IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
THE KEY TO DEFENSIBLE DISTRICTWIDE PROGRAMS

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STAR Autism Support  ·  503.716.8203  ·  www.starautismsupport.com

IMPROVING OUTCOMES FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES:
The Key to Defensible Districtwide Programs

Free Appropriate Public Education
- Educational needs must be addressed based on individual student learning characteristics
- Meaningful opportunities for students should be provided to meet challenging learning objectives (U.S. Supreme Court Case Decision Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District Re-1)
- How will a child’s progress toward meeting annual goals be measured and reported to ensure the standard is met for each student?

Implementation Matters
Assessment ● Standard-based Instruction ● Evidence-Based Practices ● IEPs ● Annual Goals ● Post-Secondary Outcomes

Case Study: Urban School District
Changes
- District level coaches were identified and trained
- Focus of professional development was on fidelity of instruction using best practices
- Instructional content included social and communication skills
- Students made gains in self-management, engagement and attention
- Once students made growth in social and communication areas, students were able to learn academic skills in general education settings
- Consultants and district coaches worked together to develop consistent programs across the district

Case Study: Urban School District
Challenges
- Teachers had limited knowledge of evidence-based practices for students with ASD and other developmental disabilities
- Teachers were unable to effectively communicate to parents student specific needs and interventions to address those needs
- Curriculum previously purchased was not implemented with fidelity
- Although centralized district programs were in place, no specific curriculum met all students’ unique communication and social needs
- Parents requested ABA and evidence-based practices, however, no systematic approach was currently in place to address these concerns within the district.

Building Sustainable Systems of Support for Schools
Districtwide capacity
Positive outcomes for students Positive outcomes for teachers
Consistent programming between classrooms and grade bands
Research validated teaching strategies and curriculum for students at all learning levels Practical solutions for teachers
Evidence base

Research guides....
Practice
To ensure positive outcomes for students
Professional Development
To ensure consistent, high-quality teaching practices

To achieve fidelity of implementation of behaviorally based curricula, it requires a system-wide response at the local level, via in-service training, that provides for on-going support (National Autism Center, 2009).
The best staff training includes demonstration, coaching and follow-up training. Bolton & Mayer (2008)
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Capacity Building Components
- Teacher Tools Including Curricula and Classroom Visual Supports
- Professional Development
- Building Capacity through Training Sites and District Level Coaches

Teachers Need Tools
- Comprehensive Curricula for students with ASD
- Visual Supports
- Progress Monitoring
- IEP Goals
- Training for General Educators
- Self-Assessment on Quality Program Indicators
- Fidelity of Implementation Checklists
- Lesson Plans
- Technology
- Guides to the Common Core
- Transition Planning Across Grade Levels
- Post-secondary

STAR Program
Preschool-Elementary
- Curriculum-based Assessment
- Lesson Plans
- Data Collection Tools

Example of Comprehensive Evidence-Based Program: Preschool/Elementary Students

The Links Curriculum
Secondary
- Visual Supports
- Assessment
- Progress Monitoring
- Instruction

The Links Curriculum
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Building Capacity through PD
- Initial Workshop on Implementation of Evidence-Based Practices
- Onsite Coaching with a Focus on Fidelity of Implementation
- Developing Training Sites and Coaches to Support New Implementers
- Training New Implementers Through Local Coaches

Model Training Sites and Coaches

Highly Trained Staff
- Workshops
- Training in assessment and program development
- Classroom consultation
- Individual student supports and planning

Collaborative Autism Project

Knowledgeable General Education Staff

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Knowledgeable Administrators

Administrator Checklist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Domain</th>
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<td>Technology Systems</td>
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Networking and Communities of Practice

Effective Early Childhood Inclusive Settings

Supporting Children with Autism and Other Developmental Delays in Childcare and Preschool Settings

Presented by Texas Collaborative Autism Project Hosted by RIO ABD

Effective Parent Communication and Supports

Session 1: First Stop: Identifying Strategies that Work
Session 2: Why Does My Kid Do That? Answering the Whys with Behavioral Principles
Session 3: Teaching and Reinforcing Receptive Language Skills
Session 4: Teaching Kids Appropriate Communication and Language Skills
Session 5: Same Stuff, Different Day: Teaching Skills Through Functional Routines
Session 6: Visualize It: Using Supports Effectively
Session 7: Challenging Behavior: Taming the Tantrum
Session 8: Map It Out: Writing Effective Behavior Support Plans
Session 9: The Fun Part: Fostering Play and Social Skills
Session 10: Overcoming Mealtime Challenges
Session 11: The Small Stuff: Mastering Fine Motor Skills
Session 12: Bathroom Break: Tools for Toilet Training

Developing a Districtwide Program

A Model for Serving Students with ASD and Intellectual Disabilities
Positive Student Outcomes Through Comprehensive Districtwide Solutions

Learn more:
www.starautismsupport.com
www.linkscurriculum.com
CAPACITY BUILDING WORKS

STAR Autism Support has developed a proven approach to building capacity to serve all of your students with autism. Taking a system-wide approach improves student outcomes, increases efficiency and improves staff satisfaction.

- Implement evidence-based practices
- Customize solutions for your district
- Develop sustainable programs
- Ensure fidelity of implementation
- Empower staff
- Improve collaboration between staff and parent

WAYS WE BUILD CAPACITY

- The training site model/coach development
- Building educational teams
- Professional development workshops
- In-class consultation
- Virtual learning
- Curriculum tools

STATE, DISTRICT-WIDE AND INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

- Oregon Program Autism Training Sites and Support (OR)
- Philadelphia Secondary Autism Project (PA)
- Arizona Statewide Autism Project (AZ)
- Arkansas Statewide Capacity Project (AR)
- Minnesota Evidence-Based Practices Project (MN)
- Utah Statewide Autism Education Project (UT)
- Puerto Rico Project (PR)
- Victoria ABA Pilot Program and BCBA Project (AU)
- OST-STAR Centers (China)

Thousands of Districts, Tens of Thousands of Educators
Training sites can provide local school districts with an effective resource to model evidence-based practices, train staff, and serve students. These training sites model the use of effective practices throughout the students’ instructional day.

**RESEARCH-BASED CURRICULA AND INSTRUCTIONAL TOOLS**

Research-based curricula and instructional tools provide the foundation for all staff to replicate effective practices.

- Instruction in a variety of settings
- Data-based decision making
- Fidelity of implementation
- Consistency of instruction
- Self-sufficient professional development
- Fidelity of implementation

**METHODOLOGY**

STAR Autism Support takes a comprehensive approach that addresses the unique needs of your organization. Recommended services may include a variety of deliverables:

- Needs assessment
- Comprehensive workshops
- Program setup
- In-class hands-on training
- Coach training
- Fidelity checklist and other resources
- Distance learning
- Certification
The first special education case brought to the Supreme Court defined “appropriate education” through the lens of the *Education for All Handicapped Children Act* in order to prohibit discrimination against students with disabilities (*Board of Education v. Rowley*, 1982; *Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975*). In the decades following this landmark ruling, the definition and interpretation of appropriate education has undergone a transformation. Where initially it was “enough” to simply open the door for children with disabilities, more recent rulings—such as *Endrew v. Douglas County School District*—have clarified that states are responsible for providing an education program that supports *meaningful* and *measurable* skill acquisition for students receiving special education services (*Endrew v. Douglas Co. School District*, 2016).

**Instruction Must Be Informed by Peer-Reviewed Research**

When the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) was reauthorized in 2004, a new emphasis was placed on applying *proven* methods of teaching in special education settings. Instruction should be based on peer-reviewed research and address students’ unique needs while preparing them for further education, employment, and independent living. To this end, IEPs *must* include a statement of the peer-reviewed research-based special education services provided to the student.

**Services and Goals Are Outcome-Oriented Rather Than Process-Oriented**

The reauthorization of IDEA in 2004 also shifted special education services from a process-oriented approach where participation in special education was the measure of success to an outcome-oriented approach that requires measurable progress. Goals must be both aligned to learning standards and, at the same time, functional for the student and valued by the family. A lack of forward planning and focus on functional outcomes is what led to the decision in Dracut Massachusetts to award a student two additional years of education services post-graduation so that he could acquire skills that would allow him to succeed after transitioning from high school (*Student v. Dracut*, 2009).

**Individualized Education Plans (IEPs) Are Based on Data**

An IEP is the foundation of the education that a student in special education receives (“A guide to the IEP”, 2000). As a collaborative document co-created by administrators, teachers, families and students, the goals that are identified within the IEP must take into consideration the student’s strengths and needs as they relate to a typical developmental trajectory. The IEP is driven by data-based decisions and should consider the student’s present levels of development as well as the typical developmental trajectory for that set of skills.

**The Classroom Meets the Needs of the Individual**

Students receiving special education services should be educated in the Least Restrictive Environment. For some individuals, that may be a general education setting. For others, placement in a typical classroom would result in a lack of meaningful participation in the learning environment. For these children, consider a setting with fewer students that is intentionally designed to work with their unique learning styles. The classroom teacher(s) and paraprofessionals should have the resources they need to work with the population in their classroom. Curriculum designed specifically with special populations in mind can improve student learning outcomes. However, simply having the curriculum available isn’t enough. Teachers and other professionals must also have access to professional development opportunities in order to use specialized curriculum with fidelity.

**References**

- *Student v. Dracut Public Schools, BSEA 08-5330, 15 MSER 78 (2009).*
**Key Considerations**

**Instruction Must Be Informed by Peer-Reviewed Research**

IEPs must include a statement of the special education services based on peer-reviewed research and provided to the child.

*IDEA reauthorization: 2004*

**Meaningful and Measurable Progress**

Schools must offer students with disabilities an education “reasonably calculated” to enable them to make progress.

*Supreme court ruling: Endrew F v. Douglas County School District*

**Services and Goals Are Outcome-Oriented Rather Than Process-Oriented**

IEPs must confer meaningful educational benefit while ensuring that students learn skills that will allow them to be successful beyond the school environment.

*Dracut Public School Decision (BSEA No. 08-5330)*

**IEPs Are Based on Data**

Annual goals should be established based on the correlation between the PLAAFP and the student needs. This is accomplished through a curriculum-based assessment.

*(Hessler & Konrad, 2008)*

**The Classroom Meets the Needs of the Individual**

“The classroom” is a blend of the curriculum and the teaching staff. The successful combination of these two resources promotes student progress.

*(Gollub, 2002, p. 134)*

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**Compliance**

The STAR/LINKS curricula use peer-reviewed and empirically validated methods to teach students with Autism Spectrum Disorder and other developmental disabilities. STAR and LINKS use ABA principles delivered through Discrete Trial Training, Pivotal Response Training and Task Analysis practices to ensure a learning environment that suits the behavioral and educational needs of students with ASD and other developmental disabilities.

**Meaningful and Measurable Progress**

The STAR/LINKS developmentally sequenced student assessment and program guides support practitioners in determining appropriate goals for students that are attainable based on current skills.

**Services and Goals Are Outcome-Oriented Rather Than Process-Oriented**

STAR and LINKS lessons are aligned to learning standards. Additionally, both curricula include intentional opportunities to generalize skills, promote independence in routines, and develop life skills.

**IEPs Are Based on Data**

The STAR and LINKS programs use a curriculum-based assessment to identify students’ present levels of functioning and determine appropriate goals. Data is collected daily to ensure skill acquisition. Progress monitoring is frequent, practical, and leads directly to data-based decision-making to guide instruction.

**The Classroom Meets the Needs of the Individual**

STAR Autism Support provides workshops and in-class coaching for teachers implementing the STAR and LINKS curriculum. Teachers learn both the basics of ABA and how to implement the specific curriculum with fidelity.

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