

**New Jersey Department of Education
Special Education Receiving School Monitoring**

Receiving School: Child Development Center **County:** Essex

Monitoring Dates: February 7 and 8, 2005

Monitoring Team: Greg Margolis, Ann Marie Bruder, Diane Mari

Background Information:

During the 2003– 2004 school year, the Child Development Center conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Child Development Center with an opportunity to evaluate its strengths and areas of need with regard to:

- The provision of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment;
- The development and implementation of policies and procedures resulting in procedural compliance; and
- The organization and delivery of programs and services to meet the needs of the students with disabilities.

The self-assessment was designed to identify areas of strength, promising practices, areas that need improvement and areas that may be noncompliant with state and federal requirements. The Child Development Center developed an improvement plan to address identified areas of need.

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) conducted an on-site monitoring to verify the self-assessment findings, to assess the appropriateness of the improvement plan, and to determine the progress in implementing the plan.

During the monitoring process, the monitoring team reviewed receiving school documents such as policies and procedures, student records from sending districts, lesson plans, services as indicated in IEPs, staff evaluations, student count information, master student lists, class lists, schedules of students/ teachers/related service personnel, and other relevant information. Interviews were conducted with the receiving school's special education administrators, building principals, special education teachers, parents and related service personnel.

School Strengths:

As a program for students with emotional disabilities, the Child Development Center integrates a significant number of positive recognition/behavior reinforcement programs. For example, the school recognizes individual students through the Student of the Week, Lunch Helpers and Perfect Attendance programs. It also highlights students' performance at the classroom level with the Operation Good Neighbor program that tracks a variety of issues and culminates in a reward chosen by the students. The school also maintains parallel programs for the staff through teacher and aides of the month and teacher and aides of the year.

The Child Development Center is commended for its comprehensive initiatives to provide staff with continual support, supervision and training. Noteworthy practices included the first year teacher mentoring program, the provision of daily general staff and

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clinical team meetings, weekly faculty sub-group meetings with the school director and regular in-service training facilitated either by school staff through turn-key training or contracted guest speakers. The school's inclusion of its teaching assistants in the same level of training and supervision relevant to their responsibilities was also impressive

The Child Development Center's overall staffing configuration and general organization was also noteworthy. The school employs six clinical social workers who are each assigned to a caseload of students. Every student at the school receives individual counseling each week and may receive additional individual and/or group sessions as needed. The school provides a "Student Passport" in which each student at the Child Development Center, works with his/her teacher to develop a cumulative file of work samples, descriptions of annual progress and related materials that the student brings with him/her as they continue through the school. This process not only provides teachers with instructional information and history about a student, but also allows the student to develop a sense of accomplishment by including those documents that he/she feels best represents their achievement.

Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:

Staff Requirements, Facility Requirements, Discipline and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the Child Development Center during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Child Development Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding staff development, annual reports and programs provided in nonsectarian settings.

During the self-assessment process, the Child Development Center identified concerns in the areas regarding policies and procedures and amendments. The Child Development Center's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the receiving school has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

Section II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Child Development Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding length of school day and year, provision of physical education, services at no cost to parents, extended school year programs and services provided in accordance with IEPs and program open to observation by LEA and DOE.

During the self-assessment process, the Child Development Center identified concerns in the areas regarding maintenance of hearing aids, provision of services as per IEP, provision of occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), speech language services

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and counseling services as per IEP. The Child Development Center's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the receiving school has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

Section V: Individualized Education Plan/Annual Review

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Child Development Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives.

Areas of need were identified during the on-site visit in regard to current IEP prior to service delivery and implementation of IEP modifications.

Areas of Need:

Current IEP Prior to Service Delivery- During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that although the Child Development Center has developed and implemented procedures and to obtain missing current IEPs, there is frequently a significant delay between the date of the IEP meeting and the date that the school obtains a copy of the current IEP. In addition, in several instances, student's current IEP's reflected district-based programs or other receiving schools.

- **The Child Development Center must develop additional procedures staff training and an administrative oversight component to ensure that all students placed at the school have current IEPs in their records reflecting placement at the Child Development Center.**

Implementation of IEP Modifications – During the on-site visit, through record reviews and staff interviews, it was determined that selected students are removed from their self-contained class to participate in a supported instructional program taught by a certified teacher of the handicapped. Subjects instructed in this class period included primarily math, reading, and English, but could also include other subjects as needed. This program modification was not included in the students' IEPs. In addition, the school has not obtained approval through its county office to provide such instruction.

- **The Child Development Center will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that if the school believes that a student would benefit from any program modifications not included in the IEP, the school will contact the child study team of the sending district to determine whether the modifications are warranted. In addition, the school must revise its procedures to ensure that changes to the programs and/or services offered are submitted to the county office of education for review**

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and approval. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent implementation of the procedures.

Section VII: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Child Development Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding class size and age range, exceptions for class size and age range, special class program descriptions maintained at county office, certifications for specialized populations, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, teachers trained and instructing in CCCSs, dispensing medication, nursing services, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services and medical exams for sport teams.

During the self-assessment process, the Child Development Center identified concerns in the area regarding collaboration for home instruction. The Child Development Center's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the Child Development Center has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in this area.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

Section VIII: Student Records

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Child Development Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding conformance to pupil record code, return of records upon termination, access to records is limited to authorized persons, access sheets, location of other records specified in central file, daily attendance available to LEAs, written communication to LEAs regarding five days of tardiness /absences, maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Child Development Center identified concerns in the area regarding written notice of placement to county office. The Child Development Center's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the Child Development Center has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

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Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Child Development Center on February 6 and 7, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Child Development Center's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the receiving school's improvement plan.

The Child Development Center is commended for the exceptionally comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review the Child Development Center was able to identify all but two areas of need and develop an improvement plan that with some revision will bring about systemic change. The school is further commended for the prompt implementation of corrective action to address the areas of need identified during the self-assessment process. As a result all of those identified areas were corrected prior to the on-site visit. Additionally, the Child Development Center is further commended for the many areas determined by the receiving school and verified by the Department of Education as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

Staff Requirements, Facility Requirements, Discipline, and Student Records were determined to be areas of compliance by the Child Development Center during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the Child Development Center during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included staff development, annual reports, programs provided in nonsectarian settings, length of school day and year, provision of physical education, services at no cost to parents, extended school year programs and services provided in accordance with IEPs, program open to observation by LEA and DOE, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP conducted with required receiving school participants, IEP conducted with students age 14 and older, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives, class size and age range, exceptions for class size and age range, special class program descriptions maintained at county office, certifications for specialized populations, special classes serving students with similar educational needs, teachers trained and instructing in CCCSs, dispensing medication, nursing services, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services, medical exams for sport teams, conformance to pupil record code, return of records upon termination, access to records is limited to authorized persons, access sheets, location of other records specified in central file, daily attendance available to LEAs, written communication to LEAs regarding five days of tardiness /absences and maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Child Development Center identified areas of need regarding policies and procedures and amendments, maintenance of hearing aids, provision of services as per IEP, provision of occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), speech language and counseling services as per IEP, collaboration for home instruction and written notice of placement to county office.

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The on-site visit identified two additional areas of need within the various standards regarding current IEP prior to service delivery and implementation of IEP modifications.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Child Development Center will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the county office of education and to the Office of Special Education Programs to address those areas that require revisions.