

New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring

Receiving School: Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning Center

County: Somerset

Monitoring Dates: March 22 and 23, 2005

Monitoring Team: Paul Bilik, Denise Wilkens

Background Information:

During the 2003– 2004 school year, the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning Center conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning 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 Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning 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 teacher, parents and related service personnel.

School Strengths:

The Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning Center's classroom teachers and therapists meet weekly to discuss student progress. To ensure regular communication, parents are invited attend. As preschool students progress in the program, they are afforded opportunities to participate in activities with their non-disabled peers and may be transferred to the regular preschool program located in the same facility.

The school's comprehensive, interdisciplinary team approach aims to maximize each student's physical well being and academic growth. The school provides students with the opportunity to participate in community-based activities through their swimming

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program at the local YMCA and bi-weekly visits to the Manville Public Library to enhance educational goals.

Section I: General Provisions

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments and programs provided in nonsectarian settings.

During the self-assessment process, the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning Center identified concerns in the areas regarding professional development for staff. The receiving school'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 receiving school 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 II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding length of school day and year, provision of physical education, maintenance of hearing aids, 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 and provision of occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), speech-language and counseling services as per IEP.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding policies and procedures for maintenance of hearing aids.

Policies and Procedures for Maintenance of Hearing Aids - During the on-site visit, through staff interviews and a review of documentation of Jerry Davis' current policies and procedures, it was determined that the school does not have a policy or procedure for the maintenance of hearing aids.

- **The school will develop a policy and procedure to ensure that hearing aids are functioning properly and will provide staff training when students who use hearing aids are enrolled in the school.**

Section III: Staff Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding appropriate supervision of physical therapy assistants (PTA) and certified occupational therapy assistants (COTA), private school dual employment, supervision of paraprofessionals, job descriptions of

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paraprofessionals maintained at county office, criminal history verification and having an approved professional development plan.

During the self-assessment process, the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning Center identified concerns in the area regarding certified/licensed staff. The receiving school'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 receiving school has appropriately implemented the specific activity to bring about correction in this area.

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

Section IV: Facility Requirements

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding programs provided in approved facilities and certificates of occupancy and inspections.

During the self-assessment process, the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning Center identified a concern in the area regarding fire drills. The receiving school'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 receiving school has appropriately implemented the specific activity to bring about correction in this area.

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 Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning 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, current IEP prior to service delivery, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, implementation of IEP components and informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives.

During the self-assessment process, the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning Center identified concerns in the area regarding communication to sending districts regarding missing IEPs components. **The receiving school's improvement plan is insufficient to address this area because it lacks procedures and an administrative oversight component to ensure that the school communicates with sending districts when IEP components are missing.**

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

Section VI: Discipline

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Summary of Finding:

During self-assessment, the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding procedures for time out rooms, restraints and aversives, removal of student pending mediation and due process, changes to program/placement pending mediation and due process, notification to sending districts regarding suspensions, removal of student to interim alternative educational setting and procedures for termination of student placement.

During the self-assessment process, the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning Center identified a concern in the area regarding standard disciplinary procedures. The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. During the on-site visit a review of records and staff interviews determined that the school has appropriately implemented specific activities for correction in this area.

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

Section VII: Programs and Services

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning 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 CCCs, collaboration for home instruction, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services and medical exams for sport teams.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding the provision of nursing services.

Provision of Nursing Services – During the on-site visit staff interviews confirmed that the school's current nurse does not hold New Jersey Department of Education certification as required by N.J.A.C. 6A:16-2.1(e).

- **The receiving school will revise its improvement plan to include activities to ensure that the full range of nursing services is provided by employing a full time certified school nurse.**

Section VIII: Student Records

Summary of Findings:

During self-assessment, the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning Center accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding conformance to pupil record code, return of records upon termination of student placement, 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, written notice of placement to county office and maintenance of student health records.

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During the self-assessment process, the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning Center identified a concern in the area regarding the access to and security of student records. The receiving school'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 the specific activities for correction in this area.

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 Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning Center on March 22-23, 2005. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning Center's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the receiving school's improvement plan.

The receiving school is commended for the exceptionally comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review the receiving school was able to identify nearly all areas of need and develop an improvement plan that with some revision will bring about systemic change. The receiving school 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.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the receiving school during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, annual reports, amendments, 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, provision of occupational therapy (OT), physical therapy (PT), speech-language and counseling services as per IEP, appropriate supervision of physical therapy assistants (PTA) and certified occupational therapy assistants (COTA), private school dual employment, supervision of paraprofessionals, job descriptions of paraprofessionals maintained at county office, criminal history verification, having an approved professional development plan, programs provided in approved facilities, certificates of occupancy and inspections, 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, current IEP prior to service delivery, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, procedures for time out rooms, restraints and aversives, removal of student pending mediation and due process, changes to program/placement pending mediation and due process, notification to sending districts regarding suspensions, removal of student to interim alternative educational setting, procedures for termination of student, implementation of IEP components, 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 (blind or partially sighted, deaf or hard of hearing), special classes serving students with similar educational needs, teachers trained and instructing in CCCSs, collaboration for home instruction, policies and procedures relating to school functions and services, conformance to pupil record code, return of records upon termination, 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, written notice of placement to county office, and maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning Center identified areas of need regarding staff development, certified/licensed staff, fire drills, communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components, standard disciplinary procedures and access to records.

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The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding policies and procedures for maintenance of hearing aids and provision of nursing services by a certified school nurse.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the Jerry Davis Early Childhood Learning 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.