

SPED NEWS

Staff Edition



November 2001
John Enloe, Director
Special Education
Sevier County Schools
Nancy Wohl, Layout

November Census

The December census report plays a crucial part in our funding. We have been requested to have this report in by December 3 this year. Due to these factors, I am asking that you fax me your November SPED Staffing Reports no later than November 26 so I will have time to get the information in the computer and make our December report as accurate as possible. Thanks so much for your help.

Rebecca Campbell fax 453-3112.

Speech & Hearing

Speech/Language Therapists Meeting November 21

9:00-11:00 a.m. at the Trula Lawson Early Childhood Center

A reminder about the meeting and that we have two audiometers available for Speech Therapists to check out and screen hearing on those children who need hearing screening for the completions of your assessment report. These are students who have moved in from another location or system and have no hearing data for the last 12 months. If the school nurse is not able to screen them in time for your eval. deadline come by for an audiometer.

Directors MEMO

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is the cornerstone of special education. It is a blueprint of what schools, teachers and parents plan for the child to accomplish and should be developed in as thorough a manner as possible. In a recent edition of the *Special Educator* some very important points about developing an appropriate IEP were identified. I felt it was significant enough to review, as our goal is to help children succeed through the continual improvement of their educational programs.

In advance of every IEP team meeting the case manager should consider the child's most recent evaluations and the child's progress before coming to the meeting. When we demonstrate familiarity with a child and his or her progress, parents are much more likely to listen to what we have to say. Also, it would be advisable to come to those meetings with draft versions of the child's goals and objectives. These drafts should be clearly marked as such and should be shared with the parents, in advance whenever possible. Finally, if the meeting may be contentious, members of the school's team should meet in advance to discuss ideas and proposals. Although decisions cannot be made in advance, the discussion will allow all team members to clarify opinions prior to the meeting itself.

The Team should clearly state present levels of educational performance (PLOPs) in terms easy for a noneducator (such as a parent) to understand. They should contain very specific examples of academic and behavioral difficulties a child experiences. Also, PLOPs should provide very clear justification of why a child will not be participating with nondisabled children in the regular classroom and placed in a more restrictive environment. This is especially true when the behavior that leads to the more restrictive placement is related to the disability. Finally, make certain that the child's goals and objectives match the PLOPs. Each goal and objective should be in response to the PLOPs.

Special factors also play a role in the IEP's development. Teams must consider factors such as attendance or paying attention in class, even when these factors do not disrupt the learning environment or violate school rules. They may impede the child's learning, requiring strategies and supports to improve them.

Finally the goals and objectives should be clearly written and measurable. They must describe what the Team wants the child to do in an observable and measurable way. In writing short term objectives use the following questions as a guide:

1. What do we want the child to do? (write a sentence, greet the teacher)
2. How often? (80% of the time, 5 out of 6 attempts)
3. In a particular location (in the classroom, in community settings).
4. Under what conditions? (with or without assistance or prompts)

Remember, although the primary purpose of the IEP is to provide a guide for the individual educational needs of each disabled child, if it is well written it will survive in the face of legal challenge and protect you from litigation. Take the time to review your IEPs, as they may be evaluated later this year when we are monitored.



Next Inservice

January 8th, TLC, 3:45-5:45

Comparing

SPED and Section 504:

Legal Rights of Disabled

and Non-Disabled Students

AT Notes: Low tech writing devices:

1. Mechanical pencil- This eliminates the need for sharpening and gives feedback to students who press too hard breaking the lead.
2. Try-Rex pencil: A large diameter with three flat sides to facilitate finger placement. This replaces the need for a triangular grip and comes in 3 different diameters (ABC school supply).
3. Hand huggers crayons, pencils and markers: These are triangular shaped and replace the need for a triangular grip. These are excellent for learning beginning writing skills due to facilitating correct finger placement (Triarco arts and crafts, Wal-Mart).
4. Fiskars scissors for preschoolers: good for preschool and early elementary student. These provide oversized finger loops for a comfortable grip with enough room for adult help (Sammons/Preston, Wal-Mart).
5. Self opening scissors: these require only half the hand strength of standard scissors and are good for students with weak hands or poor fine motor control (Sammons/Preston \$9.95).
6. Loop Scissors :these are good self opening scissors that are activated by a simple squeeze action between thumb and finger or thumb and palm, caution: they break easily and are fairly expensive (Sammons/Preston \$10.00).
7. Stetro pencil grip: facilitates tripod posture for students who have good hand function but need assistance with finger placement. Usually not successful with large hands (Sammons/Preston 2 for \$5).
8. Triangular pencil grip: useful with younger students as an introduction to tripod posture with specific finger placement (Available from a variety of places including Sammons/Preston \$6 for 25).
9. Pear shaped pencil grip facilitates good tripod posture and helps reduce finger cramping and fatigue (Sammons/Preston \$5.50 for 3)

Other considerations for improved fine motor skills in the classroom:

1. Positioning – This is the most important consideration for fine motor skills. Students should be positioned comfortably with feet on floor and desk positioned so elbows rest on the desk surface when sitting upright.
2. For students who write lightly – a thin felt tip pen will produce a darker text without any increased effort.
3. For the student who needs to learn to write on the lines or needs to learn to size letters consistently – cut writing paper into strips.
4. For the student who can't or won't stabilize the paper – tape paper in place or use clipboard.

AT Consideration on the IEP

Every time we complete an IEP we are asked to answer "Is assistive technology necessary in order to implement the child's IEP?" Here are a few considerations when answering this question:

-The first consideration is if current interventions are working then nothing new is needed and AT is not needed.

- The second consideration is whether AT (including any low tech options) are currently being used and listed under supplementary aids on the student's IEP.

- The third consideration is whether AT should be tried. When this is a consideration we need to ask the following question: "What task is it that we want this student to do, that s/he is unable to do at a level that reflects his/her skills/abilities?" After the task is identified then an appropriate tool is tried (school assistive technology team will assist the IEP team in identifying tools which could be helpful) and included in the IEP if successful.

New Staff

Sabrena Jewell

Sabrena is the new CDC teacher at New Center School. She and her husband, Jonathan and two children, Caitlin and Logan moved here in August. Previously, Sabrena attended Concord College in Princeton, W.Va. and the W. Va. College of Graduate Studies. She has taught 11 years in W.Va. and Va. Sabrena has experience teaching students with learning disabilities, educable/trainable mentally disabled and severe to profoundly disabled students. She enjoys participating in church activities, singing, landscaping, crafts and cooking.

Joan Cannon

Joan is at Seymour High School in the CDC position after moving with her family from Los Angeles, CA. Her undergraduate degree is from the University of Cincinnati, her graduate studies were completed at the University of Kentucky and California Lutheran, and a masters degree in Leadership and Administration from Pepperdine University. In 1993, she was recognized as Teacher of the Year in Los Angeles. Jake, her son is attending Maryville Middle School in the 7th grade and husband Harry has opened a practice in Hypnotherapy in Maryville.

Angela Taylor

Angela graduated from Carson-Newman in Jefferson City and taught Resource K-5 in Morristown, TN. She is now working at Seymour Primary in the new CDC class. Going to plays and movies, and cooking are things Angela enjoys after school and of course, UT football!!

Newsletter

Contributions for the newsletter can be submitted by email no later than the first Friday of the month to Nancy Wohl at the Trula Lawson Early Childhood Center, e-mail: nwohl@yahoo.com.

IMC

Theresa McCroskey wants to remind teachers to call her if you give anyone a material or test that is checked out to you. She will checkin it from you and out to the other person. This will help us find materials when they are needed. That way, when you ask for it we can find it.
