

SPED NEWS

Staff Edition



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How to Encourage Inclusion Outside the Classroom as well as Inside the Classroom

by Dr. Cecil Blankenship, ETSU

Special needs students are usually successfully included within the classroom, but what about the transition from the classroom setting to social and recreational settings outside the classroom? As children develop and reach maturational milestones such as "getting a driver's license, attending parties with their peers, going to ballgames with friends after school hours, participating in extracurricular activities, and hanging out with their friends outside of school,"

continued on next page

Director's MEMO

THE NEWLY REVISED SEVIER
COUNTY S-TEAM PROCESS

On Thursday, October 16, the Sevier County School Psychologists conducted an inservice at the Trula Lawson Early Childhood Center from 3:45pm until 5:45pm. Like all of the in-services and workshops we conduct, this provided flexible in-service hours for all attending. However, more importantly than the hours gained was the information gained.

The psychologists discussed in detail the newly updated pre-referral process, also known as the School Support Team or S-Team process. As this process is an important and required component of IDEA and one that will not change with reauthorization, it was essential that each school have a representative who understood the process and receive a manual. I strongly encourage each school to designate someone from their regular education program to be familiar with the process, as pre-referral and **S-Teams are a function of regular education**, not special education. If you do not have a manual, contact us for one.

The intent of developing a uniform S-Team process for our district is actually quite simple. Students routinely transition from one school or district to the next, and in order to be certain that we are serving them appropriately, as well as helping the teachers who are providing instruction for them, we need to be consistent with our approaches, especially those that provide interventions for the regular education classroom. The intent of federal disabilities legislation has been and continues to be to insure that all children have equal opportunities to succeed within the regular education environment prior to referral for special education and related services. This meets the Least Restrictive Environment criteria of the law, but more than that, this allows children to develop appropriately with their peers. It is in everyone's best interest to facilitate this goal.

The S-Team process works to provide the regular education classroom teacher with strategies and interventions designed to allow children to learn and develop outside of the special education umbrella. Rather than being a means of preventing students from receiving special education, it serves as a process that allows specialists in multiple areas, psychologists, pathologists, lead teachers, consulting teachers, counselors and administrators, to develop individualized interventions for each identified child within their own classroom and with their own age and grade appropriate peers. It is a tool designed to help teachers provide remediation or acceleration to students prior to a full evaluation. Obviously, any child who can succeed without the necessity of labeling or services outside those provided to all children should be encouraged and assisted in doing just that, and with the collective assistance of the school support team, most will succeed.

Next Flexible In-service

Monday, January 12th

***TCAP-ALT: The Portfolio Method of Assessment and
Alternate Skills Assessment (ASA) assessment
and***

Formative Assessments in the Classroom: Tracking Student Progress

look for more information



How to Encourage... continued from page 1

they tend to associate with classmates who have similar interests and needs. Sometimes special needs students, especially at the middle school and high school level, are not included in these activities with their school peers because of pragmatic reasons such as not having a driver's license. It is not because of the insensitivity of non-special needs students toward their special needs peers, but rather the practical aspect of the special needs student not being able to participate because of a challenging condition. Adolescents on the athletic field, in the gymnasium or playing informal games outside the school the school setting, often form strong peer bonds. Often special needs students feel neglected or "left out" because they cannot participate in these events with their school friends and peers.

It is important to encourage middle and high school students to include their special needs friends from elementary school in their social and athletic groups. Parents of special needs students should also be encouraged to be aware of special events sponsored by the school and make sure that special needs students have transportation and the necessary resources to attend such events. There are many special events sponsored by the school such as field trips, ball games, clubs and educational trips outside the school day, which provide an excellent opportunity for social interaction between special needs, and non-special needs peers. Parents of special needs students should be informed of these events and should be encouraged to allow their child to participate. Middle and high school teachers should also encourage their special needs students to attend and participate in these events. Many teachers choose to attend school events themselves. Seeing a familiar face such as a child's teacher will often make the special needs child feel more comfortable and confident at these events.

Congratulations

Congratulations to Aspen Brogan, Homecoming Queen at Seymour Middle School. She was elected Queen by her 8th grade peers and was crowned at the Homecoming game on October 9, 2003.

Way to go, Aspen!

Paraprofessional Information

"Just the Facts, Please . . ."

What Every Paraprofessional Should Know About Assessment

Traditionally, the teacher in a classroom was held to specific responsibilities such as the writing of an IEP, lesson planning, instruction and assessment. The role of the paraprofessional was to the lead teacher. However, times have changed and the role of the paraprofessional now requires increased knowledge and participation in the educational areas formerly thought of as "teacher responsibilities". This may or may not include the administration of assessments (Pickett and Gerlach, 1997). As most paraprofessionals are well aware, there are many forms of assessments. The following is a brief description of the types of assessments, their purpose, and other terms used in reference to assessment.

Screening - the purpose of screening is to determine if a problem exists that may require additional assessment. Many schools also use a screening tool to determine readiness for kindergarten or preschool. Two examples of screening tools currently used are the Denver Developmental Screening Test (Frankenburg, Dodds & Fandal, 1975) and the DIAL-R (Developmental Indicators for the Assessment of Learning-Revised, Mardell-Czudneowski & Goldberg, 1990).

Eligibility/Placement - Before a child can receive special education services, he/she must be tested to determine if a disability exists. This testing is called assessment for eligibility. If the testing shows that the child does have a disability, then he may be eligible to receive special education services. The testing tools typically used for this type of assessment may be IQ tests, behavior tests and developmental and motor assessments. The professionals conducting these tests typically are psychologists, educators and therapists. After a child is determined to be eligible for special education services, the IEP team will use the eligibility assessment results and other information to determine the child's placement (e.g., Self-contained Classroom for students with severe disabilities, preschool special education classroom, classroom for students with autism, or inclusive settings).

Pickett, A. L., & Gerlach, K. (1997). *Supervising paraeducators in school settings: A team approach*. Austin, TX: PRO-ED. *Editor Note: This article will be continued in the next newsletter.*

Are You Looking Out for Your Kids?

As a parent, your first duty is to give your children the tools they need to build a successful life. Here are my ten rules for effective parenting:

1. A parent who is looking out for a child will make time for the child.

2. Discipline is essential, but no parent should inflict frequent physical or mental pain on a child. Parents are the grown-ups and have to be patient, within reason, and remember that words can deeply wound a child.

3. A good parent will ensure that home is a refuge -- a place where a child feels protected and loved. There will be no random violence, intoxication, sexual displays, uncontrolled anger or vile language at home.

4. A parent who is looking out for a child will provide a good education. That includes paying college tuition, if possible. Education comes before the vacation or the new car.

5. An effective parent will be available when a child has a problem. Ditch the meeting, get back from the mall, get off the phone. There is nothing more important than dealing with a child's crisis immediately.

6. A good parent will screen a child's friends, know his or her whereabouts, look at homework and ask questions about school daily.

7. An effective parent will enforce the rules and explain them. "Because I say so" can work when a kid gets stubborn, but first try connecting the dots with your child. It doesn't always work, but the effort is worth it.

8. A parent who is looking out for a child will be honest and lead by example: no lying, no cheating, no nasty gossip, no cruelty, no manipulation, no envy of your child.

9. A good parent will be respectful of his or her own parents. You can't effectively look out for your kids if you don't look out for your folks. (Even if they don't deserve it.)

10. Finally, an effective parent will not allow a TV or computer in a child's room. This is a dangerous world, and the danger is now inside the house. The exploiters want your kids. You must look out for them. Fight hard.

Bill O'Reilly, *Parade Magazine*, Sept 21, 2003

Pittman Center CSA Hosts Sept. 11th Program

On the morning of September 11, Pittman Center CSA students hosted a program entitled "American Memories: A Remembrance." Each student chose a person or symbol of historical significance to research and report on, and dressed appropriately for the character. The program was attended by City Mayor Glenn Cardwell, the Pittman Center Police Department and members of the Pittman Center Volunteer Fire Department, as well as parents, other community members and the entire school's student body, faculty, and staff. The CSA students led everyone in several patriotic songs, accompanied by piano instructor Ms. Sherry Marshall. A moment of silence was held to remember the victims and heroes of September 11, 2001. The students also expressed their appreciation to the attending emergency personnel and those in the military who continue to fight for our country and democracy around the world.



From left to right Abby Henry as Sacagawea, Kali Pitts as a civil rights activist, Cami Webb as the Statue of Liberty, Tara Tyrell as Susan B. Anthony, Hannah Gray as a World War II nurse at Pearl Harbor, Cory Nichols as Uncle Sam, Matthew Kloster as the Unknown soldier, Cody Merritt as Henry Ford, Nathan Cantrell as Abraham Lincoln and Jared Cantrell as George Washington.

Local Dentist Sponsors Special Education Program

Pittman Center Elementary School would like to publicly thank Sevierville dentist Dr. J. Steve Morton and his wife Cindy for sponsoring Kathy Newman's Special Education program. Their financial donations will be used to purchase educational materials and incentives for both Resource and Gifted students. Dr. and Mrs. Morton feel it is important for local businesses to support teachers and invest in a variety of educational programs.

About Teaching

A friend sent me this about teaching school. "After being interviewed by the school administration the eager teaching prospect said, "Let me see if I've got this right. You want me to go into that room with all those kids and fill their every waking moment with a love for learning. And I am supposed to instill a sense of pride in their ethnicity, modify their disruptive behavior, observe them for signs of abuse and even censor their T-shirt messages and dress habits." "You want me to wage a war on drugs and sexually transmitted diseases, check their backpacks for weapons of mass destruction, and raise their self-esteem."

"You want me to teach them patriotism, good citizenship, sportsmanship and fair play, how and where to register to vote, how to balance a checkbook, and how to apply for a job."

"I am to check their heads for lice, maintain a safe environment, recognize signs of antisocial behavior, offer advice, write letters of recommendation for student employment and scholarships, encourage respect for the cultural diversity of others, and, oh yeah, always make sure that I give the girls in my class 50 per cent of my attention." "My contract requires me to work on my own time after school and evenings grading papers. In addition, I must spend my summer vacation at my own expense, working toward advanced certification and a

Master's degree. And on my own time you want me to attend committee and faculty meetings, attend all PTA meetings, and participate in staff development training." "I am to be a paragon of virtue, larger than life, such that my very presence will awe my students into being obedient and respectful of my authority. And I am to pledge allegiance to family values and this current administration."

"You also want me to incorporate technology into the learning experience, monitor web sites, and relate personally with each student. That includes deciding who might be potentially dangerous and/or liable to commit a crime in School."

"I am to make sure each and every student passes the state mandatory exams, even those that don't come to school regularly nor complete any of their assignments. Plus, I am to make sure that all of the students with handicaps get an equal education regardless of the extent of their mental or physical handicap."

"In addition, I am to communicate regularly with the parents by letter, telephone, newsletter, and a report card. All of this I am to do with just a piece of chalk, a computer, a few books, a bulletin board, a great big smile AND on a starting salary that qualifies my family for food stamps!"

"You want me to do all of this and you expect me NOT TO PRAY?"

From the *Coffeeville Courier*, Coffeeville, MS

IMC

We have the Criterion Test of Basic Skills for Math and Reading available in the IMC. We also have the KeyMath Test. When our current supply of forms for these tests is depleted, we will no longer make them available. Please check with Theresa McCroskey if you need either of these tests.

Three new books from Sagebrush have arrived and are available for checkout in the IMC. They are *Reading Strategies for Elementary Students with Learning Difficulties*, *Differentiating Instruction for Students with Learning Disabilities*, and *Testing Students with Disabilities*.