Working Together: To Support Best Practices And Make A Difference In The Lives of Children With Disabilities
A Year-Long Course of Study for Special Educators and Related Service Providers

Trainings 2006-2007
10/25/06 – Beyond Nuts & Bolts
12/12/06 – Making IEP Decisions
1/09/07 – Writing Measurable and Meaningful Goals & Objectives
2/06/07 - Specialized Instruction Program Planning & Implementation
3/13/07 - IEP Implementation and Program Monitoring
Making Evidence Based Decisions Using Data
Collection, and Interpretation
4/10/07 - Comprehensive Evaluation Process- How To Ask The Right Questions And Get The Answers You Need

Making IEP Decisions As A Team Keeping It Do-able & Making it Work!
With members of Joel’s East Montpelier Elementary School team:
• Cindy, Joel’s mom
• Lisa, Joel’s teacher
• Kathleen, Joel’s special educator
• Patty, Joel’s SLP
• Louise, Joel’s OT
• Sherri, Joel’s Behavior Interventionist
• Joy, Facilitator
Today’s Objectives

• Effective Teaming
• Making Collaborative Decisions
• Problem-Solving & Making Adjustments

By the end of the day, you will have:
1. Identified specific examples of effective teaming practices
2. Analyzed an IEP team of which you are a member
3. Predicted how you will make changes/adjustments to an IEP team’s functioning
4. Discussed strategies for making the various decisions facing IEP teams

Learning Task #1

• Take a minute to think about an IEP team that you are a member of (or have been a member of in the past) that you consider to be an effective team
• Discuss with a partner some of the reasons you feel the team is effective – why is it working?
• On a scrap paper, jot down 2 or 3 ideas
• We’ll hear from each site and from our panel
Learning Task #2

- Each site will take 2 points from the research
  - Brattleboro (1 & 2)
  - St. Albans (3 & 4)
  - Newport (5 & 6)
  - WRJ (7 & 8)
  - Waterbury (9 & another intriguing one!)

- Discuss the elements of effective teams reflected by your points (10 min.)
- List specific examples of how teams achieve these qualities
- We’ll hear from each site and our panel

What the research says:

1. Listen & Interact Well
   - Functioning teams spend most of their time engaged in “student-focused” discussion & working toward common goals
   - Use many strategies to communicate effectively
   - Minimize conflict, recognize it when it occurs, and establish strategies to address it
What the research says:

2. Establish Shared Values
   – Around teaching and learning
   – Student motivation
   – Disability
   – Inclusion
   – Interpersonal communication
   – Working together

What the research says:

3. Define roles and responsibilities
   – General educators
   – Special educators
   – Principal
   – Paraeducators/Instructional assistants
   – Related services providers
   – Family members

What the research says:

4. Establish a team meeting process and schedule
   – What do we want to accomplish?
   – How will we proceed during our meetings?
   – When and how often/long will we meet?
   – Where will we meet?
   – How will our process be suited to the student’s family members?
What the research says:

5. Prepare for and conduct meetings
   - Time to socialize
   - Facilitator opens the meeting
   - Roles are assigned
   - Agenda items are generated and discussed
   - Team celebrates successes
   - Facilitator keeps meeting on track
   - Timekeeper reminds team of meeting schedule
   - Action plans are created
   - Facilitator closes meeting and summarizes
   - Notes are disseminated

What the research says:

6. Teach and consult with other team members
   - Work as an equal, not an authority
   - Participate in school routines
   - Nurture relationships with fellow team members
   - Expect to learn from others and acknowledge when you do
   - Use an experiential learning approach that allows learners to be successful
   - Ask for feedback about your consultation or teaching of others

What the research says:

7. Make decisions by consensus
   - Signs of trouble
     - Team members cave in to others’ opinions when no supporting data exist or are presented
     - Decisions are made by default, members don’t respond, and silence is interpreted as agreement
     - Team members strong-arm the others into agreeing
     - Team members make the decision despite a lack of team agreement
     - Hasty reversion to “the majority rules” in order to avoid open disagreement
What the research says:

8. Team effectively “on-the-fly”
   – Informal notes in mailboxes
   – Rotating notebook
   – Stationary notebook
   – Team consultation logs
   – Individual student progress notebooks/forms
   – Specific forms that reflect/preserve team decisions or describe plans

What the research says:

9. Reflect on the team process
   – Questions about prior team achievements and student progress
   – Questions regarding individual team member accountability
   – Questions about ongoing interpersonal relationships and their effect on teamwork
   – Questions regarding progress being made in the current meeting
   – Questions about accomplishments made in the current meeting

Learning Task #3

• Using the “Team Profile” worksheet, reflect on an IEP team that you are a member of (it could be the same team from the earlier discussion, or a different team)
• List 1 or 2 areas that you would like to see the team work on
• Sites will hear from each person that would like to share
• We will take a 15 minute break
Learning Task #4

• Turn to a partner and take a minute to discuss and answer this question. What decisions do IEP teams need to make?
• We’ll hear from you in “popcorn” fashion and create a list as a large group.

So...how do we make those decisions?

Learn About the Student

PRESENT LEVELS OF PERFORMANCE ➔ ANNUAL GOALS ➔ SERVICE DECISIONS

How do we collect information about our students?

• Observation
• Interviews
• Formal and informal evaluation
• Data samples from instruction
•
•
•
Resources to help teams make decisions:

• Guidelines for Making Decisions About IEP Services (2001), VT DOE
• VISTA, A Guide to Coordinating Educational Support Services

How does Joel's team do it?

• What questions do you have for our panel?

Resources

After Lunch

• Site facilitators, please collect the following information and send to Andrea & Marie:
  • Names, contact information, and primary role of each individual
  • A list of hopes & goals for this year’s training series from your group