

Developing a Public Regional Autism Program: An Initial Report

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Initial Goals of the Program

1. Maintain High Quality

1. Not only the purview of special-purpose programs
2. From MADSEC (1999) to National Standards Project (2009)
3. Applied Behavior Analysis/Evidence-Based Procedures
4. Incorporates peer-mediated social skills interventions (Lord, 2001)
5. Decrease 'lost' time in transportation

2. Reduce Costs

- Transportation
- Overhead
- Short-term placement vs long-term costs

3. Provide Least Restrictive Environment

- Utilize existing inclusion opportunities
 - Systematically increase opportunities for inclusion
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Realized Student Benefits

1. Opportunities for Inclusion

- Daily recess
- Snack, Lunch & Specials
- General education classroom instruction

2. Instruction Across the School Day

- Communication: receptive language, verbal imitation, requesting, labeling, conversation
- Play: toy & peer play, decreasing stereotypies, accepting variability
- Social: learning in a group, lining up, turn taking, greetings, waiting, circle, centers, games, OT group, PT group

Realized School Benefits

1. Opportunities for Inclusion

- Students learn augmentative communication
- Students learn visual prompting
- Students learn to teach schedule following

2. Education of district staff

- Safety-Care™
- Quality Behavioral Competencies
- Open door policy

Projected Benefits

1. Disseminate quality district-wide
 - Developed expertise of public school Teacher and Education Technicians
2. Orientation and training to other educators in within school
3. Opportunities for training to parents and other stakeholders
4. Prevents “permanent placement” phenomenon
5. Increased cost savings in subsequent years

Start Up

Assessments, Planning, Problem-Solving

1. Department of Education
2. District
3. Community
4. Building
5. Personnel
6. Program

Critical Preparation & Timelines

1. 6 months planning
2. 6 months active assessment, planning, problem-solving
3. 1st year ongoing problem-solving
4. Ongoing years fading

Building

Physical

1. Classroom in more remote wing / area
2. Classroom with square footage for gross motor breaks
3. Bathrooms, bathrooms, bathrooms... sinks, sinks, sinks...
4. Equipment
 - swing, trampoline
 - balls / balloons / bubbles
 - streamers / strings/ shaving cream

Building

People

1. External Community Communication
2. Internal Communication, “Marketing”
 - To other educators, school staff
 - To peers
3. Challenging behavioral events across school environment (tantrums, sneezing, etc.)
4. Adaptation to protracted behavioral interventions

Personnel Essentials

1. Teacher with ABA experience – let's define
2. Teacher with excellent supervisory skills
3. Teacher & Ed Tech training:
 - 'Autism 101',
 - Basic behavioral competencies,
 - Behavioral safety skills
 - Augmentative Communication
 - Teaching independent performances

Behavioral Safety Training

1. Incident Prevention Skills
 1. Environmental Safety
 2. Safety Habits
 3. Differential Reinforcement
2. Incident Minimization
 1. Detecting Antecedents/Predicting Behavior
 2. Leadership
 3. De-Escalation
3. Incident Management
 1. Releases
 2. Emergency Procedures
4. Post Incident Procedures

Quality Behavioral Competencies

- Competency-Based
- Evidence-Based
- Pre-Requisites to Instruction, BSP's

1. Reinforcement Delivery
2. Differential Reinforcement
3. Behavioral Momentum
4. Conducting Reinforcer Assessments
5. Developing Conditioned Reinforcers
6. Implementing Graduated Guidance

Program Elements

1. Applied Behavioral Analysis Consultant for Program and Case Consultation
2. Functional approach to challenging behavior, verbal behavior, and all other behavior (IDEIA, 2004)
3. Specialized assessment & instructional programs focused on autism deficits
4. Teach *independent* skill performances
5. Data collection & analysis

Program Curriculum

Critical Components

1. Social

- a. Readiness Skills: Cooperation, Imitation, Classroom Routines, Learning in a Group, Generalization
- b. Social Skills Instruction

2. Communication & Language Acquisition

3. Play

4. Three R's

5. Behavior Reduction

Program Admissions

Although 'Autism' program...varied

1. Ages, Grade Independent
2. Levels of Communication
3. Related Diagnoses
4. Behavioral/social skills challenges

Same IEP Process
