

NASET **Special Educator** **e-Journal** **January 2021**

Exceptional Teachers Teaching Exceptional Children



Table of Contents

- [Special Education Legal Alert. By Perry A. Zirkel](#)
- [Buzz from the Hub](#)
- [Considerations for Culturally Linguistically Diverse Nonverbal Children and Families when Introducing Augmentative and Alternative Communication Systems. By Laurinda Flores](#)
- [Take Nothing Personal. By Sandra Davis \(Special Education Teacher\)](#)
- [Do Haitians Parents of Children with Disabilities Fully Understand their Roles and Services Provided to their Children? By Stephania P. Desir](#)
- [Reading Education for Students with Cerebral Palsy in the School and Home: A Literature Review. By Yvana Puerto](#)
- Book Reviews
 - [Feeding Teachers Through Their Masks: Applying the themes of Neila A. Connors' If You Don't Feed the Teachers They Eat the Students in the Times of COVID-19. By Rebecca Nicks](#)
 - [The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization. By Melisa F. Hughes](#)
 - [Is My School A Better School Because I Lead It? By Baruti K. Kafele. By Zarkia Jones](#)
- [Latest Employment Opportunities Posted on NASET](#)
- [Acknowledgements](#)

Special Education Legal Alert

By Perry A. Zirkel

© November 2020

This month's update identifies recent court decisions of general significance, specifically addressing issues of (a) settlements for special education students, and (b) system-wide claims arising under COVID-19. For related information, see perryzirkel.com.

In an unpublished decision in *J.A. v. Rocklin Unified School District* (2020), a federal district court in California addressed the proposed settlement of the claims on behalf of an 11-year old student with intellectual disabilities. His parents filed for a due process hearing under the IDEA, claiming that the district failed to assess him in all areas of suspected disability and to provide him with FAPE. They separately notified the district of money damages claims under Sec. 504/ADA, the Fourth Amendment, and the state civil rights law arising from an incident in his classroom. He allegedly suffered psychological and physical injuries as the result of his teacher physically restraining him for 30 minutes in an effort to force him to pick up a snack he had dropped. According to three aides who were present, he became visibly upset, pulled down his pants, and tried to escape. In fleeing, he broke through a PVC pipe partition, scratching his arm. He reportedly experienced a grand mal seizure that night at home. The parents also alleged that he had also suffered emotional and physical injuries from previous improper restraints. The proposed settlement agreement that the parties negotiated consisted of two parts: (1) for the IDEA claims, an IEE in five designated areas (e.g., OT/PT and AT) and various additions to the IEP (e.g., a 1:1 aide and increased related services) + \$25K compensatory education fund + up to \$20K in attorneys' fees; (2) for the other claims, a \$281K special needs trust + \$94K in attorneys' fees. The related provisions included a release for these claims and a cap for the administrative fees for the trust. The parties sought court approval for the terms of the proposed agreement.

The court approved the non-attorneys' fees provisions of the proposed settlement agreement as meeting the standards of fairness and reasonableness.

The cited reasons were that (a) the injuries were primarily emotional and psychological, thus presenting a proof problem, and (b) the court had approved settlements for largely more severe physical abuse that ranged from \$200K to \$1 million.

<p>The court also approved the attorneys’ fees provisions of the proposed settlement agreement.</p>	<p>The court cited the 25% as the benchmark rate in its jurisdiction in contingency cases for minors that were settled before trial.</p>
<p>This brief illustration provides a reminder of the way the majority of due process hearings and judicial proceedings are resolved in</p> <p>the larger and often non-visible part of the special education litigation “iceberg.” The settlement layer varies widely in the nature and amounts of the agreements, with many of them subject to court approval because they are specific to minors. The related issues include confidentiality, enforcement, and releases. The contributing factors for settlements go well beyond the likely judicial outcome, including transaction costs, public relations considerations, and insurance provisions. Finally, beyond settlements, other subsurface layers include abandoned lawsuits, withdrawn lawsuits, and unreported court decisions.</p>	
<p>In an unpublished decision in <i>J.T. v. de Blasio</i> on November 13, a federal district court in New York addressed an unusual class action suit on behalf of students with disabilities as a result of the COVID-19 closure of public school in-person instruction. The defendants were every school district and state education department in the nation. The multiple claims included alleged violations of IDEA, Sec. 504/ADA, the Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act (RICO), the Fourteenth Amendment, and state laws. The requested remedies included money damages and, along with IEEs to determine the requisite learning losses, compensatory education. The threshold claim was an alleged across-the-board violation of “stay-put” under the IDEA, for which the suit sought an order to either reopen the public schools or provide “pendency vouchers.” In the interim between the filing of the suit on July 28 and the court’s decision on November 13, the docket included extensive activity (e.g., https://www.courtlistener.com/docket/17390270/jt-v-de-blasio/). Signaling the nature of its decision, the court explained: “An unorthodox pleading demands unorthodox response.”</p>	
<p>The court dismissed all defendants except New York City. The various reasons, depending on the claim and the defendants, included lack of personal jurisdiction and venue, misjoinder, failure to state a claim, and failure to first exhaust the administrative remedy of a due process hearing.</p>	<p>The court was particularly forceful in its rejection of the RICO claim. In partial contrast, the court dismissed the IDEA claims without prejudice, meaning that individual parents of students with disabilities were not precluded from each filing a due process hearing against their particular school district for alleged denial of FAPE rather than this national attempt at “a one-size-fits all omnibus lawsuit.”</p>

<p>The court not only denied the requested preliminary injunction but also dismissed the general stay-put claim against New York City, because (1) the USDE guidance and the analogous federal appellate case law are not supportive and (2) the situation has changed in the interim.</p>	<p>The court’s reasoning appears to be stretched. Regardless of its cogency, in light of the varying factual circumstances, individual IDEA stay-put claims by any of these parents may well be viable upon sufficient evidence of a fundamental change in the “then current placement.”</p>
<p>The court dismissed the various other claims of the N.Y.C. parents (e.g., Sec. 504/ADA) for failure to exhaust the available administrative remedy of a due process hearing.</p>	<p>The exhaustion doctrine applies not only to the parents’ IDEA FAPE claims but also, in light of the Supreme Court’s <i>Fry</i> decision, their Sec. 504/ADA and other non-IDEA claims.</p>
<p>Although the plaintiffs have the right to appeal to the Second Circuit, the odds of a ruling conclusively in favor of such a nationwide class action lawsuit are very low. The major reason is the individualized nature of the IDEA, which is the primary basis of the suit. The contributing factors include the limited resources of the plaintiff attorneys (braininjuryrights.org) in the absence of the support associated with otherwise distinguishable mass tort suits. In any event, the case serves as an acute reminder of the various unsettling and unsettled legal issues for P–12 students with disabilities as a result of the pandemic. These issues start with the surprising and potentially potent applicability of the threshold issue of the IDEA’s stay-put provision in the COVID-19 context, depending on the particular factual circumstances of the individual child and the interpretation of the courts in each jurisdiction.</p>	

[To top](#)

Buzz from the Hub

All articles below can be accessed through the following links:

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/buzz-bridging-the-distance/>

<https://www.parentcenterhub.org/buzz-dec2020-issue1/>

OSEP Fast Facts: IDEA 45th Anniversary

By 1975, Congress had determined that millions of American children with disabilities were still not receiving an appropriate education, “More than half of the handicapped children in the United States do not receive appropriate educational services which would enable them to have full equality of opportunity” (EHA, §3(b)(3)).

Congress enacted the Education for All Handicapped Children Act (Public Law 94-142) (EHA), to support states and localities in protecting the rights of, meeting the individual needs of, and improving the results for infants, toddlers, children, and youth with disabilities and their families. This landmark law, whose 45th Anniversary we celebrate this year, is currently enacted as the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). This timeline depicts IDEA from its beginnings as the Education of through the last reauthorization in 2004.

IDEA Presentation Materials at Your Fingertips

Don't forget that the Parent Center Hub has curricula you can use for training families and professionals on both **Part B** and **Part C** of IDEA 2004, including an updated (2020) module on **Disproportionality and Students with Disabilities**. Each individual module includes: slide decks; Trainer's Guides explaining how the slides work as well as the content of the slides; and handouts for participants (available in English and in Spanish). These foundational resources are easy to adapt to include state-specific information and for presentations in a variety of formats (virtual, video, etc.).

Do you know the History of the Parent Centers?

Which current Parent Center was the first Parent Training and Information Center funded? How did Community Parent Resource Centers get started? Learn the answers to these questions and more when you complete the History of Parent Centers module in the Parent Center eLearning Hub. Got credentials for this *Parent Centers Only* resource? **Login here**. Need credentials? Please send your request to [us](#).

Creating Effective Partnerships to Improve Early Intervention | Webinar

Identifying young children as early as possible requires developing nurturing partnerships with families, communities, and programs. This interactive webinar discusses how IDEA early intervention programs can partner with the ambassadors of the Act Early Ambassador program. The webinar provides an overview of the purposes of Part C early intervention services for infants and toddlers and their families and Part B, 619 services for preschool special education. Viewers can

learn about Rhode Island’s partnership with their Act Early Ambassador. The Ambassador trains professionals in home visiting programs (e.g., the Maternal, Infant and Early Childhood Home Visiting program; and Parents as Teachers) on how to use “Learn The Signs. Act Early” developmental milestone resources to support earlier identification.

It’s Official: National Test Is Postponed Due to COVID-19 Concerns

Heard of the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP)? It’s the national test of reading and math given since the 1970s to representative samples of students in all 50 states. Well, it’s been postponed for 2021 by the U.S. Department of Education. See you in 2022!

GAO Report: Challenges Providing Services to K-12 English Learners and Students with Disabilities during COVID-19

COVID-19 forced schools to rapidly shift to distance learning. GAO (the Government Accounting Office) investigated the impact of this shift and found that it presented logistical and instructional challenges, especially for English learners and students with disabilities—both of whom have persistent achievement gaps compared to other student subgroups. Find out what those challenges were for each group.

Map: Where Are Schools Closed?

Want to know where school buildings are open or closed? Consult this state-by-state map.

Why School Board Diversity Matters

The racial and ethnic makeup of school boards rarely matches that of the students in the schools they are responsible for. Yet a growing body of research suggests having more diverse school boards can make concrete differences in how schools operate. In fact, having just *one* minority member on a board increases a school district’s financial investment in high-minority schools and even some measures of student achievement and student climate.

Playtime’s Guide to Activities Families Can Do Together

(Available in English and Spanish) | The Homeless Children’s Playtime Project offers creative tip sheets for parents looking for fun activities to do with their children during the pandemic. Tip Sheets 1-4 are available in English. Tip Sheets 5 and 6 are available in both English and Spanish. There are also fun videos for children on the project’s YouTube channel.

Self-Care in the Time of Coronavirus

*(Also available in **Spanish**)*

For parents, prioritizing your own well-being benefits your whole family.

Holidays During the Pandemic

*(Also available in **Spanish**)*

Tips for reducing stress, helping kids cope, and making new traditions.

[To top](#)

Considerations for Culturally Linguistically Diverse Nonverbal Children and Families when Introducing Augmentative and Alternative Communication Systems

By Laurinda Flores

Abstract

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems are effective communication tools for individuals with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or any other form of low to nonverbal disability. Historically, many advances and success stories have been made possible with the implementation practices for using Assistive Technology in monolingual families. This Literature Review provides an analysis of available information regarding promoting successful communicators in the culturally diverse community using Augmentative and Alternative Communication systems (AAC). It reflects an insufficient sensitivity to cultural factors which can potentially lead to the family's rejection of the AAC device or even abandonment of use. The literature describes a need for a closer look at the parent-practitioner partnerships for treatment, planning, and supporting the family home language, but more importantly the influencing cultural factors needed for successful communications. This need for current formal studies on this topic confirms our need to continue to find relevant research on intervention practices for bilingual and bi-cultural children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. More general training for the teachers, paraprofessionals, speech-language pathologists, and families is needed for using AAC. In students with a culturally and linguistically diverse background, learning to use the AAC device presents its own set of problems and obstacles that continue to be present, although 25 years have passed. Guiding the multicultural child and family to feel respected and accepted within their social circle with the help of all stakeholders, through long-term training on how to use an AAC device, can lead to self-efficacy and independence for the future. Nonverbal does not mean non-communicative. To be successful communicators, nonverbal children need to see that their actions influence those around them. They must intrinsically want to communicate, or they will continue to use previous methods, including gesturing, pulling, or tantrums to get their wants and needs met. Culturally and linguistically diverse families can be overwhelmed by the level of requirements to help the child learn one, two, or three languages: their home language, the school language, and the language of the AAC device. Strategies to be addressed in the future should include the effects of social emotional learning with cultural factors, along with ongoing training for families and all stakeholders, when introducing AAC to culturally diverse students.

Keywords: Augmentative, and Alternative Communication System, Autism, Culturally Linguistically Diverse families, Assistive Technology, Communication Skills, Special Education, Nonverbal

Augmentative and Alternative Communication (AAC) systems are effective communication tools for individuals with an Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) or any other form of low to nonverbal disability. Historically, many advances and success stories have been made possible with the implementation practices for using Assistive Technology in monolingual families. This Literature Review provides an analysis of available information regarding promoting successful communicators in the culturally diverse community using Augmentative and Alternative Communication systems (AAC). It reflects an insufficient sensitivity to cultural factors which can potentially lead to the family's rejection of the AAC device or even abandonment of use. The literature describes a need for a closer look at the parent-practitioner partnerships for treatment, planning, and supporting the family home language, but more importantly the influencing cultural factors needed for successful communications.

This need for current formal studies on this topic confirms our need to continue to find relevant research on intervention practices for bilingual and bi-cultural children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. More general training for the teachers, paraprofessionals, speech-language pathologists, and families is needed for using AAC. In students with a culturally and linguistically diverse background, learning to use the AAC device presents its own set of problems and obstacles that continue to be present, although 25 years have passed. Guiding the multicultural child and family to feel respected and accepted within their social circle with the help of all stakeholders, through long-term training on how to use an AAC device, can lead to self-efficacy and independence for the future. Nonverbal does not mean non-communicative. To be successful communicators, nonverbal children need to see that their actions influence those around them. They must intrinsically want to communicate, or they will continue to use previous methods, including gesturing, pulling, or tantrums to get their wants and needs met. Culturally and linguistically diverse families can be overwhelmed by the level of requirements to help the child learn one, two, or three languages: their home language, the school language, and the language of the AAC device. Strategies to be addressed in the future should include the effects of social emotional learning with cultural factors, along with ongoing training for families and all stakeholders, when introducing AAC to culturally diverse students.

Discussion

Research shows that the family environment is the primary site in which a child learns, so involving the family in using the AAC device decreases abandonment issues. The article, Culture, Families, and augmentative and alternative communication, The Changing World presented to the US Department of Education in 1995, found that family involvement in AAC plays a vital role. As far back as 1995, their goal was to review strategies for building those relationships and partnerships for future successes. Unfortunately, 25 years later, to address this gap and the lack of how to help culturally diverse families engage in communication aids, many of the same questions and problems continue to exist today, and they still need addressing. For example, how do families want professionals to build family professional partnerships:

- How do families want professionals to demonstrate respect for their family values and ethnicity?

- What can professionals do to help families learn how to use AAC devices?
- How do families want professionals to demonstrate to them how to use AAC devices?

These questions continue to be relevant, and families would encourage the professionals to respect their family values and ethnicity first; they want professionals to establish a rapport with them and get to know them before actually getting into the device's set up and use. By choice or by default, established assessment and intervention models evolved in response to these and other trends. Alsayedhassan et al. (2016) describe the picture exchange communication system or PECS as one of the Augmentative and Alternative Communication methods, which has been widely used by professionals and parents to improve children's communication skills with Autism Spectrum Disorder who are non-verbal or have complex communication needs. Both practitioners and families have indicated in the past that the picture exchange communication system was very "easy to use" and effective in developing communication skills in children with an Autism Spectrum Disorder. However, they found that it is time-consuming. Using these low-tech tools, including PECS, are established methods of communication. Some children also respond well to tangible symbols such as using a set of keys for going outside, or they may use a glass to show that they are thirsty or an actual diaper when they need to go to the restroom. Moving on from tangibles, families can use photographs of everyday items, and eventually, they can move on to more abstract symbols. Many children, including those from culturally diverse backgrounds, may benefit from tangible symbol systems, playing pre-recorded messages, using keyboards for typing messages, sophisticated voice put devices, and specialized iPhone or iPad applications.

According to Townsend et al. (2012), in an ethnographic investigation of African American mothers' perceptions of augmentative and alternative communication, AAC has to do with linguistic competence. Some of the same barriers to access to AAC competency exist throughout many cultures. Parette, Huer, and Wyatt, 2002 in the article *Toward an Understanding Between Language and Culture*, we find this linguistic competence in AAC to culture not easy but more necessary. In AAC, there is a large void of research articles regarding AAC practices with considerations for culturally diverse families.

At times culturally diverse families feel like using a communication aid could indicate a dual diagnosis to their external social environment. For many families, their child is considered disabled to society, which can be a burden in itself, and then they are being asked for the student to carry around a device and stand out even more. Fortunately, newer technology has improved, and they do not have to carry around a bulky, large 32-inch device but can utilize a tablet or phone that looks like an iPad or cell phone to others. Although advances have been made, not all parties view assistive technology communication devices as the most appropriate and best way for a child to communicate.

Roadblocks to AAC Success for Multicultural Families

Upon reviewing various studies, certain patterns emerged, and parents indicated that it was highly essential for them to feel respected culturally. They want professionals to understand and respect their elders' role, which is very important to them, and the stigma associated with a minority family having a person with a disability. This stigma is more pronounced when their child appears to be

different from their friends. When they play, the family may have to use "reinforcers" for behavior, and then on top of that, they are being asked to carry around a device that brings more attention to their being different. They feel that professionals should understand that they are feeling ostracized in their communities, and it is crucial to use elders and extended family members or community leaders to help the families be able to use the device in public. In their own culture outside of the United States, many culturally diverse families do not often get involved in the professional's responsibility. They believe that teachers are the ones who do the teaching, nurses do the nursing, and they are at home to raise the child. Providers need to be aware of cultural differences and teach families that it is okay to accept the intrusive nature of support that the family requires to succeed when using the AAC device. Another obstacle to success with AAC presented by Parette, Huer, & Wyatt, 2002 is that individuals from diverse cultural backgrounds may have varying beliefs and perceptions regarding disability, diagnosis, cause, course, and cure, leading to diverse treatment decisions.

Other barriers to success with AAC devices in culturally diverse families include the amount of training needed for all stakeholders. This includes siblings and extended family, especially when that involves another language for use at home, which led many families to believe that it is just too much work for it to be of use. Bellomo (2016) described, typically, parents do not have access to AAC learning materials to facilitate their child's AAC learning and language growth. Difficulties in accessing this material may be time, accessibility, stress, transportation, or financial constraints. One of the problems is that the culturally diverse family needs to understand its use. When professionals are introducing a device to them, the teacher's knowledge of the family's language can be a factor, and the child's overall home culture affects the outcomes for using the device efficiently. Usually, these prerequisites for providing communication aids to interact with a child are discussed and given consent before a device goes to a student or family. Another area of concern associated with encouraging culturally diverse families and the actual individual to use the AAC device is the preconceived notions that the child would learn to speak spontaneously and immediately instead of learning to use the device to speak over months or even years.

Guiding parents through unrealistic expectations that their child will not be speaking immediately as soon as they receive the device is necessary. Counseling and training can help families understand this long-term relationship between professionals and everyone involved with the student to learn how to best use the device. Unfortunately, this practice has led to a high rate of abandonment of the use of the equipment. Some family members complain that they do not speak the language programmed into the device and consider the speech-generated device (SGD) to be associated with school only and not for communication across all settings.

More roadblocks to success may have to do with parents not attending parent meetings in person due to job or transportation issues. Maybe they do not understand a note sent home about what to do with the device, and they may also feel like what happens at school has nothing to do with what they do at home. Families shared their feelings of resentment for their cultural background, not considered when programming the device. Many feel that the professional does not understand their cultural foods or commands or requests programmable for their family. An example of these are foods like "Pupusas, Tortillas, Chile, and Malta" or their favorite song in their native language. The

article describes the need for more hands-on modeling for parents and family members until they are comfortable using the child's communication aid. It is essential to teach the families about all stakeholders' roles and responsibilities for assisting the child with an Autism Spectrum Disorder.

Teachers also expressed high rates of frustration because of the apparatus's misuse when it was sent home to the family. They felt that it was used as a gameboard and not a communication tool. Waller (2019) indicates that by primarily focusing on needs and wants on most devices, a more extensive form of conversation rarely occurs. It is not easy to share a personal story with others, even for people who grow up using AAC devices for years. There is a great need for taking a pragmatic approach to the design of AAC systems, relating more to a social communication tool.

Communicating during playtime is essential for learning how to react to others' sarcasm, rhyming puns, jokes, riddles, or telling a joke. Hope for telling jokes or narrative support for reading begs the question, can a computer tell a story? The future of pragmatic social language is worth exploring for AAC devices; however, there is still much to learn about involving other school-age children as partners for social validity to use the AAC device reciprocally with modeling.

In Waller (2019), *Telling tales: Unlocking the potential of AAC technologies*, the author mentions abandonment of the device's use as a prominent reason for much-needed training. AAC technologies have made inroads, and daily use is dependent on support from family, educators, clinicians, and care staff who have little or no training in supporting someone using AAC. It also described multiple reasons for the slower adoption rate and high abandonment of AAC technologies, including poor usability, high learning demand, lack of professional expertise, and difficulty in physical access.

Professionals' problems regarding multicultural families and AAC include a high level of abandonment of the AAC devices used among nonverbal students and family. The research project reported in Pompoulou (2019) was focused primarily on the speech-language therapist or SLT perspectives about AAC system acceptance and abandonment; however, they stated that in order to be able to capture this phenomenon fully, it is vital that the views of the AAC users and their caregivers are given a voice.

Future Opportunities to Build Better Relationships Between CLD Families and AAC

The how-to instructions and information gathering questions on the front end of the introduction to the device, including multicultural factors, can lead to a successful future with their device. Ogletree (2018) stated that as we move deeper into the 21st-century, new challenges and realities impact existing AAC practices. The world is flattening as cultures and languages blurred like never before: technology is ubiquitous, increasingly mobile, and more affordable than ever. Research provides new evidence-based insights that frequently counter accepted practices.

Parents have learned how to use the devices and have been better trained, yet many do not often use their communication devices, and the child may only use their devices at home during the weekend. Setting up communication opportunities for students who use AAC to increase their device use at home and school is essential for speech-language pathologists and assistive technology technicians in future training opportunities. Future research could pay closer attention to the families' roles in how culturally diverse children using AAC to develop communication and how such relationships can be

supported. Technology in this field has such potential; however, Waller (2019) indicates, "it is clear from the research on abandonment that recognizing the need to support communication partners and instructors as users of AAC systems is paramount." According to Huer, Parette, Saenz (2001), the following are a list of what they found in their research:

1. children understand the number with the communication of persons around them
2. aided techniques are useful outside the home
3. families have great respect for professional
4. there is a need to focus on the human condition
5. there is a preference for shared responsibility between the extended family members and professionals
6. emphasis should be placed on the performance of simple tasks
7. devices in Spanish are needed.

The authors say that emphasis is placed on qualitative research strategies to provide cross-cultural awareness for practitioners providing AAC service.

When considering different options and strategies for communication with students or individuals with an Autism Spectrum Disorder, assistive technology provides powerful tools to help individuals overcome many challenges, including prompting, sequencing, and addresses some behavior difficulties, including frustration. According to Aceves & Orosco (2014), Teachers, regardless of their own culture and ethnicity, can support students' academic success by making connections to their lives and experiences. When teachers respect students with culturally diverse backgrounds and language influences, they can utilize many culturally responsive teaching methods throughout their daily instruction to build their independence skills while enhancing the student's rigor to achieve academic success.

AAC devices are evolving and adapting and have come a long way since the early 90s. Now families can have their child carry around a regular iPad that may have the necessary communication application loaded onto it, and many culturally linguistically diverse families find this useful and socially acceptable. For children with severe disabilities and a home language that differs from the language spoken at school, successful communication intervention is facilitated by a classroom condition that allows for an intensive focus on the child by teachers who were open to other cultures and languages, interested in teamwork, and familiar with AAC, as described by Pickl, G. (2011). It is not just about having a bilingual application or device or personnel to assist with training to use an AAC device, but instead, most families would prefer an understanding of cultural awareness and see it as necessary to use the devices. It also allows both the child and the device to be accepted within their family and social circle, promoting self-independence skills that nonverbal children will need to be more self-sufficient in the future. The families hoped to be part of a support group or meet another child's parent with a device to show them how to use it and express the difficulties they had gone through. It truly takes a village to teach a student with an Autism Spectrum Disorder to find a voice, and it can be an enriching experience, although it has its difficulties. Online education and training are becoming increasingly popular and are an excellent means to obtain information during natural routines efficiently. This window of opportunity could be a key to recognizing and accepting our cultural differences in the future of AAC.

According to Amelia M. Medina and Judy Salamon of New Mexico State University, " Understanding each other's perspectives and realities more satisfied with family focused relationships rather than child focused relationships highlight the lack of empirical literature about instructional practices for young bilinguals with a SD. We are more apt to find information and documentation regarding monolingual students with ASD."

Conclusion

This literature review calls for current and future research methods to build the bridges of multicultural considerations for AAC based on numerous authors indicating a valid need and opportunity to develop best practices. Targeting definition and what those best practices could be may be the next step in providing a voice for multicultural linguistically diverse nonverbal children and their families. Helping each child to want to use the AAC device as their voice intrinsically at home and school is of utmost importance. All stakeholders play an essential role in promoting the devices' individualized use by family, teachers, therapists, and paraprofessionals. A theme that emerges from the many findings listed is the consideration needed to acknowledge the insufficient strategies (including cultural factors) influencing practitioner and family partnerships necessary to enhance the child's communicative independence.

References

- Aceves, T. C., & Orosco, M. J. (2014). Culturally responsive teaching (Document No.IC-2). Retrieved from University of Florida, Collaboration for Effective Educator,Development, accountability, and Reform Center website: <http://cedar.education.ufl.edu/tools/innovation-configurations/>
- Alsayedhassan, B., Banda, D., Griffin-Shirley, N. (2016). A Review of Picture Exchange Communication Interventions Implemented by Parents and Practitioners, *Child & Family BehaviorTherapy*,38:3,191-208, DOI:10.1080/07317107.2016.1203135 <https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/09638288.2019.1620878>
- Bellomo, N. (2016). Increasing the Augmentative and Alternative Communication Knowledge and Self-Efficacy of Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorders Using Multimedia Training Materials ISBN: 978-1-3696-9568-7 ERIC Number: ED575993 <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED575993>
- Biggs, E., Carter, E., Gilson, C. (2019). A Scoping Review of the Involvement of Children's Communication Partners in Aided Augmentative and Alternative Communication Modeling Interventions. *American Journal of Speech-Language Pathology* • Vol. 28 • 743–758 • May 2019 • Copyright © 2019 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association 7 Supplemental Material: <https://doi.org/10.23641/asha.8038505>
- Bondy A.S., & Frost L.A. (1998). The picture exchange communication system. *Semin Speech Lang.* 1998;19(4):373-88; quiz 389; 424. DOI: 10.1055/s-2008-1064055. PMID: 9857393
- Bondy, A. S., & Frost, L. A. (1994). The Picture Exchange Communication System. *Focus on Autistic Behavior*, 9(3), 1–19. <https://doi.org/10.1177/108835769400900301>
- DuBay, M., Watson, L., Zhang, W. (2018). In Search of Culturally Appropriate Autism Interventions: Perspectives of Latino Caregivers. *J Autism Dev Disord* 48, 1623–1639 <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-017-3394-8>

- Fritzler, R., Sigmond, S., (2019). "Toda la Familia: An Occupational Therapy Resource Guide for Working with Latino Children Diagnosed with ASD and Their Families" *Occupational Therapy Capstones*. 413. <https://commons.und.edu/ot-grad/413>
- Huer, M.B. (2008). Toward an Understanding of the Interplay Between Culture, Language, and Augmentative and Alternative Communication. <http://journals.asha.org/perspectives/terms.dtl>
- Huer, M.B., Parette Jr, H., Saenz, T. (2001). *Communication Disorders Quarterly*. Summer 2001, Vol. 22, Issue 4, p197-206. 10p. Database: Communication & Mass Media Complete DOI: 10.1177/152574010102200405
- Huer, M. B., Parette, H. P., & Saenz, T. (2001). Conversations with Mexican Americans regarding children with disabilities and augmentative and alternative communication. *Communication Disorders Quarterly*, 22(4), 197-206. <https://journals.sagepub.com/doi/10.1177/152574010102200405>
- Lim, N., O'Reilly, M.F., Londono, F.V. et al. (2020). Overcoming Language Barriers between Interventionists and Immigrant Parents of Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder. *J Autism Dev Disord*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10803-020-04754-3>
- Kasambira, D., (2016). The Intersection of Culture and ICF-CY Personal and Environmental Factors for Alternative and Augmentative Communication *Perspectives of the ASHA Special Interest Groups SIG12*, Vol. 1(Part 3), 2016, Copyright © 2016 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association <https://doi.org/10.1044/persp1.SIG12.63>
- Medina, A., Salamon J. (2012). *Current Issues in Teaching Bilingual Children with Autism Spectrum Disorder*, JAASEP FALL, 2012 <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1135508.pdf>
- Mindel, M. Jeeva, J. (2018). Bridging the School and Home Divide for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Families Using Augmentative and Alternative Communication Systems DOI:10.1044/persp3.SIG12.154 <https://pubs.asha.org/doi/abs/10.1044/persp3.SIG12.154>
- Ogletree, B., McMurry, S., Schmidt, M., Evans, K. (2018) Perspectives of the ASHA Special Interest Group. *SIG 12*, Vol. 3(Part 3), 2018, Copyright © 2018 American Speech-Language-Hearing Association, <https://doi.org/10.1044/persp3.SIG12.113>
- Parette, H., VanBiervliet, A., Wommack, J. (1998). Culture, Families, and Augmentative and Alternative Communication Impact ERIC Number: ED424705 Record Type: Non-Journal Publication Date: 1998-Oct-26 Pages: 466 <https://eric.ed.gov/?id=ED424705>
- Parette, H., Brotherson, M., & Huer, M. (2000). Giving Families a Voice in Augmentative and Alternative Communication Decision-Making. *Education and Training in Mental Retardation and Developmental Disabilities*, 35(2), 177-190. Retrieved November 10, 2020, from <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23879942>
- Pampoulou, E. (2019). Speech and language therapists' views about AAC system acceptance by people with acquired communication disorders, *Disability and Rehabilitation: Assistive Technology*, 14:5, 471-478, DOI: 10.1080/17483107.2018.1463401 <https://doi.org/10.1080/17483107.2018.1463401>
- Pickl, G., (2011). Communication Intervention in Children with Severe Disabilities and Multilingual Backgrounds: Perceptions of Pedagogues and Parents. *AAC: Augmentative & Alternative Communication*, 07434618, Dec 2011, Vol. 27, Issue 4 <https://doi.org/10.3109/07434618.2011.630021>

Townsend, A., Harris, O., Bland-Stewart, L., (2012). An Ethnographic Investigation of African American Mothers' Perceptions of Augmentative and Alternative Communication <http://journals.asha.org/perspectives/terms.dtl>

Waller, A., (2019). Telling tales: Unlocking the potential of AAC technologies. *International Journal of Language & Communication Disorders*, 13682822, Mar/Apr2019, Vol. 54, Issue 2 <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/1460-6984.12449>

Young, J., Wilkinson, K., Karny, M., Blackstone, S. Sifter, C., (2016). A Synthesis of Relevant Literature on the Development of Emotional Competence: Implications for Design of Augmentative and Alternative Communication Systems https://doi.org/10.1044/2016_AJSLP-14-0124

[To top](#)

Take Nothing Personal

By Sandra Davis (Special Education Teacher)

TNP – (take nothing personal)

Suggestions for Behavioral programs

I have worked with emotional/socially challenged students for over 30 years and have found that it is best to have a consistent program for the teacher to introduce on the first day of school. The program may be changed/strengthened as the students start to get more comfortable in the class and become more themselves; in other words, after they get settled with a routine their behavior sometimes become more challenging. Often after a few months (yes, it takes a while) when an effective, *consistently* applied program is used daily, you will find that the students have learned how to complete their work with respect of others and themselves and will look forward to earned activities. By then most behavior problems have decreased significantly.

Program must be consistently applied daily and unemotionally. Early in the year they will rebel and insist you are being unfair when some students earn rewards and they do not. Don't argue or get in a power struggle, just reinforce how they can start to earn as soon as they follow the rules and complete the activity. I always emphasize the positive earning aspect. One of the greatest lessons I learned was never to argue with a student or debate a point. It just gets them to challenge you more, and you, as the teacher, become less effective. One to two sentences to redirect the student to task and then move on.

Take nothing personal. Out of frustration or what students may think is attempted teacher manipulation; students may act out, become defiant, or refuse to work. This usually happens at the beginning of the school year. This has nothing to do with you as the teacher. Some teachers get frustrated and let the student's response affect them. The student's responses have nothing to do with the teacher applying a behavioral program. Stay consistent, positive, and unemotional. Understand that students often tell their parents their side of what happened at school and parents agree with them. Parents often become defensive. *None* of this is your fault. I have found that working with parents by explaining and respecting their point of view or asking for their input helps put the two of you on the same side.

- Always remember to remind the students they are the ones who earn their free time or activity. It has nothing to do with the teacher's decisions. They are in charge of their behavior.
- Ask the students what they want to earn. This way they are more likely to follow the behavior program. (Free time, books, sensory toys, drawing, etc.)
- Individualized programs (in my state) must be with the consultation of the child study team.

- Different programs I have used that have been effective:
 1. 4 points per subject. 2 for work accomplished, 2 for proper classroom behavior. Students to redeem points for time off or activity of their choosing. Have a clipboard to record points earned.
 2. May do 8 points per subject so students have an opportunity to redeem themselves. 4 for work, 4 for behavior if a student's behavior and work output needs more intensity.
 3. Dollars. (I call them Davis dollar's as that is my last name) print out dollars from internet. Each student gets two per subject, one for work completion and one for proper school behavior. Once they get to ten dollars they may take 10 minutes of free time (or whatever you deem practical).
 4. Each student is given a plastic cup with their name on it. They each earn a paperclip for each assignment completed. Another one for staying on task. When they earn 10 paper clips (you pick the number) they can earn activity/free time. This one the younger students especially enjoy. They love counting their earned paperclips and letting you know how many more they need to get free time.

[To top](#)

Do Haitians Parents of Children with Disabilities Fully Understand their Roles and Services Provided to their Children?

By Stephania P. Desir

Abstract

The aim of this literature review is to evaluate Haitian parents of children with disabilities awareness and understanding of their role along with the services that are available to their children in the educational system. The findings from the articles showed there are many barriers that will hinder many immigrant parents of children with disabilities to gain the imperative information and services for their child which are the following: life stressors, lack of social support and resources; unemployment, financial insecurity, adjusting to a new culture, as well as language barrier (Brassart, Prévost, Bétrisey, Lemieux, & Desamarais, 2017; Gregoire, & Cramer, 2015). There are many Haitians parents who are lacking resources and knowledge of available services along with programs that can assist with the development of their children with disabilities.

Keywords: Haitian parents, children with disability, special education services, immigrant parents

Do Haitians Parents of Children with Disabilities Fully Understand their Roles and Services Provided to their Children?

This literature review aims to examine if Haitian parents of children with disabilities truly comprehend their role and the services that are available for their children in the educational setting. There are many barriers or roadblocks which hinder immigrant parents to navigate the educational system when acquiring information about services and programs to assist their children with disabilities development.

It is well known that parents' involvement in their children's education has an impact on their accomplishment in academia. It is deemed to be true, in the realm of research in the mental health field, studies has shown the importance of engagement among the practitioners and clients; along with active involvement from the parents during the therapy session has a fundamental impact on child's success (as cited in King, Desmarais, Lindsay, Piérart, & Tétreault, 2015, p.1373). However, it is difficult for many immigrant parents to become involved in their child's education and therapy sessions when they are dealing with other responsibilities, language barriers, financial hardship, and lack of social support especially in the Haitian community. Therefore, the following question must be asked: are Haitian parents knowledgeable of their roles and the services that are provided to their children with disabilities in education? This is an important question to ask because it requires the educators, administrators, and school psychologists' ability to practice cultural reciprocity and sensitivity to culture when working with a Haitian family with a child with disabilities. This could help guide them as to how they provide services to any Haitian family along with any immigrant families.

This literature review will use the Staudt's theoretical framework to explain parent engagement. "It addresses five key components that influence parents' engagement: daily stresses, external barriers to treatment, therapeutic alliance, cognitions and beliefs concerning treatment, and treatment relevance and acceptability" (Brassart, Prévost, Bétrisey, Lemieux, & Desamarais, 2017, p. 1243). Within these components, many immigrant parents will have to face barriers, such as life stressors, lack of resources, lack of social support, language barrier, inability or difficulty communicating in a different language, unemployment, financial insecurity, adjusting to a new culture (Brassart et al., 2017), experiencing stigma to mental illness (feeling of shame of having a child with a mental illness or seeking out help from a psychologists or psychiatrists to manage difficult behaviors), and discrimination (Alsharaydeh, Alqudah, Lee, & Chan, 2019).

Literature Review

It is important for service providers, educators, administrators, and school psychologists to find strategies that they can use to communicate with immigrant parents of children with disabilities. There are two components that are needed to provide services to the immigrant parents which are effective communication and engagement. Effective communication can be defined as a two-way communicative interaction in the sharing of thoughts and ideas (King, et al., 2015). Having good communication and listening skills are needed when an educator is in a meeting with an immigrant parent of a child with disabilities because it shows the ability to understand another person and demonstrates understanding (King et al., 2015).

It is imperative to have engagement between the administrators, educators, school psychologists, and the immigrant parents because it allows all personnel to exchange ideas and problem-solve any roadblocks that could potentially hinder student success at meeting their individual educational plan (IEP) goals.

Effective communication

It is imperative to have effective communication when working with families of children with disabilities, so they will be able to understand and be aware of the various services along with programs available for their child. It was cited in King, et al. (2015, p.1373), communication is purposeful, functional when building relationships, as well as essential for sharing imperious information. Effective communication is needed between a service provider and parents with children with disabilities to share their experiences without any judgment, appreciate and seek the parent's input in regards to their child's development, and the parents feel understood when they discuss their desires and life situations (as cited in King et al., 2015, p.1373). In a therapy setting, there are benefits to effective communication which are receptive listening (the ability to understand a person's situation and to be mindful of what is being shared), explicit conversation that provides important information and provide clarity (exploratory listening); brainstorming possible options or ideas to solve a problem; explanation of reasoning for shared understanding on a particular topic; jointly determined goals; and collaboratively creating a plan of action toward desired outcomes (as cited in King et al., 2015, p.1373). These benefits occur when educators, administrators, and school psychologists practice effective communication while working with parents of children with disabilities. .

In order for effective communication to be prevalent in a meeting with educators, administrators, school psychologist and the parents of students with disabilities, the following would need to be present: (1) clear statements of the purpose and goal(s) of the meeting along with the professional role for providing services to the child with disabilities; (2) ask questions while using various modes of communication techniques to ensure understanding, such as an interpreter, writing the instruction that is clear without the use of educational jargon, and use the parents' own words; and (3) allow the parents to ask their questions while providing a supportive environment (King et al., 2015, p.1378).

Engagement with immigrant parents

Parents' involvement in their children's education is vital for their children's academic, personal, social and behavioral growth. Past studies in the mental health field have shown when parents of children with disabilities are engaged in the therapy sessions has an impact on the therapy success rates (King et al., 2015). Therefore, it is important for school personnel, educators, and administrators to be culturally sensitive when they work with immigrant parents of children with disabilities when they are providing services to the families. Eight strategies school personnel, educators, administers, and school psychologists can use when working with immigrant parents of children with disabilities are the following: (1) take the time to understand the family situation, (2) develop a share understanding of the child's disability (Brassart et al., 2017), (3) acknowledge and respect the immigrant parents perceptions of the disability (Brassart et al., 2017), (4) explain the child's disability (Brassart et al., 2017), (5) help the parents to understand and prepare them for the educational, treatment, or therapy process for their child with disability (Brassart et al., 2017), (6) build a relationship that foster collaboration, (7) tailor the intervention to fit the parents' needs for their children with disabilities education, and (8) use interpreters (Brassart et al. , 2017), to assist with the parents understanding information that was shared with them in the meeting (King et al., 2015).

Haitian Parents' Experience in the Education System

Many immigrant parents will need support once they arrive to a new country as they try to assimilate to a new culture, especially when they are raising a child with a disability. For many Haitian immigrants, help was provided from their neighborhood which consists of extended family members to assist them with raising their children; however, while living in the United States that support tends to be limited (Ballenger, 1992). This challenge can potentially hinder Haitian parents' ability to communicate and engage in the education system for their children with disabilities. This section will discuss Haitian parents' perspective of the services and support that are provided to their child with disabilities.

Services

Just like any typical parents, Haitian parents expect their children to be successful academically, have exceptional careers, and have their own families. Haitians parents' perceptions of education for their children with disabilities are to assist their children to be better (behaviorally, socially, and academically), improve interaction, or communication skills in a social setting (Gregoire, & Cramer, 2015); however, acquiring additional services for their children with disabilities can be difficult for

them. For many of them, it is the communication barrier with school, medical, and any service providers **that** can hinder them from expressing their concerns, asking questions, and gathering additional information to plan for their child's future. For example, in the Gregoire and Cramer study (2015), there was a Haitian mother, Yvette, who stated she doesn't have someone she can communicate her concerns or where to learn about services and programs that are available for her child with disabilities. When her son was younger, she was in contact with a Haitian social worker whom provided her with assistance that she needed for her son, yet she lost contact with her. Yvette was able to network with another parent who was not Haitian, who has a son with similar disabilities as Yvette's own son. Yvette learned the other mother was able to place her child in various programs when he was 18 years old. Therefore, she wanted to know how she can place her child in those similar programs, but the other mother hasn't had time to share the vital information Yvette was seeking out for her child. Just like any immigrant parents or any parents for that matter, it is imperative to have someone to communicate in your native language to answer all of their questions and concerns, especially for parents of a child with disabilities who is seeking out services along with programs for their child's future.

Support

There are Haitian parents who feel that they will need additional support services for their children with disabilities both at home and school. These supports can be for the school system to expedite the process of placing their child with disabilities into appropriate programs (Gregoire, & Cramer, 2015). Many of the parents do not fully understand their role in the educational process for their child with disabilities (Gregoire, & Cramer, 2015). The lack of advocacy in the educational process could potentially hinder their child's ability to be successfully according to the family concerns and the children's needs in an academic, social, emotional and behavioral level both in a school and home settings. A major factor that has an impact on the parents' engagement in the educational process is the language barrier (Gregoire, & Cramer, 2015) to fully understand and communicate their concerns with the administrators, as well as the educators. Therefore, it is important to limit the professional jargon during a meeting with an immigrant parent even if the parent is proficient in English (as cited in Alsharaydeh, Alqudah, Lee, & Chan, 2019). Then, there is the financial restraints which also prevent many of the parents to be active participants in their child's education and involved in their child's school (Gregoire, & Cramer, 2015).

Conclusion

Just like any immigrant parent, Haitian parents have various barriers and challenges that could potentially hinder them to advocate and seek out additional vital information on programs along with services that can assist with their child with disabilities development in an educational setting. The more culturally aware and sensitive educators, administrators, and school psychologists are when helping an immigrant parent of a child with a disability the more it could assist in narrowing the gap between the parents' comprehension of the services and programs being provided for their child.

References

- Alsharaydeh, E. A., Alqudah, M., Lee, R. L. T., & Chan, S. W.-C. (2019). Challenges, coping, and resilience among immigrant parents caring for a child with a disability: An integrative review. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 51(6), 670–679. doi.org/10.1111/jnu.12522
- Ballenger, C. (1992). Because you like us: The language of control. *Harvard Educational Review*, 62, 199–208.
- Brassart, E., Prévost, C., Bétrisey, C., Lemieux, M., & Desamarais, C. (2017). Strategies developed by service providers to enhance treatment engagement by immigrant parents raising a child with a disability. *Journal of Children Family Study*, 26, 1230–1244. doi.org/10.1007/s10826-016-0646-8
- Gregoire, J., & Cramer, E. D. (2015). An analysis of Haitian parents' perspectives of their children with disabilities. *Multiple Voices for Ethnically Diverse Exceptional Learners*, 15(1), 3-21. doi:10.25148/etd.fi10041611
- King, G., Desmarais, C., Lindsay, S., Piérart, G., & Tétreault, S. (2015). The roles of effective communication and client engagement in delivering culturally sensitive care to immigrant parents of children with disabilities. *Disability and Rehabilitation: An International, Multidisciplinary Journal*, 37(15), 1372-1381.

[To top](#)

Reading Education for Students with Cerebral Palsy in the School and Home: A Literature Review

By Yvana Puerto

Abstract

There is very little research contributed to teaching educators how to provide reading instruction to children with cerebral palsy (CP) and their families. Specifically, this literature review will take a closer look at educational needs, family dynamics, and stressors parents may have as educators prepare to provide families with educational support and strategies in the content area of Reading during the Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Two studies that were reviewed were specific to the reading needs of students with CP. One study focused on the comparison of reading skills in typically developing children and students with CP. Data showed students with CP relied on their phonemic awareness skills longer than typically developing students. The second study focused on students with CP who have developed language skills in order to determine whether there is a large discrepancy between cognitive ability and reading skills. The data of this study reinforced the first study's conclusion of the importance of phonemic awareness in reading for students with CP. Three additional studies focused on behavior issues of students with CP, family stress, and family-centered services are also discussed in the literature review. Studies showed students who had greater limitations may experience more difficulty with prosocial behaviors and that student behaviors, although it may increase parental stress, does not cause it. The final study focused on the use of a family-centered service (FCS) in an Israeli population to increase parental involvement. The data showed more improvement was needed in the area of providing general information to parents. Overall, these studies offered insight to various aspects required to support families of children with CP in providing reading education to their child using a family-centered approach. Further research is needed to determine how to best provide reading instruction to children with CP who have difficulty with phonological processes in the home.

Reading Education for Students with Cerebral Palsy in the School and Home: A Literature Review

Reading instruction for children with special needs, especially Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), is a commonly researched topic. However, there is very little research contributed to teaching educators of children with cerebral palsy (CP) how to provide reading instruction to this specific population of students and their families. Cerebral palsy is a lifelong condition caused by damage to the developing brain. This damage can occur before or during birth. Cerebral palsy causes “physical disabilities concerning motor impairment, which places limitations on activity and participation” (Alemdaroğlu-Gürbüz & Karakuş, 2019, p.2493). These physical limitations can also cause difficulty with the reproduction of speech and language making it difficult for them to use phonological awareness when reading. According to Alemdaroğlu-Gürbüz & Karakuş (2019), cerebral palsy also causes

“sensory, cognitive, communication, and behavioral problems throughout the lifespan” (p.2493). Many children with cerebral palsy are labeled as intellectually disabled which can affect comprehension in academics and social aspects.

The purpose of this literature review is to analyze previous studies related to the reading needs of students with cerebral palsy and their family dynamics. Due to the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) and students partaking in distance learning, parents are taking on a more direct approach to their child’s learning. Parents should be equipped with strategies and evidence-based practices to help provide reading support at home, such as teaching phonics to improve reading skills. Specifically, this literature review will take a closer look at educational needs and stressors families may have as educators prepare to provide families with educational support in the content area of reading.

Cerebral palsy can cause learning disorders that can significantly impact acquisition of “listening, speaking, reading, writing, and/or mathematics skills” (Asbell, Donders, Van Tubbergen, and Warschausky, 2010, p.314). When it comes to students with cerebral palsy, there is a more complex connection between their phonological awareness and literacy skills. The study conducted by Asbell et al. (2010) focused on the comparison of reading predictors for typically developing and CP students between the ages of six and twelve. The researchers used several forms of assessments to measure receptive vocabulary, general reasoning skills, comprehension of sentences, and phonological processes. The reason for collecting this data was to compare and see if these subsections influence a child’s reading abilities. Based on the pre and post data from these assessments, receptive vocabulary can be used as a predictive tool of reading comprehension, as well as phonemic awareness and general reasoning for both groups of students. However, the data showed that typically developing students begin to have less correlation between phonemic awareness and reading comprehension as their reading fluency increases. Students with CP tend to rely on phonemic awareness longer due to their articulation skills. The researchers found that “fine and gross motor abilities had no statistically significant impact on reading comprehension, but there was an indirect effect of verbal expressive ability, which was mediated by phonemic awareness” (Asbell et al., 2010, p.322).

Critten, Messer, and Sheehy (2019) studied children with CP who had good communication and language skills to see if there was a “significant discrepancy in the cognitive abilities of children with cerebral palsy who have reading and spelling delays” (p. 131). The authors extended their question to whether the student’s phonological processes and visual-spatial skills would affect reading and spelling skills. Critten et al. (2019) stated that students with poor reading abilities have visual deficits and have poor visual sequential memory. Thus, students with poor visual-spatial skills may be impacted in reading if they skip lines or words. Students who have no issues with vision, hearing, or speaking (can be understood clearly) were given reading and spelling tests. They were also given

assessments and tasks in nonsense passage reading, decoding (regular and non-word decoding), sentence reading, nonword decoding, non-verbal reasoning, communication, receptive vocabulary, and more. There was a total of 23 assessments and tasks used in this research study. The findings indicated that students who were better readers were able to use phonemic segmentation (breaking or chunking syllables in a word) more than poor readers indicating the phonological awareness in students with CP affects their reading and spelling skills. According to Critten et al. (2019), most students in their study with CP had poor visual and spatial perception. In order to aid in the development of literacy skills in reading and spelling, the authors recommended “teaching visual sequential memory and visual spatial relationships” (Critten et al., 2019, p.141). This supported the findings of the previous research in which phonological awareness played an important role in reading comprehension of students with CP.

Brossard-Racine, Hall, Majnemer, Shevell, Law, Poulin, and Rosenbaum (2012) found that “behavioural difficulties in children with developmental disabilities can affect family functioning and overall well-being of the child and family members” (p.36). Previous studies explored by Brossard-Racine et al. (2012) demonstrate higher levels of behavioral difficulties in children with CP; therefore, possibly increasing parental stress. The researcher’s purpose for the study was to examine the consequence of intrinsic and external factors on student behaviors. According to the Brossard-Racine et al. (2019) study, some behaviors the students with CP engage in are “difficulties with peers, attention problems, hyperactive behaviour, emotional problems, increased dependence, withdrawal, obstinacy and antisocial characteristics” (p.36). Parents of the study’s participants were asked to complete a Strengths and Difficulties Questionnaire (SDQ) which is used to detect problem behaviors. Some factors the researchers looked at in relation to behavioral difficulties are social economic status, age, access to services, IQ score, adaptive behavior, and parental stress. The results of the study indicate that children with CP who have greater limitations may experience more difficulty with prosocial behaviors. The researchers recommend individual and group interventions to promote positive social skills development as it is an important skill for social integration. The study also showed that there is not enough evidence to prove that student behaviors cause parental stress though it may contribute to it. In some cases, parental stress can also be a contributing factor to student behaviors.

A study of family dynamics in raising children with CP was conducted by Abdikadir, Kulzhanov, Aitmanbetova, Nurbakyt, and Padaiga (2020). The purpose for this study was to “obtain social and psychological data on the family with CP children in order to substantiate further suggestions for improving their medical and social assistance” (Abdikadir et al., 2020, p.401). The researcher used 418 cases of children with cerebral palsy. Data was collected on families through questionnaires and medical data. The observed families included single-parent homes, complete, large, and foster families. Data shows 87% of the family structures have a mother as the primary caregiver for the child with CP. Additionally, the researchers discovered that the main factor affecting families of children with CP is lack of comfortable housing and resources. The authors noted in the study that

there was a large amount of families where the child with CP was the only child due to the fear of having another child with disabilities. Families of children with CP require social support and the social worker may be the link they need for these services (Abdikadir et al., 2020). This research is important to note as parents also take on the increased responsibility of helping their child academically from home. Educators must provide support to help relieve already stressed parents of students from incomplete family homes.

A study by Schenker, Parush, Rosenbaum, Rigbi, and Yochman (2016) focused on a family-centered conductive service (FCS) which is a “service delivery characterized by practices that treat families with dignity and respect, provide information sharing, encourage family choice regarding involvement in and provision of services and promote parent–professional partnerships as the context for family programme relations” (p.910). The FCS program used in the study is called “Tsad Kadima (TK – Hebrew for ‘a step forward’),” originating from Israel, a “collaborative educational initiative of parents and professionals and provides conductive services to children and adults with CP in educational and community settings nationwide” (Schenker et al., 2016, p.910). In TK, the conductor, the primary person to provide guidance and collaborate with parents, uses their disciplinary knowledge and understanding of human learning processes to provide support to families.

Schenker et al. (2016) measured how parents perceived family-centeredness across settings and identified strengths and gaps in their FCS program for improvement. To obtain this data, two questionnaires were administered to capture parents’ views and expectations of how they are receiving FCS. The data showed that parents felt they received slightly less support in the pre-school setting than in the day care setting. The researchers noted the settings were across the same center and used the same conductor. Additionally, some improvements in the area of providing general information to parents when providing services were mentioned by the authors as well as investigating improvements in other domains that received poor feedback from parents as seen in previous studies. This study provided great insights in implementing family-centered educative practices for parents of children with CP when it comes to promoting reading education in the home.

In conclusion, further research must be conducted to gain a deeper understanding of supporting parents of children with CP in providing reading education to their child using a family-centered approach. Community resources and parental stress can be determining factors to a child’s education. More studies are needed to determine how to best provide reading instruction to children with CP who have difficulty with phonological processes in the home.

References

- Abdikadir, M., Kulzhanov, M. K., Aitmanbetova, A. A., Nurbakyt, A. N., & Padaiga, Z. (2020). The social portrait of families' upbringing children with cerebral palsy. *Systematic Reviews in Pharmacy*, 11(4), 401–404.
- Alemdaroğlu-Gürbüz, F., & Karakuş, A. B. (2019). Examining mobility, independence, motor function, participation, and parental stress in a school-aged Turkish cerebral palsy population: A cross-sectional study. *Neurological Sciences*, 40(12), 2493–2500.
- Asbell, S., Donders, J., Van Tubbergen, M., & Warschausky, S. (2010). Predictors of reading comprehension in children with cerebral palsy and typically developing children. *Child Neuropsychology*, 16(4), 313–325.
- Brossard-Racine, M., Hall, N., Majnemer, A., Shevell, M. I., Law, M., Poulin, C., & Rosenbaum, P. (2012). Behavioural problems in school age children with cerebral palsy. *European Journal of Paediatric Neurology*, 16(1), 35–41.
- Critten, V., Messer, D., & Sheehy, K. (2019). Delays in the reading and spelling of children with cerebral palsy: Associations with phonological and visual processes. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, 85, 131–142.
- Schenker, R., Parush, S., Rosenbaum, P., Rigbi, A., & Yochman, A. (2016). Is a family-centred initiative a family-centred service? A case of a conductive education setting for children with cerebral palsy. *Child: Care, Health & Development*, 42(6), 909–917.

[To top](#)

Book Review: Feeding Teachers Through Their Masks: Applying the themes of Neila A. Connors' *If You Don't Feed the Teachers They Eat the Students* in the Times of COVID-19

By Rebecca Nicks

Abstract

In *If You Don't Feed the Teachers They Eat the Students*, Neila A. Connors outlines specific strategies for administrators to use to make sure their teachers feel appreciated and respected. While this is always an important job of administrators, it is especially essential as schools return during the COVID-19 pandemic. In this book review, the author analyzes how Connors' strategies can be implemented during the challenging times of teaching during the pandemic.

Introduction

Neila A. Connors laid out a delightful “menu” of ideas of how administrators can show appreciation and respect for their teachers throughout the school year in her 2014 work, *If You Don't Feed the Teachers They Eat the Students!* However, at the time of publication, she could have no way of knowing what teachers and administrators would be facing in 2020. The stresses of being thrown into remote learning in the Spring when the novel coronavirus COVID-19 forced school closures had just about subsided when districts were then tasked with the challenge of how to safely reopen schools with the pandemic still in full force in the United States. Being a teacher or administrator in the Fall of 2020 will come along with unprecedented challenges, but Connors' themes that she laid out in *If You Don't Feed the Teachers...* can be adapted to fit the needs of extra “hungry” teachers in 2020. Connors asserts in her work that teachers must feel genuinely appreciated and respected by administrators in order to be the most effective educators. In a time that many educators feel that the general public could not care less whether they literally live or die, providing teachers with support has never been more important.

The Menu

Connors, who, according to her biography on the Education Speakers Group website, has been an elementary and middle school teacher and administrator, outlines several specific areas that administrators can support their staff members. While these were written with the intention of general support in schools, they can easily be applied to supporting educators through the trials that COVID-19 has presented as well.

Connors starts her book by explaining that it is not necessarily evidence-based, but rather “based on observations, discussions, personal learning experiences, shadowing, and ‘good ol’ common sense” (11). The first chapter also includes her reasoning for writing the book and who she believes will benefit from it. The chapter ends with a self-assessment for readers to take in order to see where they

may need to focus their efforts in “feeding” their teachers. In today’s climate, self-reflection and trying some out-of-the-box strategies will be even more important. While many administrators may be focused on the physical safety of their students and teachers, it is still incredibly important to focus on the emotional needs of staff and students, and through Connors’ method of “feeding” teachers with appreciation and respect, this need will likely be met.

Connors continues to discuss what it means to feed teachers and why it is important. Connors explains that, in research with “phenomenal educators” that when asked what made them great teachers, many responded that it was due to “an administrator who encouraged and supported them, trusted their professionalism, and made them feel like a significant member of a very important team” (21). Her research solidified her beliefs that supportive leadership creates better teachers, who in turn create more fully educated students. She continues by sharing how effective administrators use teachers, and what to look for to see if their teachers are “hungry,” and then 50 indicators of great administrators according to teachers who were surveyed. Teachers and staff are entering a school year in which they will likely feel “hungrier” than ever. On top of the general stress that the world feels from living through a pandemic, teachers are also charged with keeping their students safe, juggling teaching in traditional brick and mortar settings and virtually, keeping themselves healthy, trying not to expose their loved ones, and all while being called lazy or worse by strangers (or worse yet, “friends” and family) on the internet. While administrators are facing all of these things as well, it will be incredibly important this year to make sure that administrators are not adding to these stresses with poor leadership. Administrators need to make sure they are seeking to feed their teachers this year more than ever – they just may need to be more creative with how.

Connors goes on to discuss how feeding teachers also improves the overall climate of the school. She describes how important having a culture of change in a school is and that “in providing a climate of change, leaders become change agents. They must encourage innovation, collaboration, and creativity...applaud risk taking while realizing only ‘people-based’ change will be effective in the long term” (45). COVID-19 has forced schools to make many unwanted, but very necessary changes. While many of these changes go against what most teachers know to be effective (i.e. group work, manipulatives, classroom libraries, etc.), teachers also know that many of these practices simply cannot be done safely. But along with these changes, many schools also face the need to change the climate of their schools in order to be a more caring and supportive environment for both teachers and students. Michael Fullan also addresses the challenges of making changes in schools in the second edition of his book *Leading in a Culture of Change* (2020). Even before the challenges of COVID-19, Fullan asserts that “leadership needs to change because the situation has changed in irreversible ways” (139). Both Connors and Fullan argue that effective leadership is essential in creating positive and lasting change in schools, and both give many different ways in which administrators can properly support their staff. Similar to Connors’ emphasis on people-based change, Fullan also states that “humans are hard-wired to learn through social connections” (82). While the social connections made between teachers, students, and administrators may need to be physically distanced for the foreseeable future, Connors has shared strategies that can still meet this need in a safe way.

Throughout the remainder of *If You Don't Feed the Teachers...* Connors provides numerous examples of how administrators can feed teachers. From being fully present in their schools, to having a positive attitude, maintaining a sense of humor, and being solution-focused, Connors shares a full buffet of ways to make teachers feel valued and improve the climate of the school. While many of the strategies she shares could absolutely help the climate of the school, there was one suggestion that could potentially be emotionally damaging to teachers. Connors refers to teachers who are “Dependent Upon Criticizing and Killing Success” or simply “D.U.C.K.S.” (99). She asserts that D.U.C.K.S. are engaged in an ongoing pity party and spend their days complaining. She later describes strategies to keep these teachers from complaining or “quacking,” such as having other teachers make duck calls when these teachers start “quacking” or having teachers put money into a jar when they are caught “quacking” (122). While administrators should indeed attempt to keep their teachers thinking and speaking positively, with the novel challenges and stresses that many teachers are facing right now, they may be justified in engaging in some complaining about the current situation. It can be therapeutic to vent and clear some mental space by mourning many of the unfortunate changes COVID-19 has forced. If administrators get caught up on squelching any “quacking,” it could cause some teachers to shut down and not feel respected. Administrators will need to tread lightly when it comes to acknowledging the validity of negative thoughts and feelings about the changes and challenges COVID-19 has caused.

There are several strategies Connors shares, however, that are easily adaptable to the times of social distancing. One simple example is her suggestion of literally feeding teachers with special treats, breakfasts, or lunches just for the sake of having something special for teachers. While it may not be safe to have the entire staff in one area eating without masks on, simple adaptations could be having “grab and go” style treats or even scheduling different smaller groups or teams of teachers either over several days or even during their planning periods to increase the ability to socially distance. Connors also emphasizes how important communication is between administration and teachers. When there is so much uncertainty around what reopening schools looks like and what the future of the school year will be like, making sure administrators are transparent and continually communicating with the staff is of utmost importance.

Neila A. Connors emphasizes the importance of administrators making sure their teachers are “fed” with adequate support, appreciation, and respect, and the teachers going back to school in the middle of a pandemic will be hungrier than ever. But through the careful selection of different strategies from the menu that Connors shares in order to provide this support for teachers, administrators can ease some of the stresses associated with returning to schools in such a tumultuous time. While each new day will bring new challenges and questions as schools continue to reopen, Connors reminds administrators and teachers that “excellence can be attained if you care more than others think is wise, risk more than others think is safe, dream more than others think is practical, and expect more than others think is possible” (72). Connors’ statement remains true during the pandemic and will continue to be true long after the virus is under control. While many questions remain unanswered, the passion and selflessness of teachers should never again be questioned.

References

- Connors, N. A. (2014). *If You Don't Feed the Teachers They Eat the Students: Guide to success for administrators and teachers*. Incentive Publications by World Book.
- Education Speakers Group (2004). Dr. Neila A. Connors. Education Speakers Group. www.educationspeakersgroup.com/n_connors.html.
- Fullan, M. (2020). *Leading in a Culture of Change* (2nd ed.). Jossey-Bass.

[To top](#)

Book Review: The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization

By Melisa F. Hughes

Abstract

Individuals among educational and business organizations are an integral part of the team. The characteristics that are displayed throughout the book indicate that the ability of a leader to lead from any position within an organization helps to build confidence of everyone on the team. The type of leadership that is discussed can be applied at any level and sets the tone when opportunities are presented.

Maxwell, John. *The 360-Degree Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization*. Nashville, Tennessee: Thomas Nelson, Inc. 2005. 314 pp. \$14.99

Being labeled as a leader within an organization doesn't always mean you have influence. Bringing value and influence can occur from anywhere within an organization. Having an impact can often times occur from the middle of an organization.

John Maxwell is an American author, professional speaker and pastor. Maxwell has written many books that focus primarily on leadership. Maxwell is the founder of INJOY, Maximum Impact, The John Maxwell Team, ISS and EQUIP, which is a non-profit organization that helps with leadership development among leaders from over 80 nations. Every year Maxwell is a keynote speaker at many Fortune 500 companies where he helps individuals reach their potential in leadership. Maxwell has dedicated his life to training leaders around the world through the organizations he has developed. Within the text of *The 360-Leader* Maxwell identifies three principles that will help bring value and influence within every level of an organization. By creating influence amongst people at every level of an organization, you can learn to lead in all directions, which include leading up by influencing our leaders, leading across by influencing our peers and leading down by influencing those down the hierarchy of the organization.

By helping others Maxwell leads readers to contemplate that people at every level of the organization helps themselves. Maxwell writes to inform readers that becoming a 360 leader is attainable for anyone that has leadership skills that are considered average or above and is willing to work at improving them. The 360 leaders are the leaders that make an impact no matter what their position is and where they stand within the organization.

The book is broken up into six sections and tackles several myths that are associated with leadership. The author discusses challenges, values and principles that help shine a light on circumstances that can be altered with the effort of intentional changes that in turn lead to growth.

Throughout the sections and chapters of the book the author supports the claims being made by sharing experiences that has shaped his thinking and incorporated proven solutions and ways to

improve the climate within an organization. The thesis that Maxwell has developed is shown throughout the writing which addresses the myths that individuals within an organization believe to be true. From that point Maxwell makes it a point to prove the myths that people perceive to be true as falsehoods that are held on to due to the belief that not being at the top of an organization determines who leads and who follows. Maxwell states that *“Leadership is a choice you make, not a place you sit. Anyone can choose to become a leader wherever he is. You can make a difference no matter where you are.”* Throughout the writing within the text there is a progression of thoughts that move from one point to another in a manner that is fluid and collects the content in a complete way.

Throughout the second section the challenges that 360-degree leaders face are addressed, and Maxwell provides advice that helps to tackle the challenges that are faced in an organization from the middle and how to use the challenges as opportunities to learn and grow. Maxwell goes on to state that *“The role of leaders in the middle of an organization – in nearly every circumstance -is to add value to the organization and to the leader.”* Having the ability to lead yourself helps to practice self-management, which helps to emphasize the focus it takes, along with discipline and purpose. Within the areas affiliated with the third section of the text, Maxwell continues to address ways that leaders can practice leading up. By utilizing the content that he has written allows for leaders within the middle of an organization to see the importance of leading oneself exceptionally well and choosing to become better at self-management, which in turn helps your growth.

With the material pertaining to the principles that 360-degree leaders’ practice to lead across an organization throughout the fourth section of the book gives simple practices that can be implemented daily in order to help lead others who are alongside each other. Being able to work alongside others without competing can help to garner respect and credibility amongst the leaders across the organization. Being that these individuals are working in the same environment it is important to listen to initiatives presented by others and move beyond the current environment in order to gain perspectives in a new light, which helps to garner new ideas. Maxwell states *“If you help lift the load, then you help your leader succeed.”*

Being able to lead from within an organization allows individuals to become role models and encourage others to become apart of a bigger agenda. Throughout the area pertaining to principles that help to lead down within an organization Maxwell encompasses the idea that the behavior and attitude of a leader determines the culture and atmosphere of the organization. Within the principles that are developed for the leaders within this area Maxwell encourages that *“The middle of an organization is a good place to discover your identity and work things out. You can discover your leadership strengths there.”* Being that the rhythm of writing describes the methods in which the author’s arguments support his thesis, support of points that are strong in terms of application and validity are important to consider as well as points that prove to be less valuable. The values that Maxwell discusses throughout the last section of the book portray the results of effective leadership. Being cognizant of your abilities at your current level and leading successfully at one level usually qualifies the leader to step up to a higher level. At times this argument may prove to be true, but as time has shown over a number of decades this is a weak argument because there have been times that due to prejudices and racial biases individuals who lead others greatly and with effective leadership qualities have continued to be looked over within organizations that hold on to biases that hinder the growth of others. Being that Maxwell does inform readers that the necessary steps to

achieve success are fostered within the principles that are set forth throughout each chapter, it is ultimately up to the leaders within an organization to determine the strengths of each employee and give them the right job that will help them to thrive within the organization. By giving training that is world-class, leaders will be equipped to win.

The theories that Maxwell include in his writing compare to “Leading in a Culture of Change” by Michael Fullan because the educational leadership paradigm follows similar principles. Being able to equip leaders to be the best they can be within an organization helps to achieve better relationships, which helps leaders become a greater team. Fullan states that *Effective leadership means guiding people through the differences and, indeed, enabling differences to surface*” (114). Both authors suggest that understanding change and being innovative helps to get results. Leadership that occurs in business have the same concerns that leadership in education experience. Having the opportunities to learn from companies that are innovative and are achieving goals allows organizations from both a business and educational standpoint to create an environment that garners change that impacts growth across all levels of the organization.

Being that Maxwell has obtained success in the field of leadership throughout four decades of experience, it is understandable that being able to have a positive impact no matter where you are in an organization adds value to any circumstance that leaders may find themselves in. No matter what your position or title is within an organization you can influence others.

References

- Maxwell, John. C. (2005). *The 360-Leader: Developing Your Influence from Anywhere in the Organization*. Nashville: Thomas Nelson, Inc.
- Fullan, Michael. (2001). *Leading in a Culture of Change*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

[To top](#)

Book Review: Is My School A Better School Because I Lead It? By Baruti K. Kafele

By Zarkia Jones

Baruti K. Kafele was an educator in the New Jersey school system for over 20 years, an author of eight books and a highly distinguished master teacher. Kafele was highly sought after for his transformational leadership and his ability to teach people how to be effective leaders. He has traveled around the world to share his knowledge and ask the critical question “*is my school a better school because I lead it*”. During his experiences, he was shocked to learn that many educators and so-called leaders hadn’t even thought about that question. He would usually have to poke, prod or coach to get the true answers he was looking for. That led to him writing and publishing his book, *Is My School A Better School Because I Lead It?*

He identified three key points a leader should ask themselves when thinking about the critical question. The three components were contention, evidence and staff’s perception. Contention is what a person thinks, feels and believes about their own leadership. Do they, themselves, believe they are strong enough to lead while still being open to learning. In order for the contention to be true, the evidence must support it. What skills has a person shown to demonstrate that they are a good leader? What changes have they made within a school system prior to becoming a leader? Lastly, staff’s perception is vital to the overall component of a true leader. If you are not leading your staff, if your staff cannot contribute a few of their own successes to your leadership, how can you claim to be a great leader?

Is My School A Better School Because I Lead It highlighted 35 key question a person must acknowledge on their journey to becoming a true leader. The questions were uncomfortable because they make the reader think far beyond the surface, but they are necessary to determine if a person is truly a leader.

Main Themes

Is My School A Better School Because I Lead It focuses solely on the success of one man in the field of education. This book had a strong sense of self-reflection and the importance of tearing down every single thing a person may know about being a leader, then rebuilding themselves up to become the best leader they can possibly be.

Baruti Kafele harps on the importance of being uncomfortable enough to face your fears and answer the questions he laid out in his book. Every single question captured a different component of leadership without being repeated or irrelevant. Kafele shared a few of his struggles on his journey to becoming a highly sought-after leadership expert while also highlighting the strong points throughout his time as an educator.

The very first question Kafele confronts his readers with is “who am I as the leader of my school?” It is easy for a person to own up to being a leader, but it takes courage to point out the flaws, the lessons and the hardships that come with being a leader. Leaders should be distinguishable in a large crowd, have clear intentions and have a staff who respect them even if they are not always in agreement. This single question set the tone for the remainder of the book, with each question getting a little more personal and uncomfortable for those who refuse to take a deep look withing themselves.

Question 35, the last question in the book, is the key question and the driving force behind this 72-page book. “Is My School A Better School *Because* I Lead It?” (Pg. 56) after completing the series of previous questions and digesting the answers truthfully, a person is forced to take one last look at themselves and answer the question honestly. They must reflect on the changes they’ve implemented, the missions they’ve accomplished, the lives they changed and most importantly, the legacy they’ll leave behind when it comes time for them to transition into another phase of life. The perfect placement of this question has the ability to leave readers to sleep on the answer to that question for days, weeks or even months after completing the book.

Kafele ends his book with a real-life experience that changes his entire outlook on life. Although it is important to dive into your role as a leader, it is equally important to dive into the health of your mind and body. While giving a speech as a keynote speaker, Baruti Kafele suffered a heart attack right on stage. I believe it was in those moments he got the opportunity to reflect on his own journey and delve into some of his highs and his lows. That was the life-changing event he needed to alter his entire perspective on life and leadership. Kafele made it his mission to teach people how to become effective leaders, how to take care of their schools, staff and students while living healthy lives. His message continues to be spread across the United States and a few countries around the world.

Key Quotes

- “*Who am I as a leader of my school?*” (Pg. 3) The very first question Kafele asks allows the reader to look deeply into themselves; they have to uncomfortably look into their own lives and evaluate what actually makes them a leader.
- “*How do I mentally transition into my leadership identity every morning?*” (Pg. 7) In any job a person pursues they must be mentally prepared to take on the position and the duties it entails without a single ounce of doubt.
- “*What does my leadership presence represent to my school’s community?*” (Pg. 15) The community surrounding the school is a vital component of the school. According to Kafele, the school and the community surrounding it should work hand-in-hand for the betterment of the school.
- “*How does my leadership impact the social-emotional needs of my students?*” (Pg. 22) Social-emotional learning is at the forefront of schools today. It is vital that leaders make a connection to the social-emotional needs of the students and staff members.
- “*What fuels my passion for leadership every day?*” (Pg. 30) Determining your *why* is a critical component of any job. When you find your passion and understand why you want to

lead, becoming a leader is much easier. Your passion will always fuel you to continue with the mission until you complete it.

- *“How does my leadership purpose impact student and staff performance?”* (Pg. 38) When it comes to being a school leader, you have to be aware of the people that are directly impacted by your leadership. Do the students only see you for disciplinary problems or do you see them and know their names and living situations outside of school?
- *“What is my leadership vision?”* (Pg. 45) Kafele dove deep into the importance of having a clear vision for the overall success of the entire school. It is important to identify your own vision as a leader then align your vision with the vision of the school.
- *“Is my school a better school because I lead it?”* (Pg. 56) This was a question Kafele asked himself on a daily basis. If the school was not performing better with him in place, then he felt there was no need for him to be there. In the end, this was the most uncomfortable question and it caused the reader to think about themselves and the impact they have on their school.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Baruti Kafele provided a deep dive into the real world of leadership and what it takes to become a thoroughbred leader. The questions asked throughout the book allow for current leaders as well as aspiring leaders to evaluate themselves while on the pursuit to becoming the best leader they can be. A few of the strongest components throughout the book focused on the importance of having a staff who believe in the mission just as much as the leader, having students who trust their leader to not only protect them but to have their best interest at heart and acknowledging one's purpose as a leader.

Although Baruti Kafele did an excellent job at forcing a leader to look within in themselves and evaluate their leadership skills, this book has the ability to completely tear someone down or discourage them from pursuing leadership all together. Many of the questions mentioned throughout the book are questions that people may not even want to delve into. They force leaders to point out every single flaw they may have and reevaluate them without proper direction on how to rebuild those flaws. He shared a compelling story of his own personal journey into leadership, which was painted in a picture of leadership perfection.

There were a few implications of his own struggles throughout the book, however, they were quickly cleaned up with the good that happened to him along his own journey. There was much more room to discuss the failures and the hard lessons learned from the failures which contributed to his overall success.

Rather than taking in this book in one sitting, this can be used as a resource for leadership training. The questions can be used to develop breakout sessions or discussion topics for professionals pursuing leadership roles in schools. Not everyone's journey in leadership will elevate as quickly as it did for Kafele's, so it is important that readers understand to give themselves time to rebuild themselves into the leaders they aspire to be.

Comparison to Fullan

Baruti Kafele illustrated his own real-world experiences and how they shaped his career as a school leader. Throughout *Is My School A Better School Because I Lead It*, he highlighted key components and questions that guided him to being an exceptional leader. This was not the traditional book on leadership because it didn't focus on data driven studies, test groups or standard data.

In comparison to Michael Fullan's book, *Leading In A Culture Of Change*, Fullan focused on the similarities between corporate businesses and the operation of school leaders. One of the key components of Fullan's novel was the *framework for leadership* model he highlighted. The five-part framework was designed to allow leaders to think about the complex changes of leading. The five components of the framework were moral purpose, understanding change, coherence making, knowledge creation and sharing, and relationship building.

Moral purpose was defined as the intention to make positive changes in the lives of employees, customers and society. Since there are constantly changes in the educational and corporate systems, it is important for leaders to understand how to navigate the changes while leading a team. In order to achieve coherence making, the leader has to understand how important it is to have a strong moral purpose and believe in that purpose. As leaders grow, they should remain open to creating new knowledge as well as sharing it with their subordinates. Lastly, relationship building is a key factor to successful change in any initiative.

Opposite of Kafele's story which heavily evaluated a single person as a leader and the sole decisions they make on their own journeys of leadership. I believe that Fullan provided the answers as well as the formula for building an effective leader whether it be in a school setting or in a corporate setting.

References

Fullan, M. (2001). *Leading In A Culture Of Change*. Jossey-Bass.

Kafele, B. K. (2019). *Is My School A Better School Because I Lead It?*. ASCD.

[To top](#)

Latest Employment Opportunities Posted on NASET

* **Special Education Teachers - All areas** - 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 significant difference in the lives of public school students, parents, principals, teachers, and central office employees. To learn more - [Click here](#)

* **Teacher** - JHU is looking for an energetic, flexible, and motivated teacher needed to work full-time with a young adult with autism. Teachers work on a multi-disciplinary team with specialists in autism, special education, speech-language pathology, fitness, art, and behavior analysis to address communication, academic, daily living, vocational, and leisure skills in home, educational, and community settings in and around New York City, Connecticut, and via Zoom. To learn more - [Click here](#)

* **Assistant Professor; Collaborative Special Ed** - The University of North Alabama invites applications for the position of tenure-track, Assistant Professor in the Department of Teaching, Learning, & Leadership. Qualifications include: an earned doctorate in special education; a minimum of three years of successful public school experience with students who have either mild, moderate, or severe disabilities in grades K-6, 6-12, or K-12; demonstrated university teaching experience to teach undergraduate courses required for a dual K-6 certification in elementary and special education, along with online graduate courses; excellent verbal and writing skills; the ability to advise teacher education candidates; and the ability to work with P-12 students as well as P-12 schools and administrators. To learn more - [Click here](#)

* **Educational Instructional Support Specialists** - The Collaborative for Educational Services (CES) is seeking Educational Instructional Support Specialists to assist with onsite coordination of hybrid and/or remote teaching and learning. The Specialist will provide structure, onsite support and the connection to teachers as needed. The Specialist's purpose is to make sure that students have what they need in order to actively, and successfully engage with their learning when done via remote instruction, or through a combination of in person and on-line (hybrid) programming. To learn more- [Click here](#)

* **FT Special Education Teachers, (K-4, 5-8, 9-12)** - PA Virtual has openings for Full Time Special Education Teachers at the Elementary, Middle and High School Levels. All teaching positions are remote and we require candidates to have a current, valid certification to teach in the state of Pennsylvania. The Teacher position is responsible for the planning, organization and implementation of an appropriate instructional program, in an elementary or secondary virtual learning environment. To learn more - [Click here](#)

* **Special Education Teacher** - A local school district in Charleston, SC has partnered with an industry leading healthcare job placement agency, to fill several vacant Special Education Teacher positions in Charleston, SC for the entire 2020-21 School Year. The Special Education Teacher is responsible for planning, coordinating and the provision of special education services to eligible students. This position assures adherence to timelines and federal and state requirements for special

education services and the responsibility for monitoring compliance with Individualized Services Plans (ISP) and/or Individualized Education Plan (IEP). To learn more - [Click here](#)

* **Special Education Teacher** - Merakey is seeking a Special Education Teacher to join our Education Services within our Children's and Family division in our school in Chambersburg PA for the 2020-2021 school year. The Merakey Children's and Family Division focuses on a continuum of care throughout the lifespan. The core, fundamental principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA) are incorporated into a specialized approach across all service offerings. To learn more - [Click here](#)

* **Special Education (Autism) PreK-4** - General responsibilities include aiding each student consistent with his or her abilities and educational needs. Develop competence in the basic learning skills, progress on the basis of achievement, and to qualify for further education and/or employment. To learn more - [Click here](#)

* **Virtual Special Education Teacher Positions** - K12 believes in education for everyone. We provide families an online option for a high-quality, personalized education experience. Students can thrive, find their passion, and learn in an environment that encourages discovery at their own pace. In support of this, we are committed to creating and maintaining a culture of inclusion and diversity. To learn more - [Click here](#)

* **Special Education Teacher** - \$60,000/school year (185 days), summers off with year-round pay and year round appreciation. Special Education Teachers needed in Arizona (Phoenix and surrounding cities). Needs are in the self-contained and resource settings serving students with emotional disabilities (ED), Autism (A), Severe/Profound (S/P), and Intellectual Disabilities (ID). STARS is the largest school contract agency in AZ. STARS is owned and operated by Occupational Therapists. You will be an employee and receive full benefits - 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

[To top](#)