

Spring 2015 Lecture Series:
Ensuring Children's Success in School

Promoting Academic and Socioemotional Growth Among Exceptional Learners
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Bill Barfoot, Ph.D.
Lecturer, School of Behavioral and Brain Sciences
The University of Texas at Dallas
Learning Specialist
Alcuin School

Exceptional learners...

- Include children who experience difficulties in learning *AND* students whose abilities are very advanced
- Are students with
 - Learning and/or behavioral difficulties
 - Communication disorders
 - Physical disabilities, sensory impairments, and health impairments
 - Superior intelligence and/or special talents
- Differ from the norm (either below or above) to such an extent that they require an individualized program of special education and related services to fully benefit from education
- Necessitate *exceptional* professional practices, instructional methods, and curricular considerations

Early intervention...

- Consists of a comprehensive system of therapies, educational, nutritional, child care, and family supports, designed to enhance early development
- Can provide both intermediate and long-term benefits for young children with disabilities and those at risk for developmental delay
- High quality early intervention services...
 - Can alter a child's developmental trajectory
 - Can positively impact outcomes across developmental domains: health, language and communication, cognitive development, social/emotional development
 - Can improve outcomes for children, families, and communities

Parent-teacher partnerships

- Effective partnerships are characterized by family members and professionals jointly pursuing shared goals in the context of mutual respect (Heward, 2013)
- "A relationship in which families and professionals agree to build on each other's expertise and resources, as appropriate, for the purpose of making and implementing decisions that will directly benefit students and indirectly benefit other family members and professionals" (Turnbull et al., 2011, p. 137)

- The effectiveness of educational programs for children with disabilities is enhanced when parents and families are actively involved (e.g., Newman, 2004; Resetar, Noell, & Pellegrin, 2006)

Professional collaboration

- Teachers are better able to analyze and solve problems in the classroom when they work together
- Coordination - ongoing communication and cooperation to ensure that services are provided in a timely and systematic fashion
- Consultation - team members provide information and expertise to one another

(Heward, 2013)

The benefits of inclusion:

- Preparation for adult living
- Improved learning through peers and greater exposure
- Growth for peers
- Effective use of resources
- Friendship development
- Acceptance of differences
- Team building
- Focus on strengths
- Support of civil rights

(Adapted from Steps to Integration Parent Materials, Utah Parent Center, Utah and Institute on Community Integration, University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, Minnesota)

Successfully managing problem behaviors (at home and at school)

- Determine the function of the behavior
- Implement behavior change strategies

The importance of teaching life skills

- Daily living skills (managing personal finances, caring for personal needs, etc.)
- Personal/social skills (achieving self-awareness, maintaining good interpersonal skills, communicating with others, etc.)
- Occupational skills (selecting and planning occupational choices, exhibiting appropriate work habits and behavior, etc.)

Web-based resources

National Association of Parents with Children in Special Education: <http://www.napcse.org/>

Special Education Guide: <http://www.specialeducationguide.com/>

LDOnline: The Educators' Guide to Learning Disabilities and ADHD: <http://www.ldonline.org/>

Books

Exceptional Children (Tenth Edition) by William L. Heward (2013).

The Resilient Parent: Everyday Wisdom for Life with Your Exceptional Child by Mantu Joshi (2014).