaurant, attend a movie, go to a sporting event, meet at the individual's home, or simply drive around the neighborhood to discuss the local businesses. During these activities, the job coach can learn a lot about the job seeker. How does the person like to spend time? What is important to the individual? Are there any particular non-negotiables related to employment?

Asking significant others in the individual's life what is important related to work also can be important and helpful. The information can be gathered using person-centered planning meetings or activities or less formally through conversations. The person should always be included and confirm that these ideas are of interest for employment.

A key point to remember is that individuals with disabilities often will be more comfortable and open if the meetings and activities occur in locations of the individual's choice rather than at the CRP. This is true even if the person has a long history of being served in the organization's facility-based program. Getting out in the community will allow the job coach to see a totally different side to the individual and provide valuable information.

2. Is able to identify the individual's skills and talents in order to facilitate a job/career of choice.

Getting to know the individual also gives the job coach an opportunity to observe the jobseeker's abilities and create a visual image of his or her support needs. This is much more valuable than the scores that the person makes on a standardized test! For example, the job coach could learn about the person's physical abilities, social skills, money use, time keeping, functional academic skills among numerous other things.

Strategies: Suppose the job coach and the individual go out to a restaurant and talk about employment opportunities. While there, the job coach not only can learn about the individual's interests but also skills and support needs. Does the individual arrive with or without assistance by taking public or private transportation? Does someone have to come with the person to the appointment? Does the individual arrive on time and is dressed appropriately? This is important to note even if family members or residential support staff bring the person, which may provide insight on the supports available to the individual.

Once there, what support does the individual need? This could include such things as ordering, eating, using the restroom, moving around the restaurant, social skills, paying for the food, and so forth. This type of functional assessment in community settings can be used when analyzing potential work settings that will match or closely match the individual's skill level. The closer the match, the better chance the person will be successful and the less training that will be needed for the individual to be independent.

3. Is able to negotiate customized jobs for individuals with disabilities.

Some individuals who need supported employment services will not be able to qualify for existing jobs or may have very unique talents. In these instances, job coaches must be able to negotiate or work with employers to customize positions. Customized employment can benefit both the individual with a disability and the business. The employment specialist must be prepared to identify these potential benefits when working with the business community.

Strategies: Business can benefit from customizing positions in a number of ways. For instance, a business may have work that is not getting done or is not currently assigned to an employee. These job duties could "customized" to match the skills and interests of an individual with a disability. And, businesses may save money by customizing jobs if they are paying overtime to staff for task completion. Identify ways that a job might be customized when conducting a job analysis or talking with an employer. Some of the strategies that have been used to customize jobs include the following.

- The job duties in one job description might be divided into two or more positions resulting in a customized position for a specific job seeker.
- Tasks that are not being done or not done often enough might be identified to negotiate a job description.
- Tasks that employers are paying over-time for may be combined into a position to save the company money while hiring an individual who is interested in these job duties.
- Job duties that take employees away from their areas of expertise may be combined into one position. This may save the employer money and get jobs done more often if an individual is dedicated to these tasks.

While there is no one "best" way to negotiate a customized job, there are some basic steps that can lead to successful employment negotiations. Step one is to begin with a clear knowledge of the jobseeker's vocational interests, strengths, expectations, and support needs. If a job coach is representing the person with a disability, he or she must know the jobseeker's bottom line. Knowing the job seeker will ensure that negotiations move in the right direction from the beginning and that a job of choice for the individual is identified. Compromising on features of a job to satisfy the employer that do not match the interests of the job seeker will not result in a mutually beneficial employment relationship.

Step two is to identify the employer's needs. Successful negotiations also require understanding the business and its operations. Time must be spent building rapport with the employers, before negotiation is attempted for a specific job seeker. Identify the company's needs and suggest possible work solutions that might resolve these needs. One thing to remember is to not assume that what is important for one company will be the same for another. One employer may be motivated to negotiate a job to save money, while another may have a job task that current employees are not completing. Remember, the end result is a mutually agreed upon job. All sides should leave the negotiation feeling satisfied.

4. Is able to address employer concerns about hiring people with disabilities while maintaining the confidentiality of the job seekers.

They may have preconceived ideas about people with disabilities as well as spoken or unspoken concerns about hiring someone with a disability. In addition, employers may unknowingly ask questions that are unlawful about the person's disability under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Or, they may be afraid to ask questions. In many communities, employers already know that the job coach works for a "disability" agency simply by knowing the name of the CRP. During initial contacts, the job coach must be able to educate the employer without disclosing information that is confidential.

Strategy: Common employer concerns may include some of the following.

- If I hire a person with a disability, will my liability insurance increase?
- Will hiring a person with a disability cost me money?
- Am I liable if something happens to the job coach when he or she is in my business?
- Will I be sued if I have to fire the person?

Answers to these questions should be discussed, and a policy or standard answers developed that job coaches can use. Examples of how hiring an individual has been beneficial to employers in the community could be gathered and shared with potential businesses. Confirm with the employers and their workers with disabilities that information can be shared regarding their success stories. Focus on how accommodations and supports resulted in worker independence and employer benefits rather than on the specific disabilities of the workers.

Prior to job development, the job coach must talk with the job seekers to decide what, how much, and when to disclose a disability to an employer. Discuss with the individual and his/her family if needed what they want disclosed to the employer. Remember that details about a specific person's disability cannot be disclosed without the individual's consent. Generic answers to questions about disabilities may be OK if specific individuals are not discussed. However, any discussion should be phrased in the terms of providing qualified applicants to the business. This could include how simple accommodations and supports will assist the person in completing the essential job functions that are being negotiated with the employer. Discussing disclosure with the job seeker in advance and always doing so in a way that accentuates the positive is key. Planning to address these issues with business in advance and actually bringing them up during discussion will preclude employers from having to do so or leave them wondering about such things.

5. Is able to identify a wide variety of workplace supports.

Every person with a disability is unique; every job site is different. There is no one type of workplace support that will accommodate all individuals or settings. Supports must be customized. Therefore, job coaches must be familiar with a variety of workplace supports and be ready to facilitate the right type and intensity of support to help the new hire become successful.

Strategy: Some examples of on the job supports might include identifying the natural cues and/or adding compensatory memory strategies to assist the person in task completion. Natural cues include recognizing the salient features of work tasks or supplies. For instance, a person who assists with inventory delivery may need to learn that a particular form in his / her inbox means that someone is ordering supplies to be delivered. In this instance, the natural cue is the presence of the form in the inbox. A compensatory strategy for completing this task might be adding "inboxes" for each department in the company if the worker has difficulty figuring out where to deliver the supplies once the order is filled. Or, if the person cannot read, perhaps the business would be willing to implement a form with small photos of the supplies to be ordered. Providing training on the job skills using instructional techniques, adding assistive technology, implementing training to help teach appropriate social skills on the job are other important things to consider.

The goal is to assist the worker in becoming independent of the job coach as quickly as possible. Therefore, it is critical for job coaches to learn how to recognize and facilitate natural / existing supports in a workplace. Often the success of the new hire will be related to the supports provided by other workers. This might be as simple as observing when coworkers take their breaks and pass through the individual's work area. A coworker might be asked if he/she could provide support or feedback to the worker with a disability during that time period. In other words, facilitating the support from coworkers might be necessary initially but will occur naturally as the coworkers get to know the new worker with a disability.

6. Uses data collection techniques to document effectiveness of workplace supports and to guide fading from the job site.

Decisions about the effectiveness of on the work supports and the employee's progress on the job should not be based on guesswork. It should be based on sound data collection procedures and interpretation of the data presented. Just as job coaches need to be familiar with a variety of workplace, they should also know how to collect and analyze data. This information can then be used to guide instruction and develop a schedule to fade the job coach's presence from the job site.

Strategy: Again, every person is unique. Additionally, every job and workplace is different. Thus, training strategies will vary and hence the appropriate data collection techniques. At a bare minimum, job coaches should be familiar with how to design a task analysis and use it to collect data related to productivity.

Fading must begin the moment the job coach sets foot in the business. Even if this means walking away from the worker for as little as five minutes the first day on the job. Data collection can show the job coach where the worker is performing independently and does not need assistance as mentioned, even on the first day of employment.

7. Provides proactive follow along services.

One of the unique features of supported employment is the ongoing service. As long as the person is employed, follow-up services are provided to monitor work performance and job satisfaction from both the worker and employer's perspectives. This information is used to determine the need for additional supports. Some examples on-going job coach support include assisting the worker to perform new job duties, relearning skills previously learned but being performed incorrectly or poorly, as well as problem-solving issues that occur outside of work, which, if left unattended, could lead to difficulties and possibility job separation.

Strategy: The nature and amount of long-term support needed varies from person to person. Additionally, the type and intensity of support necessary will change over time. Thus, job coaches must become skilled at making observations, collecting data, and asking the "right questions" to predict and identify support needed and provide or facilitate the service. Maintaining ongoing and regular contact with the worker and employer is vital to job retention. This feature of supported employment is one of the benefits that may encourage business to hire a worker with disabilities and use supported employment services.

Summary Key Points

- Functional community-based assessments, instead of testing or simulations should be used to determine the job seeker's skills, interests, learning style, social skills, and support needs. This information helps customize desirable and suitable work options.
- Employers are customers too. As such, job coaches must understand how the service benefits business and be prepared to share this when meeting with employers to discuss job opportunities.
- Some job seekers cannot qualify for existing jobs. Job coaches must encourage business to consider customizing existing job descriptions specifically for a job seeker with disabilities.
- The job coach provides or facilitates both on and off the job supports to help increase the odds that the individual with a disability becomes successful at work.
- Performance data is collected and analyzed to assist the job coach with making decisions about the effectiveness of work place supports. As needed, supports are modified or new ones are developed.
- Long term ongoing support is available throughout the worker's employment. The job coach finds ways to anticipate potential supports and provides or facilitates additional support as indicated.

References

Bissonnette, D. (1995). Beyond traditional job development: The art of creating opportunity. Santa Cruz, CA: Diversity World.

Learn more about this book by visiting: http://www.diversityshop.com/store/beyondtext.html
Wehman, P., Inge, K.J., Revell, W.G., & Brooke, V. (2007). *Real work for real pay: Inclusive employment for people with disabilities*. Baltimore: Paul Brookes Publishing Co.
Learn more about this book by visiting: www.brookespublishing.com/store/books/wehman-7535/index.htm

Additional Online Resources:
APSE The Network on Employment: http://www.apse.org/
VCU CRP-RCEP: http://www.crp-rcep.org
VCU Rehabilitation Research and Training Center on Workplace Supports and Job Retention: http://www.worksuppor.com
The authors for this fact sheet are Dr. Katherine Inge (VCU CRP-RCEP Project Director), Howard Green (MD TA Liaison), and Pam Targett (DC TA Liaison). For more information on VCU CRP-RCEP, please visit http://www.crp-rcep.org.

For additional information, contact your TA Liaison.
Delaware

Grant Revell - wgrevell@vcu.edu

Maryland

Howard Green - jhgreen@vcu.edu

Pennsylvania

Valerie Brooke - vbrooke@vcu.edu

Virginia and West Virginia

Jennifer Todd McDonough - jltodd@vcu.edu

Washington D.C.

Pam Targett - psherron@vcu.edu

This fact sheet was funded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration (RSA), which is part of the U.S. Department of Education (#H264B050007). The contents do not necessarily represent the interpretations or opinion of the U.S. Department of Education. Virginia Commonwealth University is an equal opportunity/affirmative action institution providing access to education and employment without regard to age, race, color, national origin, gender, religion, sexual orientation, veteran's

status, political affiliation, or disability. If special accommodations or language translation are needed, contact Katherine Inge at: kinge@vcu.edu or Voice (804) 828 - 1851 | TTY (804) 828 - 2494.

To top

The Importance of Parental Advocacy for Children with Disabilities: A Review of the Literature

By Miranda Freites

Abstract

This paper explored five published articles that report on results from research conducted that highlights the importance of parental advocacy for children with disabilities. Parents of children with disabilities may feel the special education system process to be difficult in navigating and even daunting. When introduced into the special education community not all parents are not guided in learning what can be done to assure the best quality of education for their child. This paper examines the research in relation to the importance of parental advocacy.

Keywords: parent involvement, children with disabilities, advocacy

The Importance of Parental Advocacy for Children with Disabilities: A Review of the Literature

It seems today that many parents of children with disabilities often time find the entire special education system process to be difficult in navigating and even daunting. Research suggests that this may be due to parents' lack of understanding the rights of their children, understanding of the disability and intimidation of the process (Mandic, Rudd, Hehir, & Garcia 2010). When students become eligible for special education services, parents may feel lost in understanding the relevant special regulations and nonadversarial advocacy techniques when meeting with the school (Burke, 2013). In schools today the repercussion of lack of parental involvement and knowledge are sweeping. With lack of parental involvement and input leads to inappropriate placements and services for students with disabilities. In order to improve parent involvement, parents or guardians must understand the importance of theirs and their child's rights. Without parental involvement, students with disabilities are more likely to receive inadequate and inappropriate services.

It is emphasized in many studies in the literature the importance of parent advocacy of children with disabilities, which than impact the quality of education those students receive. It is evident that all parents or guardians want the best for their children. When introduced into the special education community not all parents are not guided in learning what can be done to assure the best quality of education for their child. Evidence suggests that when parents are involvement in their child's education aids in securing appreciate educational services (Burke, 2013). In reviewing the literature, the following themes and interventions were considered: improving parent- school collaboration in special education, understanding parental/ guardian rights in special education, and parent involvement. The research focuses on the importance of parental advocacy for children with disabilities.

Improving Parent- School Collaboration in Special Education

Chen and Gregory (2010), claimed that when there is parental involvement alongside educational professionals it leads to promising means within students' educational outcomes. When developing appropriate services and accommodations for students with disabilities it is imperative for educators to receive parent input on the matter. Parents or guardians add very valuable information about a student outside of the school setting. In creating a collaborative unite both parents and educators can best meet the needs and interest of the child. Burke (2013), conducted a study implementing two special education advocacy training models: Special Education Advocacy Training (SEAT) and the Volunteer Advocacy Project (VAP). Through this study, researchers discussed parents of students with disabilities often encounter restraint in navigating the special education system. Some parents may even find it a daunting task in understanding the terminology or the services (Burke, 2013). Both purposed models is to train individuals in special education advocacy. The SEAT project has had three cohorts and a total of 144 participants, while the VAP project has had five cohorts of trainees with 129 individuals graduating. Special education advocates are individuals with knowledge of both special education laws and advocacy skills to assist parents in working with the school system. It was determined that further research about family- school collaboration should be done being there are many items that factor into family involvement. Results highlights that by preparing advocates can help assist parents of children with disabilities as well as educating to work collaboratively with the school. Advocacy trainings is one way to improve the parent-school relationships, which evidently improves the quality of the students' education (Burke, 2013).
In a similar study, Starr and Foy (2010), conducted a study to review of parents of children with autism spectrum disorder and their satisfaction with their children's education services. The sample study for this study consisted of 144 parents of children with autism spectrum disorder. Researchers examined the responses to open- ended questions of a given survey to the parents. The survey regarded the parents perceptions of and satisfaction with their child's education services they were receiving (Starr & Foy 2010). The instrument used was a survey consisting of a total of 106 questions including both Likert type scale and open- ended questions. A major theme that came repeatedly in all the questions was a concern of effective communication and collaboration between parents and schools. Findings indicated that parents of children with Autism felt frustration and low expectation for their child's education. This means all members of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) team should collaborate and communicate effectively, not only with the parents but also with other educational personals to ensure that interventions are being carried out appropriately (Starr & Foy 2010). Results concluded with the idea that schools need to take parents views into consideration when developing interventions for students.

Understanding Parental/ Guardian Rights in Students Education

For parents of children with disabilities it is imperative to understand their rights in the case that actions need to be taken. For example, when given documentation during an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meeting, parents may not be able to understand the services provided. It seems some educators do not take the time to explain to parents procedural safeguards or any given paperwork to parents. This leads to many unanswered questions for parents. Mandic et al., (2010), conducted a study that reviews a pervious study by Fitzgerald and Watkins (2006), which examined the readability of procedural safeguard documents from all state departments of education, except the state of Ohio. With the study as a primary source, researchers focused on literacy related barriers for parents understanding the rights of students with disabilities within the special education system. Using the SMOG readability assessment for the 50 states indicated that the reading levels among parents are lower than what policy documents are written out inMandic et al., 2010). The study provided evidence that the literacy demand on parents understanding the special education process is too high. This language mismatch may significantly impede parental involvement in special education, an issue of great concern. The study also went into further detail that there should be a goal in place to clearly communicate procedural safeguards to parents so that there can be a more effective partnership among the team (Mandic et al., 2010). Results indicated that making sure parents have a clear understanding of their rights will ensure the best quality of services for a child with special education services.

In relation to the previous study, Valle (2011), examined what researchers and professionals may know in depicting the knowledge of parents in the special education system, specifically parents of children with learning disabilities. Valle (2010), started her studies over three decades ago focusing her research on fifteen mothers of children with learning disabilities. The study points out after decades of research mothers still seem to have the same feelings of their knowledge of understanding their child's education. Implications found that all fifteen mothers felt left out of the education process and also intimidated by the language of the documentation (Valle, 2010). It seems this framework study of parents and special education is not a new phenomenon but a constant problem. Valle (2010), left with a strong point that mothers of students with learning disabilities have much to teach professionals about the impact of disability and about the profound experiences they face.

Parent Involvement

With decades of research to confirm that parent involvement is one major factor in creating successful education outcomes for students (Chen & Gregory 2011). When parents immerse themselves into their child's education it creates opportunities for families to work together and even positive learning experiences. Chen and Gregory (2011), explored parental involvement in the prereferral intervention team (PIT) process. Researchers examined a stratified sample of 88 PIT student records from fourteen elementary schools with on district. The study was implemented to examine what types outcomes parental involvement would have in the PIT intervention process, if it may have any impact on the child's presenting problems and if referrals for special education testing are necessary. As a result, findings showed that the greater parental participation was greatly related to quality of interventions and targeted the child's problems (Chen & Gregory 2011). Which evidently reduced the likelihood of that child being evaluated for special education services. Researchers suggest that parent presence at the PIT meeting and involvement at home for their own interventions is highly related outcome (Chen & Gregory 2011). It is important that parents are involved in their child's education because they provide valuable information from a different perspective during the problem solving process. This also offers more in- depth collaboration and increased efforts to ensure the best interventions and services for the child's needs.

The literature review supports the importance of parent advocacy of children with disabilities, which than impact the quality of education those students receive. Based on the reviewed literature, improving parent- school collaboration in special education, understanding parental/ guardian rights in special education, and parent involvement are all considered strategies and themes that be will implemented in further research. When parents educate themselves about not only their child's disability but their parental rights it can only lead to positive outcomes. As stated prior, parents only want the best for their children unfortunately not all students' needs are met in special education services. When parents are well informed of their families' rights, necessary changes can be made with the students' best interest in mind. In order for parents to gain this information school districts should be more willing in offering educational sessions stressing the importance of parent advocacy. More importantly when parents are invited to Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings school officials should really be going over with parents their rights clearly.

References

Burke, M. M. (2013). Improving Parental Involvement: Training Special Education Advocates. *Journal of Disability Policy Studies, 23*(4), 225-234.

Chen, W., & Gregory, A. (2010). Parental Involvement in the Prereferral Process: Implications for Schools. *Remedial and Special Education, 32*(6), 447-457.

Fitzgerald, J. L., & Watkins, M. W. (2006). Parents' rights in special education: The readability of procedural safeguards. *Exceptional Children,* 72, 497-510.

Mandic, C. G., Rudd, R., Hehir, T., & Acevedo-Garcia, D. (2010). Readability of Special Education Procedural Safeguards. *The Journal of Special Education, 45*(4), 195-203.

Starr, E. M., & Foy, J. B. (2010). In Parents' Voices: The Education of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Remedial and Special Education, 33*(4), 207-216.

Valle, J. W. (2011). Down the Rabbit Hole: A Commentary About Research on Parents and Special Education. *Learning Disability Quarterly, 34*(3), 183-190.

To top

The Critical Need for Robust Communication between Schools and Parents of Students with Learning Differences: A Review of the Literature

By Heather-May V. Potter

Introduction

In Education there is much discussion of the need for parental involvement to maximize students' academic achievement as well as positive social-emotional behaviors. It is widely acknowledged that parents are the experts in their own children's strengths and needs (Starr & Foy, 2012), and that they are "not only the first teachers of children in encouraging their children's positive personality traits and supporting their developmental areas, but they are also indispensable partners of educators" (Llik & Er, 2019). Varied studies going back to the 1960's have found that parental involvement in the forms of homework assistance, attendance at school events, and communication with the school provides "immediate, positive results on students' academic achievement". This involvement also has positive effects on attendance, drop-out rates, and at-risk behaviors (Burke, 2013). These positive results occur across economic and educational levels. There has been extensive research into this area as it relates to the processes of Special Education, including identification, referral, and programming. Many studies have shown that there are indeed clear, data-based, positive outcomes for both students and schools when educators and parents communicate and collaborate with the shared goal of providing the best possible education to the student. Research has also shown that these school and parent partnerships are hindered by institutional barriers to communication (Burke, 2013; Llik & Er, 2019; Mandic, Rudd, & Acevedo-Garcia, 2012) that must be deliberately and persistently countered by educators if we truly wish to pursue the best outcomes for our students, their families, and our schools.

Collaborative Communication Improves Educational Services

Studies have shown that educational services improve when parents have participated in meetings to discuss the decisions made about those services In Chen & Gregory (2011), researchers analyzed the records of 88 pre-referral cases from 2006-2006 in a mid-sized public school district in the American Southeast. These cases documented the Response to Intervention Process (RTI) in which teachers and parents meet to discuss a student's struggles in school, and plan and implement a targeted intervention to determine if specific instruction will close the learning gaps, or if evaluation for special education services is warranted. This study found that the parents' mere presence at these pre-intervention meetings were related to greater alignment between the child's needs and the interventions recommended to the school staff. Parental attendance at these meetings - initial meeting and one follow up - were also related to a decreased likelihood that the child would be referred to evaluation for special education services. (Chen & Gregory, 2011) Their results also showed that parent attendance at meetings superseded the impact of race or gender on a student's likelihood of referral, which is significant in context of the historical overrepresentation of black students and male students in special education programs. While it was not part of the study to determine why parental attendance had this effect, two possible factors were presented by the researchers. The first was that parental input may provide valuable information for planning interventions that would otherwise not be considered by the school. Another possible explanation is that "Parental participation in the process may also encourage a higher level of accountability from all parties involved, leading to more in-depth collaboration and increased efforts to ensure recommended interventions more comprehensively address the child's needs" (Chen & Gregory, 2011). In other words, educators simply work better when we put faces to names and discuss our work in person with other stakeholders.

A 2012 survey in Ontario supports the possible explanation that parent input provides valuable information for educators tasked with planning students' education. "Because parents know their own children best and are increasingly asked to work collaboratively with school personnel, it is important to investigate their perspectives regarding their child's education" (Starr & Foy, 2012). This survey asked parents of students with Autism Spectrum Disorder their experiences with and perceptions of their children's special education programs. The results of this survey found that poor communication and collaboration was often noted by parents as a problem, contributing to the sobering statistic that only 22.7% of surveyed parents of students with ASD in grades 7-9 reported feeling "satisfied" with the education their child was receiving (Starr & Foy, 2012). This was the lowest percentage of satisfied parents compared to elementary and high school parents. Conversely, satisfied parents attributed the success of their children's programs with adequate communication, as seen in this parent's words, "All members listen to our concerns and we all try implementing what is working for each place" (Starr & Foy, 2012).

Collaborative Communication Improves Parent's Perceptions of School Quality

Trust is key to parent satisfaction and support of the school's programming for students. In Starr and Foy (2012), many parents surveyed were dissatisfied with their children's education and expressed the belief that teachers did not have enough training in ASD. This impacted the level of communication and collaboration between the school and the parents (Starr & Foy, 2012). These surveyed parents went on to express, however, that they were more satisfied with the school when teachers and assistants showed a willingness to learn more about their students' ASD. There was also an expressed frustration in parents by their perceived need to start over with educating their children's teachers year after year (Starr & Foy, 2012). This frustration could be lessened with collaborative discussions that included teachers across grades, and communication to parents to inform them as to how the school was building and maintaining its capacity to work with students with disabilities.

A lack of trust in the school can also lead to broken relationships between parents and teachers, preventing any productive discussion towards effective programming decisions for the student, and possibly even legal action (Burke, 2013).

The Costly Consequences of Poor Communication by Schools

Since the passing of legislation ensuring the education of students with disabilities in 1975, parent involvement has been written into special education policy. However, many parents feel unable to be involved due to various logistical and social barriers. One such barrier may be the discrepancy between their own education level and that of the language used in discussions and documents pertaining to special education. In one study, for example, the reading level of Procedural Safeguards documents designed to inform parents of their rights for their children with disabilities were scored as written above a 12th grade level (Mandic & Rudd, 2012), and a 2002 study in Public Agenda, New York, NY found that 70% of parents of children with disabilities believe that their children lose services because parents do not know their rights. If parents' perception is that they are not informed, despite receiving documents intended to do so, they may not understand the options for their child or they may feel excluded from the process (Mandic & Rudd, 2012), leading to a breakdown of trust in the school and an adversarial, rather than a collaborative, relationship. Another barrier may be the parents' perceived inadequacy in expertise for challenging the authority of the school and advocating for their child when they do not agree with the school's decisions (Burke, 2013). For these reasons and many others, parents may feel cut out of the decision-making process regarding their child's education, and may thus turn to a third-party advocate. Special Education Advocacy is a growing field, bringing together the knowledge of special education law and advocacy skills. California and Tennessee are two states which have developed their own training programs for volunteers in this field to work with families to ensure their children's best interests are being served (Burke, 2013). If schools do not adequately communicate with parents and include them in a collaborative process of making decisions about their children's education, and build trust with those parents, they may not be perceived as satisfactorily serving their students, and parents are more likely to turn to third party advocates or attorneys. When disagreements are then elevated to legal proceedings, there will be more tension, expenses, and missed opportunities for the student, the parents, and the school (Burke, 2013). It is therefore in the best interest of all stakeholders to engage in clear and timely dialogue.

Conclusion

The importance of parental involvement in special education decision-making is no longer debatable. The potential costs - social, psychological, and financial - of a school's failure to adequately include parents of students with disabilities in these processes are only increasing for all stakeholders as the rates of students with disabilities grow, along with stronger advocacy. Teachers and schools must therefore seek out and implement structures and resources for robust communication with parents, such as translators, documents and meeting talking points without jargon and using lower-level literacy demands. Schools must do personal and individual outreach, and hold meetings and events at varying times and locations to accommodate parents' logistical and social needs. Given the documented and anecdotal evidence of parental dissatisfaction and disengagement in the junior high school (or middle school) years, teachers in these grades need even stronger efforts to connect with parents. It is a duty of schools to be proactive and persistent in efforts to reach out to all parents of students with disabilities, and to bring them in to a collaborative partnership when it comes to making decisions about their children's education. If this duty is not met, the result is damage to students, families, and the schools themselves.

References

Burke, M. (2013). Improving Parental Involvement: Training Special Education Advocates. *Journal of Disability Studies, 23,* 225-234.

Chen, W., & Gregory, A. (2011). Parental Involvement in the Prereferral Process: Implications for Schools. *Remedial and Special Education,* 32: 447. doi 10.1177/0741932510362490.

Llik, S.S., & Er, R.K. (2019). Evaluating Parent Participation in Individualized Education Programs by Opinions of Parents and Teachers. *Journal of Education and Training Studies, 7,* 76-83.

Mandic, C.G., Rudd, R., Hehir, T., & Acevedo-Garcia, D. (2012). Readability of Special Education Procedural Safeguards. *The Journal of Special Education*, 45:195. Doi: 10.1177/0022466910362774.

Starr, E.M., & Foy, J.B. (2012). In Parents' Voices: The Education of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders. *Remedial and Special Education,* 33:207. doi: 10.1177/0741932510383161

To top

Barriers to Parental Involvement in the Individualized Education Plan Process

Katherine J. Ramirez

Abstract

Parental involvement in the educational setting has been found to increase the performance of the students, especially in the area of special education (Tamzarin, Menzies, & Ricci, 2012). According to the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA), it is mandatory and essential to include the parents in the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process in order to fully meet the needs of the students (Jung, 2011), however, parental involvement is not as high as it should be in regard to special education and the IEP process. Through research, it has been found that certain barriers including the communication style, cultural beliefs, and prior knowledge of the IEP process lead to misunderstandings and negative feelings which cause parents to refrain from participating. Through future research, these barriers can be further examined to help increase parental involvement in the IEP process (Tamzarin, Menzies, & Ricci, 2012).

Barriers to Parental Involvement in the Individualized Education Plan Process

According to the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) in 1990, involving parents in the development of the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is mandatory and essential in order to meet the needs of students with disabilities (Jung, 2011). Parental participation in education leads to increased performance from students and ensures the proper development of IEP goals. Unfortunately, parents, especially parents from culturally and linguistically diverse (CLD) backgrounds, are not as involved as they should be in the IEP process. Various barriers including communication styles, cultural beliefs, and knowledge of the special education process contribute to the lack of participation (Tamzarin, Menzies, & Ricci, 2012).

Barriers to Participation

Communication Style

Limited English proficiency. Parents who are not proficient in English have a difficult time following along during IEP meetings. Interpreters from the district are brought in to help the parents in the meetings, however, the interpreters are often unfamiliar with the professional jargon, fail to translate main parts of information, or influence the decisions of the parents in favor of the school. This leads to the school controlling the meetings and the parents feeling like an unimportant part of the process (Jung, 2011).

Even if the parents are able to communicate in English, teachers often use professional jargon and unfamiliar documents which can lead to confusion and frustration. The parents are trying to follow along with all of the information being provided to them, however, when they are exposed to unfamiliar vocabulary and acronyms with no explanation of their meanings, they tend to smile and agree with what is being discussed. When the parents feel insecure due to the language barrier, it causes them to back away from the process which creates an image that they do not care. In reality, they want to be included but they simply do not understand what is happening (Tamzarin, Menzies, & Ricci, 2012).

Nonverbal communication. Different cultures have unique styles of communication. Two major types of communication between cultures are low context and high context (Jung, 2011). Low context communication is typically used by Western cultures and involves the use of words alone to communicate. Other cultures use high context communication, which incorporates body language, eye contact, and gestures in addition to words to relay the meaning. Individuals who rely on high context communication often misinterpret nonverbal communication signs by the teachers and cause them to feel unwelcome in the meetings. Similarly, parents who rely on high context communication may feel uncomfortable disagreeing with a teacher verbally, but use nonverbal cues to communicate the disagreement. If the teacher fails to pick up on the nonverbal cues, the parent can feel ignored (Tamzarin, Menzies, & Ricci, 2012). As a result of this miscommunication, parents have been found to describe teachers as arrogant which causes them to feel isolated, frustrated, and unwilling to participate in the future (Jung, 2011).

Cultural Beliefs

Individuals from different cultural backgrounds view education in different ways and have different behaviors in regard to the educational setting. Parents from CLD backgrounds might not participate in educational subjects because they believe it is disrespectful to the teacher and want to leave them alone. This causes the teacher to be reluctant in inviting the parents to any meetings because they see the parents as uninterested.

On the other hand, parents from some CLD backgrounds may view the parent-teacher relationship as personal and informal, while the teacher views it as a professional interaction. During meetings, the parents are expecting a warm and friendly conversation, when in reality the teacher acts professional and formal. While the teacher may view this as a positive behavior, the parents feel as if the teacher does not care about them or their child. This too causes the parents to back away from the IEP process (Tamzarin, Menzies, & Ricci, 2012).

Knowledge of Special Education

The IEP process is comprised of information that is not common knowledge and has to be researched and learned. Parents who are unfamiliar with the IEP process and requirements are less likely to fully participate even though their involvement is beneficial to their child (Hebel & Persitz, 2014). Ilik and Konuk (2019) found that 76 percent of parents of students with special needs did not know the meaning or purpose of an IEP. They also found that even though 80 percent of the parents attempted to be included in the process, 88 percent of the parents were not invited to any preparation of the IEP. Through these results, it is evident that parents are not properly informed or involved in the development if the IEP for their child. Without adequate knowledge, the parents cannot properly communicate their child’s needs or the desire to participate in the process to the teachers.

Conclusion

Barriers lead to miscommunications and negative feelings between parents and teachers. The parents want to participate and the teachers want to include them, however, the parents are often made to feel inferior because they do not understand the jargon, the material, or their actions are misunderstood. Teachers often misinterpret cultural behaviors or insecurities as a lack of interest and chose to discredit the parents instead of taking the time to understand the problem (Jung, 2011). Through research, it has been found that parents are willing and try to participate in the IEP process, however, they are discouraged because of various barriers. The teachers can change this trend by becoming culturally responsive and developing empathy towards other cultures. The teachers need to develop an understanding of their own culture to be able to understand the culture of others. The teachers should develop a relationship with the family and become aware of their culture and beliefs in order to properly communicate (Tamzarin, Menzies, & Ricci, 2012). The involvement of parents in the IEP process is crucial for the development of the child because they know their child the best out of anyone. Their contributions to the IEP help their child receive the proper services that will be the most beneficial. Creating an empathetic approach when dealing with parents of students with special needs will cause them to feel included and appreciated in the process and increase their participation (Ilik & Konuk, 2019).

References

Hebel, O., & Persitz, S. (2014). Parental Involvement in the Individual Education Program for Israeli Students with Disabilities. *International Journal of Special Education, 29*(3), 58-68. Retrieved April 12, 2019.

Ilik, S., & Konuk Er, R. (2019). Evaluating Parent Participation in Individualized Education Programs by Opinions of Parents and Teachers. *Journal of Education and Training Studies, 7*(2), 76-83. doi:10.11114/jets.v7i2.3936

Jung, A. W. (2011). Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and Barriers for Parents from Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Backgrounds. *Diversity and Special Education, 19*, 21-25.

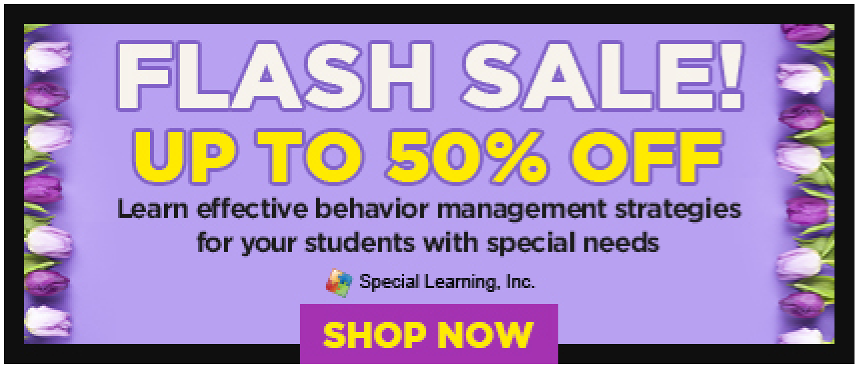
Tamzarian, A., Menzies, H. M., & Ricci, L. (2012). Barriers to Full Participation in the Individualized Education Program for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Parents. *Journal of Special Education Apprenticeship, 1*(2), 1-11. Retrieved April 12, 2019.s

About the Author

Katherine Ramirez is a current special education teacher for 4th , 6th , and 7th grade students. She earned a Bachelor of Science Degree in Exceptional Student Education with endorsements in English Speakers of Other Languages and Reading from Broward College. Currently, she is pursuing a Master of Science Degree in Special Education with an endorsement in Autism Spectrum Disorder from Florida International University. When she is not working or studying, she can be found caring for her animals, crafting, going to Disney, or helping her mom care for her elderly Nana.

To top

NASET SPONSOR



Latest Employment Opportunities Posted on NASET

* **Special Education Teacher** - Growth Public Schools (GPS) seeks Special Education Teachers to encourage a culture of mutual respect & equitable practice and exhibit knowledge of student cognitive development and various learning. Communicate effectively with students and families about classroom activities and student progress. To learn more - Click here

* **Chief Clinical Officer** - Criterion Child Enrichment is conducting a search for a Chief Clinical Officer (CCO). Founded in 1985 as a not-for-profit organization, Criterion has served families for over 30 years and is a leading provider of early childhood education and early intervention services in Massachusetts. The Chief Clinical Officer will work in partnership with the agency's Chief Administrative Officer to oversee operation of programs fulfilling Criterion's Mission and Strategic Plans. To learn more - Click here

* **Rivermont Schools - Special Education TEACHER positions available!** - Now is a great time to join Rivermont Schools. Currently offering a $2,000 sign-on bonus and reimbursement of relocation expenses for Special Education Teachers! Rivermont Schools are private, nonprofit, special education day schools with campuses across Virginia. To learn more - Click here

* **Student Services Administrator** - Monitors compliance with IDEA, ADA, OCR, CRDC, and other relevant Special Education and/or English learner regulations for the purpose of ensuring ECS schools are in compliance with federal and state regulations. Assist in the updating of all policies and procedures for ECS that adheres to mandates pertaining to English learners and students with disabilities. To learn more - Click here

* **Special Education Teacher** - Cozad Community Schools, an AdvancEd School District, having excellent facilities, utilizing a Professional Learning Community structure, technologically strong, and intent on growing leaders, is accepting applications for a high school special education teacher opening for the 2019-2020 school year. To learn more - Click here

* **Coordinator of Learning Services/Learning Specialist** - Trinity School is seeking a certified Learning Specialist to lead a small team of specialists in the role of Coordinator of Learning Services. The ideal candidate is one who has taught in a variety of settings; a range of ages; and used different approaches. This person knows about remediation and how to provide strategies for students and teachers through direct and indirect services. To learn more - Click here

* **Teacher - Special Education (All Areas) - Approximately 100 positions!** - We are looking for highly motivated and skilled talent to join our team at District of Columbia Public Schools (DCPS). We seek individuals who are passionate about transforming the DC school system and making a signifcant difference in the lives of public school students, parents, principals, teachers, and central once employees. To learn more - Click here

* **Special Education Teachers** - Responsible for providing an educational atmosphere where students have the opportunity to fulfill their potential for intellectual, emotional, physical, spiritual and psychological growth. This person is responsible for organizing and implementing an instructional program that will maximize the learning experience of students with special needs. To learn more - Click here

To top

Acknowledgements

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

- Center for Parent Information and Resources
- Committee on Education and the Workforce
- FirstGov.gov-The Official U.S. Government Web Portal
- Journal of the American Academy of Special Education Professionals (JAASEP)
- National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth
- 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

The **National Association of Special Education Teachers** (NASET) thanks all of the above for the information provided for this or prior editions of the Special Educator e-Journal