A Teacher’s Guide to Universal/Inclusive Education

By

The Universal Education Grant of the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council

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A Teacher’s Guide to Universal Education

Introduction

In 2007, the Florida Department of Education funded an effort by the Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) to generate a set of standards for inclusive education. Extensive work was conducted using experts in the field to generate the Best Practices in Inclusive Education (BPIE). These indicators of best practices nationally have served as the focus and guiding light for Florida school district administrators and educators in their efforts to increase inclusion in Florida’s schools. The FIN website (located at http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/) describes the BPIE as:

An internal assessment instrument to facilitate the analysis, implementation, and improvement of inclusive educational practices at the district, school, and education team levels. The BPIE assessment is conducted with a team of relevant stakeholders and is facilitated by a trained FIN facilitator. The assessment team meets during multiple (3-4) sessions to complete the assessment process and develop an action plan based on scoring results and priority needs. The action plan is used for short- and long-range planning and implementation of improvement efforts and involves ongoing collaboration between district and school personnel and the Florida Inclusion Network. The BPIE was developed in collaboration with nationally-known experts in the field of inclusive education and is based upon an extensive review of research, current literature, and best practices.

http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/Research_Centers/CRSRL/Florida_Inclusion_Network/Services/Technical_Assistance_Activities_.aspx

This Guide provides an elaboration on each of the BPIE indicators at the instructional level. The effort was conducted through the Universal Education Project that was funded and sponsored by the United States Department of Health and Human Services, Administration on Developmental Disabilities and the Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc. The purpose of the document is to provide additional context and specific assistance to teachers as they strive to increase universal education/inclusion for all students.
Universal Education and Inclusion

In 1975, Congress passed Public Law 94-142, the Education of All Handicapped Children Act. This law was then codified as the “Individuals with Disabilities Education Act” and referred to as IDEA. The initial impact on school districts was considerable. Each child qualifying as handicapped under the Act was required to have an Individual Education Plan (IEP) and receive services according to the plan. A key concept was the requirement to place children with disabilities into the “least restrictive environment” needed in order to maximize the educational experiences for the child and the learning from those experiences. From the outset, however, school districts and schools exerted pressure to limit the placement of children with significant disabilities into general education classrooms.

The impetus for PL 94-142 came from a strong belief that all children have equal rights to a quality education, without regard to race, sex, religion, or disability. Peterson and Hittie (2010, p.349) share the following story:

*Donald, a 5th grader labeled as being a child with a severe disability, was a member of the school’s general education 5th grade classroom. He had many friends who helped him in many ways and who he helped in many ways as well. If you talked with Joshua, Donald’s best friend, he would explain to you that his friend Donald uses alternative communication devices and how he feels those devices could be improved to better enable Donald to communicate. Joshua was thinking like an engineer, innovatively brainstorming ways to improve devices. Later the class was working on a map of their state project and Sylvia and Donald were working together on the project (with the help of some assistive technology). A class conversation about diversity, a conversation that Donald was a part of, clearly showed true reciprocal learning between Donald and his 5th grade friends- “We have learned so much by having Donald in our class”. That same day the class was reading a story about the Holocaust and talking about how people of difference lived together. These students understood through their lived experiences in their inclusive 5th grade class what people with differences living together meant. Would they without inclusion or would it just be theory for them?*

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC) has long supported state and national policies asserting the right of all children to an education. Part of this support has been expressed through a thorough commitment to fully
inclusive schools in which all students, regardless of disabilities, are educated in classrooms with their peers. Critical tenets of these beliefs are:

- Florida's children should receive their education in an inclusive general education setting, reflecting natural proportions and age-appropriate heterogeneous groups across core academic and elective/special areas within the school community;
- Students with disabilities are valued members of the classroom and school community and have teachers that prepare all students for success in school and the community;
- The community at large must be educated about universal education;
- All teachers, administrators and families support universal education and have the knowledge and supports available to enable them to effectively teach all children; and,
- All teachers should be provided access to current research and technical assistance in best practices, instructional methods, and supports tailored to an individual's needs.

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council's Position, Policy and Practices Statement on Universal Education asserts that “Education is the right of ALL children.” It further states that “Universal education, also referred to as inclusion, is an approach to education that creates learning environments which are inherently designed for diversity, making natural educational settings accessible to all children, all together, all the time.” The FDDC defines characteristics of universal education as focusing on school values, knowledge, and supports.

Differentiated, authentic, multi-level and interdisciplinary instruction is at the root of instructing all students together meaningfully (Peterson & Hittie, 2010). The Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) (2009) explains universal design for learning (UDL) as a way of organizing instructional support and pedagogy based on ways that match individual students’ learning styles and differences. According to UDL, to help students learn, teachers must:

1. use multiple ways to present information,
2. provide multiple pathways for students’ action and expression, and
3. provide multiple ways to engage students, including collaborative and interactive structures.
What does this mean? It means that students of all abilities can learn well together, but it takes unique, individualized and targeted instructional strategies and supports to move each student from where they are to their own personal next level.

Causton (2009 p.31 and following) offers these indicators of inclusive classrooms:

- Natural proportion—the number of students with disabilities should reflect the natural population of students with disabilities in the school.
- Team teaching—Inclusive classrooms often have two teachers (one general and one special education) with equitable responsibilities for teaching all students.
- Community Building—teachers use community building to ensure that students feel connected to one another and to their teachers.
- Differentiation—content is differentiated to accommodate learners of various academic, social and behavioral levels.
- Engaging Instruction—Teachers plan instruction with the range of learning styles in mind. Students experience active learning, partnering, and group work.

Through the Response to Intervention, co-teaching model, and differentiated instruction efforts, the Florida Department of Education has embraced many of these indicators.

**Need for Greater Inclusion**

In the decades following the passage of PL 94-142, major improvements were made in the inclusion of children with significant disabilities into less restrictive educational settings. In the 1980s, the closing of the Sunland Centers placed many children within local communities and often educated within local schools. Students in segregated schools serving only children with significant disabilities were more frequently placed within a general education school, although the locations for their classrooms often were in the “back forty” or portable classrooms that contributed to their isolation from their age-appropriate peers.
Florida has made considerable progress in increasing universal/inclusive education. Consider, however, these statistics from the State Education Agency (SEA) (spell out on first reference) Profile published by the Florida DOE/Bureau of Exceptional Student Education and Student Services:

- 69% of students ages 6-21 with disabilities spend 80% or more of the school week with their non-disabled peers.
- 24% of students ages 3-5 in 2010-11 were enrolled at least 80% of the time in a typical (more than 50% non-disabled children) early childhood program or kindergarten, a decline of 15% since 2006-07.

Clearly, more progress is needed. Of considerable concern is the ongoing operation in many school districts of separate facilities that completely segregate children with significant disabilities from age-appropriate peers. Ongoing operations in many districts include center or cluster programs in which students are placed in schools far away from their homes in order to concentrate the lower incident populations of students and isolate them by the type of disabilities they have. These facilities reduce the interactions of children with their neighbors and decrease overall interactions with children their own ages who are without disabilities.

Overall, Florida has made major improvements in the last thirty years in increasing universal/inclusive education within the public school system. To make the concepts and practices pervasive and to have them fully implemented by school district staff, administrators, and teachers, greater effort is needed. This Guide is provided as one means to encourage greater adherence to the indicators of best practices in universal/inclusive education as expressed in the BPIE.
Structure and Use of This Guide

This Guide is organized by the 28 Educator Team BPIE Indicators in these sections:

1. Values And Team Climate (4 Indicators)
2. Access To General Education (5 Indicators)
3. Policies And Support - Leadership (5 Indicators)
4. Policies And Support - Program Development And Evaluation (7 Indicators)
5. Instructional Support And Pedagogy (14 Indicators)

A short title listing the 28 district indicators is located in Appendix A. When appropriate, some indicators also include sections on “Related BPIE Indicators,” and “From the BPIE Glossary.”

The Guide provides a summary for each of the five BPIE Sections with Key Terms that may be useful. Each indicator within the section contains these components:

- Restatement of the indicator from the BPIE,
- Rationale - describing the importance of the indicator,
- What does this look like?- descriptions of what the indicator looks like in implementation,
- Bright Ideas! – specific steps and suggestions for implementation,
- Related Indicators when appropriate, and
- Great Tips! - helpful hints and resources for successful implementation.

The guide is intended to be used by school staff as they are learning about ways to increase universal/inclusive education in Florida. Schools planning on conducting a BPIE analysis of the status of inclusive/universal education can use this guide in preparation for the BPIE sessions as well as a reference on specific indicators on which additional work is needed. Educator teams may
also benefit from a better understanding of the indicators. The most important outcome is to increase the opportunities for all students with disabilities to learn together with their peers.
I: Values and Classroom Climate

Why is this Important?

In these days, it is doubtful that any child may reasonably be expected to succeed in life if he is denied the opportunity of an education. Such an opportunity...is a right which must be made available on equal terms. We conclude that in the field of education, the doctrine ‘separate but equal’ has no place” (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954).

This direct quote from the Brown v. Board of Education decision in 1954 is still applicable today. While “separate but equal” was originally applied to racial segregation, it holds true today for children who attend school with a disability label, the majority of whom continue to be segregated from their peers who do not carry a disability label (U.S. Department of Education, 2007).

Research from the mid 1970s supports the education of children with disabilities alongside their peers. Although many separate special education classes have lower student-to-teacher ratios and controlled environments with specially trained staff, research fails to demonstrate the effectiveness of such programs over programs that educate students together (Sailor, 2003). In addition, there are decades worth of evidence that speak to the negative effects of...
separating children with disabilities from their peers. Inclusion far outweighs any benefit shown in segregated programs (Audette & Algozzine, 1997; Lipsky, 1997 as examples).

Section Indicators

This section addresses the values teachers must hold in order to support and implement inclusive/universal education and the culture or climate teachers need to develop in their schools to ensure that every student is given the opportunity to learn with their peers. Essential elements include a clear commitment to inclusive values and beliefs, a pro-active and collaborative educational environment in which all staff work together to implement quality education for every student, the use of person-first language that values each person above any labels used to describe them, and modeling and implementing these values throughout the educational program in the school.

There are four indicators in the Values and Classroom Climate section:

1. Behaviors and practices are consistent with inclusive values and beliefs.
2. Team members collaborate and share responsibility for planning, implementation, and evaluation of instruction for all students.
3. Team members consistently use person-first language.
4. Team members consistently articulate a clear set of values and model behaviors consistent with best practices.
I.1- Inclusive Values and Beliefs

I.1. All members of the education team demonstrate collaborative and individual behaviors and practices that are consistent with the following values and beliefs about providing educational services in general education and natural contexts for all students with and without disabilities, including all students with severe disabilities: (a) all students can learn, (b) all education team members are accountable for demonstrating progress toward social and academic goals for all students served by the team, and (c) all education team members are responsible for providing effective services for all students served by the team.

Rationale

The first component of the BPIE- values and classroom climate- is your non-negotiable vision of designing education for ALL. This is your belief. How your vision manifests itself in the practice of teaching comes from this starting point. Education for all children means just what it says- all children belong, all children are competent, and all children can and will learn. The belief that every student is “entitled to a quality education with other students is not negotiable” (Capper & Frattura, 2009, p.43).

Teachers for all children have a clear vision that each and every student belongs, is competent, and can learn. With this vision a teacher's language, program planning, lesson planning, lesson implementation and lesson evaluation, as well as the culture of the classroom/classroom climate are based on the strengths and needs of all children in their grade level and/or class. No class arrangement, grouping, or lesson is planned for the majority, but instead the students with the most significant and challenging needs, the ones who are typically pulled out or educated at the back of the room, are part of the original classroom and lesson design. Furthermore, teachers are committed to the intellectual challenge and measurable improvements of all students’ learning outcomes (Kluth et. al, 2003; Capper & Frattura, 2009). **The driving priority at all times is your clear vision of belonging and achievement for all children.**
What does this look like?

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<th>You should not see............</th>
<th>You got it....</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Examples:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Examples:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• It's to be expected that some children just don’t succeed/pass/achieve desired results.</td>
<td>• You are excited to keep trying new ways of presenting, teaching, and assessing students until every single child in your class succeeds, passes, or achieves desired meaningful results.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Mainly managerial, logistical, cordial, or even tense reactions to student (or other staff) questions and ideas occur, i.e. “Why aren’t you working? Just get it done and hand it in”, or, “No, that’s not right either”.</td>
<td>• All students are learning from and with one another. Teacher/student and student/student responses to questions/comments consistent with confidence and encouraging language, i.e., “I know this is hard, but last week you accomplished that really hard problem using your math text and this website tutorial with Angel, so I know you can do this too. What could you use to help you with this? Who in this class could do it with you?”</td>
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Giangreco (2007, p.5 and following) suggests guidelines for classroom teachers to establish values consistent with effective inclusive classrooms. In summary, the guidelines are:

1. **Get a little help from your friends.** It is not expected that you know all the specialized information that is needed to work with all students with disabilities. Collaborative teamwork is essential.

2. **Welcome all students in your classroom.** Your teaching team, i.e., all staff in the room) will set an example for all the students in the classroom and for other teachers if they send a message that all the students, including those with disabilities, are welcome in the classroom and “belong” there. The welcome will create a positive learning environment.

3. **All staff should be the teacher for all the students.** General education teachers should think of the students with disabilities in their classrooms as “their” students and should learn each student’s strengths and abilities. Special education teachers and support staff should think of the students without disabilities as “their” students too. Often this will help the teachers learn approaches that benefit their entire class. Many of the techniques used in Response to Intervention will apply.

4. **Establish a classroom community.** ALL students, including those with disabilities, should have desks and classroom placements and assignments so they can participate in the same activities as their classmates. The students with disabilities should have the opportunity to learn, socialize and work with the rest of the class and be missed when gone. *If they are ever pulled out for a different activity, make sure to acknowledge them when they return.*

5. **Develop shared educational program expectations.** The teaching team must share common expectations about what each student should learn in the classroom and who will do the teaching. Identify the student’s highest priority learning outcomes, and then establish a larger set of outcomes that reflect a broad-based education program. Identify
supports needed to clarify what the team expects the student to learn. *Co-planning is key. This does not mean I plan, you read, you adapt/modify/support. Plan together.*

6. **Have options for including all students.** Some students with disabilities will have the same learning outcomes as other students in the class. In other cases, the student with disabilities will pursue learning outcomes at a different level, but from the same curriculum. Another possibility is that the student with disabilities will have individual learning outcomes from different curriculum areas than the rest of the class. *You must still be committed to having all students meaningfully participate in lessons together and can do this by differentiating your instruction/lesson and using embedded instruction.*

7. **Make learning active and participatory.** Activity-based learning, as opposed to large-group lectures and worksheets, is well suited to a wide range of students and is typically more enjoyable for all students.

8. **Adapt classroom strategies and materials.** Instruction must often be adapted to be effective with students with disabilities. Adaptations include small cooperative groups, computer-assisted instruction, guided practice, peer-assisted instruction, matching materials to the student’s interests, and adding tactile or auditory cues, or the use of assistive technology. *The teaching team and class members should be part of the adaptation planning.*

9. **Make sure support services are part of the teaching team.** The teaching team should establish a shared agenda with support service personnel that accounts for the student’s education program, facilitates social interactions, and improves the overall classroom flow.

10. **Evaluate the effectiveness of your teaching.** You must continually evaluate your teaching in terms of whether it is having a positive difference in your students’ lives. *The form of evaluations and formative assessments for students will vary and they are critical to determine whether outcomes are achieved, and which, if any, adjustments are needed to improve outcomes for all students.*
Great Tips!

Hannel (2007, p. 114) offers the following advice for successful teamwork:

- Teaching is a demanding job that can be stressful. Support your colleagues with care, concern and practical assistance when the going gets tough.

- Ask for support and assistance from your colleagues, supervisors, and administrators if you are finding that your work is too stressful.

- Take care of yourself! If you are exhausted, unwell, depressed, anxious, or overly stressed, you will not be able to provide the students or your colleagues with the support they need.

- Follow through with what has been agreed on by the group. Do not say one thing in a group meeting and then do something different once the meeting is over.

- You do not have to be an instant expert of everything. Talk to colleagues and share expertise both ways. If you do not know something, say so, and then find someone who can help or provide the information you need.

- Make time for regular meeting with colleagues. You cannot work together unless you spend time talking together.

- Be flexible and accommodating and a good team player.

- Be prepared to pull your weight. Be generous with your time, effort, and expertise to make inclusive education and intervention a success story in your school.

- Communicate with your colleagues and coordinate what you do, so students and parents have continuity between one teacher and another.

- Be particularly careful during transition periods, such as changes from one school year to the next, so that all information is shared with the next teacher.
• Have regular show-and-tell sessions, where colleagues report back from conferences, present professional papers, describe examples of good practices and generally enhance the team’s ability to be inclusive and provide effective intervention.

• Share resources that individual teachers develop in class, such as teacher-made materials, audiotapes, resource folders, and classroom posters.

Also see:

I.2 - Collaboration and Shared Responsibility

I.2. All education team members collaborate during, and share responsibility for, the planning, implementation, and evaluation of instruction in general education and natural contexts for all students with and without disabilities, including students with severe disabilities.

Rationale

Planning for the education of each student should be conducted in a collaborative setting in which all teachers to whom the student is assigned work together to identify the strengths, needs, educational goals, and specific objectives for the student. The planning is conducted with a common vision that each and every student belongs, is competent, and can learn. This vision permeates the implementation and evaluation of instruction and student success.

What does this look like?

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Non-Examples:</th>
<th>Examples:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• ESE teachers in discrete group, excluded</td>
<td>• Common planning times have been established.</td>
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<td>• General education teacher fills out/creates lesson plans -then ESE adds to it -keeping planning separate</td>
<td>• All teachers are part of the collaborative planning time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• ESE teachers organized into</td>
<td>• Communication/collaborative mechanism with the whole team: “specials”, teachers, therapist,</td>
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own group

- ESE teachers not part of planning

etc.

- Lesson plans are created together in a universally designed way, merging all students’ strengths and needs, learning objectives and preferred learning mode.

Pugach & Johnson (2006), Friend and Cook (2007), and Hudson and Glomb (1997) offer definitions and implementation procedures for shared responsibility. Peer collaboration, co-teaching or other professional teaching partnerships are models of teaching designed for one or more professionals to work together in a structured and meaningful way.

The most important variable of any true shared responsibility/relationship is a **time and place for collaborative conversations and common planning**. To have true shared responsibility and shared teaching, lessons must be planned together.

**Great Tips!**

Friend and Cook (2007) suggest the following framework for meaningful collaboration to use when co-planning:

1. Shared, but differentiated roles- each meeting participant takes a role of the initiator, i.e., the person who will lead the conversation, usually the one who is bringing up the topic of concern, or the facilitator, i.e., the
person who helps guide and move the conversation along. These roles will shift and change for each conversation. A team self-check should occur to make sure each team member assumes the role of initiator for equal amounts of time so that one teacher is not always leading/choosing the planning and decision-making process.

2. Clarifying purpose or question- each meeting should have a stated purpose. The initiator states the purpose or question and the facilitator(s) asks questions to clarify the purpose/question.

3. Summarization/examination- the team should take time each meeting to summarize and examine the purpose or question raised. This should be done by establishing the pattern of behavior or teaching need/lesson objective, explicitly discussing each team member's feeling about the purpose/question and identifying aspects of the classroom/school/instructional environments that need to be addressed.

4. Interventions/lesson plan/predictions- The team should come up with at least three interventions or instructional methods to address the question or purpose as well as the desired and realistic predicted outcomes for each of the three plans for all students/individuals involved. Lessons and interventions (including behavioral plans) must be differentiated and universally designed for all students in the class from the onset (in contrast to being modified after general education teachers plan the lesson and “share” it with other professionals).

5. Evaluation- The team should come up with evaluation plan(s) for each of the three methods from step four. This plan should include, at a minimum, how teachers will keep track of the lesson/intervention, each student’s progress, and follow-up meetings to re-assess and adjust plan.
I.3- Person-First Language

I.3. All education team members consistently refer to students using person-first language, communicate with and about students and their families in a manner that demonstrates respect, and maintain confidentiality for all students, including students with severe disabilities. Education team members articulate and model these behaviors, and encourage and support their use by others across all contexts.

Rationale

Person-first language is the practice of referring to an individual as a person first and using the modifiers describing characteristics of the individual afterward. It also includes using language that emphasizes the strengths of the individual instead of concentrating on deficits or negative aspects. Using person-first language demonstrates the district's commitment to treating each person and student in the district with respect.

According to Kathie Snow, a parent, author, and trainer, “People-First Language puts the person before the disability, and describes what a person has, not who a person is.” Her website (http://www.disabilityisnatural.com/images/PDF/pfl-sh09.pdf) contains an excellent 2-page article explaining person-first language, with examples. She recommends using language such as “She uses a wheelchair” instead of “She is wheelchair bound.” Other examples include students with cognitive disabilities instead of “those retarded children.” This concept is also applied to the staff in the district and in the schools. It is more appropriate to use terms such as teachers of students with learning disabilities, instead of the LD (learning disabilities) teacher. When staff have been sensitized to using person-first language, the non-examples that continue to be used by some staff become obvious. With appropriate training, all district and school personnel will refer to students using person-first language, rather than language based on labels or categories.

All education team members should consistently use person-first language to communicate with and about students. The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council (FDDC) offers the following observation on person-first language:
People-First Language recognizes that individuals with disabilities are—first and foremost—people. It emphasizes each person’s value, individuality, dignity and capabilities.

What does this look like?

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<td><strong>Non-Examples:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Examples:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teacher's lounge conversations about individual students regarding confidential information or using disrespectful language.</td>
<td>• Using person-first language and politely re-directing colleagues who do not.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers introducing themselves only as an ESE teacher.</td>
<td>• Identifying each teacher as the classroom teacher.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Language is powerful, and the words we use impact more than we know. The words we use can “raise or lower expectations; hurt or help; crush hopes or create dreams; and so much more” (Disability is Natural book at http://disabilityisnatural.com/shop?page=shop.product_details&flypage=flypage.tpl&product_id=42&category_id=1).

By using language that communicates respect of all people we will begin to influence both the individual and society. To do this you must make sure you
model, use and remind others to always speak about the individual as a person first, not as a disability label.

Kathie Snow (http://www.disabilityisnatural.com/) offers examples of person-first language contrasted with labels that stereotype and devalue to help you begin to rethink what words you choose to use:

Here are some examples:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language to Use</th>
<th>Instead of:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Student with disabilities</td>
<td>Disabled student; handicapped student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student without disabilities</td>
<td>Normal student; healthy student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities</td>
<td>Mentally retarded student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student who has autism</td>
<td>Autistic student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student who has epilepsy</td>
<td>Epileptic student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student who had Down syndrome</td>
<td>A Down's student, a Mongoloid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Person with a mental illness</td>
<td>Mentally ill, emotionally disturbed person</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student with a learning disability</td>
<td>Learning disabled student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student who is deaf, has a hearing impairment</td>
<td>Deaf student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student who is deaf and cannot speak; has a speech disorder</td>
<td>Deaf and dumb student; mute</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student who uses a wheelchair</td>
<td>Wheelchair-bound student</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congenital disability</td>
<td>Birth defect</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessible buses, bathrooms</td>
<td>Handicapped buses, bathrooms</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reserved parking for people with disabilities</td>
<td>Handicapped parking</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


In addition to using person-first language, you should:

- not tolerate “put downs” of any pupil, parent, or colleague.
- avoid using negative words that place blame on a colleague or parent.
- not allow prejudice, gossip, bias or exclusion to go unchallenged or unchecked.
Great Tips!

Find examples of person-first language in these resources at these locations:

- Articles by Kathie Snow at http://www.disabilityisnatural.com/explore/language-communication
I.4 - Value-Driven Programming

I.4. All education team members consistently articulate a clear set of values and model behaviors that are consistent with best practices for inclusive education for all students with disabilities, including students with severe disabilities.

Rationale

Students with disabilities and especially students with significant disabilities will receive an appropriate education if all district and school personnel understand the benefits of inclusive/universal education and support policies and decisions that will fully implement inclusive/universal education. Through the consistent modeling and expression of these values, every student in the school will benefit.

This indicator is the culmination of all of the other indicators in the system. Typically, the BPIE process is completed before forming this judgment, and the judgment represents a summary across all of the indicators.
What does this look like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You should not see........</th>
<th>You got it....</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Examples:</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Developing an IEP based on predetermined placement and services</td>
<td>• Neighborhood schools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Determining placements and services based on a student’s label.</td>
<td>• Willingness to learn and develop new skills - open to inclusion - responsibility and advocacy for all children</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Pre-printed IEPs</td>
<td>• Teachers are able to talk about the school’s universal education and inclusion priorities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Center schools</td>
<td>• Shared values, priorities with all members of a student’s education team</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Where a student receives their education is an IEP decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• General education is <em>always</em> the first consideration.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Teachers actively seeking out and learning skills to educate children with more intensive needs</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
|                          | • Advocate for student to be in their classroom and for supports to come to them, as opposed to “how do I get them out”.


Beattie (2006, p 22) notes the importance of positive attitudes toward inclusion. “Effective practices often require that teachers, administrators and other professionals give up traditional attitudes and expectations. Successful inclusion in the general education curriculum is most likely to happen when the following beliefs are fostered”:

- “Responsibility for positive outcomes for special education students is equally shared by all school personnel.
- General and special education classroom teachers both feel and are held responsible for identifying appropriate education goals and providing instruction to help the student reach them.
- Teachers know the strengths and weaknesses of all their students.
- Administrators recognize that teachers need time and support to adequately teach diverse groups of students.
- Administrators recognize that teachers need to have time set aside to work with other teachers and parents to identify best practices and approaches for all students.
- Teachers recognize that a special education label does not direct how much or how well a student will learn or perform, so assignments and activities are not based primarily on a student’s educational category.
- All parties concerned recognize that good teaching involves alternative methods, activities, expectations, and approaches to meet the diverse learning strengths and weaknesses prevalent in today’s classrooms.”

Read the article, *The Least Dangerous Assumption: A Challenge to Create a New Paradigm* by Cheryl Jorgensen, Ph.D. in Disability Solutions, Volume 6, Issue 3 (Fall 2005).

[http://www.includingsamuel.com/Libraries/Resources_for_Teachers_and_Paraeducators/The_Least_Dangerous_Assumption_A_Challenge_to_Create_a_New_Paradigm.sflb.ashx](http://www.includingsamuel.com/Libraries/Resources_for_Teachers_and_Paraeducators/The_Least_Dangerous_Assumption_A_Challenge_to_Create_a_New_Paradigm.sflb.ashx)

Articles by Kathie Snow are located at:

See also:

http://www.peakparent.org/resourceMaterials.asp

*Great Tips!*

The best method for increasing the team’s implementation of this indicator is to conduct a team-level BPIE process to review all of the indicators. The FIN Facilitators are available to assist all districts in conducting a BPIE review, and districts or schools that have already completed one in the past can always benefit by reviewing recent process and reassessing the status on the indicators. Contact your FIN facilitator through the FIN Network at: http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/page265.aspx.
II: Access to General Education

Why is this Important?

Access to the general education curriculum and culture is a vital component of inclusive education. It is important that policy and practice promote a philosophy of equal membership for all children in the culture of a given school. At the core of special education legislation is the concept of the Least Restrictive Environment or LRE. The LRE provision guarantees a student’s right to be educated in the setting most like that for peers without disabilities in which the student can be successful with appropriate supports provided. For most students with disabilities, the LRE is full-time or nearly full-time participation in the general education classroom (Friend & Bursuck, 2009).

Until recently, any discussion of special education was typically centered on where the student would receive educational services. Inclusive practices are currently receiving increased attention among education professionals and parents because they understand and acknowledge the importance of such practices. Additionally, the high standards and accountability provisions of No Child Left Behind (NCLB) are leading schools to become more inclusive (U.S. Department of Education, 2004). The LRE discussion and decision must move beyond the “place” and to a discussion of access to the curriculum and culture of general education.

When discussing LRE, inclusive practices, and access to the general education curriculum, the effect on student achievement must be considered (Friend & Bursuck, 2009). Generally, academic outcomes have been found to be positive for all students who participate in inclusive settings (Idol, 2006). Although few studies have particularly targeted the outcomes of students without disabilities, studies in existence suggest that these students’ achievements are not hindered because of inclusive practices (for example McDonnell et al., 2003). The concept of inclusive practices implies that all learners are welcomed at their schools and that they are seen as the responsibility of all educators (Frattura & Capper, 2006; Turnbull, Turnbull, Wehmeyer, & Park, 2003). There are three dimensions to inclusive practices: physical integration, social integration, and instructional

KEY TERMS

LRE - least restrictive environment

Severe disabilities - Extensive mental, physical, and/or behavioral impairment or a combination of multiple impairments likely to be permanent in nature and significantly compromising a student’s ability to learn, function independently in the community, perform self-care, and obtain employment.
integration. All are equally important when designing educational experiences for all children.

Perhaps most important to the discussion of access is the notion of social justice and the right of all children to be full members of their school and community. Students with disabilities have a right to equal membership in their schools and communities and to equal educational opportunities. Our traditional system of separate programs and services for different groups of children is based on problematic assumptions and leads to the perpetuation of tracking, particularly of students of color and lower social class. This limits their educational opportunity, leads to higher costs, creates issues with generalization of skills and knowledge, and perpetuates the notion that a label is required for a student to receive support (Capper & Frattura, 2009). The alternative is a comprehensive and collaborative system in which a broad range of teachers teach together and schools are better able to meet the needs of all students. Lack of access to general education leads to reduced expectations and opportunities for children. This cannot happen if we are to promote the equal value and membership of all children. Therefore we must ensure access for all to all.

Section Indicators

There are five indicators in the Access to General Education section:

1. The education team ensures that all students with disabilities served by the team have opportunities to participate with same-age peers without disabilities during academic and non-academic general education experiences.

2. The education team considers the academic and non-academic objectives of students with disabilities equal to that of the objectives of students without disabilities.

3. Education team members collaborate with students’ IEP teams to identify instructional goals based on the state standards, independence, and participation across general education and natural contexts, and monitor progress toward those goals.

4. Education team members ensure that all of their students with disabilities participate in and demonstrate progress on state and district assessments.
5. Education team members ensure that all students with disabilities access transportation and school facilities, participate in events, and receive recognition along with same-age peers without disabilities.
II.1 - Participation with Same-Age Peers

II.1. The education team ensures that all students with disabilities, including students with severe disabilities, served by the team, have opportunities to participate with same-age peers without disabilities during academic and non-academic general education experiences, e.g., unsupervised, informal interactions; transitions, and activities, e.g., lunch, electives, clubs, assemblies, in groups of different sizes and varying membership, e.g., ability level, cultural diversity.

Rationale

The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council’s Position, Policy and Practices Statement on Universal Education asserts, “Education is the right of ALL children.” It further states, “Universal education, also referred to as inclusion, is an approach to education that creates learning environments which are inherently designed for diversity, making natural educational settings accessible to all children, all together, all the time.” The FDDC defines characteristics of universal education as focusing on school values, knowledge, and supports. Placement of students into schools and classes with their peers without disabilities is beneficial to all students. Students needing greater support benefit by the increased exposure to age-appropriate academic and social stimuli. Students without disabilities benefit by increasing their appreciation for the contributions that all students make to the classroom and the school.
What does this look like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You should not see..........</th>
<th>You got it....</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Examples:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Examples:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Seating/positioning children with disabilities in the classroom or at special time or table during activities and events such as lunch, assemblies, etc.</td>
<td>• Natural proportions are seen in grouping of children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Students with disabilities participate in general education and/or “specials” (art, gym, music, etc) with non-same age peers.</td>
<td>• Age- matched groups rather than ability-matched groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Clumping of students with disabilities in one group or class.</td>
<td>• Focus on access to academic objectives for kids with more significant needs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Separate transportation, special bus, special bus stop...</td>
<td>• Fully accessible stage, playground, buildings, etc.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Schwartz (2005, p. 115) presents the primary themes of the inclusive classroom:

- **Community building**—Create a community in which all students feel that they belong and allow them the opportunity to develop social responsibility. Facilitate a healthy balance of the student’s relationship to the teacher and among themselves to avoid dependence on the adult figure to answer all questions, solve all problems, and direct all activities. The physical layout of the classroom impacts student behavior and attitude and can encourage appropriate behavior.

- **Curriculum development**—The classroom must be academically inclusive as well as physically, emotionally, and socially inclusive. The needs of all students should be built into the curriculum, not added on.

- **Differentiated instruction**—Addressing diverse learners can require multiple entry points, tiered assignments, varying questions, and flexible grouping.

In recreating the role of educators to integrate students with disabilities with the general education population, Schwartz notes that:

- Teachers must have a vision of inclusive teaching and schooling—develop a clear enough vision to guide action; connect the vision to daily practices, as well as to school policies and practices;

- Teachers must transform their view of student learning—accept the premise that all students are capable of learning complex material; and

- Teachers must transform their teaching roles—they are not simply providers of knowledge.
Castagnera et al (1998) propose the use of Infused Skills Grids which can be useful tools for including students in the general education classroom. Teachers can use a matrix such as the Infused Skills Grid to determine what, when, and where to teach specific skills, and other IEP goals can be infused into the daily routines of the student as he or she participates in the general education curriculum (Castagnera et al., 1998). By integrating teaching of skills within the general education classroom and curriculum, issues of generalization are often mitigated.

**Great Tips!**

Check these resources for more ideas on students with disabilities in same-age peer group classes:

- I'm Tyler  [http://www.imtyler.org/](http://www.imtyler.org/)
- Social Inclusion Project - replication guide  [http://flfcic.fmhi.usf.edu/projects/community.htm](http://flfcic.fmhi.usf.edu/projects/community.htm)
- Art for Me Too! by Lynn Wood, Michele Burton, Patricia Mervine and Mayer-Johnson, LLC
• k8accesscenter.org The Access Center is a national technical assistance and dissemination center. This site offers print and webinar resources designed to support access to the general education curriculum for students with disabilities. Included are a series of professional development modules available on CD and information briefs.
II.2 · Instructional and Non-Instructional Objectives

II.2. When planning general education instructional and non-instructional activities, the education team considers the academic and non-academic objectives of students with disabilities, including students with severe disabilities, equal to that of the objectives of students without disabilities, so that instruction and support for students with disabilities, including students with severe disabilities, are embedded within those activities to ensure meaningful participation.

Rationale

All students learn more when there are clearly articulated instructional goals that teachers, parents, and students are working together to master. Students with special needs thrive in settings where they are aware of, and participate in, the educational process.

Florida is a national leader in setting high expectations for all students, including students with special needs. Many students with special needs are capable of succeeding in the general education curriculum defined by the Florida Common Core Standards (CCS) and previously by the Next Generation Sunshine State Standards. The Florida Department of Education Access Points (http://www.floridastandards.org/Standards/AccesspointSearch.aspx) provides guidance to teachers and administrators on the “building blocks” for students with disabilities that lead to appropriate standards by content areas.

From the BPIE Glossary

Non-instructional activities: Activities occurring throughout the school day not specifically designed with an academic focus (e.g., arrival/dismissal, transitions, lunch, recess, pep rally).
What does this look like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You should not see..........</th>
<th>You got it....</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Examples:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Examples:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Inappropriate use of functional curriculum (e.g., not using in an age-appropriate manner.)</td>
<td>- General education team members show knowledge and use/implementation of access points.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Inappropriate use/timing of community-based instruction.</td>
<td>- IEP goals show breadth and attention to range of objectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Non-inclusive community-based instruction.</td>
<td>- Functional and age-appropriate curriculum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Meaningful community-based instruction</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Karten (2005, p.17) points out that the educational goals of students with disabilities are just as valid as those of other students. Without proper supports, however, students and teachers can encounter difficulties translating research into classroom practices.

Ekins (2009, p.95) offers Provision Mapping as a strategic whole-school development tool for developing and documenting inclusive practices within a school setting. Provision maps provide schools with a way to record the variety of interventions and services that are planned to respond to pupil needs. The maps provide a way to record what is happening, evaluate the school experience for all students, and support strategic analysis and critical
reflection. The National Strategies group in the UK suggests the basic mapping model contain the following information:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provision</th>
<th>Staff/Pupil Ratio</th>
<th>Staff Involved</th>
<th>Frequency and duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Cooperative Learning Approaches can be used to meet the needs of all students in the classroom. When implementing co-operative learning approaches, Friend and Bursuck (2009) recommend that teachers:

- Form students into co-operative learning groups by creating heterogeneous groupings.

- Prepare students for co-operative learning by teaching co-operative group skills including those related to forming, functioning, formulating, and fermenting by:
  - Make sure students understand the need for the teamwork skill.
  - Make sure students understand what the co-operative learning skill is and how and when to use it.
  - Set up practice situations and encourage skill mastery.
  - Give students feedback on their use of the skill.
  - Make sure students practice the co-operative learning skill until it becomes automatic.

- Select curricular content to adapt for co-operative learning – almost any subject matter can work!

- Choose a co-operative learning program.

- Monitor program effectiveness.

Examples of co-operative learning programs are found in:

- Jigsaw Classrooms (Aronson, 2005)
- Peer tutoring
- Cooperative Integrated reading and Composition (CIRC)
Great Tips!

Resources for enhancing meaningful participation by students with special needs in the general education classroom are available at:

- The Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) is a non-profit research and development organization that works to expand learning opportunities for all individuals, especially those with disabilities, through Universal Design for Learning. [http://www.cast.org/](http://www.cast.org/)
- Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) [http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/page265.aspx](http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/page265.aspx)
- Success for All Foundation [www.successforall.com](http://www.successforall.com) (Extensive summary of types of co-operative learning).
II.3 - Instructional Goals

II.3. Education team members collaborate with students’ IEP teams to identify, for all of their students with disabilities, including all students with severe disabilities, instructional goals based on the state standards, independence, and participation across general education and natural contexts and to monitor progress toward those goals.

Rationale

The educational goals specified in the IEPs set the academic framework for the learning progress of the student. Collaboration in planning for these goals is critical to ensure that all of the people who have contact with the student are on board and actively working toward maximizing the learning of each student, including all students with disabilities.

What does this look like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You should not see...........</th>
<th>You got it....</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Examples:</td>
<td>Examples:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Only yearly IEP revision of IEP goals</td>
<td>• Collaborative planning time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Lack of or inappropriate implementation of Access Points</td>
<td>• Parents included in planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Sunshine State Standards not incorporated in planning for all</td>
<td>• Data teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• More frequent review of goals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Use of infused skills grids</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Special education is infused in</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Planning a student’s IEP should begin with collaborative meetings among all educators who will be educating the student. Critical to this process is enough collaborative planning time for the group to meet on a regular basis, not just one time for the initial planning. Parents should be included in the planning and in periodic progress reviews.

Establishing times for data team meetings emphasizes the importance of reviewing data on the student’s progress in making academic gains.

Infused skills grids can help all of the participating educators to see what skills will be taught in both academic and natural settings. Note that exceptional education is infused in all levels of Response to Intervention (RtI).

**Great Tips!**

Resources related to collaborative planning can be found at:

- The Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) is a nonprofit research and development organization that works to expand learning opportunities for all individuals, especially those with disabilities, through Universal Design for Learning. [http://www.cast.org/](http://www.cast.org/)
• Access points
  http://www.floridastandards.org/Standards/AccesspointSearch.aspx

• Sunshine State Standards - http://www.fldoe.org/bii/curriculum/sss/

• CPALMS http://www.floridastandards.org/index.aspx

• Infused skills grids (for example:


• Collaboration for Inclusive Education: Developing Successful Programs.
  Walther-Thomas, Korinek, McLaughlin & Toler Williams (1999).

• National Strategies
  www.nationalstrategies.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/leadingonintervetion.

• Florida Inclusion Network
II.4 - State and District Assessments

II.4. Education team members ensure that all of their students with disabilities, including all students with severe disabilities, participate in and demonstrate progress on state and district assessments (with the appropriate accommodations and/or modifications) that are required for a standard diploma.

Rationale

A common saying is that we value what we measure. Participation by students with disabilities in state and district assessments provides the students, teachers, administrators, and parents with valuable information on the academic progress of the student. Simply spending “seat time” in classes is not sufficient to meet the needs of any student, including students with disabilities. To become valuable and fulfilled adults, all students must maximize their potential for learning, regardless of where that maximum level may be.

Florida is a national leader in creating student assessment systems and in measuring the academic progress of students with special needs. As of the 2011-2012 school year, all students whose IEPs do not indicate they are intellectually impaired must take the appropriate statewide tests, typically the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) at grades 3-10, and the Florida’s End-of-Course Assessments. Students who are exempt from taking the FCAT are required to take the Florida Alternative Assessment (see http://www.fldoe.org/asp/altassessment.asp). Districts are also required to assess all students for benchmark testing and other assessments used in the statewide determination of student progress.

One of the issues with this indicator is the phrase “accommodations and modifications when needed.” The BPIE Glossary defines accommodations as changes to how (the way) students are expected to learn (i.e., instruction) and to demonstrate what they have learned (i.e., assessment).

When accommodations are made, expectations for student achievement do not change. Accommodations should be made based on individual learner characteristics, not the particular disability. Accommodations involve a wide
range of techniques and support systems in areas such as: methods and materials, assignments and assessments, learning environment, time and scheduling, and special communication systems. The Glossary defines **modifications** as “Changes to the requirements of a course or the standards a student must meet - a change in what a student is taught and/or tested on. This change is based on a student’s needs as identified by the IEP team.”

The BPIE Glossary defines **modifications** as changes to what a student is taught or tested on, i.e., the requirements of a course or the standards a student must meet, based on student’s needs as identified by the IEP team. Modifications are not allowed in the administration of any of the statewide assessments because the modifications would alter the validity of the test for the student, i.e., invalidating comparisons of the student’s performance on any given test with other students, or with that student’s performance on another level of the test.


Districts may also have limits on the types of accommodations and modifications that are allowed for different district assessments. Consult your district testing coordinator for directions and assistance.

**What does this look like?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-examples:</th>
<th>Examples:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>% of students assigned to alternative assessment and check for whether all are appropriately assigned.</td>
<td>% of students assigned to alternative assessment and check for whether all are appropriately assigned.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Students and teachers have opportunity to use accommodations all year –</td>
<td>Students and teachers have opportunity to use accommodations all year –</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodations used ONLY for testing</td>
<td>Accommodations used ONLY for testing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Modifications on standardized tests</td>
<td>Modifications on standardized tests</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouraging absences during</td>
<td>Encouraging absences during</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
test week

- Children inappropriately being assigned to alternative testing
- Change in placement before/after FCAT
- Using ESE staff to pull kids for testing rather than instruction
- General education staff demonstrate a lack of awareness of and use of accommodations.

testing matches daily instruction.

- Teachers are provided with approved accommodations at get-go so they can be incorporated all year.
- Doing test stamina with all kids all year
- Use of technology appropriately – match between instruction and testing

Karten (2005, p.274) notes that all student are expected to attain a given knowledge set and accommodating a child with disabilities does not necessarily devalue the entire assessment. He also notes that schools can face penalties if improvement is not evidenced over a period of time. Given that fact, schools have concerns over the impact of testing students with disabilities and Karten recommends that school staff collectively discuss these challenges.

Great Tips!

Resources for planning for assessments of student with disabilities can be found at:
• Florida Department of Education  
  http://www.floridastandards.org/index.aspx

• Descriptions of FCAT Accommodations  

• Fair Is Not Always Equal by Rick Wormeli (2006)

• Florida Inclusion Network  
II.5 - Access to Transportation and School Facilities

II.5. Education team members ensure that all students with disabilities, including all students with severe disabilities, access transportation and school facilities, participate in events, and receive recognition along with same-age peers without disabilities in a manner that reflects a philosophy of equal value and participation as school members.

Rationale

To be fully included in school activities, every student must have access to all the facilities of the school needed to ensure full participation in the educational program with their age-appropriate peers without disabilities. Students with disabilities should have access to lockers, the gymnasium and locker rooms, the cafeteria area, including seating, the media center, and the administrative offices, including the guidance suite. Each student should be able to exit from the school during an emergency in a manner designed to prevent injury.

What does this look like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You should not see...........</th>
<th>You got it....</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-examples:</td>
<td>Examples:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Special proms, events, sports, etc</td>
<td>• Transportation for extracurricular activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Separate transportation for different groups</td>
<td>• Adapted instruments for band</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Inaccessible buildings, stage, playground, etc.</td>
<td>• Sporting events – bleachers have ramps/seating or only field area – All watch the game.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Under Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, districts are required to provide non-discriminatory access to educational programs for students with disabilities. Program access includes physical access to the buildings and programs, including vocational services and extra-curricular programs. Similarly, transportation needs cannot be used to deny access to programs for which the student qualifies. Transportation is defined as “travel to and from school and between schools; travel in and around school building; and specialized equipment (such as special or adapted buses, lifts, and ramps) if required to provide special transportation for a child with a disability.” (Schwartz, 2005, p. 44, 182).

This indicator is in line with requirements of IDEA and Section 504 as well as the expanded rights enumerated for individuals with disabilities under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. The indicator is a challenge for some districts where older facilities continue to be used, especially when funds are limited for infra-structure improvements. Note that a lower rating for this indicator will result when a student has classes in a wing of a school or a portable that is accessible but other facilities such as the library or cafeteria are not accessible.

School districts are required to have accessibility plans for all schools and for every student qualifying under Section 504. Having an emergency exit plan for each student is not sufficient. All staff in the building should know what the exit plans are for all students, especially those with wheelchairs or other
physical support needs, so that every student in the school can be evacuated quickly and safely in case of an emergency.

**Great Tips!**

Find out more about access to transportation and facilities by reviewing these resources:

- Social Inclusion Project – [http://flfcic.fmhi.usf.edu/projects/community.htm](http://flfcic.fmhi.usf.edu/projects/community.htm)
- See Schwartz (2005, p. 44, 182) for extensive references regarding meeting compliance for Section 504.
- Section 504 - Accommodation Plan for Postsecondary Adult/Vocational Education Students (May 2004) - (PDF, 1MB)
III: Policies and Support-Leadership

Why is this Important?

Ms. Cook, the principal of a local elementary school was passing through the main office between meetings during late spring when she overheard the following conversation between the office assistant and a parent who was new to the neighborhood:

“OK, we have Billy registered for the 3rd grade. Now let’s get his older brother all set up”

“Oh no, he won’t be going here. I have to go and register him over at Siles. He has autism and Siles is the autism unit school”.

Ms. Cook quickly came over and said, “Welcome, I’m Ms. Cook. I overheard you say that Jose won’t be attending school here. I wanted to let you know that while we do not have an autism unit here at our school, we educate all our children and want you to know that Jose is always welcome in our school.”

Jose and Billy’s mom’s eyes swelled with tears when she said, “But the district told me that Jose has to go to Siles. Do you mean it? My boys are 9 and 11 years old and have never been able to play with each other at recess or after school.”

At that time the boys overheard what was happening and instantly ran up and excitedly asked if they would get to go to school together at last.

Billy and Jose still go to school together. Their parents both get to go to open house together and they get to play on the same basketball team for the first time in over a decade. Billy and Jose both go to their neighborhood school.
As this example shows, a school leader acting in support of inclusive education ensures that the school serves all the neighborhood children. All means every single child in the school’s boundaries regardless of disability label.

**Section Indicators**

There are five indicators in the Policies and Support – Leadership Section:

1. All education team members are knowledgeable about best practices for inclusive education and collaborate with school, district, local, regional and state resources.

2. Education team members collaborate and use performance data and feedback from school and district personnel, from students, and from family and community members to determine needs for collaborative professional development.

3. Education team members advocate for and access appropriate resources for collaborative planning.

4. Education team members advocate for necessary supports and services to implement best practices for inclusive education for students with disabilities.

5. Education team members advocate for the assignment of all students with disabilities across general education classes in the students’ neighborhood schools.
III.1 - Policies and Support: Leadership

III.1. The education team is knowledgeable about universal education best practices and work with state and local organizations (FIN, FDLRS, universities, ATEN, Mental Health, Children and Family services, and other state level and community organizations) to access the resources they need in order to develop, implement and sustain the practices necessary to meaningfully educate ALL their students, including students with unique, significant and intensive needs.

Rationale

Detailed knowledge about the services available for students with disabilities increases the quality and quantity of services that the education team can ensure will be provided to each student. These services are specific to each student, so the greater the knowledge the education team has, the better the service planning can be tailored to the needs of each student.

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<td><strong>Non-Examples:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Excluding para-professionals and elective teachers from professional development opportunities</td>
<td>• New teacher interview questions incorporate universal education, differentiation, inclusion, cooperative teaching and cooperative groups.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Not getting information to all staff in a timely way.</td>
<td>• Teachers familiar with and implement universal education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inclusion seen as an ESE issue</td>
<td>lessons and differentiated instruction</td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secondary – separate assistant principal or other administrator for ESE</td>
<td>• Collaborative professional development attended by teams of teachers and staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>Role-specific professional development as only method of delivering/offering professional development (i.e. special educators go to their own training)</td>
<td>• Collaborative teaching (co-teaching)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Use of heterogeneous co-operative groups</td>
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To learn more about resources and strategies for working with students with disabilities, first work with your principal and district inclusion staff. In addition, you should contact your local Florida Inclusion Network (FIN) liaison. Together, your principal, district personnel and FIN can help you navigate local, state and regional resources. Also, work with the parents of your students to get connected to any organizations they find helpful. Parents are often the experts on how to get resources for their own children. There is a lot to be learned from them.

First Steps:

- Meet with principal
- Meet with key district personnel
- Work with parents
- Meet with your local FIN
Great Tips!

To learn more about accessing resources for students with disabilities, go to:

- FIN website- www.floridainclusionnetwork.com
- Florida Developmental Disabilities Council  http://www.fddc.org/
- PEAK Parent Center- http://www.peakparent.org/
- FDLRS http://www.fdlrs.org/
- Florida Positive Behavior Support Project http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/
III.2 - Data-Driven Professional Development

III.2. Education team members collaborate and use performance data of all students, including students with severe disabilities and feedback, e.g., surveys, interviews, requests, parent conferences, IEP meetings, from school and district personnel, from students, and from family and community members, to determine needs for collaborative professional development leading to the implementation of services that reflect best practices for inclusive education.

Rationale

Most educators, when informed about the benefits of inclusive/universal education, willingly support this approach to educating all students. Participating in job-embedded professional development to explain what universal/inclusive education is and how it works is an effective means of creating a culture of acceptance and success in our schools. Teachers (general and exceptional education), para-professionals, and all members of education teams will benefit from this essential professional learning conducted during the school day and, as much as possible, in the context within which the skills and knowledge will be used.

All district and school staff should participate in training on best practices in inclusive/universal education. The intensity of the professional learning may vary with the level of responsibility of the individual. Teachers (general and exceptional education), para-professionals, guidance counselors, and media specialists can benefit from the most intensive sessions and detailed knowledge about specific instructional and management strategies to use in classrooms and with individual students. Office staff need specific examples for interacting with parents and students. Other school staff who interact with students (custodial staff, bus drivers, food service staff) benefit from understanding the reasons for including all students in a school and specific examples of how they can help implement universal/inclusive education.
From the BPIE Glossary

**Job-embedded professional development** - Professional development activities that occur as teachers and administrators engage in their daily work settings and schedules.)

Schwartz (2005, p. 206-7) stated: “Administrators need to show their support by arranging collaborative planning time on a regular basis for teachers, and by providing effective and relevant professional development opportunities. In addition, teachers need to be given more decision-making responsibilities in creating collaborative models like co-teaching that will work to fit their personalities and teaching styles, and will best address pupil needs. Teachers need to know they are regarded as major players in making decisions rather than merely serving as an advisory group and sounding board for the principal’s ideas and mandates. Administrators also should provide necessary technological support and resources to help further inclusive practices within the classroom program.”

Beattie (2006, p.24) reflected “Ensuring that all students gain access to the general education curriculum in inclusive settings requires support for efforts to improve teacher skills. Each teacher has his or her own set of unique strengths and weaknesses. When teachers identify and address their own teaching needs, they are better quipped to make inclusion work…. Teachers must have high-quality training and support to be successful inclusive teachers. The following are skills that help teachers support inclusion and access to the general curriculum for all of their students:”

- “Organizing classrooms and physical space to support diverse learning styles;
• Planning, organizing, and presenting lessons that encourage diverse learning styles;

• Managing behavior and motivation to keep students actively engaged;

• Teaching reading relentlessly to support learning in other content areas;

• Teaching cognitive strategies to support diverse learning styles and remediate typical learning problems;

• Providing accommodations and modifications to encourage all students to learn;

• Monitoring progress frequently with appropriate assessments and grading practices;

• Providing family-friendly educational experiences; and

• Collaborating, consulting, and communicating with other professionals.”

Today, high quality professional development is typically characterized by the principles of reflective practice, described in Jorgensen (2006, p. 192-3). “Reflective practice is characterized by teachers’ participation in small learning communities that meet on a regular basis to talk about school culture, teaching, and student learning”, and focusing on collaboratively improving student performance. “Reflective practice groups can be a powerful tool for teams trying to solve challenges relating to inclusive education, such as:”

• “Re-organizing staff assignments and caseloads so that all students are well supported;

• Solving problems related to a student’s challenging behavior;

• Determining why a student is having difficulty using an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device;

• Gaining insight into what supports best facilitate a student’s learning of the general education curriculum;

• Developing strategies for promoting acceptance of diversity within a school; and

• Finding ways to improve a student’s social connections and friendships.”
Ekins (2009, p 14) lists some reflective questions for teams to consider as they track, monitor and analyze the progress of all students and measure the impact and quality of the programs and interventions:

- How is the process of self-evaluation undertaken at your school?
  - Who is involved? When does this occur? What activities have been developed to encourage and engage participation of all members of the school community? Are there any stakeholders who are currently not fully involved?

- Does your school engage in processes such as target setting, intervention planning, student tracking, and data analysis?
  - How is this organized? Who is involved? How do the individual processes relate to each other? How do the processes impact on students learning and engagement within the school? How do the processes lead to future strategic planning and development for the whole school to respond to developing needs?

- What do you perceive your role to be in enabling the processes to occur within your school setting?
  - Will you be a leader in establishing processes in your school to support inclusion? Will you collaborate in strategic partnerships with colleagues? Will you support other schools to think in different ways about the issues raised? Will you contribute to the whole school self-evaluation?

**Great Tips!**

FIN is an excellent resource for the professional development specified in this indicator (http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/). The website has “Fact Folios” that can be used in training teachers and parents, as well as other resources. The FIN facilitators will assist or present in groups and work with schools to increase awareness and understanding of inclusion/universal education. FDLRS staff is also available with a wealth of resources and documents that can be used to help all district and school staff in the ongoing process of increasing universal education/inclusion.
III.3 – Common Planning Time

III.3. Education team members advocate for and access appropriate resources, e.g., common planning time, stipends for before/after school, approved “comp” time, for opportunities, at least weekly, for collaborative planning to develop, implement, and evaluate instruction for their students with disabilities, including students with severe disabilities, in general education and natural contexts.

Rationale

Beattie (2006, p.24) states that “Ensuring that all students gain access to the general education curriculum in inclusive settings requires support for efforts to improve teacher skills. Each teacher has his or her own set of unique strengths and weaknesses. When teachers identify and address their own teaching needs, they are better quipped to make inclusion work.” Teachers must have high-quality training and support to be successful inclusive teachers. The Florida Department of Education's Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol specifies 65 standards for professional development that can assist school teams in ensuring that professional learning in the schools is meeting high standards.

From the BPIE Glossary

Job-embedded professional development: Professional development activities that occur as teachers and administrators engage in their daily work settings and schedules.
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<td>• One-stop workshop trainings driven by the district with no local data to drive needs.</td>
<td>• Teachers are seeing data suggesting that current ISS levels are on the rise for students with IEPs so the principal brings in a long-term professional development team to work with teams of teachers on development, implementation and monitoring of PBS.</td>
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**Bright ideas**

The following are skills that help teachers support inclusion and access to the general curriculum for all of their students:

- Organizing classrooms and physical space to support diverse learning styles
- Planning, organizing, and presenting lessons that encourage diverse learning styles
- Managing behavior and motivation to keep students actively engaged
- Teaching reading relentlessly to support learning in other content areas
• Teaching cognitive strategies to support diverse learning styles and typical learning problems

• Providing accommodations and modifications to encourage all students to learn

• Monitoring progress frequently with appropriate assessments and grading practices

• Providing family-friendly education experiences

• Collaborating, consulting, and communicating with other professionals (Beattie 2006, p.24)

Today, high-quality professional development is typically characterized by the principles of reflective practice described in Jorgensen (2006, p. 192-3). Reflective practice is characterized by teachers’ participation in small learning communities that meet on a regular basis to talk about school culture, teaching, and student learning, focusing on collaboratively improving student performance. “Reflective practice groups can be a powerful tool for teams trying to solve challenges relating to inclusive education, such as:

• Reorganizing staff assignments and caseloads so that all students are well supported;

• Solving problems related to a student’s challenging behavior;

• Determining why a student is having difficulty using an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device;

• Gaining insight into what supports best facilitate a student’s learning of the general education curriculum;

• Developing strategies for promoting acceptance of diversity within a school; and

• Finding ways to improve a student’s social connections and friendships.”

See also reflective questions for teams to consider posed by Ekins (2009) as referenced in Indicator III.2.
Great Tips!

FIN is an excellent resource for the professional development specified in this indicator (http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/). The website has “Fact Folios” that can be used in training administrators and parents, as well as other resources. The FIN Facilitators will assist or present in groups and work with school administrators to increase awareness and understanding of inclusive/universal education. FDLRS staff is also available with a wealth of resources and documents that can be used to help all district and school staff in the ongoing process of increasing universal education/inclusion.


Another contact for information and training on professional development is the Florida Association for Staff Development. http://www.fasdonline.org/.

See additional information in:

- Ekin (2009), p 14
- Florida Association for Staff Development. http://www.fasdonline.org/
III.4 - Supports and Services

III.4. Education team members advocate for necessary supports and services to implement best practices for inclusive education for students with disabilities, including students with severe disabilities, based on careful analysis of the students’ performance data and the students’ instructional needs, and the current use of resources on the campus.

Rationale

Inclusive education teams, along with inclusion facilitators, may find their primary role in inclusion is to serve as a change agent, transforming others’ beliefs about inclusive education and students with significant disabilities. Advocating for the supports needed to ensure a high-quality education for each student is an essential component of the responsibilities of the education team.

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<tr>
<td>• Inclusion teams view</td>
<td>• Teachers that work inclusively frequently engage in conversations with colleagues about how they can move to more inclusive practices and work with them to begin the process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>themselves as a special elite “family” within the school, as a sort of sub-culture.</td>
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Jorgensen, 2006, p. 65, describes a model focused on changing individuals (rather than systems) that is based on the Concerns Based Adoption Model. The answers to the following questions are used to plan strategies for transforming that person's beliefs and practices:

- What does this person value?
- What are this person’s concerns about inclusion?
- How might this person's personality type affect the best way to communicate and work with him or her?

**Great Tips!**

Jorgenson presents characteristics of effective change agents for inclusion:

- Administrators, teachers and inclusion facilitators who are effective as change agents must embody many strong principles relating to working with others.
- Change agents for inclusion are confident about their own efficacy. They persevere, manage their stress and use self-talk productively.
- Change agents possess a broad repertoire of skills for working with diverse individuals in a variety of situations.
III.5 – Neighborhood Schools

III.5. Education team members advocate for the assignment of all students with disabilities, including students with severe disabilities, across general education classes in the students' neighborhood schools (or schools of choice).

Rationale

Educating students with disabilities in neighborhood schools increases the interactions of the students with other children in their neighborhoods, and reduces the extensive travel times and distances needed to transport students to far-away cluster sites. The travel times often reduce the amount of educational time for students and increases the stress on students who often have other health issues and can least afford further challenges to their physical health. Furthering the concept of students being served in their neighborhood schools, this indicator ensures that students with special needs receive their education with their peers in their own neighborhoods, rather than being placed in special “centers” or “clusters” that often form isolated enclaves within the districts/schools, with little contact with their peers.

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<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Examples:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Your school has an autism unit.</td>
<td>• Siblings walking to school together and engaging in after school activities at the same School.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• You are the “EMH” teacher for the district.</td>
<td>• Parents of children (where one child has autism) going to one</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Siblings forced to go to different schools because the neighborhood</td>
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IDEA requires that education be provided in the least restrictive environment for each child, meaning that students with disabilities should be taught in neighborhood schools, in general education classes (IDEA, 2004). Therefore, to truly be an inclusive school and a school where full membership is a reality for all members of your community, all the children must attend their neighborhood school. This means that all the children assigned to the school per school boundaries attend their neighborhood school. There are no cluster programs and no students at center schools or accessing McKay scholarships because of a lack of programming. Teachers should be aware of all the students in a school's boundaries and work with principals to make sure the school is welcoming to all students and make sure that the principal is actively working toward getting all their neighborhood children, regardless of disability label, back into their school and being successful.

Schwartz (2005, p. 115) presents the primary themes of the inclusive classroom:

- Community building—Create a community in which all students feel that they belong and allow opportunity to develop social responsibility. Facilitate a healthy balance of the student’s relationship to the teacher and among themselves to avoid dependence on the adult figure to answer all questions, solve all problems, and direct all activities. The physical layout of the classroom impacts student behavior and attitude and can encourage appropriate behavior.
• Curriculum development—The classroom must be academically inclusive as well as physically, emotionally, and socially inclusive. The needs of all students should be built into the curriculum, not added on.

• Differentiated instruction—Addressing diverse learners can require multiple entry points, tiered assignments, varying questions, and flexible grouping.

In re-creating the role of educators to integrate students with disabilities with the general education population, Schwartz notes that:

• Teachers must have a vision of inclusive teaching and schooling—develop a clear enough vision to guide action; connect the vision to daily practice, to school policies and practices;

• Teachers must transform their view of student learning—accept the premise that all students are capable of learning complex material; and

• Teachers must transform their teaching roles—they are not simply providers of knowledge.

**Great Tips!**

The choice of placement of students with disabilities in general education classrooms sometimes tells more about the school and the values of the teachers and administrators than about the student characteristics. Giangreco (2007, p.5 and following) suggests guidelines that administrators can use with classroom teachers to establish values consistent with effective inclusive classrooms. In summary, the guidelines are:

1. **Get a Little Help from Your Friends**—The general education classroom teacher is not expected to know all the specialized information that is needed to work with all students with disabilities. Collaborative teamwork is essential.

2. **Welcome the Student in Your Classroom**—The classroom teacher will set an example for all the students in the classroom and for other
teachers if they send a message that the student with disabilities is welcome in the classroom and “belongs” there. For the student with disabilities, the welcome will create a positive learning environment.

3. **Be the Teacher for All Your Students**—General education teachers should think of the students with disabilities in their classrooms as “their students” and should learn each student’s strengths and abilities. Often this will help the teacher learn approaches that benefit their entire class.

4. **Establish a Classroom Community**—Students with disabilities should have desks and classroom placements and assignments so they can participate in the same activities as their classmates as much as possible. The students with disabilities should have the opportunity to learn, socialize and work with the rest of the class.

5. **Develop Shared Educational Program Expectations**—The teaching team must share common expectations about what the student should learn in the classroom and who will do the teaching. Identify the student’s highest priority learning outcomes, then a larger set of outcomes that reflect a broad-based education program. Identify supports needed to clarify what the team expects the student to learn.

6. **Have Options for Including Students**—Some students with disabilities will have the same learning outcomes as other students in the classroom. In other cases, the student with disabilities will pursue learning outcomes at a different level, but from the same curriculum. Another possibility is that the student with a disability will have individual learning outcomes from different curriculum areas than the rest of the class. The teacher differentiates instruction and increases the likelihood that all students can meaningfully participate.

7. **Make Learning Active and Participatory**—Activity-based learning (as opposed to large-group lectures and worksheets) is well suited to a wide range of students and is typically more enjoyable for all students.

8. **Adapt Classroom Strategies and Materials**—Instruction must often be adapted to be effective with students with disabilities. Adaptations include small cooperative groups, computer-assisted instruction, guided practice, peer-assisted instruction, matching materials to the student’s interests, and adding tactile or auditory cues. The teaching team and class members can assist with adaptation ideas.

9. **Make Sure Support Services are Really Helping**—Some support service personnel can inadvertently be a hindrance. General education teachers
should establish a shared agenda with support service personnel that accounts for the student’s education program, facilitates social interactions, and minimizes disruptions to the classroom and the student’s schedule.

10. **Evaluate the Effectiveness of Your Teaching**—Teachers must continually evaluate their teaching in terms of whether it makes a positive difference in the students’ lives. The form of evaluation for students with disabilities may vary, but is still important to determine whether outcomes are achieved and to adjust and improve instruction.
IV: Policies and Support –
Program Development and Evaluation

Why is this Important?

Students of all abilities can learn well together, but it takes unique, individualized and targeted instructional strategies and supports to move each student from where they are to their own personal best. The 20th century model of education in which the same methods and techniques were used for whole classes of students is being replaced by individualized and small group instruction with immediate measures of success and interventions to ensure mastery of the expected outcomes. This approach is often termed ‘Response to Intervention’, but is, in essence, a systems approach to learning. Planning, implementing, and evaluating these instructional methods at the student, classroom, and school levels are critical to ensuring the success of every student in the school, regardless of their educational needs.

An important concept in this new approach is the use of universal design concepts for all students in a classroom to increase the effectiveness of classrooms for all students, including students with significant disabilities. CAST (2009) explains universal design for learning as a way of organizing instructional support and pedagogy based on ways that match individual students learning styles and difference. According to UDL, to help students learn, teachers must (1) use multiple ways to present information, (2) provide multiple pathways for students’ action and expression,
and (3) provide multiple ways to engage students including collaborative and interactive structures. Differentiated, authentic, multi-level and interdisciplinary instruction is at the root of instructing all students together meaningfully (Peterson & Hittie, 2010).

Developing and evaluating instructional programs for all students in a school, including students with all levels of disabilities, can be a challenge in many schools. Some useful practices include:

- Practices for inclusive education are embedded within a collaboratively developed school improvement plan;
- The school leadership team evaluates progress toward best practices for inclusive education and ensures all staff is well-informed and supported;
- Aggregated and dis-aggregated results on state assessments (including alternate assessments) are used for school improvement planning as well as classroom and curricular planning;
- Hiring procedures ensure applicants’ knowledge of, experience with, and willingness to implement best practices for inclusive education;
- Collaborative, job-embedded professional development for all personnel reflect goals for implementing best practices for inclusive education;
- There is a school-wide approach to develop positive inter-dependent relationships among students with and without disabilities; and
- Program evaluation decisions are made collaboratively by all staff for all students. This includes curricular and classroom level program evaluation as well as student-centered program evaluation such as whether a particular student’s special education program should be terminated, continued or modified (Friend & Bursuck, 2009).

Ekins (2009, 11-12) presents key principles to developing inclusive approaches within schools:

- Developing an inclusive school culture— Successful inclusive schools will build upon a shared understanding of, and commitment to, inclusive values and practices. Staff will develop inclusive policies, but also will work on developing an inclusive culture.
• Responding to student diversity—Inclusive schools will work to remove any barriers to participation, access and achievement for all students. Diversity welcomed and celebrated.

• Developing leaders who are committed to inclusive values—There will be evidence of distributed leadership across the school and leaders who have a strong commitment to inclusive values.

• Evolving shared inclusive values—Staff will engage in on-going professional dialogue on problem solving and creative approaches to curriculum innovation.

• Developing collaborative problem solving—Staff will take a creative and professional approach to working collaboratively with a wide range of other professionals and agencies to support the needs of all students.

• Individual inclusive school development—There is no one “blueprint” model for developing inclusive schools. Because of the complexity of the school community, other schools may be seen as models, but not approaches for “replication.” Inclusive schools will place a priority in developing a partnership with parents and the local community to develop the model appropriate for their mix of students and families.

Section Indicators

There are seven indictors in the Policies and Support - Program Development and Evaluation:

1. Goals that support the implementation of best practices for including all students with disabilities.

2. The education team aggregates assessment results of all students with and without disabilities and uses these data to develop, implement, monitor, and revise strategies to improve the effectiveness of inclusive education programs.

3. The education team aggregates the alternate assessment results of students with severe disabilities with the standardized assessment results of their same age peers with and without disabilities. These data are analyzed and used to develop, implement, monitor, and revise strategies to improve the effectiveness of education programs.
4. Each education team member demonstrates willingness to work with, and share knowledge about, all students with and without disabilities.

5. Each education team member participates in and consistently implements effective strategies from collaborative, job-embedded personnel development based on student data.

6. The education team evaluates their progress toward implementation of research-based best practices for effective instruction of students with disabilities and develops plans for increasing those best practices.

7. Each education team member facilitates interactions among students with and without disabilities across instructional and non-instructional school-sponsored activities inside and outside of the school day.
IV.1 Professional Development Related to Inclusive Practices

IV.1 All education team members incorporate within their professional development plan, and demonstrate progress toward, goals that support the implementation of best practices for including all students with disabilities, including all students with severe disabilities across general education and natural contexts.

Rationale

Including professional learning about students with disabilities in the professional development plans and programs for every teacher in the school assists all faculty members to “embrace our own,” and view the exceptional students in the school as valued and rightful members of the community. It is critical that the school and teacher professional development plans include specific statements confirming the commitment to every student in the district, including students with significant disabilities. The school’s annual evaluation of progress toward best practices for inclusive education should ensure that the statements on paper are actually implemented.

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<tr>
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<td>• Teachers participate in</td>
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• Professional development focuses on narrow range of service delivery settings and models.
• Professional development opportunities and materials are not shared by all staff.

professional development as teams in heterogeneous groups.
• Ongoing discussion around professional development needs for best practice for educating students with disabilities occurs between all team members.

From the BPIE Glossary

**Job-embedded professional development:** Professional development activities that occur as teachers and administrators engage in their daily work settings and schedules.

Beattie 2006, p.24: “Ensuring that all students gain access the general education curriculum in inclusive settings requires support for efforts to improve teacher skills. Each teacher has his or her own set of unique strengths and weaknesses. When teachers identify and address their own teaching needs, they are better equipped to make inclusion work. Teachers much have high-quality training and support to be successful inclusive teachers. The following are skills that help teachers support inclusion and access to the general curriculum for all of their students:”
“Organizing classrooms and physical space to support diverse learning styles

Planning, organizing, and presenting lessons that encourage diverse learning styles

Managing behavior and motivation to keep students actively engaged

Teaching reading relentlessly to support learning in other content areas

Teaching cognitive strategies to support diverse learning styles and typical learning problems

Providing accommodations and modifications to encourage all students to learn

Monitoring progress frequently with appropriate assessments and grading practices

Providing family-friendly education experiences

Collaborating, consulting, and communicating with other professionals.”

Today, high-quality professional development is typically characterized by the principles of reflective practice, described in Jorgensen (2006, p. 192-3). “Reflective practice is characterized by teachers’ participation in small learning communities that meet on a regular basis to talk about school culture, teaching, and student learning”, and focuses on collaboratively improving student performance. “Reflective practice groups can be a powerful tool for teams trying to solve challenges relating to inclusive education, such as:”

“Reorganizing staff assignments and caseloads so that all students are well supported;

Solving problems related to a student’s challenging behavior;

Determining why a student is having difficulty using an augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device;

Gaining insight into what supports best facilitate a student’s learning of the general education curriculum;

Developing strategies for promoting acceptance of diversity within a school; and
Florida Developmental Disabilities Council
Teacher's Guide to Universal/Inclusive Education

- Finding ways to improve a student's social connections and friendships.”

Great Tips!

FIN is an excellent resource for the professional development specified in this indicator (http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com/). The website has “Fact Folios” that can be used in training teachers and parents, as well as other resources. The FIN facilitators will assist or present in groups and work with schools to increase awareness and understanding of inclusive/universal education. FDLRS staff are also available with a wealth of resources and documents that can be used to help all district and school staff in the ongoing process of increasing universal education/inclusion.


Another contact for information and training on professional development is the Florida Association for Staff Development. http://www.fasdonline.org/.
IV.2 Aggregation of Standardized Assessment Results

IV.2 The education team aggregates the standardized assessment results of all students with disabilities, including students with severe disabilities, with the standardized assessment results of their peers without disabilities. These aggregated data are analyzed and used to develop, implement, monitor, and revise strategies that will improve the effectiveness of education programs in general education and natural contexts for all students.

Rationale

Assessment information is one of the best sources for determining the overall success of the district’s efforts in increasing the academic performance levels of students. Florida has one of the most detailed and rigorous statewide assessment systems in the nation that generates extensive information that can be used to improve the overall educational system. Most districts conduct additional assessments that provide more frequent and more detailed results related to specific curricular programs. All of these data are valuable inputs into decision-making about better ways to educate and support students with disabilities. Public reporting of these data provides transparency to the programs so that parents, teachers, and others can fully participate in improving the education of all students.
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<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Example:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Example:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Results from standardized assessments from various groups are analyzed in a categorical fashion as if they are not related.</td>
<td>• Personnel have a system-wide philosophy of measuring effectiveness.</td>
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Beattie (2006, p. 202). NCLB uses assessment data to determine student proficiency and adequate yearly progress. These requirements have implications for all students, but especially those in inclusive classrooms. Students with disabilities are among the four groups of students who are included in the data used to determine adequate yearly progress along with the total school scores.

Teachers can gather assessment data through a variety of means including:

- Observations
  - Active (active observational record)
  - Passive (review products of previous actions)
• Various test types  
  o norm-referenced  
  o criterion-referenced  
  o curriculum-based measurement  

• Various test item formats (oral or written)  
  o multiple choice  
  o matching  
  o fill-in  
  o essay  
  o activity  

• Portfolio assessment  

• Interviews  
  o structured  
  o unstructured  

Criterion-referenced assessments and curriculum-based measurement are directly related to specific objectives and will probably provide the teacher with the strongest basis for planning and delivering instruction.

Concerning grading, the Office of Civil Rights requires that grades be assigned in a manner that enables all students to be treated similarly. “If modified grading is to be implemented, the grading modification must be available to all students.” P.208. Co-teachers must review grades carefully to ensure that students receive grades that reflect his or her effort, mastery, and consistency. As with testing, there are several methods for assigning grades, including (1) Norm-referenced, with scores reflecting the difficulty level of the skills, and (2) Criterion-referenced grading system related to mastery of a specific curricular skill. Grades may be assigned with a notation indicating that the material was below the student’s grade level. Whatever methods are used to grade and to report grades, the principles of fairness and equity must always guide the process.

Ekins (2009, p. 41) emphasizes that staff must have a clear understanding of how to use data effectively and strategically to enable meaningful change and development. Some key questions related to systems and practices on which to reflect include:

• How often is pupil progress assessed within my school context?  
• How is pupil progress assessed? What assessment materials are used?
• Do these materials link in and complete end-stage assessment tests?

• How is work leveled? Has there been any standardization of leveling across the whole school setting?

• Do all staff have a clear understanding of what progress looks like at each level?

• Is there a clear understanding of what good and expected rates of progress are?

• How is the information from pupil assessment collated?

• Who is involved in the process?

• Is the information from the pupil assessments shared and discussed at a strategic level? How does this impact on practice within the school?

• How are individual class and subject teachers encouraged and supported to reflect upon and evaluate cohort issues raised by the assessment data?

In response to analysis of assessment data, needs that may be identified include:

• Reconsider the structure of a particular teaching input or lesson,

• Provide more focus and opportunities to develop skills in a particular area,

• Reconsider how he or she approaches appropriate differentiation in order to extend and challenge all students,

• Question how support is currently used, and how to make changes in order to give further focused support to key groups of students.

Jorgensen, 2006, p. 159, notes that teams should refrain from making judgments about a student's performance without carefully evaluating the quality of the instruction and support provided to those students. If the team is confident about the quality of the instruction and support, then the student assessment is more meaningful. If not, team members might make a commitment to try other supports and assess again.

Friend & Bursuck, (2009) offer the following recommendations for strategies for fair assessment of diverse students:
Give students practice tests. Teach test-taking skills.

Qualify test performance with class performance.

Individualize reinforcement; use individualistic, competitive, and cooperative goal structures.

Allow more time to establish rapport and gain trust.

Check for understanding of directions; avoid automatically penalizing students for not saying enough or not giving details.

Teach students strategies for when and how to make a best guess on a test.

Extend test-taking time to accommodate students’ pace.

Eliminate unfamiliar content or don’t give the test.

Assess students using both English and students’ native language.

Do not count dialectic differences as errors; examine your attitudes about non-standard dialects for potential bias.

**Great Tips!**

Find out more about using standardized test results in these resources:

- National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO)
  [http://education.umn.edu/nceo](http://education.umn.edu/nceo)
  - Provides information on state and national testing policies

- American Psychological Association [www.apa.org](http://www.apa.org)
  - Provides information on types of assessment, including high-stakes assessments

- National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) [www.ncme.org](http://www.ncme.org)
• Florida Department of Education – Assessment information http://www.fldoe.org/educators/assessment.asp

• Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate services CLAS http://clas.uiuc.edu/

• Fair Isn't Always Equal: Assessing & Grading in the Differentiated Classroom by Rick Wormeli. This book explores the research and common sense thinking as it relates to grading and assessment. The author cites examples throughout to help teachers and administrators address controversial issues. Stenhouse Publishers (2006) 1-57110-424-0


• Checking for Understanding - Formative Assessment Strategies for Your Classroom by Douglas Fisher & Nancy Frey. Shows teachers how to increase students' understanding through the use of creative formative assessments and discusses how teachers can use traditional tests and collaborative assessments to improve instruction and increase comprehension. ASCD (2007) 978-1-4166-0569-0.


• Fair Isn't Always Equal: Assessing & Grading in the Differentiated Classroom. Rick Wormeli. This book explores the research and common-sense thinking as it relates to grading and assessment. The author cites

IV.3 Aggregation of Alternate Assessment Results

IV.3 The education team aggregates the alternate assessment results of students with severe disabilities with the standardized assessment results of their same-age peers with and without disabilities. These aggregated data are analyzed and used to develop, implement, monitor, and revise strategies that will improve the effectiveness of education programs, e.g., curriculum, groupings, instruction, evaluation) for all students at the same grade level.

Rationale

The purpose of providing education to all students is to increase their knowledge and skills. Student achievement results are one of the best methods for determining whether each student is making progress on academic and social skills. This is true for students with disabilities as well as those without disabilities. Using summaries of these data is an essential component of identifying strategies and efforts that are working and making plans to improve the academic and support systems for students with disabilities.

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<td>Non-Examples:</td>
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<tr>
<td>- Results from alternate assessments are kept separate from other assessment information.</td>
<td>- All assessment results are combined and considered a comprehensive measure of program effectiveness.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Results from alternate</td>
<td>- Program is considered the</td>
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assessments are not included in planning purposes for classrooms and schools.

entire program - there are no subsets.

Florida is a national leader in creating student assessment systems and in measuring the academic progress of students with special needs. As of the 2011-12 school year, all students whose IEPs do not indicate they are intellectually impaired must take the appropriate statewide tests, typically the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) at grades 3-10, and the Florida’s End-of-Course Assessments that are being phased in. Students who are exempt from taking the FCAT are required to take the Florida Alternative Assessment (see http://www.fldoe.org/asp/altassessment.asp). According to the website, “The Florida Alternate Assessment is designed for students whose participation in the general statewide assessment (FCAT) is not appropriate even with accommodations. Aligned to the Sunshine State Standards (SSS) in Language Arts, Mathematics, and Science; the Florida Alternate Assessment measures student academic performance on the Sunshine State Standards Access Points at three levels of complexity, participatory, supported, and independent. Access Points are extensions of the general standards and capture the essence of the SSS with reduced levels of complexity. It is expected that only students with the most significant cognitive disabilities who are eligible under IDEA will participate in the Florida Alternate Assessment.” Districts are also required to assess all students for benchmark testing and other assessments used in the statewide determination of student progress.

One of the issues in standardized achievement testing is the extent to which accommodations and modifications are allowed. The BPIE Glossary defines accommodations as changes to how (the way) students are expected to learn (i.e., instruction) and to demonstrate what they have learned (i.e., assessment). When accommodations are made, expectations for student achievement do not change. Accommodations should be made based on individual learner
characteristics, not the particular disability. Accommodations involve a wide range of techniques and support systems in areas such as: methods and materials, assignments and assessments, learning environment, time and scheduling, and special communication systems. The Glossary defines **modifications** as “Changes to the requirements of a course or the standards a student must meet - a change in **what** a student is taught and/or tested on. This change is based on a student's needs as identified by the IEP team.”

Modifications are not allowed in the administration of any of the statewide assessments because the modifications would alter the validity of the test for the student, making it invalid to compare the student’s performance on any given test with other students or with that student’s performance on another level of the test (such as the scaled scores on standardized tests or the developmental scores on the FCAT). Certain accommodations are allowed under specified circumstances. The DOE website on the state-wide assessment program describes the allowable accommodations and eligibility of students. It is readily available at: [http://www.fldoe.org/ese/fcatasd.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/ese/fcatasd.asp) and [http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-5831/dps-2010-92.pdf](http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-5831/dps-2010-92.pdf).

Districts also may have limits on the types of accommodations and modifications that are allowed for different district assessments. Consult your district testing coordinator for directions and assistance.

**Great Tips!**

Find out more about using alternative assessments at:

- National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO)  
  [http://education.umn.edu/nceo](http://education.umn.edu/nceo)  
  - Provides information on state and national testing policies

- Exceptional Student Education Data and Program Evaluation  

- School Grades and AYP  

- Sunshine State Standards  
  [http://www.floridastandards.org/index.aspx](http://www.floridastandards.org/index.aspx)
• Just Read Florida! www.justreadflorida.com

• No Child Left Behind http://www.fldoe.org/nclb/


• American Psychological Association www.apa.org
  o Provides information on types of assessment, including high-stakes assessments

• National Council on Measurement in Education (NCME) www.ncme.org

• Florida Department of Education – Assessment information http://www.fldoe.org/educators/assessment.asp

• Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate services CLAS http://clas.uiuc.edu/
IV.4 Willingness to work with “ALL” by “ALL”

IV. 4 Each education team member, regardless of area of specialization, demonstrates a willingness to work with all students with and without disabilities, including students with severe disabilities. Each team member shares his/her expertise so that all team members have general knowledge of behavioral and learning characteristics of students with and without disabilities, as well as age-appropriate content and materials.

Rationale

All staff within a district are important factors in ensuring that all students in the school system receive an education that will maximize their potential. Through national and state mandates as well as local changes in attitudes, greater efforts are being made to include students with disabilities into general education settings. Each person in the school must have the skills and willingness to support universal/inclusive education and work effectively with students of all performance levels, regardless of their disabilities.

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<td>Non-Examples:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Policy and practice reflect a categorical and separate system of work with children.</td>
<td>• Staff can be interchangeable in certain situations.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teachers fail to intercede unless they have received specific</td>
<td>• All staff take responsibility for all children.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>• Community language is utilized</td>
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General education teachers and special education teachers must work together to provide instruction for both students with and without disabilities. All teachers verbally and physically support instruction and are responsible for all students. General education teachers must be given supports to make these practices work in the classroom. The key is to share information and ideas about meeting students’ needs—all students. (Karten, 2005, p. 131).

Administrators can facilitate this sharing by arranging planning times that allow general education teachers and special education teachers to plan together for their instruction. It would be counterproductive to have general education teachers with one planning period and special education teachers with another.

Sapon-Shevin (2009) provides guidance for teachers and teaching teams to conceptualize inclusive practice through the process of reflective questions about our classrooms and teaching. She recommends teachers:

- Ask whether each child is visible and valued in the classroom space, teaching, and assessment of outcomes.

- Ask what needs to be done to make sure each child in this class is visible, valued and part of the teaching and assessing plan.
Resources on collaborative teaching are available in:


- Power of 2 by Marilyn Friend. This video provides information about and examples of various co-teaching models. Forum on Education, Indiana University (2005).

• Working Together - The Art of Consulting and Communicating by Anita DeBoer, This resource explores how educators can effectively engage in peer problem solving. The book focuses on three aspects of the process: (1) models for consulting with colleagues in problem solving, (2) communication skills necessary for consulting, and (3) how to collaborate with colleagues with differing interpersonal styles. Sopris West, (1995) 1-57035-041-8.

• Working Together - Tools for Collaborative Teaching by Anita DeBoer & Susan Fisher. This book contains a variety of tools designed to assist teachers who are working as part of a collaborative team. Sopris West (1995) 157035046.

• Florida Inclusion Network
IV.5 Implementation of Effective Professional Development

IV. 5 Each education team member participates in and consistently implements effective strategies from collaborative, job-embedded personnel development, e.g., study groups, classroom observations, mentoring, action research, team technical assistance, which is based on student data and is related to effective instruction of all students with and without disabilities, including students with severe disabilities, in general education and natural contexts.

Rationale

Most teachers and staff, when informed about the benefits of inclusive/universal education, willingly support this approach to educating all students in our schools. Providing job-embedded professional development to explain what universal/inclusive education is and how it works is an effective means of creating a culture of acceptance and success in our schools. These opportunities should be provided during the school day and as much as possible in the context within which the skills and knowledge will be used. The Florida Department of Education’ Professional Development System Evaluation Protocol specifies 65 standards for professional development that can assist school teams in ensuring that professional learning in the schools is meeting high standards.
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<td><strong>Non-Examples:</strong></td>
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<td>• Professional development</td>
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<td>activities are segregated</td>
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<td>in terms of membership and</td>
<td>as training tools and discussion</td>
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<tr>
<td>content.</td>
<td>points.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Professional development</td>
<td>• Professional development</td>
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<td>activities are not related</td>
<td>activities take place within</td>
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<td>professional development.</td>
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According to DeBoer (1995, p. 247), the evaluation of progress of inclusive practices should look to the following:

- Appropriate instructional methods and supports—Instructional methods, services and accommodations should be individualized and appropriate for ongoing use in the general education classroom.
• Student readiness—Determine if the student has the skills he or she needs to function appropriately in and benefit from education in the general education classroom.

• Appropriate student participation—Determine whether the student continues to gain skills to function appropriately and demonstrates behaviors that contribute to a safe learning environment.

• Student benefits from participation—Determine whether the student is benefiting academically and socially from his/her education and is treated as a full member of the general education class.

If unfavorable results are obtained from the evaluation, the team needs to determine:

• if it is reasonable to expect the teacher and other staff to implement the strategies, if the staff have the ability to implement the strategies, if the staff have the appropriate support, if the staff have had the necessary training, and if the amount of time needed to implement the strategies takes too much time away from the typical students;

• whether the appropriate goals and objectives were established, whether the appropriate teaching and intervention strategies were used, and whether the student is unable to learn and use his/her skills in the general education classroom;

• if the student displays disruptive or other negative behaviors that inhibit the learning of his/her classmates and if behavior interventions are needed;

• Whether the attitude of a particular teacher, a group of teachers, or the entire school struggles with accepting and educating students with disabilities.

Great Tips!

For more information about implementing effective strategies, see:


The Art and Science of Teaching by Robert J. Marzano. The author presents a model for ensuring quality teaching that balances the need for researched-based practices with the need to understand the strengths and weaknesses of individual students. ASCD (2007) 978-1-4166-0571-3.

Classroom Instruction that Works by Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock. This book outlines nine teaching strategies that research has shown to have a positive effect on student learning and outcomes. ASCD (2001) 0-87120-504-1.

Creating Robust Vocabulary by Isabel Beck, Margaret McKeown, Linda Kucan. Extension of 'Bringing Words to Life', the authors provide an incredible menu of instructional activities to deepen word knowledge. Guilford Press (2008) 978-1-59385-753-0.

Differentiated Literacy Strategies for Student Growth and Achievement in Grades 7-12 by Gayle H. Gregory and Lin Kuzmich. This book contains practical strategies for differentiating instruction when students are asked to read their textbooks or nonfiction text. Corwin Press (2005) 0-7619-8883-1.
• Leadership for Differentiating Schools and Classrooms by Carol Ann Tomlinson & Susan Allan. Helps administrators to know what to look for in the differentiated classroom. Also helps them to set up for appropriate differentiation in their school. ASCD (2000) 871205025.


• Exceptional Student Education Data and Program Evaluation [http://www.fldoe.org/ese/datapage.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/ese/datapage.asp)

• School Grades and AYP [http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org/](http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org/)

• Sunshine State Standards [http://www.floridastandards.org/index.aspx](http://www.floridastandards.org/index.aspx)

• Just Read Florida! [www.justreadflorida.com](http://www.justreadflorida.com)

• No Child Left Behind [http://www.fldoe.org/nclb/](http://www.fldoe.org/nclb/)

IV.6 Monitoring Program Effectiveness

IV.6 The education team evaluates its progress toward implementation of research-based best practices for effective instruction of students with disabilities, including students with severe disabilities, in general education and natural contexts, e.g., uses BPIE or other evaluation tool. Education team members collaboratively develop plans for comprehensive implementation of increasing numbers of research-based best practices, which are then incorporated into each team member’s professional development plan.

Rationale

Implementing effective practices in inclusive/universal education must be pervasive throughout the school. When armed with understanding and commitment, teachers are key in setting and supporting the policies that are needed to help the entire school staff make each school an exemplary inclusive school using universal design principles to instruct all students. Conducting systematic reviews and assessments of the progress the teachers and schools have made in implementing best practices keeps schools and faculty on the right track.

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<tr>
<td>• Teachers plan and implement instruction without reflection on or assessment of practices.</td>
<td>• Teachers continuously collaborate to collect student achievement data and use reflection on results as a planning tool for present and</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Teachers are not capable of defending their choice of</td>
<td>planning tool for present and</td>
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Curriculum-based measurement encompasses an assessment methodology that can be used to develop goals, benchmarks, or short-term objectives for individualized educational programs for students with disabilities. Teachers also use curriculum-based measurement as a means for monitoring student progress across the year. This paper describes curriculum based measurement in reading and mathematics and provides sample goal statements for each area. In addition, the process by which teachers can examine data and make meaningful decisions about the overall effectiveness of their instruction is described. Available at http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resource_infoBrief/studentprogress_org_library_monitoring_student_progress_in_individualized_educational_programs_using_cbm.pdf.html

Scientifically-Based Progress Monitoring. Abstract. When teachers use systematic progress monitoring to track their students’ progress in reading, mathematics, or spelling, they are better able to identify students in need of additional or different forms of instruction, they design stronger instructional programs, and their students achieve better. This document first describes progress-monitoring procedures for which experimental evidence demonstrates these effects. Then, an overview of the research is presented. Available at http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/resource_infoBrief/osepideasthatwork_org_toolkit_pdf_ScientificallyBasedResearch.pdf.html
Great Tips!

Information about monitoring program effectiveness can be found in:

- At the End of the Day, edited by Marquita Grenot-Scheyer, Mary Fisher, & Debbie Staub. This book encompasses eight case studies featuring diverse children with varying disabilities (from preschool to high school) that show how including them in the classroom affects families, teachers, and other students. These case studies, combined with the latest research, enable educators to evaluate different methods for inclusion. Paul H. Brookes (2001) 1-55766-480-3.


- Deciding What to Teach and How to Teach it - Connecting Students Through Curriculum and Instruction, 2nd Edition by Elizabeth Castagnera, Douglas Fisher, Karen Rodifer, Caren Sax, Nancy Frey. Provides families and professionals with practical strategies for meeting the diverse needs of secondary students. The topics include creating an inclusive curriculum, tailoring supports to meet individual needs, planning instruction, and accommodations and modifications, etc. Contains several useful forms. PEAK Parent Center (2003) 1-884720-19-6.

- From Disability to Possibility by Patrick Schwarz. This book allows teachers to change the way they look at and work with their students with disabilities. With the scenarios presented, teachers will begin to look at the possibilities for their students in the inclusive classrooms. Heinemann (2006) 978-0-325-00993-3.
• Inclusive Elementary Schools - Recipes for Success, 2nd Edition by Douglas Fisher, Nancy Frey, Caren Sax. Provides families and professionals with practical strategies for meeting the diverse needs of elementary students. The topics include creating an inclusive curriculum, tailoring supports to meet individual needs, planning instruction, and accommodations and modifications, etc. Contains several useful forms. PEAK Parent Center (2004) 1-884720-21-8.


• Widening the Circle by Mara Sapon-Shevin. This book highlights the need for inclusive education and the benefits to all. The author provides clear and compelling arguments for the inclusion of all students as well as practical suggestions and tips. Beacon Press (2007) 0807032808, 9780807032800.

• You’re Going to Love This Kid!: Teaching Students with Autism in the Inclusive Classroom by Paula Kluth. Provides insight into working with students with autism in an inclusive classroom. Includes specific ideas for enhancing literacy; planning challenging, multidimensional lessons; supporting student behavior; connecting, communicating, and collaborating; fostering friendships; and adapting the physical environment. Paul H. Brookes Co. (2003) 1-55766-614-8.

• Student Progress Monitoring www.studentprogress.org

• Circle of Inclusion http://www.circleofinclusion.org/

• http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/
  The IDEA '04 and Research for Inclusive Settings Center develops training enhancement materials to be used by faculty and professional development providers for the preparation of current and future school personnel.
IV.7 Facilitating Interactions Among All Students

IV.7 Each education team member facilitates interactions among students with and without disabilities, including students with severe disabilities, across instructional and non-instructional school-sponsored activities during and outside of the school day.

Rationale

Inclusive/universal education works best when the entire school body understands the reasons for including all students in the school’s programs and activities, and supports the process and the students. Committed teachers are crucial factors in speaking up for and encouraging the needed resources to support and facilitate inclusive/universal education.

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<td><strong>Non-Examples:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students have limited opportunities to interact outside of assignments.</td>
<td>• All students have a variety of relationships with their classmates.</td>
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<td>• Students are grouped homogeneously.</td>
<td>• Teachers help students with and without disabilities connect in ways they want to and overcome the barriers that prevent students from seeing each other as potential friends.</td>
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Causton (2009, p. 67) offers six tips to facilitate relationships between students with disabilities and their peers:

1. Highlight similarities among students
2. Help students invite each other to socialize.
3. Provide behavioral supports that are social in nature.
4. Provide students with responsibilities that are interactive and collaborative.
5. Help other students understand disabilities.
6. Get out of the way! Give students space so that a natural conversation can occur.

Jorgensen (2006, p. 127 and following) shares seven essential conditions that facilitate student interactions:

- Fully including students in a heterogeneous general education class—fully included students will develop a set of common experiences on which to base conversations and relationships.
- Providing students with a means to communicate all of the time—when students with disabilities have a means to communicate, they are more likely to gain a variety of social relationships.
- Providing support in a way that encourages inter-dependence and independence—when students have to rely first on natural supports, such as their classmates, rather than a para-professional, there is a chance for the students to build a relationship.
• Involving students in problem-solving to remove barriers to social relationships. One approach is to identify existing groups that can connect students and break down barriers. Another approach is to establish a “circle of friends” who are invited to get to know a student who is not yet connected in a meaningful way.

• Giving students access to age-appropriate materials and activities—help students with disabilities who have not previously been with their age group to dress and express interests that are consistent with their age group.

• Forging a partnership between home and school to facilitate friendships and participation in social activities—actively work with families to promote participation of students with disabilities in school-sponsored extracurricular activities and social events.

• Addressing the climate of the whole school with respect to diversity—schools that value diversity embed social justice and diversity issues within the curriculum. School staff reflect racial, cultural, linguistic, gender and sexual orientation diversities.

• Treating students as if they are competent—staff should treat all students as if they are competent, engaging them in regular conversations, avoiding exaggerated praise, and applying the same standards for behavior as with other students.

Giangreco (2007, p.49 and following) offers the following guidelines for supporting friendships for all students:

1. Everyone can and should have friends.
2. Model high expectations for all students.
3. Make sure all students share time, space and activities.
4. Even if students don't speak, they still have things to say.
5. Create classes that celebrate, not simply tolerate, diversity.
6. Respect the space that friendships require. Don’t get in the way.
7. Seek the perspectives and involvement of classmates.
8. Families are essential. You can’t do it alone.
9. Pay attention to what friendship is and isn’t.
Great Tips!

Tips for facilitating interactions among all students are available at:

- Circle of Inclusion [www.circleofinclusion.org/](http://www.circleofinclusion.org/)
- Yes I Can Social Inclusion Program [http://ici.umn.edu/yesican/program/default.html](http://ici.umn.edu/yesican/program/default.html)
  - The program teaches interested students with and without disabilities to effectively work together to ensure that youth with disabilities are included in recreational and social activities of their choice.
- National Down Syndrome Society
- Kids Together, Inc
  [http://www.kidstogether.org/inclusion/benefitsofinclusion.htm](http://www.kidstogether.org/inclusion/benefitsofinclusion.htm)
V. Instructional Support and Pedagogy

Why is this Important?

To meet the needs of all students in universal/inclusive classrooms, teachers implement differentiated instructional practices that build the successes of each student while constantly determining the additional assistance every child needs to master the targeted goals and objectives of instruction. The Department of Education provides strong support for differentiated instruction and Response to Intervention models. Additional assistance for teachers and students comes from consistent behavioral support and classroom management systems such as the Positive Behavioral Support Program and the resources of Project Ten at the University of South Florida. All of these methods are good practices that benefit all students, but are especially supportive of students with disabilities who are placed within general education settings with their peers. These teaching practices are simply good teaching made better.

Section Indicators

There are 14 indictors in the Instructional Support and Pedagogy section:

1. All education team members collaboratively develop, implement, and evaluate progress toward goals on their students’ IEPs.

2. School personnel and families use mutually agreed-upon techniques to communicate effectively as family members actively participate in the development, implementation, and evaluation of instructional activities.

KEY TERMS

- **Summative Assessments**: Assessments used to summarize a student’s overall achievement at the end of a given time period; are often standardized tests or formal school evaluations, i.e., FCAT, ACT, SAT, but can also be qualitative, i.e., person-centered planning.

- **Formative Assessments**: Assessments used to inform a teacher’s teaching. These are authentic, individualized, informal and meaningful to practice, i.e., rubrics, open-ended questioning, journals, observations, running records, end of chapter quiz, story, play, artwork, etc…

- **Naturally-Occurring Activities**: The activities that occur in the normal flow of life/a student’s school day; in this case, i.e., literature circles, story time, lunch, recess, physical education class, etc…

- **Research-Based Strategies**: Teachers implementing teaching methods and interventions that are based on a literature base which shows effectiveness.

http://www.peatc.org/peatccgi?template=peakaccom
3. The education team uses individually determined formal and informal assessments to examine the individual skills, strengths, interests, and needs of their students with disabilities and assess the results to determine what and how to teach.

4. The education team collects instructional and behavioral data for their students with disabilities within naturally occurring activities across general education and natural contexts. The education team regularly analyzes these data as a part of the instructional decision-making process.

5. The education team implements research-based strategies to provide social and behavioral supports for students with disabilities in naturally occurring activities with peers without disabilities across general education and natural contexts. Student-specific strategies are developed and modified based upon analysis of individual student data collected through formal and informal processes.

6. The education team uses various instructional groupings of students, with and without disabilities, resulting in meeting the individual instructional needs of all their students.

7. The education team uses a school-wide approach to determine appropriate assessment instruments, strategies, and accommodations/modifications for all their students with disabilities.

8. The education team identifies and uses individualized accommodations and modifications for all students with disabilities to facilitate their instruction and meaningful participation across general education and natural contexts.

9. Each education team member implements and monitors special education and related services for students with disabilities during the naturally-occurring activities in which the skills are needed.

10. The education team identifies content that is meaningful for each student with disabilities and embeds instruction on that content within naturally-occurring activities across general education and natural contexts.

11. The education team provides instruction on choice-making and self-determination within naturally-occurring activities across general education and natural contexts, and facilitates and monitors opportunities for students with disabilities to make choices and demonstrate self-determination.

12. The education team collaborates with community agencies to jointly plan and/or provide services and follow-up to students with disabilities and/or their families to ensure that these students receive supports that facilitate school and community inclusion.
13. All education team members participate in one or more person-centered planning processes to make transition decisions for each student with disabilities, resulting in a plan which emphasizes the student accessing environments in ways that are consistent with their peers without disabilities.

14. The education team collaboratively develops, implements, and monitors an action plan for transition for each student with disabilities to ensure that the student has ongoing, meaningful, participation across environments in ways that are consistent with their peers without disabilities.
V.1. - Collaborative IEP Goals

V.1. All education team members collaboratively develop (i.e., collectively review all pertinent data and identify appropriate goals and objectives that are non-discipline specific), implement (i.e., all education team members share responsibility for systematic instruction related to each objective across general education and natural contexts), and evaluate progress toward, (i.e., all education team members collect data related to each objective across general education and natural contexts and collectively review all data) goals on their students' IEPs, including IEPs for their students with severe disabilities.

Rationale

Guiding the inclusive education of students with disabilities requires a team which includes the special education teacher, the general education teacher, the student’s parents, and the student, when appropriate. Depending on the student’s needs, the team also may include a speech/language pathologist, physical therapist, occupational therapist, school psychologist, counselor, and para-professional. Keep in mind that groups of educators assigned to a particular student do not necessarily constitute a team. A real team shares a single set of educational goals that belong to the student rather than any particular discipline, and collectively pursues the student’s goals in a coordinated manner (Giangreco, 2007). Therefore, it is a premise of the BPIE indicators and of this Teacher's Guide that the exceptional education and the general education staff work collaboratively to plan and implement the students' individualized education program and support students to make progress in the educational setting. The collaborative education team has a number of roles and responsibilities, not the least of which is to guide a process to generate and monitor Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for all students with disabilities.
What does this look like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Examples:</th>
<th>Examples:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- IEP pre-written by ESE only.</td>
<td>- Going back farther than just one year to develop more meaningful goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Para-professionals doing data collection without training</td>
<td>- Using Access points to <strong>guide</strong> (not DRIVE) planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Special education teachers writing and reviewing IEPs prior to the meeting and creating it themselves without the team, student, and/or family collaboration.</td>
<td>- Implementing practical strategies of collaborating and involving the student and/or family in the IEP development process.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Using privacy as a reason to not share IEP with staff members.</td>
<td>- Using a broader definition of what is “pertinent data”, i.e., a variety of strategies and settings, naturalistic settings, multiple sources across multiple environments</td>
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<tr>
<td>- ESE as primary (or sole) person responsible for IEP data collection.</td>
<td>- IEP goals are measurable and lend themselves to data collection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Relying on para-professionals to implement and/or evaluate IEP goals and objectives</td>
<td>- IEPs are collaboratively created.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Draft goals and present levels are shared by and with teachers, parents and the student before meetings.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- The ENTIRE educational team has access to the entire IEP – not just the accommodations</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
section.

- The Education team has built in planning time to make sense of the IEP and what it means for each classroom/learning environment.

According to Jorgensen (2006), the team’s responsibilities include:

- Creating a classroom environment in which all students are valued members and participate fully;
- Monitoring and evaluating student learning;
- Creating instructional and assessment materials;
- Providing individualized instruction;
- Delivering student supports; and
- Engaging in professional development to improve skills related to high-quality inclusive education. (pg. 108)

Processes that will help ensure effective team meetings are described in Jorgensen (2006). These include:

- Defining each meeting's purpose and ensuring that the right combination of team members is present;
- Using a standardized team meeting agenda designed to suit each team’s purpose and style;
• Distributing leadership roles periodically, so that various team members serve as facilitator, recorder, and timekeeper;

• Using participatory decision-making, including full participation by everyone in the group, commitment to building a shared framework of understanding, work toward inclusive solutions, and share responsibility for implementation. A problem is not considered solved until everyone who will be affected by the solution understands the reasoning behind the solution;

• Managing conflict within the team to lead to new learning and growth through effective communication skills, e.g., paraphrasing, eye contact, criticize ideas-not people, never interrupting, and principled negotiation, e.g., strive for both/and solutions, not either/or solutions through brainstorming, reconciling interests, and establishing objective criteria by which the final decision will be evaluated.

It may fall to the educator of students with disabilities or inclusion facilitator to consult with team members, particularly the general education teacher and the para-professionals, to facilitate the team collaboration. Techniques that are helpful in establishing effective consultations include (1) drawing on prior knowledge of the staff to develop rapport and establish a trusting, working relationship, (2) facilitating independent problem-solving by the teacher and para-professional by explaining the big picture and the thinking process used to adapt a situation or help a student with a difficult activity, and (3) helping the educators recognize and take pride in small steps of progress that the students make (deBoer, 2009, p. 185-186).

Particular stages that may require the consultative role of the special educator or inclusion facilitator include the following:

• Observing and finding the appropriate general education classroom;

• Planning for the first days of inclusion;

• Training and preparing the general education teacher and para-professional;

• Facilitating the first days of inclusion (deBoer, 2009, p. 114-128).

The development of the IEP is not to be a solitary endeavor done by the special education teacher and presented to the IEP team and parents. By law the IEP team is mandated to create the IEP with one another, this is, to include, at a minimum, the child, the parent/guardian, the special education teacher, general
education teacher, and related service personnel, the district resource representative, and other members invited by the parent(s). Every member of the IEP team is to be an integral part of the development of the IEP goals, instructional plan and progress monitoring of the goals. There are many practical ways to achieve this, and each team will find its own way. To get started, it is important to keep the following things in mind:

- Use strength-based profiles to communicate who the students is to all team members and make sure to update it on a regular basis.

- Circulate some sort of elicited response form at least 3 months prior to the annual IEP review date to all members of the IEP team. With today’s technology an on-line forum can be created for this, but something as simple as a paper form can be circulated. It is important that all team members are part of developing the process.
  - This form should include, but not be limited to: current goals with data on current level of performance as well as a place for others to add data; criterion for how to determine if a goal is met, needs to be continued, adapted or removed; suggestions for current goals with an area to rank priorities; summary of preferred learning modes and instructional strategies that have proven to be or not to be successful.

- Two months before the IEP meeting, the education team should compile data from the above-elicited form and DRAFT collaborative goals and objectives as well as accommodations, special education services, and/or related services based on the needs that emerged. This information should be sent out to the entire team for feedback.

- One month before the meeting team members should all gather current data, update draft goals/programming suggestions, and collaboratively begin drafting language that may be included in the annual IEP.

- At the IEP meeting, no one should be seeing the draft IEP for the first time. The facilitator of the meeting should have an electronic means to create the final IEP during the meeting with the input of all team members.
Great Tips!

Hannel (2007, p. 114) offers the following advice for successful teamwork:

- Teaching is a demanding job that can be stressful. Support your colleagues with care, concern and practical assistance when the going gets tough.

- Ask for support and assistance from your colleagues, supervisors, and administrators, if you are finding that your work is too stressful.

- Take care of yourself! If you are exhausted, unwell, depressed, anxious, or overly stressed, you will not be able to provide the students or your colleagues with the support they need.

- Follow through with what has been agreed upon by the group. Do not say one thing in a group meeting and then do something different once the meeting is over.

- You do not have to be an instant expert on everything. Talk to colleagues and share expertise both ways. If you do not know something, say so, and then find someone who can help or provide the information you need.

- Make time for regular meetings with colleagues. You cannot work together unless you spend time talking together.

- Be flexible and accommodating and a good team player.

- Be prepared to pull your weight. Be generous with your time, effort, and expertise to make inclusive education and intervention a success story in your school.

- Communicate with your colleagues and coordinate what you do, so students and parents have continuity between one teacher and another.

- Be particularly careful during transition periods, such as changes from one school year to the next, so that all information is shared with the next teacher.
• Have regular show and tell sessions, where colleagues report back from conferences, present professional papers, describe examples of good practice and generally enhance the team’s ability to be inclusive and provide effective intervention.

• Share resources that individual teachers develop in class, such as teacher-made materials, audiotapes, resource folders, and classroom posters.

Additional resources are available from:

• Parent Educational Advocacy Training Center (PEATC)  

• Florida Inclusion Network Publications List  
V.2 – Family Involvement

V.2. School personnel and families use mutually agreed-upon techniques, e.g., communication logs, regular meetings, e-mails, phone calls, to communicate effectively, as family members actively participate in the development, implementation, and evaluation of instructional activities, e.g., offer suggestions for accommodations/modifications, and assist with instruction and/or data collection outside of school.

Rationale

Federal law (IDEA) requires that parents be involved as part of a child’s education team, and that the team also include the exceptional and general education teachers who teach the child. In every step of planning, implementing, and evaluating instructional activities and student progress, the parents have a right to be involved. Collaboration of the entire education team is the best practice. Given the requirement of parent and education team involvement, it is critical to acknowledge that the educational progress of a student with disabilities is a shared responsibility of educators and parents, and collaboration between educators and parents is not only best practice but essential.

What does this look like?

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<tr>
<td>Non-Examples:</td>
<td>Examples:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• The practice of using point sheets and sending them home without specific feedback or</td>
<td>• Ongoing and frequent participation of all stakeholders in evaluation and planning of</td>
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contextual information and explanation of what the “score” means.

- Solely relying on whole class newsletters.
- Setting up meeting times and inviting parents with no input from families as to which date/time works and where the best location could be.
- Sending homework that is not tied to a student’s individualized education plan and is above or below student’s level.
- Blaming parents or family for lack of home/school communication.

instructional activities and beyond

- Communication logs and home visits
- Strategies for families to use to support student - as well as strategies from families of how to best support/teach students.
- Include information about all areas of develop, not just behavior.
- The time is taken to set communication schedules.
- Accommodated/modified/individualized homework.

School personnel find and use creative and mutually agreed-upon ways to communicate meaningfully and effectively with family members. The communication facilitates the active participation in the development of the IEP, the implementation of reaching IEP goals, and the evaluation/assessment of instructional activities. The student and/or family members could be communicated with via communication logs/journals, regular weekly or bi-weekly meetings (not just the annual IEP), e-mails, blogs, discussion boards, phone conferences, or other creative communication methods.

The student and/or family member should be contributing meaningful suggestions for accommodations/modifications, assistance for instruction,
providing instructional ideas, and being a part of the data collection team outside of school. These suggestions should be used and integrated into the student’s IEP goal development and the implementation/instructional programming as well as data collection/evaluation of progress (progress monitoring).

To create an effective, collaborative relationship with parents and each other, educators must focus on effective communication strategies. As a foundation for the collaborative relationship, educators should communicate:

- In a manner that is respectful and non-judgmental;
- In a way that shows the parent and all education team members are welcome in the partnership;
- In a way that acknowledges that the parents are the experts on their children;
- In a way that shows the educators truly care about the student and want to work collaboratively with the parents and each other (Rief, 2006).

Communication can be verbal (including phone), written (communication logs, including email), or digital (blogs, discussion boards, digital communication journals, etc.) and can include report cards, checklists, behavior charts, and homework assignments.

Educators should be proactive in their communication with parents and each other, such as sending notes home communicating positive messages, making themselves accessible to parents and each other, clearly communicating expectations and procedures, welcoming parents and all education team members in the classroom, and finding ways that parents and education team members, including related service and support personnel, can contribute to the classroom that meets their comfort level and interest (Rief, 2006).

Communication should be frequent and begin early in the year. Frequent communication has many benefits including averting problematic situations, sending a message of worth to the parents and each other, and telling students there is a connection between all the school components and home (Karten, 2005).

Communication should be welcoming, both in words and body language, and designed to foster a sense of collaboration and shared responsibility. Teachers should take the time to explain reports and materials, send notes home to acknowledge good work, let parents and educational team members know if
students are failing or falling behind early, stay calm if parents or colleagues become angry or upset, and let team members know when problems arise (McGrath, 2007).

Giangreco (2007) offers guidelines for education teams to use in building partnerships with parents and caregivers which can also be applied to fostering the student's involvement in their own education plan. In summary, the guidelines are:

1. Send a Clear Message of Regard and Value—the way teachers talk about students has a significant impact on the development of relationships with parents. Parents are more likely to be open and interested if they know their child is important and valued.

2. Put Yourself in the Shoes of the Parent and your Colleagues—teachers who attempt to understand the parents' and their colleagues’ frame of reference are less likely to develop judgmental attitudes that could be damaging to relationships.

3. Demonstrate Genuine Interest in Parents' Goals—through their choice of language and their interaction styles, teachers can create an atmosphere of respect and interest in the parents' priorities for their child. The interplay of the teacher's expertise and the parent's information and insight can greatly enrich the outcome for students.

4. Use Everyday Language—when the education team uses terms that are unclear to parents, parents can feel excluded. Teachers should minimize the use of jargon and take leadership in making sure the discussion is in terms that the parents understand. In writing, use common words and place the technical term in parentheses.

5. Talk with Parents and all Team Members About How they Want to Share Information—ask parents how they want to communicate and how often. Realize this may change over time, so revisit during the year.

6. Expand your Awareness of Cultural Diversity—it is important to be sensitive to cultural issues that may affect parents' thoughts on their role in their child's education. Asking parents their preferences shows respect—the first step in teaming with families.

7. See Individuals—Challenge Stereotypes—focus on productive actions such as staff development that focuses on the diversity in families, promotion of disability awareness information-sharing sessions, and offering examples that contradict stereotypes expressed by others.
8. Create Effective Forums for Planning and Problem Solving—some teams hold meetings on an ongoing basis, not just annually for the IEP review. These meetings include sharing successful strategies, discussing progress, and planning for the next school year. While time is always a challenge, the benefit of such meetings can be significant, including a greater ability to be responsive to students as they encounter obstacles.

9. Support Full Membership for All Students—as students get older, the parents’ efforts for inclusive education for their child become much more difficult. Teachers can support changing systems for inclusive teaching by supporting staff development efforts that build expertise with diversity, challenging plans that refer students to a more restrictive setting, or join community organizations that have goals related to building inclusive schools.

10. Persevere in Building Partnerships with Parents—a collaborative relationship with parents does not automatically happen. Education teams should not give up too quickly and dismiss parents who do not attend meetings. Building partnerships takes commitment and vision over the long term, with teams extending themselves and doing what needs to be done. Always be welcoming, attempting to make parents as comfortable as possible. Express sincere interest in their role in the student’s education.

Teachers cannot understand their students with disabilities fully without taking into account the parent’s perspectives and struggles as well. Parents go through stages as they learn to accept and adjust to their child’s disability. The teacher needs to try to understand what stage the parents are in and how that is influencing their actions and decisions. With this understanding, it will be easier for the teacher and the parents to become allies in the educational process. Mutual respect is the key. Teachers should be sensitive to the jargon and formal processes that can be intimidating to some parents and students and make an effort to keep parents and students well informed. Education teams should ensure parents and students are empowered to voice their perspectives in planning and evaluation of education activities. (Karten, 2005, p 285-7). If there are concerns about the student, make contact with the student and parents and explain the concerns objectively, being sure to solicit their input. Take time to listen and to explain the strategies that you plan to use. (Rief, 2006).

**Great Tips!**
Schwartz (2005, p. 252) provides tips for educational teams on building relationships:

- The key to any successful partnership is to establish a relationship of mutual respect and appreciation.
- Cultural sensitivity helps to build trust.
- Open communication and active listening promote understanding.
- Teachers can help parents become active partners in supporting learning by sharing information about class routines and activities.
- Parents can help educators by sharing important and relevant information about their child.
- Advocating for a child with disabilities is the first step in building a partnership.

Hannel (2007, p. 118) offers the following advice for working with parents, which can also be applied to working with colleagues and other members of the educational team:

- Recognize that a family's cultural and religious values and traditions may play a significant part in the parents’ and colleague’s perspective.
- Remember that parents often see a different side of their child compared to the one teachers see at school. Always talk to them about how things are at home and their personal concerns about the student.
- Anxiety is a normal and healthy reaction to a problem. It stimulates action and problem solving. Work with anxious parent to deal with the problems they perceive.
- Do not dismiss parents’ anxieties as unfounded because you think the problem is minor. Respect parental concerns, and do all you can to address them.
Parents will be particularly anxious if they do not know or understand the full picture. Provide as much information as you can and help to interpret it, so that parents have an accurate picture of the situation and what is being done to work with the problem.

Parents, too, have a lot of information about their child. Ask parents to discuss their child and to help you see things through the eyes of the student and family.

Sometimes, parents have had unfortunate experiences in previous encounters with professionals. You do not have to judge or defend your colleagues, but you do need to understand the issues that the parents are dealing with.

Other times, parents have had very positive experiences with professionals. Knowing what has worked well in the past is an important part of future planning.

Remember that there may be a family history that colors the parents’ reactions to difficulties with learning.

Do not take parental concern or questioning as a personal attack on your professional skills.

Let parents know you hear and understand their perspective.

Do not make the parents feel they are to blame for the student’s difficulties.

Make sure the parents have the support they need to understand and support their child. Provide extra counseling, discussion and practical help to ease tensions, if they exist.

Talk to parents about their thoughts concerning their child’s future, to understand their hopes and fears.

Work with parents to find out about positive avenues that may be available in the future for the student. These may be quite different from what the teacher assumes.

Share with parents the positives as well as the negatives about the student.
The more involved the parent and student are in their educational activities, the more likely communication and collaboration will be effective. Rief (2006, p. 162) provides tips on increasing parent participation:

- Provide incentives to increase attendance.
- Make video recordings of school events for lending libraries, so parents can view if they were unable to attend.
- Have student-led exhibitions of different kinds, such as samples of favorite work.
- Organize a “Shadow Your Student” half-day.
- Host volunteer appreciation celebrations of various kinds.
- Encourage parents to participate based on their interests, gleaned through a Parent Interest Form.
- Help your school offer parenting classes.
- Establish a parent center in the building, for networking, browsing resources, and working on projects for the school.
- Encourage an up-to-date school website that students are a part of building so parents can access information about school activities.

Another resource is:

V.3 - Individualized Assessment

V.3. The education team uses individually determined formal assessment instruments, e.g., WISC-R, WRAT, FCAT, PASS-D, and individually determined informal assessment strategies, e.g., observations, ecological inventories, person-centered planning, across general education and natural contexts to examine the individual skills, strengths, interests, and needs of their students with disabilities, including students with severe disabilities. The education team uses the results of these assessment instruments and strategies to determine what, e.g., state standards, functional activities, and how to teach.

Rationale

Assessments provide information about the strengths and weaknesses of each student and the class as a whole. Retesting in the middle of the year allows the teacher to determine if the interventions put in place at the beginning of the year have been effective. If a student’s progress is not satisfactory, the team needs to look for different approaches for the second half of the year. Final assessments can provide information for placement and planning for the next year (McGrath, 2007).

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<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Examples:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Only using IQ, FCAT, standardized assessment scores</td>
<td>• Parents and students are part of assessment process.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• In-class assessments include</td>
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</table>
- Planning instruction without incorporating daily “Check-ins” of how and what students are learning (formative assessments)

- Assessment content drives what is being taught.

**informal as well as formal assessment.**

- Assessment is authentic, given in the natural context and learner-centered.

- Person-centered planning (Circle of Friends, PATH, etc) is used.

- Multiple sources across multiple contexts are used to get authentic picture of student(s).

- Instruction and individual student strengths/capabilities drive assessment methods.

- Assessment results are used as an instrument/tool to inform the teacher in planning for instructional methods, pace and delivery.

- Authentic assessment is used to guide instruction and evaluate achievement. They are informal assessments that can be used in natural contexts.
Authentic assessment is measuring what a child actually does in a variety of contexts and a variety of points in time (Ryan, 1994). Assessment that is authentic often involves person-centered planning, well-purposed portfolio systems, rubrics, observations, and performance-based assessments. The education team uses both individually determined formal (summative) assessment instruments and individually determined informal (formative) assessment strategies to examine...

- Student strengths
- Student learning styles
- Individual skills
- Individual interests
- What needs exist

**Person-Centered Planning.** The critical feature of person-centered planning is a circle of friends, including the student, family members, friends, peers, teachers, and other service providers coming together during regularly scheduled and structured meeting times to build relationships with the student, explore his/her strengths and interests, and develop team unity and a comprehensive plan for the student. Resources for person-centered planning include:

- Group Action Planning, known as GAP (Turnbull & Turnbull, 1992).
- Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope, known as PATH (Pearpoint, O'Brien, & Forest, 1993).

**Portfolios.** Portfolios contain work samples to showcase a student’s abilities in selected areas, i.e. math, writing, social studies, reading. The work samples show each developmental level of the student’s growth, e.g., to showcase a student’s writing, include writing samples of each stage of the writing process at different points in time. Portfolios have a clear set of inclusion/exclusion criteria based on a collaboratively determined purpose. Different types of portfolios, according to Ryan (1994) include:

- Collection Portfolios- a collection of the ‘students work for each subject area or project-based learning unit;
- Showcase of Display Portfolio- “best example” from collection portfolio with student reflections and personal items showcasing achievement, teacher portfolios as an example; and
- Assessment Portfolio- work samples, anecdotal notes, conference and meeting reports, observations, IEP progress monitoring data.
Great Tips!

As lesson plans are implemented in the classroom, it is important for teachers to use information gained from one lesson to help prepare and implement the following lessons. On some occasions, a student may not have mastered the skills necessary to progress, in which case, the next lesson should not be presented. Therefore, it is extremely beneficial to collect performance information on students. The data collection does not need to be extensive, but there should be enough for the team to make decisions about particular interventions, modifications, or accommodations to be used in future lessons (Beattie, 2006).

These websites provide valuable information on assessments for students with disabilities:


Districts may also have limits on the types of accommodations and modifications that are allowed for different district assessments. Consult your district testing coordinator for directions and assistance.

Other resources include:

- FCAT: http://fcat.fldoe.org/fcat/
- End-of-Course Examinations: http://fcat.fldoe.org/eoc/
V.4 - Natural Contexts

V.4. The education team collects instructional and behavioral data for their students with disabilities within naturally occurring activities across general education and natural contexts. The education team regularly analyzes these data as a part of the instructional decision-making process.

Rationale

Instructional and behavioral data are taken throughout the year in the student’s general education environment as well as in other natural environments such as lunch, recess, in the hallway, or waiting for the buses. These data are collected during naturally occurring activities. The team then analyzes the data together, regularly, as a part of their collaborative lesson planning processes.

What does this look like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You should not see........</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Examples:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Examples:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The special education teacher or speech therapist pulling students with IEPs to a different room to assess a student’s communication skills.</td>
<td>• The classroom teacher sharing a week’s worth of observation data that counted the amount of times a particular student initiates communication with classmates during lunch or during a collaborative planning meeting.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• A multiple-choice quiz on the latest novel read in class.</td>
<td>• Teachers recording a student’s</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
comprehension of the novel through the student's successful variation of the costumes that accurately represent the two main characters of the novel in the group-developed play and deciding to use a play for the next social studies/literature integrated unit.

From the BPIE Glossary

**Naturally occurring activities:** Events that occur within the normal flow of a student's daily life.

When schools are in the process of moving to a school-wide approach to inclusion, the roles of the general education teacher and the exceptional education teacher are necessarily re-configured. Unless there is an inclusion coordinator, the special education teacher is faced with managing a diverse set of educational placements. Ideally, one person should serve as an inclusion facilitator, perhaps a special education teacher, and a different special education teacher handle any self-contained classrooms that may continue.
In an inclusive school-wide approach, the student with disabilities receiving instruction in a general education classroom is one of the general educator’s students, not a visitor. This teacher will consider the student in lesson planning and schedule time to meet with the inclusion facilitator.

For the exceptional education teacher or related-service provider, the approaches also change in terms of focus—what support does the student need in order to fully participate in general education—and where services are delivered. As described by Jorgensen (2006, p. 188), “communication skills can be supported within reading groups or on the playground. Gross motor skills can be supported as students move from class to class or participate in physical education. Fine motor skills can be supported as students use a computer, participate in art activities, or complete vocational tasks.” In an inclusive model, support services might occur in longer blocks of time with less frequency. In general, the idea is to plan to ensure support that is purposeful, discreet, and faded out when unnecessary.

Giangreco (2007, 123) provides guidelines for a school-wide universal design for learning (UDL). In summary, the guidelines are:

1. Recognize Each Learner’s Strengths and Needs—The way each student learns is highly individual. UDL responds to individual needs and strengths by providing appropriate scaffolds, supports, options, and choices. The availability of digital text makes such differentiation more possible today than previously.

2. Understand How the Learning Brain Works—UDL correlates the three elements of learning (recognition of information to be learned, strategies to process, and engagement with the task) with the neural networks established by brain research (recognition, strategic, and affective networks). Therefore UDL principles include providing varied methods of presentation, multiple pathways for reaching goals, and multiple options for engagement.

3. Understand How UDL and Assistive Technology Fit Together—Technology should be implemented in ways that support learning goals. Some supports will improve access to information, while others support participation in the general curriculum.

4. Differentiate the Means of Presentation—Using the wide variety of multimedia tools now available, teachers can more easily provide diverse pathways to learning. Teachers might present multiple examples of a concept, give extra attention to the background knowledge those
students possess, provide links to reference material for support, and generally differentiate the presentation to reach more learners.

5. Offer Students Multiple Pathways to Learning—Ideally, learners should be supported in taking different approaches to achieve common goals. Teachers may present students with different models of skilled performance (showing the essential features while bringing individual creativity to the task), offering lots of practice with supports and scaffolds that are gradually withdrawn, and providing multiple avenues for expression (an online concept map vs. a written essay, for example).

6. Engage Learners in Multiple Ways—Providing appropriate levels of challenge and support is the key to engaging students. Provide basic access support (such as larger fonts for students with low vision), provide supports in learning strategies (such as writing strategy support), and provide students with choices in content, tools, and learning context.

7. Use Ongoing Assessment to Improve Instruction—Ongoing assessment is a way to help teachers adjust their instruction to meet individual needs and to help students learn to self-regulate and manage their own learning processes. Digital, interactive technologies make ongoing assessment easier to provide.

8. Provide Flexible Supports for Literacy—Multiple supports and avenues for success can re-energize and re-engage discouraged students. Many new technologies offer content with varied scaffold and supports, such as text-to-speech and read-aloud functions, animated characters that act as mentors, providing feedback on responses, and on-line work logs.

9. Develop New Literacys Using Technology—New technologies, e.g. instant messaging, on-line chat rooms, cell phones, multimedia blogs, music/video downloads, and picture swapping, offer teachers new opportunities to reach all learners, but also require a broader understanding of literacy. Now students must develop skills to gather facts from diverse sources, analyze and synthesize this information, evaluate sources for credibility, form points of view and plans of action, and express themselves using different media.

10. Listen to Students and Learn from Them—Ask students questions during the course of a lesson, conduct interviews with individual students, and solicit student ideas through multiple venues to gather valuable data about student progress.
Great Tips!

Causton (2009, Teaching Exceptional Children), provides an excellent discussion on how to “fade” adult support in general education classrooms to avoid:

- Unnecessary dependence on adults
- Interference with peer interactions
- Interference with creativity
- Interference with teacher contact and instruction

Alternatives to Side-by-Side Support include the following:

- Modify the material so the student can do the work independently.
- Modify the expectations so the student can complete the task without support.
- Pair everyone in the class with a partner.
- Model written notes for everyone on the overhead projector.
- Check on students periodically—walk around the room and support all students.
- Stand in front of the room and write main ideas on the chalkboard for all students.
- Sit at a table to create modifications for an upcoming lesson while keeping an eye on a particular student.
- Arrange for peer support.
- Go to the library to find visual materials to support an upcoming lesson.
- Create a to-do list on a student’s desk instead of providing verbal reminders
V.5 - Social and Behavioral Support

V.5. The education team implements research-based strategies to provide social and behavioral supports for students with disabilities in naturally occurring activities with peers without disabilities across general education and natural contexts. Student-specific strategies are developed and modified based upon analysis of individual student data collected through formal and informal processes.

Rationale

Current law requires schools and teachers to consider the behavior of a student in conjunction with possible behaviors that are associated with their identified disabilities. Best educational practices ensure that schools and teachers provide a consistent and positive system for encouraging and rewarding appropriate classroom behavior. Using positive behavioral support plans and systems are a win-win for the students, teachers, and the school as a whole.
**What does this look like?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Examples:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Long line of students with IEPs in principal's office, on suspension, or in-school suspension rooms (ISS).</td>
<td>• School-wide positive behavioral support plan (PBS)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Placement decisions are made solely based on behavior.</td>
<td>• Individual behavior plans are positive and are based on a functional behavioral assessment (Level 1 RTI).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• No positive behavior support in general education class or school-wide.</td>
<td>• Teachers engage regularly and comfortably in conversations about the interaction between behavior, academic, communication and sensory needs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Deciding to be inclusive without staff training on positive behavior support (PBS). For example, a principal wanted to create a behavioral unit but had no plan of how to transition students back into general education.</td>
<td>• Class has a peer mediation/peer support process in place that is used and created with students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Punitive level systems</td>
<td>• The development of student positive interdependence is a part of lesson planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Visual schedules and technology are in place in all school environments.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Prevention techniques around behavior – crisis management, and escalation techniques are known by all staff</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Teacher's Guide to Universal/Inclusive Education**

- Teachers are committed to fix the problem collaboratively, rather than assigning blame.
- Caution against behavior units, communication units – importance of peer modeling.
- Stats on exits from units
- If ISS (In-school suspension) must be used, data is collected on what percentage of children with disabilities access the environment,
- Education occurs in ISS- the IEP is still followed.
- Criteria exist to return to general education, if separated.

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Jorgenson (2006) shares an example of the power of a functional behavioral assessment, “A child with autism in a middle school was soiling himself, and through observation she discovered he was terrified of the auto flush in his new school which was different from past school.” Blame was not placed on the child, but instead the environment was analyzed to see what was different. By identifying the reason behind the behavior, the child was able to avoid potentially disrespectful and harmful interventions.
Behavior and Social Supports

Positive behavior supports emphasize the use of collaborative teaming and problem-solving processes that are designed to prevent and remediate behavior problems, without resorting to the traditional mechanistic and sometimes aversive behavior management practices. Positive behavior supports require a team approach and a pro-active system of management (Causton, 2009).

According to Rief (2006), the best way to avoid students misbehaving out of boredom or frustration is through positive instructional practices, such as:

- Providing engaging, meaningful learning activities;
- Plan well for lessons; lag time is when behavior problems often arise; provide independent work that is developmentally appropriate and within the student’s capability;
- Use effective and inclusive questioning techniques;
- Use differentiated instructional practices, and make accommodations for different learning styles.

For students with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD), it is especially important that the expectations placed on the student do not exceed what is reasonable for them at their current level of understanding and abilities (deBoer, 2009, p.219)

After positive instructional practices, focus on proactive management strategies. A key proactive strategy is to organize the environment in a way that promotes positive behavior. Most student behaviors can be managed through basic structuring of the environment with appropriate rules, consequences, and consistent enforcement. Strategies that establish a structure for success include:

- Establish clear, reasonable rules and behavior standards, routines, procedures, and guidelines.
- Establish the rationale for all expectations, and teach, model, practice and review them frequently.
- Post a schedule.
- Post the rules and refer to the visual rules frequently.
• Provide specific, descriptive feedback to students about positive behaviors.

• Prepare for and structure transition times of the day, and provide extra help if there are unexpected changes of routine.

• Arrange the environment for each access to all parts of the room and clear visibility of all students.

• Use proximity control: circulate among students and stand next to the desk of a student who needs additional support.

• Change student seating, for example to move a student closer to the teacher for cueing and prompting. Do not isolate a student by seating him or her in a separate location.

• Provide more space if possible, e.g., increasing the distance between desks.

• Use music for transitions and for calming.

• Build a classroom environment with a sense of community, teamwork, and independence. (Rief, 2006).

Other proactive management strategies include:

• Matching instructional practices to student strengths;

• Building relationships with students;

• Meeting student needs for autonomy, relationships, safety and trust, pleasure and joy, and communication (Causton, 2009).

Giangreco (2007) provides guidelines for creating positive behavior supports. In summary, the guidelines are:

1. Create a Student-Centered Team—A team approach to a student with difficult behaviors is likely to be more effective than the teacher going it alone. A team of individuals that know the student, possibly including a classmate, can brainstorm ways to prevent problems, teach new skills, and respond in supportive ways.

2. Establish Common Educational Goals—The team must identify positive behaviors to teach instead of focusing on the negative behaviors. The
team should develop a common language for positive behavioral changes and make a commitment to support the student through difficult times.

3. Understand the Impact of Your Interaction Style—Teachers should develop an understanding of their style of interaction when presented with difficult behaviors and the impact that style may have on the student. Rather than overprotective, mechanistic, or authoritarian, the style should be one of respect, relationship, and solidarity.

4. Identify the Message behind the Behavior—Students communicate through their misbehavior for various purposes: to get attention, to escape or avoid, getting something, to play, to self-regulate. If the team can identify the purpose of the behavior, they are in a position to select alternative positive skills that can be taught to replace the behavior.

5. Help the Student Feel a Sense of Control—The teacher can help the student feel a sense of control in a variety of ways, including posting a schedule, establish clear routines and transitions, teach turn-taking skills, provide choice-making opportunities, and combining materials of interest with activities of least interest.

6. Share Information with the Student’s Classmates—with parental involvement, the teacher may develop information to share with classmates regarding a student with difficult behaviors. Other students may be more supportive when they understand the behavior better and have the opportunity to problem-solve.

7. Focus on Prevention—The key to prevention is prediction. If the teacher knows when a challenging behavior is likely to occur, the teacher may alter the physical environment, adapt the instructional environment, and/or change the social environment.

8. Teach New Skills—Teachers may be able to prevent problems by teaching new skills, such as teaching a student to tap a classmate on the shoulder instead of grabbing the student for attention.

9. Respond in Positive and Supportive Ways—A positive behavior support plan emphasizes prevention rather than reacting once a behavior has occurred. If a problem behavior occurs that the teacher cannot prevent, the teacher needs to guide the student in using positive behavior. For example, the teacher may provide choices, move materials so the child can continue working, state when a break is due, or provide positive feedback and encouragement.
10. Evaluate Your Teaching and Your Interactions—Careful observation and evaluation provide information regarding how effective the positive behavior support plan is. Videotaping is one effective form of evaluation of the interaction style of the teacher, the purpose of the student’s behavior, and new skills that need to be addressed. Requesting that other team members observe is a similar strategy.

If corrective responses to challenging behaviors are determined by the team to be appropriate, these should be given without lecturing or scolding, and instead delivered calmly, in a matter-of-fact manner. A discipline hierarchy of consequences is often used for general management. The first infraction invokes a minor consequence, the second a stronger consequence, and the third or more, more serious consequences. For example, in a middle school, the plan might evolve as (1) conference with student, (2) time out or behavior journal, (3) call to parents or behavior plan, (4) parent conference, detention after school, or mediation in class (Rief, 2006).

**Great Tips!**

Rief (2006, p 126) provides these tips for working with students with challenging behaviors:

- Plan a response and avoid reacting to challenging behavior;
- Call for a break if needed;
- Problem-solve after both parties have had time to cool down;
- Realize that you cannot control anyone else’s behavior;
- Change what you can control—yourself (attitude, body language, voice strategies, expectations);
- Physically relax before dealing with situations (deep breaths, unfold arms, lower voice);
- Disengage from power struggles;
- Affirm and acknowledge the student’s feelings;
• Express your confidence in the student’s ability to make good choices;
• Do not take the student’s behavior personally, demand, or threaten;
• Avoid nagging, scolding, lecturing and confrontations.
• Try to maintain a sense of humor.
• Repeat directions with the same words and a calm, neutral voice;
• Take time to actively listen;
• Avoid being judgmental;
• Show caring and empathy;
• Work together on establishing goals and identifying positive reinforcers;
• Teach problem-solving strategies; and
• Try prompting the student to use self-calming techniques if needed.

Some students have great difficulties with concentration and organization, even if their motivation and intentions are good. Hannel (2007) presents specific strategies for managing:

• Physical restlessness
• Impulsivity and impatience
• Concentration difficulties
• Poor organization

Rief (2006) provides a detailed discussion of managing behavior through support and interventions, addressing:

• Alternatives to suspension and expulsion;
• Managing problem behaviors in other school environments, including the elementary school playground and out-of-class middle school problems; and
• Interventions such as student study teams, and individualized behavioral programs and monitoring systems.
Beattie (2006, pg 111-131) provides an illustration of how to use behavior management in the classroom, including use of observations and interviews to plan interventions, and evaluating how well activities work to manage and motivate.

Other resources are found in:

- Vanderbilt University-Peabody’s IRIS Center for Training Enhancements offers special education resources and materials for inclusion, including validated and evidence-based instructional strategies. The website provides a module on the crisis continuum and implementation of PBS. [http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/](http://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/)
- Florida’s Response to Intervention and Positive Behavior Support: [http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/](http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/) provides an overview of positive behavioral support and how-to guides.
- Brothers from Different Mothers or Sisters from Different Mistresses? Presents an analysis of the relationship between RtI and Positive Behavior Support data systems. [http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/FLPBS%20and%20RtI%20article.pdf](http://flpbs.fmhi.usf.edu/FLPBS%20and%20RtI%20article.pdf)
V.6 - Groupings

V.6. The education team uses various purposeful and planned instructional groupings (pairs, small group, large group, teacher-selected, student-selected) of students based on the desired outcomes and preferred learning mode of all students, including students with disabilities and students with significant and unique differences.

Rationale

Students learn in many different ways. Students diagnosed with the same disability may learn in very different ways, some responding better to auditory cues and others absorbing new information and skills kinesthetically or through visual instruction. Instruction for all students should be planned and delivered considering the best modalities for instructing each student, and varying the size of the group based on the instructional goals and objectives.

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Examples:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Non-Examples:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Islands in the mainstream-students with IEPs sitting in the back of the room with ESE personnel.</td>
<td>• Teachers using a variety of flexible instructional groupings in each lesson.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Ability grouping</td>
<td>• Differentiated instructions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Tracking</td>
<td>• Heterogeneous grouping</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Students work on their own skill</td>
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</table>
Florida Developmental Disabilities Council
Teacher's Guide to Universal/Inclusive Education

- Remedial reading sets in a larger group that are assessed using authentic assessment.
- Natural proportions- Group makeup matches the demographics of the school and/or classroom.

Walters (2000) shares a vision of Terry Anderson's 3rd-grade classroom. In this classroom nobody has an assigned seat. Throughout the day “the 23 students move from the carpet to a computer station or scatter to work at three small tables around the room. The arrangement works well, reports Anderson, a teacher at Robinson Elementary School in Kirkwood, MO. ‘Anywhere the kids want to settle in during their reading and writing time is fine,” she says. "And this way there are more places for kids to work in groups. They're usually all over the floor.”"

Walters goes on to say “In schools across the country, teachers are putting down their chalk and moving away from the front of the class. They are rearranging students into groups and encouraging a steady hum of voices sharing ideas. Pods of desks are replacing neat rows as the landscape of the American classroom shifts to accommodate more teamwork.”

Organizing the classroom is one of the most important aspects of the teacher’s job and becomes even more important with an inclusive classroom. The needs of the students, both those with and without disabilities, will affect the classroom organization in visible and invisible ways. A first consideration is the physical layout of the classroom. The accommodations and modifications addressed in students’ IEPs may affect the physical layout of the classroom, so it is advisable to consider these at the beginning of the organization planning, rather than reacting later. The guiding principle should be that if an area is to be used by or accessible to any of the students, those areas should be used by and accessible to all students. Students with sensory or physical disabilities
may need more space, and students with ASD may need specially organized space. All students should be able to see and hear the teacher presentations with ease, and the teacher should be able to see every student when scanning the room. Students who have trouble paying attention should sit where they can be easily monitored. Materials should be stored in a simple, consistent arrangement so that students with disabilities know where to get the materials and return them after use. (Beattie, 2006, p. 59)

Variation in the physical arrangements for student seating is called for, depending on the teaching activity. Scruggs and Mastropieri (2010), and others (Burrello, Lashley & Beatty, 2001; Friend & Cook, 2009) write about the critical role of varied, flexible and multiple group instructional arrangements in meeting the needs of all learners.

Beattie (2006, p. 66) presents three arrangements for collaborative teaching and grouping of students according to learning needs, as well as two arrangements for heterogeneous grouping:

- **Station teaching**: Students are placed at two or more stations. The co-teachers divide instruction into two segments, with the content presented in the separate sites. Students switch from one station to the other. One station may be independent work, while the other is small group instruction. Transitions from one group to the other need to be carefully planned.

- **Parallel teaching**: In parallel teaching, the class is divided into two groups, with each co-teacher responsible for instruction to one group. The same topic is presented by each teacher, but in different formats and/or levels. Students are placed in groups according to their learning needs in the target subject, so students with disabilities may be in either group. Typically, the special education teacher will work with the smaller group, while the general education teacher works with the larger group.

- **Alternative teaching**: Alternative settings usually include one large group and one small group. One group may preview the material for the next lesson, while the other group may focus on re-learning materials that were not mastered. In this case, the small group, previewing new material, may be led by the general education teacher, while the special education teacher leads the larger, re-learning group.

- **Teaching together**: In this model, teachers teach/manage the entire group. The two teachers employ various formats, such as small group instruction, partner work, or individual instruction.
• Shared/ Co-Teaching: This model also has teachers working with the entire class. The general education teacher and the special education teacher cooperatively teach the lesson, share in the presentation, and work with the same students simultaneously.

Schwartz (2005, p. 276) provides an overview of two methods that encourage students of different abilities to work together. The first is the fairly familiar model of cooperative learning. Schwartz cautions that true cooperative learning requires a substantial amount of teacher planning. Cooperative learning is a strategy that has been documented as a successful strategy for inclusive education since the late 1980’s (Johnson and Johnson, 1986). Research has proven its effectiveness in improving student achievement, student attitude towards subject matter, and increased cooperation among diverse groups of students (Oortwijn, Boekaerts & Vedder, 2008). Cooperative learning is an instructional form where students work collaboratively in small groups to complete group assignments and projects.

Mastropreiri and Scruggs (2010) offer the following strategies for implementing cooperative learning in the classroom:

• Create objectives- purposefully create both academic and social objectives, including inter- and intra-personal skills

• Determine group parameters- typically, when the number of students ranges from 2 to 6, larger groups can be formed with more experienced cooperative learners, whereas younger and less experienced cooperative learners do better with smaller group sizes. Plan group membership well, being thoughtful of heterogeneous grouping and learning styles that compliment one another. Roles within groups, as well as the physical arrangement of the groups, must be planned in advance.

• Explain goals, rules and procedures before activities begin- students should be aware that they are responsible for their own learning, the learning of the group and the learning of the entire class (in that order).

• Monitor group activities- The teacher’s role shifts from being the teacher to the facilitator and monitor. Teachers should move fluidly around the room, monitoring, demonstrating and assisting groups as needed. At the end of the activity it is imperative that the teacher provides closure with a wrap-up or summary of main points along with the whole class.
• Evaluate individual and group efforts- evaluation is on-going through the cooperative learning lesson. Group functioning, as well as group and individual achievement, needs to be a part of the evaluation.

• Integrate students with IEPs and other special needs into the cooperative groups- they should not be a group of their own or excluded from the activity.

The following quick list of cooperative groupings can get you started:

1. Discuss a lesson with your neighbor for 3 minutes- use questioning and clarifying.

2. Include a small “table” group going over homework and working through difficult problems.

3. Editing groups- have students work in groups of 2-3 to proofread, critique and discuss papers.

4. Test Review groups- have students meet in groups of 2-3 to prepare for a test

More formal arrangements for grouping are:

1. Student Team-Achievement Divisions (STAD)
2. Team Assisted Individualization
3. Cooperative Integrated Reading and Comprehension (CIRC)
4. Jigsaw
5. Group Investigation

A second model is cooperative thinking strategies. The series is divided into five areas, each focused on an integral component for cooperative work. As Schwartz (2005) describes, students work in small groups and “learn to break a project into smaller parts, assign tasks, give and receive help and feedback from group members, and ultimately complete and evaluate the project.”

Great Tips!
Information to support grouping can be found at:

- University of Kansas Center for Research on Learning at www.ku-crl.org,
V.7 - Appropriate Assessment

V.7. The education team uses a school-wide approach to determine appropriate assessment instruments, strategies, and accommodations/modifications for all their students with disabilities.

Rationale

Assessments provide information about the strengths and weaknesses of each student and the class as a whole. Retesting throughout the year allows the teacher to determine if the instructional program put in place is effective. If a student's progress is not satisfactory, the team needs to look for different approaches. Final assessments can provide information for placement and planning for the next year (McGrath, 2007).

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Examples:</td>
<td>Examples:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Label driven alternative assessment- all students with an intellectual disability take alternative assessments.</td>
<td>• Common sets of accommodations are available for test taking (podcasts of test, quiet rooms, extended times, etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Test accommodations used are driven by a student's label- i.e. all students with LD receive extended time on tests.</td>
<td>• School team used to discuss individual needs of students who may be able to be grouped into common assessment</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
• Students with accommodations or modifications are graded on a different scale.

• Varied and multiple assessment sources are used to drive instruction and determine a student’s achievement level.

From the BPIE Glossary

**Accommodations:** changes to how (the way) students are expected to learn (i.e., instruction, and to demonstrate what they have learned (i.e., assessment.

Florida is a national leader in creating student assessment systems and in measuring the academic progress of students with special needs. Currently, all students whose IEPs do not indicate they are intellectually impaired must take the appropriate statewide tests, typically the Florida Comprehensive Assessment Test (FCAT) at grades 3-10, and the Florida’s End-of-Course Assessments. Students who are exempt from taking the FCAT are required to take the Florida Alternative Assessment (see [http://www.fldoe.org/asp/altassessment.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/asp/altassessment.asp)). Districts are also required to assess all students for benchmark testing and other assessments used in statewide determination of student progress.

One of the issues with this indicator is the phrase “accommodations/modifications.” When accommodations are made, expectations for student achievement do not have to change. Accommodations should be made based on individual learner characteristics, not the particular disability. Accommodations
involve a wide range of techniques and support systems in areas such as: methods and materials, assignments and assessments, learning environment, time and scheduling, and special communication systems. The Glossary defines **modifications** as “Changes to the requirements of a course or the standards a student must meet. A change in **what** a student is taught or tested on. This change is based on student’s needs as identified by the IEP team.”

Modifications are not allowed in the administration of any of the statewide assessments because the modifications would alter the validity of the test for the student, making it invalid to compare the student’s performance on any given test with other students or with that student’s performance on another level of the test (such as the scaled scores on standardized tests or the developmental scores on the FCAT). Certain accommodations are allowed under specified circumstances. The DOE website on the statewide assessment program describes the allowable accommodations and eligibility of students. It is readily available at: [http://www.fldoe.org/ese/fcatasd.asp](http://www.fldoe.org/ese/fcatasd.asp) and [http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-5831/dps-2010-92.pdf](http://info.fldoe.org/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-5831/dps-2010-92.pdf).

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As lesson plans are implemented in the classroom, it is important for teachers to use information gained from one lesson to help prepare and implement the following lessons. On some occasions, a student may not have mastered the skills necessary to progress, in which case, the next lesson should not be presented. Therefore, it is extremely beneficial to collect performance information on students. The data collection does not need to be extensive, but there should be enough for the team to make decisions about particular interventions, modifications, or accommodations to be used in future lessons (Beattie, 2006).

**Great Tips!**

The DOE website on the statewide assessment program describes the allowable accommodations and eligibility of students. It is readily available at:

Find out more about using standardized test results in these resources:

- Florida Department of Education – Assessment information http://www.fldoe.org/educators/assessment.asp
- National Center on Educational Outcomes (NCEO) http://education.umn.edu/nceo
  Provides information on state and national testing policies
- American Psychological Association www.apa.org
  Provides information on types of assessment, including high-stakes assessments
- Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate services CLAS http://clas.uiuc.edu/
- Fair Isn’t Always Equal: Assessing & Grading in the Differentiated Classroom by Rick Wormeli. This book explores the research and common sense thinking as it relates to grading and assessment. The author cites examples throughout to help teachers and administrators address controversial issues. Stenhouse Publishers (2006) 1-57110-424-0
- Checking for Understanding - Formative Assessment Strategies for Your Classroom by Douglas Fisher & Nancy Frey. Shows teachers how to increase students' understanding through the use of creative formative assessments and discusses how teachers can use traditional tests and collaborative assessments to improve instruction and increase comprehension. ASCD (2007) 978-1-4166-0569-0.


Related Indicators

II.4 Education team members ensure that all of their students with disabilities participate in and demonstrate progress on state and district assessments.
V.8 - Accommodations and Modifications

V.8. The education team identifies and uses individualized accommodations and modifications for ALL students, including all students with IEPs, including students with the most unique and significant differences. Accommodations and modifications are used purposefully to facilitate instruction and meaningful participation across GENERAL EDUCATION and natural contexts.

Rationale

To facilitate instruction and meaningful participation in all natural school/classroom contexts, the education team identifies and uses individualized accommodations and modifications for all students, including all students with unique and significant needs. This is an integral part of the way of work in the classroom and should be considered an RTI level-one process.

From the BPIE Glossary

Accommodations: changes to how (the way) students are expected to learn, i.e., instruction, and to demonstrate what they have learned, i.e., assessment.

Modifications: Changes to the requirements of a course or the standards a student must meet. A change in what a student is taught or tested on. This change is based on a student’s needs as identified by the IEP team. Florida Department of Education, Division of Public Schools and Community Education, Bureau of Instructional Support and Community Services (2001). For Parents of Florida’s Students with Disabilities.
**What does this look like?**

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<td><strong>Non-Examples:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Accommodations used are driven by a student's label, i.e., all students with LD receive extended time to complete assignments.</td>
<td>• Consistency across every class and every teacher that will benefit all students, i.e., note-taker, ability to re-take a test, etc.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Accommodations or modifications are used to excuse lack of student academic progress.</td>
<td>• Technology is integrated into all aspects of the class using universal design principles to apply to all students, when appropriate.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Universal design learning principles are known and used by the entire education team.</td>
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To facilitate instruction and support meaningful participation of students with disabilities, various accommodations and modifications to instruction and assessment may be necessary.

**Accommodations** mean that students are achieving the same objectives, but need adjustments to achieve those objectives, e.g., larger font or uncluttered worksheet. **Modifications** change the learning objective, e.g., name decimals up
to the thousandths or hundredths place, rather than the millionth place. (Karten, 2007, p. 33)

Accommodations generally fall into the categories of setting, scheduling, presentation, responses, and equipment/technology. The purpose of any accommodation is to provide the student with disabilities access to the same content as their peers without disabilities (Beattie, 2006, pp. 183-185).

- The classroom setting can be used to do externally what a child may have difficulty doing internally, supporting difficulties with memory, organization, and maintaining focus. For example, use the walls to provide outlines, schedules, word lists, etc. Provide areas for quiet reading and other areas for group interaction (McGrath, 2007, p. 40). Settings may also be changed to reduce possible distracters for both instruction and assessment.

- Scheduling accommodations may allow for an extended time format or more frequent breaks.

- Presentation to convey meaning of content or to determine what a student has learned can be altered so that the information is presented orally, in a print format, with an audiocassette or on an iPod as a podcast, on an overhead projector or a whiteboard—whatever is needed to match the learner's style of receiving information. Be creative!

- Formats for responses may be altered to accommodate students who have an expressive language disorder or a physical disability—such as allowing for a taped response instead of a written narrative, or providing a “note-taker” for lectures.

- Equipment/technology—Teachers need to ensure that students are using the equipment/technology supports that are available to them including Braille material, calculators, word-processing programs and the like.

While accommodations provide access to content, but do not alter the content, modifications change content and delivery, and therefore require special considerations. Modifications may impact assessment, instructional delivery, materials, expectations, support, and physical setting, to name a few.

- Teachers may accommodate instructional delivery by using smaller groups, independent learning activities, hands-on manipulative materials, computer software for independent practice, and visual stimuli as well as verbal description. Students may need materials to supplement texts, such as books on tape or peer reading.
• Teachers’ expectations may be planned to recognize the material that all students will be expected to learn while identifying other information that only some students will learn—all the while challenging all students to reach the maximum ability.

• To provide the many practice opportunities that students with disabilities often need, teachers may use para-professionals, peer tutoring, “reading buddies,” or outside volunteers.

Much is available in the way of assistive technology to support students with disabilities. Assistive technology may include low-tech or high-tech devices. Assistive technology includes, but is not limited to, mobility devices, software, keyboards with large keys, software for students who are blind or have visual impairments, text telephones for students who are deaf, book holders magnifying lenses, graphic organizers, to name a few. Assistive technology is available for students with physical disabilities and for those with learning disabilities. Ideally, the assistive device should provide access to one or more of these academic skills areas: literacy skills (expressive and/or receptive), math skills (word problems and/or reasoning), organizational skills, or meta-cognitive skills. The devices should support the student to learn the necessary study skills to access instruction, include students with disabilities in challenging curricula, provide opportunities for students to learn basic literacy skills, and encourage students to communicate effectively through writing. The most important source of information about the student needs is the IEP. (Schwartz, 2005, p.284)

Florida supports CAST, an educational research & development organization that works to expand learning opportunities for all individuals through Universal Design for Learning (The Center for Applied Special Technology at http://www.cast.org/). The Florida Alliance for Assistive Services and Technology (FAAST) provides extensive support and information about assistive technology (http://www.faast.org/).

Classroom teachers are not expected to know all the best strategies for all diverse learners without assistance. One of the best ways teachers learn new strategies is through the student support team process. Student support teams are site-based, problem-solving teams that may have a variety of names such as the RtI team, the School Improvement Team (SIT), or the child-study team. Schools have procedures in place for these teams through which the general education and special education teachers can get assistance with the challenges they encounter with students with disabilities (Rief, 2006, p. 89-90).

Schwartz (2005, p.295) provides some additional suggestions:
Explore the feasibility of low-tech devices before investing in more costly high-tech alternatives.

Consider various sources of funding available to assist in the purchase of expensive technology, e.g., service clubs like Kiwanis or Rotary, federal grants, state loan programs.

Ensure that the student and the educator providing support receive the appropriate training to use the technology.

Become more competent in the selection of assistive technology by exploring websites to learn about products, and vendors. Visit a technology center and ask for a tour and explanation.

Causton gives ideas for alternatives to side-by-side support (2009, TEACHING Exceptional Children).

Modify the material so that the student can do the work independently.

Modify the expectations so the student can complete the task without support.

Pair everyone in the class with a partner.

Model written notes for everyone on the overhead projector.

Check on students periodically—walk around the room and support all students.

Stand in front of the room and write main ideas on the chalkboard for all students.

Sit at a table to create modifications for an upcoming lesson while keeping an eye on a particular student.

Arrange for peer support.

Go to the library to find visual materials to support an upcoming lesson.

Create a to-do list on a student’s desk instead of providing verbal reminders.
Great Tips!

Tips on accommodations and modifications are available in the following references:

- McGrath (2007) provides specific accommodations for reading and mathematics.


- deBoer (2009, pp.156-195) provides specific suggestions for facilitating the education of students with ASD (Autistic Syndrome Disorder) within general education.

- The Florida Developmental Disabilities Council, Inc., has prepared a 22-page guide for parents explaining accommodations and modifications, including an explanation of what accommodations and modifications are, the various forms that accommodations and modifications take, and how to make sure the necessary services are provided (Beech, 2000).

- Rief (2006, pp. 93-102) provides detailed checklists of accommodations and modifications for assignments and instructions, materials, environment, memory supports, writing, reading, testing, behavior, and social/emotional coping.
V.9 - Implementation in Naturally Occurring Activities

V.9. Each education team member implements and monitors special education and related services for students with disabilities, including students with severe disabilities during the naturally occurring activities in which the skills are needed across general education and natural contexts with peers without disabilities.

Rationale

Students display their ever increasing knowledge in a variety of ways in and out of school. Sometimes the best instructional setting is in the cafeteria, in music class, or on the gym floor. Planning and implementing instruction should consider all of the opportunities to instruct and to assess the results of instruction.

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<tr>
<td>• Students are “pulled out” for special education services.</td>
<td>• Special education services and instructional strategies are infused into the planning for entire groups of children.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students are only involved in general education classrooms for non-academic experiences.</td>
<td>• Differentiated instruction is evident.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Special Education services are conducted separately from the naturally occurring activities such as at a back table while</td>
<td>• Special education services and instructional strategies are embedded within the natural</td>
</tr>
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<td>other students listen to a presentation.</td>
<td>activities and routines of the classroom as whole.</td>
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Tomlinson (1999, pg 96 and following) offers the following suggestions to help teachers steer their thinking and planning toward student-centered, differentiated classrooms.

- Examine your philosophy of individual needs
  - Instead of starting by considering what to do in the classroom, start by determining how to think about teaching and learning.
  - Are students more likely to come to you at the same level with the same needs or will they be at different points of readiness? Why?
  - Do all students seem to learn in the same way and at the same pace? Why?

- Start small – gradually add complexity
  - Start by not differentiating. Have students do an independent anchor activity to set up a baseline.
  - Add a sub-group that works on a task that is also independent while others continue with the anchor.
  - At the beginning, try a differentiated task for only a small block of time. For example, at the middle school level, begin with a whole class discussion and common use of a graphic organizer. For the last 10 minutes of class ask students to do one or two journal entries at different levels of complexity or based on two different interest areas.

- Grow slowly – but grow.
  - The following strategies will help you gradually grow your differentiating skills.
- Take notes on your students each day. Be conscious of what works and what doesn't for which learners.
- Assess students before you begin to teach a skill or topic. Reflect on implications.
- Look at all work students do as indicators of student need, not marks in a grade book.
- Try creating one differentiated lesson per unit.
- Differentiate one product per semester.
- Find multiple resources for key parts of your curriculum.
- Establish class criteria for performance, then work with students to add personal aspects.
- Give students more choices as to how to work, how to express learning, or which homework assignments to do.

- Envision how an activity will look
  - Plan in detail

- Sit back and reflect
  - Evaluate effectiveness

Tomlinson also offers some practical considerations

- Give thoughtful directions
- Establish routines for getting help
- Stay aware, Stay organized
- Consider “home-base” seats
- Establish start-up and wrap-up procedures
- Teach students to work for quality

**Great Tips!**

Ideas on how to maximize instruction in naturally occurring activities and natural contexts can be found in these references:

- Activities for the Differentiated Classroom (Language Arts) by Gayle Gregory & Carolyn Chapman. Activities and reproducible products that


- The Art and Science of Teaching by Robert J. Marzano. The author presents a model for ensuring quality teaching that balances the need for research-based practices with the need to understand the strengths and weaknesses of individual students. ASCD (2007) 978-1-4166-0571-3.

- Classroom Instruction that Works by Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock. This book outlines nine teaching strategies that research has shown to have a positive effect on student learning and outcomes. ASCD (2001) 0-87120-504-1.

- Creating Robust Vocabulary by Isabel Beck, Margaret McKeown, Linda Kucan. Extension of 'Bringing Words to Life', the authors provide an incredible menu of instructional activities to deepen word knowledge Guilford Press (2008) 978-1-59385-753-0.

- Differentiated Literacy Strategies for Student Growth and Achievement in Grades 7-12 by Gayle H. Gregory and Lin Kuzmich. This book contains practical strategies for differentiating instruction when students are asked to read their textbooks or nonfiction text. Corwin Press (2005) 0-7619-8883-1.

- Leadership for Differentiating Schools and Classrooms by Carol Ann Tomlinson & Susan Allan. Helps administrators to know what to look for
in the differentiated classroom. Also helps them to set up for appropriate differentiation in their school. ASCD (2000) 871205025.


V.10 - Meaningful Content

V.10. The education team identifies content that is meaningful for each student with disabilities, including students with severe disabilities, and embeds instruction on that content within naturally-occurring activities across general education and natural contexts to address the student's individual learning characteristics, ability to generalize and maintain knowledge, and ability to combine skills to complete an activity.

Rationale

Although it may be easiest to plan instruction that is a repetitive drill of skills, instruction should be designed to be meaningful for the student. These methods are frequently found within the day-to-day activities in which the student is engaged, such as counting money in the cafeteria or reading signs on posters in the school. Learning this way is more likely to be retained and used purposefully the next time it is needed.

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<td><strong>Non-Examples:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Content instruction is based on the content and is the same for all students with disabilities.</td>
<td>• Content is selected based on individual needs and instruction is designed for each student as an individual.</td>
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<td>• Instruction is embedded within the naturally-occurring activities</td>
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Tomlinson (1999, pg 30 and following) suggests that teachers work continuously to see their students as individuals, to see who they really are, and what makes them unique. Teachers should also allow themselves to be known as individuals by the students. She describes a healthy classroom as one in which “what is taught and learned”:

1. Is relevant to students; it seems personal, familiar, connected to the world they know;

2. Helps students understand themselves and their lives more fully now, and will continue to do so as they grow up;

3. Is authentic, offering “real” history or math or art, not just exercises about the subject;

4. Can be used immediately for something that matters to the students; and

5. Makes student more powerful in the present as well as the future.

Friend & Bursuck (2009, pg 154) explains the INCLUDE Strategy which gives teachers a systematic process for accommodating students based on their individual needs and the classroom demands on or expectations of the teacher. It contains elements of both universal design and differentiated instruction and is consistent with the idea behind Response to Intervention or RtI. Seven steps to the INCLUDE Strategy are:

1. Identify classroom demands.
2. Note student learning strengths and needs
3. Check for potential areas of student success
4. Look for potential problem areas
5. *Use* information to brainstorm ways to differentiate instruction.
6. *Differentiate* instruction
7. *Evaluate* student progress

*Great Tips!*

Resources related to increasing meaningful content can be found in the following sources:


- The Art and Science of Teaching. Robert J. Marzano. The author presents a model for ensuring quality teaching that balances the need for research-based practices with the need to understand the strengths and weaknesses of individual students. ASCD (2007) 978-1-4166-0571-3.

- Classroom Instruction that Works. Marzano, Pickering, and Pollock. This book outlines nine teaching strategies that research has shown to have a positive effect on student learning and outcomes. ASCD (2001) 0-87120-504-1.
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• Leadership for Differentiating Schools and Classrooms. Carol Ann Tomlinson & Susan Allan. Helps administrators to know what to look for in the differentiated classroom. Also helps them to set up for appropriate differentiation in their school. ASCD (2000) 871205025.

• Teaching every Student – Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) www.cast.org/tes

• National Center to Improve Practice in Special Education through Technology, Media and Materials www2.edc.org/ncip/

• Association for Direct Instruction www.adihome.org
V.11 – Self-Determination

V.11. The education team provides instruction on choice-making and self-determination within naturally occurring activities across general education and natural contexts. The education team facilitates and monitors opportunities for students with disabilities, including students with severe disabilities, to make choices and demonstrate self-determination within naturally occurring activities across general education and natural contexts.

Rationale

All students learn best when they are vested in the education in which they are engaged. Involving students in determining what and how they will learn increases the motivation to learn and sets the learning within a meaningful context.

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<tr>
<td>• Teachers ask students with disabilities about their preferences and needs.</td>
<td>• Teachers continuously and actively teach students decision-making skills within natural contexts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Students are allowed to choose what classes or activities to participate in.</td>
<td>• Teachers ensure that students are offered the opportunity to make fully informed choices.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Teachers respect the choices</td>
<td>• Teachers respect the choices</td>
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All students benefit by being engaged in planning for their educational program and school activities. These efforts begin in the classroom as teachers create opportunities for students to generate ideas for class projects or organize into groups to work on special events. Many educators and schools have adopted systems in which the students help identify the instructional goals and objectives for a semester or year, based on their own assessment scores. For students with disabilities, this process is more formalized into an IEP meeting and process. Including the student in the process of planning for instruction and all aspects of his or her school life increases the buy-in of the student and likelihood of success for the learning. These collaborative efforts should continue into the transition planning for work and play after a student's formal education is complete.

The NEXT S.T.E.P. Curriculum and Instructional Program is offered by the University of Oregon and was designed to teach students how to engage successfully in self-directed transition planning. The acronym "S.T.E.P." stands for Student Transition and Educational Planning.

The instructional program was designed to be presented to students, with or without disabilities, in a classroom setting. Both regular and special education classes participated as the curriculum was being developed. Both regular and special education teachers served as instructors, sometimes alone and sometimes as team teachers. Parents are actively involved throughout the program in supporting roles for their students.
The scope and sequence of this instructional program involves the following main units: (1) overview of transition planning, (2) self-evaluation, (3) goal development, (4) goal implementation, and (5) student direction of his/her transition planning meeting. The lesson format varies from large group instruction to one-on-one instruction, depending on the nature of the tasks being addressed. As one outcome of the program, each student creates and begins implementation of a unique transition plan addressing four areas: (1) education and training, (2) jobs, (3) personal life, and (4) living on your own. Each special education student, to the extent of his/her capabilities, also directs his/her transition-planning IEP meeting. Regular education students often engage in a similar process, even though it is not required by law. More information on this program is located at http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/sped/tri/nextstep.htm

Great Tips!

Information about self-determination can be found at:

- Self-Determination Resource Website - http://www.selfdeterminationak.org/
- Beach Center on Disability - http://www.beachcenter.org/Default.aspx?JScript=1&JScript=1
- TASH (Advocacy organization) http://www.tash.org
- Self-Instruction Pedagogy: How to Teach Self-determined Learning by Dennis E. Mithaug, James E. Martin, Martin Agran, Michael L. Wehmeyer, and Deirdre K. Mithaug.
Related Indicators

V.14 The education team collaboratively develops, implements, and monitors an action plan for transition for each student with disabilities to ensure that the student has ongoing meaningful participation across environments in ways that are consistent with their peers without disabilities.
V.12 - School and Community Collaboration for Inclusion

V.12 The education team collaborates with community agencies, e.g., Vocational Rehabilitation, family service centers, Independent Living Center, to jointly plan and/or provide services and follow-up such as job coaching, counseling, and supported living services to students with disabilities, including students with severe disabilities and/or their families to ensure that these students receive supports that facilitate school and community inclusion.

Rationale

Students with disabilities often need many additional supports to learn effectively. A critical component of the educational program needs to be planning and working cooperatively with the staff in community agencies to ensure students receive the services that they need to learn by the best means possible.

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<td>Non-Examples:</td>
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<td>• Lack of communication</td>
<td>• Schools and teachers have long-</td>
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<td>between schools, education</td>
<td>standing collaborative</td>
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<tr>
<td>teams and community</td>
<td>relationships with various</td>
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<tr>
<td>programs and professionals.</td>
<td>community agencies and</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Giving a family a phone</td>
<td>professionals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>number of an agency and</td>
<td>• Schools and teachers can offer</td>
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<tr>
<td>telling them to follow up.</td>
<td>options to individuals and</td>
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<td>families and educate them in</td>
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making their own informed decisions.

- Representatives from community agencies join the team in planning transition.

The PACER Center (Minnesota Parent Training and Information Center) provides information regarding the importance of collaboration around transition as well as the following practical suggestions for how to do so:

Team members might collaborate as previously defined by coming together to:

- communicate and decide how to work together (relationship and structure);
- consider needs, interests and preferences of the student as well as input from the parents in determining and agreeing to goals that will be worked on (mutual goals);
- include the student, parents and those who can represent the various agencies, organizations, providers or others who can assist in providing support and/or services that are needed to accomplish the goals and objectives of the plan (responsibilities and accountability for success);
- share resources, knowledge, unique experience and expertise;
- benefit from successful outcomes (shared rewards).

As partners in a vital planning process, parents need effective interagency collaboration between the many agencies and providers of adult services to ensure a “seamless transition.” As transition planning team members share
dreams and a vision for the future, generate ideas, explore options, develop and implement a plan, and effectively follow-through, successful outcomes will be achieved for students with disabilities as they transition into the adult community. A discussion of Interagency Collaboration and Transition can be found at the PACER website at http://www.pacer.org/tatra/resources/inter.asp

**Great Tips!**

Information about school and community collaboration is available from:

- Transition Services and Programs FLDOE and the transition Center at the University of Florida [http://www.fldoe.org/Interagency_Programs/Files/Resources_chart.pdf](http://www.fldoe.org/Interagency_Programs/Files/Resources_chart.pdf)

**Related Indicators**

V.14 The education team collaboratively develops, implements, and monitors an action plan for transition for each student with disabilities to ensure that the student has on-going, meaningful, participation across environments in ways that are consistent with their peers without disabilities.
V.13 – Person-Centered Planning for the Future

V.13. All education team members participate in one or more person-centered planning processes, e.g., MAPS, PATH, Person-Planning, ecological inventory process, to make transition decisions—year-to-year, school-to-school, school-to-adult life—for each student with disabilities (including each student with severe disabilities) resulting in a plan that emphasizes the student accessing environments (e.g., general education settings, the community, post-secondary education settings, work environments) in ways that are consistent with their peers without disabilities.

Rationale

Effective education for all students, including students with disabilities, means ensuring that as they move toward adulthood and real-world responsibilities, all resources possible are used to support the planning for the transition. A person-centered planning process concentrates on what the student wants and can do best as the focal point for using the supports from the community to make the plans happen.

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<td><strong>Non-Examples:</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• A student and family are told the “best” choice from what is available.</td>
<td>• The planning starts with a discussion with the student and their family about their goals and dreams, then works backwards toward attaining</td>
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instructed to “settle” for what is available.

- No research is conducted into possibilities.

For the BPIE Glossary

**Ecological Inventory Process:** Process of utilizing informal instruments in the development of age-appropriate and functional programming for a student with a severe disability.

Kendrick (2000) offers an overview of person-centered planning. He posits that person-centeredness is about intentionally being with people that may or may not include planning. In considering our thoughts about the people with whom we are planning, it is helpful to reflect upon our actions against the following seven touchstones condensed from Kendrick's paper:

- A commitment to know and seek to understand
- A conscious resolve to be of genuine service
- An openness to being guided by the person
- A willingness to struggle for difficult goals
- Flexibility, creativity, and openness to trying what *might* be possible
- A willingness to enhance the humanity and dignity of the person
- To look for the good in people and help bring it out

The Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) provides the following overview of person-centered planning on their website:
“The idea of "person-centered planning" emerged as an alternative to the static, traditional "systems-centered" approaches to special education, which has in the past concentrated merely on the placement of individuals into available "slots" in the special education system, the rehabilitation service system, or the adult services system (Mount, 1992). Most notable among the person-centered planning approaches are Making Action Plans or MAPs (Forest & Lusthaus, 1990) and Group Action Planning or GAP (Turnbull & Turnbull, 1992; 2002). Planning Alternative Tomorrows with Hope or PATH (Pearpoint, O'Brien, & Forest, 1993) and Circle of Friends (Perske, 1988) are tools that can enhance the effectiveness and versatility of MAPs.”

**Group Action Planning (GAP)** is a person-centered planning process developed by University of Kansas researchers at the Beach Center (Turnbull & Turnbull, 2002). GAP provides the opportunity for an individual with a severe disability to be supported by a unified, reliable alliance that includes the individual (him- or herself), family members, friends and professionals. Turnbull and Turnbull summarize research demonstrating the critical importance and positive impact of "reliable allies" in person-centered planning. As with other person-centered approaches, GAP assists individuals and their families to envision the best possible outcomes and helps bring their vision to a reality. GAP members make a commitment to accomplish, monitor, and adjust those goals that provide continuous, on-going support to individuals with a severe disability and their families.

The GAP process involves seven steps: (1) inviting people from an individual’s natural network to help with the planning process; (2) choosing a facilitator who communicates well with others and is willing to assign tasks; (3) engaging an individual person and their family as much as possible; (4) highlighting information based on personal knowledge in contrast to professional "knowledge"; (5) fostering dynamic dreams for the future, directed and controlled by an individual with severe disabilities and their family; (6) brainstorming to arrive at solutions based on everyone’s input that are driven by high expectations; and (7) unrelentingly celebrating progress made by the team.

**Making Action Plans (MAPs),** a widely used approach to person-centered planning, adheres to six central tenets (Pearpoint, Forest, & O’Brien, 1996):

- All students belong in the regular classroom
- General education teachers can teach all children
- Necessary supports will be provided when needed
- Quality education is a right, not a privilege
- Outcomes must be success, literacy, and graduation for all
• Creative alternatives will be made available for populations who do not succeed in typical ways.

MAPs is a collaborative planning process that brings together key actors in a student's life. It involves a student and his or her peers, family, and teachers to aid in the identification of that student's goals and dreams and the educational and community resources for making them come to fruition. MAPs is comprised of seven essential elements:

1. graphic recording

2. hospitality

3. key professional people who attend and take part in discussion, as do a student's parent(s) or guardian(s)

4. a student, his or her siblings, and friends attend and take part

5. key issues are addressed

6. a next meeting is scheduled

7. a concrete plan of action is developed"


Great Tips!

Information about person-centered planning is available at:

- University of Oregon, College of Education. NEXT S.T.E.P. Curriculum
  http://www.ed.uiuc.edu/sped/tri/nextstep.htm

- Self-Determination Resource Website - http://www.selfdeterminationak.org/
• Sound Out – Promoting Student Voice in Schools -
  http://www.soundout.org/series.html

• Curriculum Access for Students with Low-Incidence Disabilities.

• Beach Center on Disability -
  http://www.beachcenter.org/Default.aspx?JScript=1&JScript=1

• TASH (Advocacy organization)- http://www.tash.org/index.html

• Cornell University – Person Centered Planning Education
  http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/pcp/

• Self-Determination Resource Website (resources for teachers)
  http://www.selfdeterminationak.org/resources_for_teachers.html
V.14 –Transition

V.14. The education team collaboratively develops, implements, and monitors an action plan for transition, (e.g., articulation plan, ITP, for each student with disabilities (including each student with severe disabilities) to ensure that the student has ongoing meaningful participation across environments (e.g., general education settings, the community, post-secondary education settings, work environments) in ways that are consistent with their peers without disabilities.

Rationale

Putting the transition plans into writing in the form of an Action Plan is the best way to help make sure the student will thrive in the new setting. The Action Plan should ensure that all aspects of the student’s life are addressed, including the community as well as post-secondary opportunities and ways in which the individual will work toward economic self-sufficiency.

What does this look like?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>You should not see........</th>
<th>You got it....</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Non-Examples:</strong></td>
<td><strong>Examples:</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The action plan is seen as static.</td>
<td>• Schools and teachers have long-standing collaborative relationships with various community agencies and professionals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• One size fits all transition/action plan.</td>
<td>• Representatives from community agencies join the</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Action plan only includes segregated settings.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Several organizations can be very helpful in transition planning and writing the Action Plan:

- Project 10: Transition Education Network is Florida’s statewide discretionary project supporting the secondary transition of youth with disabilities. It is funded by the Bureau of Exceptional Education and Student Services (BEESS), within the Florida Department of Education. Project 10’s primary charge is to assist school districts in providing appropriate planning and timely transition services and programs to assist youth with disabilities in their transition to adulthood. Project 10 is currently focusing on four major initiatives outlined below: Capacity Building, Interagency Collaboration, Transition Legislation and Policy, and Student Development and Outcomes. (http://www.project10.info).

- TASH (advocacy organization), devoted to equity, opportunity and inclusion for people with significant disabilities, has been a leader in disability advocacy for more than 35 years. (http://www.tash.org)

- Curriculum Access for Students with Low-Incidence Disabilities (CAST) provides a website with a variety of resources. (http://aim.cast.org)

- FIN and FDLRS have a variety of resources on transition planning and action plan formats that can be very useful. (http://www.floridainclusionnetwork.com) (http://www.fdlrs.org)
Great Tips!

Resources to explore self-determination are available at:


- TASH (Advocacy organization) - [http://www.tash.org/index.html](http://www.tash.org/index.html)


- Self-Determination Resource Website (resources for teachers) [http://www.selfdeterminationak.org/resources_for_teachers.html](http://www.selfdeterminationak.org/resources_for_teachers.html)
Conclusion

Every person in our schools and districts can make a difference in the lives of students with disabilities. By using the BPIE indicators as a guide to best practices, all educators can help each and every student achieve their maximum potential.
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Circle of Friends  http://www.circleofriends.org/.

Circle of Inclusion  http://www.circleofinclusion.org/.


Cornell University – Person Centered Planning Education http://www.ilr.cornell.edu/edi/pcp/.


Culturally and Linguistically Appropriate services (CLAS) http://clas.uiuc.edu/.


Educating Peter & Graduating Peter


Florida Association for Staff Development. http://www.fasdonline.org/.


Florida Department of Education, No Child Left Behind http://www.fldoe.org/nclb/.

Florida Department of Education, Response to Intervention –

Florida Department of Education, School Grades and AYP
http://schoolgrades.fldoe.org/.

Florida Department of Education, Statewide Assessment.
http://www.fldoe.org/ese/fcatasd.asp
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Appendix A

BPIE Sections and Indicators

Educator Teams

I. VALUES AND DISTRICT CLIMATE (4 Indicators)

1. All education team members demonstrate collaborative and individual behaviors and practices that are consistent with inclusive values and beliefs.

2. All education team members collaborate and share responsibility for the planning, implementation, and evaluation of instruction for all students in general education and natural contexts.

3. All education team members consistently refer to students using person-first language, communicate with and about students and their families in a manner that demonstrates respect, and maintain confidentiality for all students.

4. All education team members consistently articulate a clear set of values and model behaviors that are consistent with best practices for inclusive education for all students.

II. ACCESS TO GENERAL EDUCATION (8 Indicators)

1. The education team ensures that all students with disabilities served by the team have opportunities to participate with same-age peers without disabilities during academic and non-academic general education experiences.

2. The education team considers the academic and non-academic objectives of students with disabilities equal to that of the objectives of students without disabilities.

3. Education team members collaborate with students’ IEP teams to identify instructional goals based on the state standards, independence, and participation across general education and natural contexts, and monitor progress toward those goals.
4. Education team members ensure that all of their students with disabilities participate in and demonstrate progress on state and district assessments.

5. Education team members ensure that all students with disabilities access transportation and school facilities, participate in events, and receive recognition along with same-age peers without disabilities.

III. POLICIES AND SUPPORT - Leadership (5 Indicators)

1. All education team members are knowledgeable about best practices for inclusive education and collaborate with school, district, local, regional and state resources.

2. Education team members collaborate and use performance data and feedback from school and district personnel, from students, and from family and community members to determine needs for collaborative professional development.

3. Education team members advocate for and access appropriate resources, e.g., common planning time, stipends for before/after school, approved “comp” time, for opportunities, at least weekly, for collaborative planning to develop, implement, and evaluate instruction for their students with disabilities, including students with severe disabilities, in general education and natural contexts.

4. Education team members advocate for necessary supports and services to implement best practices for inclusive education for students with disabilities.

5. Education team members advocate for the assignment of all students with disabilities across general education classes in the students’ neighborhood schools.

IV. POLICIES AND SUPPORT - Program Development and Evaluation (7 Indicators)

1. All education team members incorporate, within their professional development plan, and demonstrate progress toward, goals that support the implementation of best practices for including all students with disabilities.

2. The education team aggregates assessment results of all students with and without disabilities and use these data to develop, implement,
monitor, and revise strategies to improve the effectiveness of inclusive education programs.

3. The education team aggregates the alternate assessment results of students with severe disabilities with the standardized assessment results of their same-age peers with and without disabilities. These data are analyzed and used to develop, implement, monitor, and revise strategies to improve the effectiveness of education programs.

4. Each education team member demonstrates a willingness to work with and share knowledge about all students with and without disabilities.

5. Each education team member participates in, and consistently implements, effective strategies from collaborative, job-embedded personnel development based upon student data.

6. The education team evaluates their progress toward implementation of research-based best practices for effective instruction of students with disabilities and develops plans for increasing those best practices.

7. Each education team member facilitates interactions among students with and without disabilities, across instructional and non-instructional school-sponsored activities, during and outside of the school day.

V. INSTRUCTIONAL SUPPORT AND PEDAGOGY (14 Indicators)

1. All education team members collaboratively develop, implement, and evaluate progress toward goals on their students' IEPs.

2. School personnel and families use mutually agreed-upon techniques to communicate effectively as family members actively participate in the development, implementation, and evaluation of instructional activities.

3. The education team uses individually determined formal and informal assessments to examine the individual skills, strengths, interests, and needs of their students with disabilities and assess the results to determine what and how to teach.

4. The education team collects instructional and behavioral data for their students with disabilities within naturally occurring activities across general education and natural contexts. The education team regularly analyzes these data as a part of the instructional decision-making process.

5. The education team implements research-based strategies to provide social and behavioral supports for students with disabilities in naturally
occurring activities with peers without disabilities across general education and natural contexts. Student-specific strategies are developed and modified based upon analysis of individual student data collected through formal and informal processes.

6. The education team uses various instructional groupings of students, with and without disabilities, resulting in meeting the individual instructional needs of all their students.

7. The education team uses a school-wide approach to determine appropriate assessment instruments, strategies, and accommodations/modifications for all their students with disabilities.

8. The education team identifies and uses individualized accommodations and modifications for all students with disabilities to facilitate their instruction and meaningful participation across general education and natural contexts.

9. Each education team member implements and monitors special education and related services for students with disabilities during the naturally occurring activities in which the skills are needed.

10. The education team identifies content that is meaningful for each student with disabilities and embeds instruction on that content within naturally-occurring activities across general education and natural contexts.

11. The education team provides instruction on choice-making and self-determination within naturally occurring activities across general education and natural contexts, and facilitates and monitors opportunities for students with disabilities to make choices and demonstrate self-determination.

12. The education team collaborates with community agencies to jointly plan and/or provide services and follow-up to students with disabilities and/or their families to ensure that these students receive supports that facilitate school and community inclusion.

13. All education team members participate in one or more person-centered planning processes to make transition decisions for each student with disabilities resulting in a plan which emphasizes the student accessing environments in ways that are consistent with their peers without disabilities.

14. The education team collaboratively develops, implements, and monitors an action plan for transition for each student with disabilities to ensure that the student has ongoing meaningful participation across environments in ways that are consistent with their peers without disabilities.