

**Collaboration in Special Education: Working Together to Ensure Success For All
Students**

by

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Internship

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Abstract

The paper addresses ways that teachers can collaborate in an effort to make classrooms more inclusive. This collaboration includes ongoing communication between general education and special education teachers. The first chapter, the introduction, consists of the purpose/goal of the internship, as well as the connections to CEC standards. Chapter two contains the review of current educational literature related to the topic of using collaboration to encourage and support inclusionary practices. The next chapter explains the method I used to keep a journal each day of my internship. The complete journal pages can be found in the paper's appendix. Finally, there is a reflection on the work. The CEC standards for beginning special education professionals are reviewed and relationships to the internship are made. There are recommendations for using what was learned and experienced in order to promote further collaboration and inclusion in the future.

Acknowledgements

I began this journey towards getting my Master's in Education seven years ago. The primary goal at that time was to receive continuing education credits in order to renew my state teaching certificate, as I could not get those from teaching since I was currently a stay-at-home mom. I was not certain if I actually would be able to manage getting my degree because of time and financial constraints. Jen Heggelund, director of special education in my school district, was pivotal in encouraging me to finish my degree so that I could work as a special education teacher. Dr. John Meyer reviewed the plan for completing my degree and gave me recommendations about which classes I should take. Daryl Hanneman, my advisor, kept me on track and offered advice as I completed my internship. My children, Elijah and Abigail, were patient and encouraging as I worked on my classes. Ben, my husband of thirteen years, was supportive through the whole process. He made sacrifices so that I would have time to work and was committed to arranging our finances so finishing the program was possible. Most of all, I thank the Lord, for giving me the time, talent, money, abilities, and perseverance to complete the work.

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Chapter I: Introduction

The Purpose/Goals of the Internship

I began my teaching career in 2003 with a call to serve at a Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) kindergarten and first grade classroom in Las Vegas, Nevada. Through a series of events and life changes, I am currently working as a special education teacher in the public school system of Watertown, South Dakota. In order to continue serving in special education, I need to obtain the appropriate certification.

This internship is one of the necessary steps for obtaining special education certification. Besides meeting that requirement, I am excited to have the opportunity to learn more about how to best serve students with special needs. The children I will be working with will spend the majority of the school day in the general education classroom, but will receive some supports from the special education teacher. Integrating students with special needs into the general education classroom successfully requires collaboration between the special education teacher and general education teachers. My goal is to find ways to promote successful inclusion of students with special needs through a team-based approach to meet the needs of those students.

The Importance of the Internship

The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), with its revisions in 1997 and 2004, requires that all students, including those with special needs, are educated in the least restrictive environment. Often the general education classroom, with support from a special education teacher, is the most appropriate environment for those students. My current goal is to find ways to promote collaboration between teachers in the public

school system. I do, however, see an application for WELS schools. There are times when WELS schools are not able to adequately meet the needs of all students. This is sad because students with special needs may be missing the opportunity for a Christ-centered education. I believe that WELS teachers can learn ways to collaborate with special education teachers in order to provide an appropriate inclusive environment for students with special needs.

Connection to Standards

My goals are aligned with standard 7.0 from the Council for Exceptional Children, “Special education specialists collaborate with stakeholders to improve programs, services, and outcomes for individuals with exceptionalities and their families” (Council for Exceptional Children, 2015, p. 9). South Dakota uses CEC standards for special education teacher certification standards.

Chapter II: Literature Review

Introduction

The field of special education is a dynamic one, continually changing in an attempt to reach the goal of enabling all students to meet their full potential. For almost fifty years, legislators have been enacting various laws in order to accomplish that objective. Important laws related to the education of all students, regardless of ability, include the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 (especially Section 504), Education for All Handicapped Children Act (EHCA) of 1975, and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) of 1990 along with its revisions in 1997 and 2004 (Billingsley, Brownell, Israel, & Kamman, 2013). The passing and implementation of these laws has had many effects on the area of special education. My focus will be on meeting the needs of all students in the least restrictive environment (LRE), which often means the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. This requires collaboration between general education teachers, special education teachers, parents, administrators, related service providers, and other stakeholders. While all of these individuals play vital roles, the focus of this literature review will be on collaboration between special education and general education teachers. Collaboration between general and special education teachers can lead to the successful inclusion of students with special needs in the general education classroom.

Collaboration Between General and Special Education Teachers

To make inclusion possible, general and special education teachers will need to work together more closely in order to align their programs. Special education should be

viewed as a service provided to students instead of a particular location where separate services are provided (Kirby, 2017). This promotes a shift from viewing special education as taking place outside the classroom to the inclusion of students with special needs in the same environment as their peers. The goal of legislation was to give all students access to services, which often was incorrectly interpreted to mean that those students needed to be excluded from the general education classroom in order to have their needs met (Kirby, 2017). This lack of cooperation may still be apparent in some cases, as it seems that there is an “uneasy peaceful coexistence between classroom teacher and special educators” (Welch, 1998), as they work next to each other rather than together in both a figurative and literal sense. According to a qualitative study conducted by Ledoux, Graves, & Burt (2012), general education teachers feel a disconnect with special education. This can be bridged with increased communication and collaboration.

Special and general education teachers need to collaborate in order to design and implement Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals for students. General education teachers’ participation in the IEP process was mandated by the reauthorization of IDEA in 1997 (Billingsley et al., 2013). IDEA requires that general education teachers be present at the IEP meeting in order to give input and set goals. Unfortunately, the responsibility for setting those goals was and is often taken on by the special education teacher, who independently writes the goals before the meeting for the approval of the team (Welch, 1997). Although this is done in an effort to expedite the process, it minimizes the role of the general education teacher in contributing to the IEP process.

Collaboration between general and special education teachers should not only be encouraged solely because of legal requirements, but also to best meet the needs of students with disabilities. Researchers have found that collaboration between the different disciplines has had a positive effect on the achievement of students with disabilities in a supportive, inclusive setting (Buli-Holmberg & Jeyaprabhan, 2016; Hernandez, 2013; Lawrence-Brown & Muschaweck, 2004; Lingo, Barton-Arwood, & Jolivette, 2011; Morgan, 2016; Obiakor, Harris, Mutua, Rotator, & Algozinne, 2012).

Effective Collaboration

In order to collaborate effectively, it is necessary for teachers and teams to possess certain characteristics. Successful collaborators need positive attitudes, good interpersonal skills, open communication, trusting relationships, professional demeanors, respectful attitudes, confidence in their abilities, and the willingness to treat others as equals (Hernandez, 2013; Thousand, Villa, & Nevin, 2006). These qualities may not be demonstrated immediately, but with determination and conscientiousness they can be developed over time. Practices used by effective collaborative teams include taking turns with different roles, sticking to the agenda, identifying who will carry out designated tasks, and setting dates for meeting targets (Lawrence-Brown & Muschaweck, 2004). According to the synthesis of the literature by Morgan (2016), successful team collaboration also relies on parity, setting mutual goals, working together to make decisions, voluntary participation, sharing resources, sharing accountability, showing respect for the opinions of others, and accepting advice based on the expertise of others. For example, general education teachers can contribute with their expertise related to

curriculum, standards, and the classroom as a whole, while special education teachers may share ways to individualize instruction and curriculum (Van Gardener, Stormonont, & Goel, 2012). It is important for special education teachers to model collaboration, build positive relationships with general education teachers, and cooperatively determine how students with disabilities will be included in the general education classroom (Morgan, 2016).

It is important to perform student assessments in order to monitor the progress of students served by both special education and general education teachers. They should work together in order to collect and analyze data for students who may need additional services. They can use the information they gather in order to make decisions about which interventions should be implemented. The ways that teachers divide these responsibilities will depend on the individual situations. Special education teachers can provide examples of appropriate assessment methods, provide training in utilizing them, collect and analyze data, conduct student observations, suggest interventions, and help decide how to differentiate instruction. Together with general education teachers, they can set and monitor clear academic, behavioral, and social goals for students (Lingo et al., 2011).

General education teachers have reasonable concerns about being able to make inclusion work. Quantitative data from a study conducted by LeDoux et al., (2012) indicated that teachers are concerned with the ability of special education students to “keep up” with the general education curriculum and the lack of time to meet the needs of those students. This lack of time was unsurprisingly a common theme in the literature

(Hernandez, 2013; Lawrence-Brown & Muschaweck, 2004). Members of focus groups from the study by LeDoux et al. (2012) were concerned with communication and collaboration among the different parties. Other obstacles to collaboration include the lack of connection between activities in the classroom and resource room, difficulty with sharing control, lack of trust, different personalities, and different teaching styles (Morgan, 2016).

Lawrence-Brown and Muschaweck (2004) wrote about ways that collaboration would be beneficial to the Catholic education system. As fellow Christians, many of their motivations and goals are shared by Wisconsin Evangelical Lutheran Synod (WELS) schools. The goal of WELS schools is to reach as many children as possible with the gospel of Christ. This requires that we take steps to meet the needs of students with disabilities in the general education classroom, as separate special education programs are not common in WELS schools. Reaching out to and collaborating with special education teachers in the public school system may also be necessary in order to fully meet the needs of all students.

Summary

The literature shows the positive benefits that can be reaped when general and special education teachers collaborate to meet the needs of students with disabilities. There are many ways to make these partnerships possible. The special education teacher and special education programs should be viewed as partners and resources rather than as separate, exclusive entities. This will enable teachers to use their resources, experiences, and abilities in order to make true inclusion possible and beneficial.

Chapter III: Journal

My internship consisted of serving as a special education resource teacher at two public elementary schools in Watertown, South Dakota. Each day, I worked at one in the morning and the other in the afternoon. At the end of the day, I wrote down some of my experiences I had working with specific students as well as the general duties of a special education teacher. I made an effort to align topics I wrote about in my journal with the CEC standards for beginning special education professionals. After each entry, I recorded which standards were addressed in that day's entry. Space was left for my college supervisor to make comments and/or ask questions about my reflections.

See Journal Appendix A

Chapter IV: Reflective Essay

Introduction

I began my internship with the purpose of finding ways to collaborate effectively with other teachers in order to promote inclusion in the general education classroom. I did this in the capacity of a special education teacher working with general education teachers as well as other special education teachers. At the same time, I was learning the skills necessary to serve students in the capacity of a special education teacher.

Conclusions

According to standards laid out by the Council for Exceptional Children, collaboration is addressed in standard seven. I did, however, work to meet the criteria for all of the other standards as well. My goal was to have a variety of experiences in order to prepare me to serve as a special education teacher. Through the work at both of the elementary schools, I believe that I was able to achieve that objective. Below, I will list each of the beginning special education professional standards and reflect on how I met them through my internship experiences.

1.0 Beginning special education professionals understand how exceptionalities may interact with development and learning and use this knowledge to provide meaningful and challenging learning experiences for individuals with exceptionalities.

It takes time and thoughtfulness to begin to meet this special education standard. Before I began my internship, I read the IEPs of all of the students I would work with. This gave me knowledge of each child's performance level, needs, and history. It takes meeting each child and working with him or her to adequately individualize instruction. I

began this process from the first day I met with the students, having conversations with them about their families, home lives, and interests among other topics. In addition to building a relationship with each student, it is important to reach out to their families as well. I was able to talk to most of the caretakers at open house or on the phone. One time this connection was helpful was when one of my students was struggling with behaviors. I sent a text message to his mom and she told me that his schedule had changed due to her work circumstances. Being cognizant of that situation helped me to understand the student's difficulties while still encouraging him to do his best work and use appropriate coping strategies.

2.0 Beginning special education professionals create safe, inclusive, culturally responsive learning environments so that individuals with exceptionalities become active and effective learners and develop emotional well being, positive social interactions, and self-determination.

During my internship, I was proactive in teaching social skills. I read social stories to students describing appropriate behaviors including being quiet in the classroom, following instructions, and taking a break. We practiced the skills in the Learning Center and encouraged their use in other settings. For example, we read a story about attending and assembly before going to a schoolwide program.

I was able to adapt my schedule when there was a chance for students to participate in an activity with their general education peers. In doing this, they were able to use their social skills in an inclusive setting.

3.0 Beginning special education professionals use knowledge of general and specialized curricula to individualize learning for individuals with exceptionalities.

Working with a general education teacher in the inclusion writing setting gave me the opportunity to adapt the curriculum to meet the needs of students with special needs. This consisted of modifying the length of the writing assignment, allowing extra time to complete work, and working in an alternative setting.

4.0 Beginning special education professionals use multiple methods of assessment and data sources in making educational decisions.

I regularly monitored student progress in reading, math, and writing using Curriculum Based Measures. This information was used to determine if my current instructional practices were benefiting students by assessing their growth in reading fluency, reading comprehension, math fact fluency, and writing fluency. Progress towards individual goals was reported using the results of the progress monitoring as well as teacher input, work samples, and observations.

5.0 Beginning special education professionals select, adapt, and use a repertoire of evidence-based instructional strategies to advance learning of individuals with exceptionalities.

As I got to know individual students, I was able to integrate their interests into instruction as well as their choice of responses. There were times when I altered my lesson plans based on the individual needs of students.

I used curriculum that used evidence-based instructional strategies for reading, math, writing, and social skills. When students were not making adequate progress, I implemented other evidence-based strategies to better meet their needs.

6.0 Beginning special education professionals use foundational knowledge of the field and their professional ethical principles and practice standards to inform special education practice, to engage in lifelong learning, and to advance the profession.

I learned more about the field and practice of special education through reflecting in my journal, communicating with special and general education teachers, consulting with administrators and related service providers, as well as reading professional literature. I made adjustments to my teaching when I recognized that my school district was in favor of implementing inclusive practices in special education. I participated in training and monitoring the teaching of paraprofessionals who worked with me in the classroom.

7.0 Special education professionals collaborate with families, other educators, related service providers, individuals with exceptionalities, and personnel from community agencies in culturally responsive ways to address the needs of individuals with exceptionalities across a range of learning experiences.

I was in regular communication with general education teachers, special education teachers, parents, administrators, school psychologists, speech/language pathologists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, counselors, and social workers.

We often worked together to brainstorm ways that we could best meet the needs of our students. This collaboration allowed many people to contribute with our expertise.

Recommendations

The majority of my internship consisted of me working as a special education resource teacher with individuals or small groups in the Learning Center. I was able to collaborate with the classroom teachers to promote inclusion in a few ways. One of the students in the alternative education classroom was allowed part of his day in the general education classroom, with a plan outlining the criteria he needs to meet to add additional time. In the second grade writing group, I was able to use the inclusion model by allowing the students to participate in the mini-lesson in the general education classroom. I then taught them in small groups along with peers who were not identified for special education services.

The teacher for fourth grade reading and writing has been open to trying a more inclusive approach. In January, I will begin to adapt the general education writing curriculum so that it can be used by the students who receive special education services. My hope is that this will prove beneficial for students who go to the Learning Center, especially as they will be exposed to the standards their current curriculum is lacking. After that is implemented, I plan to talk to the general education teacher about ways those students may be included in the general education classroom. This may consist of them listening and participating in the mini-lesson for writing before going to work in a small group. Another possibility would be asking to form groups consisting of students with special education needs and students from the general education classroom who may be

struggling. This would be a benefit to both sets of students as well as both sets of teachers.

This internship served to increase my understanding of how special and general education teachers can work together to best meet the needs of all students. My focus was on creating opportunities for increased inclusion in the general education classroom when possible, and the teachers were receptive to those plans. The field of special education in general and my school district in particular are embracing opportunities for increased inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom. Although my current position is as a special education teacher in a public school, I have collaborated with WELS teachers informally in order to give them strategies and resources to support students with special needs in their classrooms. When teachers in WELS schools are able to collaborate with special education teachers, there is an increased likelihood of being able to include students with special needs in that environment. This provides children more time in the Christian setting to not only grow academically, but also to hear God's Word on a daily basis and as it is applied throughout the school day. The mindset of including all children in Christian education echoes the words of Jesus in the eighteenth chapter of Matthew, verse thirty-seven, "Let the little children come to me, and do not hinder them, for the kingdom of heaven belongs to such as these."

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Appendix A

Internship for Radtke 2018- McKinley Elementary School and Roosevelt Elementary
School Watertown, SD
Collaborative Online Document

Description	Intern Comments	Field and College Supervisor Comments
Date:		
Activity:	<p>September 24, 2018</p> <p>For this internship, I will be working with approximately thirteen students who receive special education services. I have been working with them since August, so we are already familiar with each other.</p> <p>The day begins with making sure that the students on behavior plans have their behavior charts so that the special education and general education teachers can be consistent with our expectations and behaviors can be monitored.</p> <p>In the morning, I teach math and writing to four students in second and third grade. They receive services in the Learning Center (special education classroom) for the majority of the day. They are included with their peers for breakfast, the beginning of the day routines, specials (computer, music, art, physical education), social studies, science, lunch, recesses, and read aloud time at the end of the day.</p> <p>I also provide services in the Learning Center for a shorter time period for two children working on reading fluency.</p> <p>In the afternoon, I get to work in an inclusion writing setting. There are two students in the class who have been identified as needing special education services for writing. The</p>	Good overview!

	<p>classroom teacher and I work together to decide on appropriate teaching strategies for individual students. Although I am in the classroom to help two particular students, I walk around the classroom and help other students as well. I think this is beneficial because no one is singled out.</p> <p>After that group, I work with seven students for reading and writing. The classroom teacher has offered to provide some inclusion opportunities for the students. If she has a mini-lesson that she believes will be beneficial for my students, she lets me know what the topic is and asks if it's alright to keep them in the classroom for about ten extra minutes. I am in the classroom at that time if she needs any assistance.</p> <p>In order to teach that group of students, a teacher's assistant and I have split the students into two groups. We each take a group for teaching reading and then we switch groups for writing. She is a certified teacher, so she is a good person to collaborate with on ways to best meet the needs of the students.</p> <p>As I continue to journal, I will comment on experiences that I have with the individual students and how I am able to collaborate with other staff members to best serve their needs. There will be an emphasis on including the students in the general education classroom when possible.</p> <p><i>CEC 2.1, 3.3, 6.6, 7.2, 7.3</i></p> <p>September 25, 2018</p> <p>This morning I prepared a parental prior written notice in order to reevaluate a student for his 3 year IEP. (The pseudonym "Eric" will be used for this student.) One of the special education teachers gave me a format to follow. I consulted with the speech teachers, OT, and PT in order to find out what evaluations he needed. I also contacted the</p>	<p>You are getting right into the swing of things!</p>
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	<p>school psychologist to make sure that I had all the necessary testing areas listed.</p> <p>I worked with a small group in the classroom where students have inclusion for writing. The classroom teacher instructed the students to choose a piece of their writing that included sight and sound words (skill they've been working on). I helped the two students who receive special education services to choose a piece and add at least one sight or sound word. The teacher divided the students into groups. I took one group that included general education students as well as one of the students receiving inclusion services. (The pseudonym "Evan" will be used for this student.) Evan got to share his writing and also listen to what other students had written. He receives services for reading and math in the Learning Center, so it was good to see him included in the writing activity.</p> <p>CEC 2.2, 4.3, 7.3</p> <p>September 26, 2018</p> <p>Today I was able to test a third grade student for phonics and sight word acquisition. (The pseudonym "Aiden" will be used for this student.) He is a student who does not currently receive special education services other than speech, but there are concerns about his reading based on his CBM scores. I used the SIPPS assessment. The test begins with a screening for cvc words and sight words. Aiden passed that section and the next section as well. When he got to the next section, he did not pass with enough correct words in the phonics section. He was able to pass the next two sections for sight words, so the emphasis in any intervention will be phonics based.</p> <p>In the afternoon, we had professional development. All of the special education teachers in the district were able to meet as a group. This gave us time to collaborate on a</p>	<p>Good "co-teaching" experience.</p> <p>It might be interesting and practical to follow him throughout your internship. Another student would be fine, too.</p> <p>This might be another good student to follow in detail during the intervention.</p>
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	<p>new assessment piece the district is implementing, but also on individual situations. I have two students on my caseload who spend a portion of their day in the alternative education program because of behaviors related to their diagnoses of EBD. One student is transitioning back to his home school well with the majority of his day spent in the general education setting. (The pseudonym “Weston” will be used for this student.) I did talk with the special education teacher and his general education teacher on strategies to use for him to accept “no”. The other student spends the first thirty minutes of the school day at his home school and then receives transportation to the alternative education school. (The pseudonym “Tyler” will be used for this student.) We are working with the parents and the classroom teacher to provide some contact time in the general education classroom since he had not been in that setting for over a year. The short time period is the class’s morning meeting with no academic expectations. Tyler has been struggling with the transition, exhibiting behaviors that are inappropriate for the classroom. We are planning a meeting with his IEP team to discuss expectations for him in the classroom, his behavior plan, and the protocol for times when he is not behaving appropriately.</p> <p>CEC 4.1, 4.2, 6.4</p> <p>September 27, 2018</p> <p>Today I talked with the school psychologist about a behavior intervention plan for one of the students on my caseload. (The pseudonym “Oliver” will be used for this student.) There have been concerns about his ability/willingness to follow instructions given by the teacher. I have seen the same behaviors when I have worked with him in the Learning Center. The teacher, school psychologist, and I talked about ways that we could help Oliver.</p>	<p>Very good experience.</p> <p>Good example of collaboration.</p>
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	<p>Collaboration will also involve input from the school counselor.</p> <p>I used a CBM for reading fluency from AIMS Web with a group of fourth grade students. Since they do receive special education services because of a lower reading level, I gave them a second grade passage to read. They read for 1 minute and the words read correctly was recorded. I am in contact with the school district's reading specialists to determine a reasonable but challenging number of words read correctly by the end of the school year. The assessment will be repeated at the middle of the year and the end of the year using the same passage in order to gather data on words read correctly. <i>CEC 4.1, 5.2, 7.3</i></p> <p>September 28, 2018</p> <p>In the mornings, I teach four different children (one in each group) from the SRA Connecting Math Concepts curriculum. Three of the students are at different instructional levels and it doesn't work to pair the two at the same level because of scheduling. The direct instruction approach is a very predictable teaching method for the students. The concepts are broken down and previously learned material is reviewed often. I think that it is good for students who are not able to perform at their grade level for math. One struggle I do have with it is that the students do not often get to work with others and they sometimes get bored when the material repeats. One student gets tired of answering orally and wants to do the whole worksheet on her own. (The pseudonym "Ivy" will be used for this student.) I set expectations for how we are going to do the math. I tell her that first we are going to talk about math. Then I show Ivy which parts of the worksheet we will do together and what she will do on her own. This does seem to help her when she knows</p>	<p>I am very fond of the expression "reasonable but ambitious" in reference to goals and you captured that in other words.</p> <p>Good. It sounds like you are in tune with student needs.</p>
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	<p>how the lesson will be conducted. I use “first” and “then” to structure her activities.</p> <p>There is another group of students who receive special services that have been using the general education math curriculum at two levels below their grade level. I think that it is good to expose them to the structure, but the concepts are often hard to understand in the way they are presented. The teachers in general education are struggling with the new curriculum, so it isn’t surprising that it would be difficult for students identified with learning disabilities. The teacher’s assistant who works with them will continue to use that curriculum but will also supplement it with other materials, such as the SRA Connecting Math Concepts curriculum. CEC 3.1, 3.3, 6.6</p> <p>October 1, 2018</p> <p>Ivy is on a behavior plan where she carries a chart to each of her classes. She earns smileys (smiley face emojis) if she follows instruction in class. If she receives an agreed upon percentage, she gets a prize at the end of the day. I have been discussing how to modify her chart with a special education teacher who also works with her. Right now Ivy is having trouble reaching her goal. I think that part of it is because she either receives 100% if she earns a smiley or 0% if she doesn’t earn it. I would like to have more options so that she can at least earn 50% or 25%. This will also help to communicate the expectations that go with the chart to other teachers who work with her. I made a chart for her that shows 4 different emojis ranging from very happy to sad. At the top of the chart, I included a key for teachers to follow. The levels are broken down into followed instruction right away, needed a few extra prompts to follow instructions, needed multiple prompts to follow instructions, and would not follow</p>	<p>If you give her an pseudonym so I remember who she is you can refer to her from time to time so I can see how things are going with her.</p>
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	<p>instructions.</p> <p>I am planning on explaining the new chart to all of the teachers that work with Ivy so that we can be on the same page. I also sent a copy of the chart for her mom to take a look at. Her mom and I are in contact almost daily. The Remind app has been a great tool to easily share positive messages and to let her know when there are struggles. Sometimes a phone call is necessary, but many of the parents I work with appreciate being able to respond to texts instead.</p> <p><i>CEC 1.1, 2.2, 7.2</i></p> <p>October 2, 2018</p> <p>Today we had our monthly special education case study at Roosevelt. This is a chance for special education instructors, related service providers, administration, and the school psychologist to meet. We discussed good news, reevaluations, initial evaluations, meetings to be scheduled, student concerns, curriculum/building concerns, and general education concerns/referrals. I appreciate that we start the meeting by sharing something positive that is happening in our settings. Special education is a field that can seem overwhelming and unrewarding. Teachers and administrators are forced to think of something good that is happening. It reminds me of the beginning of an IEP meeting, where everyone says something positive about the student before concerns are addressed.</p> <p>The majority of the meeting is spent discussing student concerns. In our setting, all of the members of the meeting are usually at least familiar with all of the students. The concerns are expressed and possible strategies and interventions are offered. When a student works with more than one special education teacher, each teacher can share their experiences with the child. The group as a whole can collaborate in order to find possible solutions.</p>	<p>Good! I'm glad you are keeping the "key players" informed.</p> <p>Sounds like a very practical activity for all.</p>
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	<p>There was also some discussion about students in the general education classrooms who are struggling with behavior. We talked about ways to support the teachers of those students so that they could remain included in the classroom. For the majority of the students, the general education classroom is the least restrictive environment. Supporting the general education teachers decreases the likelihood of those students being referred for special education services when that might not be the best option.</p> <p>CEC 7.2, 7.3</p> <p>October 3, 2018</p> <p>Today I talked to the school psychologist about the new behavior plan for Ivy. She agreed that the different smileys should represent a wider range of percentages, instead on just 0% or 100%. Given that she has cognitive delays, she thought that the four different levels might be hard for her to understand. Instead, we will do three levels. She will receive the first one with 100% if she followed instructions with 2 or fewer prompts. She will receive the second one with 50% if she needed multiple prompts. Failing to comply at all, would result in earning 0%. We also talked about what total percentage we should expect her to obtain in order to receive her prize at the end of the day. Ivy's current percentage for the day has been set at 70%, but there are very few days when she has achieved that goal. We are going to lower the percentage to 50%, raising it when she begins to regularly meet that goal. We also felt that waiting until the end of the day for a reward may be too long. We are going to have her checkout with me before lunch. Then she will start over on her percentage and checkout at the end of the school day. I think that giving her more opportunities for success will encourage her to follow directions.</p> <p>I have shared the new plan with her mom and</p>	<p>Yes! Great point!</p> <p>You are really digging in to your work!</p>
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	<p>she thinks it sounds like a good idea. Although there aren't major changes, I will wait until the first day of the new week to begin implementing it. We will continue to keep track of her percentages for each day so that we can monitor her progress.</p> <p>CEC 1.2, 7.3</p> <p>October 4, 2018</p> <p>This week I have been preparing the IEP for Aiden, the student being evaluated for special education services in reading and speech. He is currently receiving speech services, but the IEP team will also consider adding reading services. This was my first time for me to prepare one, so I worked with the school psychologist and the other special education teachers. The school psychologist shared the evaluation report that she had compiled for him. She had conducted the following norm based assessments: WISC-V, KTEA-3, and BASC-3. The speech teacher assessed him using the PPVT-4 and TOLD:I-4 as norm assessments. Skill based assessments were conducted by the school principal, special education teacher, speech teacher, and classroom teacher. These included observations, rating scales, and phonics assessment. Using this information and input from teachers, lists of strengths and needs for reading and language were written. I put that information in the present levels of academic achievement and functional performance section of his IEP. The speech teacher wrote two language goals for him into the IEP. Using the information from the evaluations, I prepared two reading goals for him. The fluency goal stated that, when given a reading passage at his level, he would be able to read 70 words per minute with 4 or few errors in 2 of 3 stories. Aiden's current fluency rate is 54 words per minute. I talked with the literacy coach and she recommended 70 words per minute as an attainable goal for a student</p>	<p>Excellent experience for you!</p>
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	<p>whose scores fall into his current fluency percentile. The basic reading goal to address decoding skills stated that, when given a list of 40 polysyllabic words, he will be able to decode 36 out of 40 words correctly in consecutive trials. The recommendation is for him to receive 50 weekly minutes of reading fluency interventions, 75 weekly minutes of fluency interventions, and 40 weekly minutes of speech/language services. We will have his IEP meeting next week to share the information with his mother. The team will discuss his need for special education services and how we plan to implement them.</p> <p><i>CEC 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 7.3</i></p> <p>October 5, 2018</p> <p>Today was a tough day for Ivy, the student with the smileys behavior chart. She came in okay, but began to shut down ten minutes into math class. This has been a problem with her and another student. Either it is boring or they do not want to do it. (The Connecting Math Concepts is intended for a small group, but I teach it to individual students. I reached out to my mentor, also a special education teacher, to find out if she has encountered the same kind of problem. She told me that she hasn't worked with it, but she will talk to someone who has and get back to me.) When Ivy did not want to count by 10s to 60, she put her head down on the table. At intervals, I repeated the instruction, "count by 10s from 10 to 60." This happened several times until she began to cry and laid down on the floor. I communicate with her mom through Remind so I sent her a message about whether anything was troubling Ivy. She said she had played with a friend the afternoon before and they had struggled to get along. She asked if Ivy could talk to her. I said that I would like her to get something done first to show that she can follow instructions. We counted by 10s to 60 together. Then I gave her a one page</p>	<p>Very good summary!</p> <p>Note for me: (DBH 10/5)</p>
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	<p>math sheet with single addition problems rather than the full assignment we had been doing. She completed it and we called her mom. She was crying as she talked to her mom and I talked to her mom. Her Mom encouraged her, saying that she could do the work. She was able to go to PE after that and then came back for writing and spelling. She did well for those, but then she did not want to listen to a story on CD. She told me that her legs were shaking. I didn't see anything, but I did want to take her seriously since she has a history of seizures. I called Mom and she said to just monitor her.</p> <p>That afternoon, when I was at my other school, I got a message from another special education teacher. She had laid on the floor for an hour refusing to work. The principal talked to her and she did eventually start to work.</p> <p>It has been interesting as we have got to know this girl. She has cognitive delays and seizures, so we want to treat her fairly. On the other hand, we have heard from her mother and the nurse that she may try to manipulate situations to get attention. We are finding the balance between whether she's not able to do something and whether she simply doesn't want to. I'm looking forward to starting her new behavior chart and seeing if that helps encourage her to have positive behaviors.</p> <p><i>CEC 2.3, 3.1, 6.1</i></p> <p>October 9, 2018</p> <p>We got to start the new behavior chart with Ivy today. She was very excited when I showed it to her. We have the day broken down into smaller chunks and are starting with the expectation of her earning 50% of her smileys to earn her reward. We also started an morning check out with me. The school psychologist thought that waiting until the end of the day might be too long for her. I made a visual menu of choices that she has. This</p>	<p>It looks like you are wisely considering the many factors that can be contributing to Ivy's behavior. I'm eager to follow her progress!</p>
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	<p>includes jump rope, draw on the whiteboard, color a picture, send a text to mom about her good morning, do a puzzle, and build with Duplos. She has five minutes at the end of her morning to do the activity if she earns it. She had a really great morning and got all smileys, so that was great to see as that has not happened for awhile. She chose to jump rope for her activity choice. I am not with her in the afternoon, but she only had one sad face, so she earned a prize there too (they have a different menu). I was happy to see her have such great success and to be able to reinforce the positive. I also sent a message to her mother on Remind letting her know that Ivy had such a good morning. Her mom has been very cooperative with any problems we have had, but I do like to build up the positive comments anyway.</p> <p>CEC 1.2, 2.2, 5.4, 7.3</p> <p>October 10, 2018</p> <p>Today we had our IEP meeting for Aiden. He was scheduled for his 3 year reevaluation for speech and we had decided to test him in reading as well. The school psychologist mainly led the meeting with input from the classroom teacher. The speech therapist shared the results of her assessments and recommendations. I also talked to his mom about the testing I had done with him and the concerns about fluency and decoding skills in reading. I told her that we were recommending that he receive 10 minutes of fluency 5 times a week and 15 minutes of decoding 5 times a week. He will be in the general education classroom for the full hour of reading. He will come to the Learning Center to work during a 25 minute time period that is scheduled for RTI reading. We did modify one of the goals. Based on his fluency rate of 54 words per minute on his CBM from this year, I had set his goal for reading 70 words per minute by the end of the year. The</p>	<p>Excellent! Even little rays of success can be very powerful, but it looks like more than a “little” success! Good work!</p>
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	<p>school psychologist suggested that we increase that since he was reading over 60 words per minute at the end of last year. The team agreed and we increased the goal to 80 words per minute by the end of the year. Aiden's mom was very receptive to adding services in the area of reading. She commented that math comes easily to him, but reading is more difficult. Everyone on the team agreed that some of his struggles might be due to having trouble focusing, but there was enough of a deficit in his assessment scores to qualify for a learning disability.</p> <p>I am looking forward to being able to work with him individually so that he can increase his fluency rate and decoding skills.</p> <p>Ivy did not have as good of a day as yesterday. We used the new behavior chart and she got all smileys until after specials. When she came back to class at 10:20, she seemed upset. She said that there was something going on with her uncle so I told her she could make a picture for him and then do her work. She made a picture with markers and then asked to use stickers while sitting at my desk. I told her that we were just going to use markers at the table where she was sitting. (I had let her choose between markers, crayons, and colored pencils.) She got upset and laid on the floor. I gave her an option to take a break. She did not take it at first, but later she did. She was happy and having fun with fidgets during the break time. After that, I gave Ivy her handwriting sheet. She started, but then got upset and hit her paper off the table when she made a mistake. I told her that she could fix the letter. The rest of the time I had her in the morning, she would do a little bit of work and then lay on the floor. She needed many prompts and only got a portion of her work completed. She only reached 50% for following instructions when the day before she had earned 100%. We had decided she was</p>	<p>Once again, you do a very good job of summarizing the situation. It is very helpful to get a picture of what you are doing and experiencing.</p>
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	<p>capable of more and set the goal at 60% for the day, so she did not earn her prize in the morning. She did accept that well. I showed her the rest of her schedule on the other side of her point sheet and told her that she had another chance to get a prize in the afternoon.</p> <p>I communicate regularly with her mom, so I shared how Ivy's day was going with her. She gave me a message from mom about shaping up and doing her work. She said that they would talk about her uncle after school. I shared that information as well as how Ivy's morning had been with the special education teacher who works with her in the afternoon. Her afternoon was not much better. She was at 50% again for following instructions. In the morning I plan to talk about her new behavior chart with her again and show her the prize options. I will encourage her to follow instructions so that she can get smileys. <i>CEC 4.2, 5.5, 6.2, 7.3</i></p> <p>October 11, 2018</p> <p>We had our meeting for Tyler today, the boy who is mostly served in the alternative education setting but has 30 minutes of time at his home school. The meeting consisted of the principal, general education teacher, alternative education teacher, assistant director of special education, his parents, and myself as his case manager. We were meeting to discuss how his behavior has been in the general education classroom. The assistant director of special education started the meeting by going around the table and having everyone introduce themselves. We also each said one positive thing about Tyler. I thought that was great, because it is easy to focus on the negative behaviors of a student. Starting on a positive note put us in the mindframe of we do like this kid and want to find ways to help him succeed. This was especially important for his parents to hear. We then discussed how he</p>	<p>As you know, once a behavior plan begins, the target behaviors often get worse until they even out. Keep up your consistent expectations, Sarah.</p> <p>Since Ivy did so well at first, you should keep the current plan for a "reasonable" amount of time. If major retooling needs to take place, perhaps Ivy could provide more input into the plan's design.</p>
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	<p>was doing in the general education classroom. His behavior has been inconsistent because the classroom teacher said that he has had more good days than bad days. Unfortunately, his behaviors are often very disruptive when he is not having a good day. We talked about strategies to help him when he is struggling with behavior. We plan to give him the option of a break. This will involve preteaching him the procedures for taking a break at that school. This will include how to ask for a break, where to take a break, his options of break activities, and how to return from a break.</p> <p>The team also talked about the possibility of adding to Tyler’s time at his home school. Once his good behavior is more consistent, the plan is for the team to meet to discuss adding the next class period, computer lab to his schedule. We are hoping that as he becomes more comfortable in the classroom, he will be motivated to choose good behaviors that will earn him more time. The team seem satisfied and the parents are happy that he is getting some time in the general education classroom.</p> <p>Ivy’s behavior was much better today, with earning 94% of her smileys in the morning and 92% in the afternoon. We had started the day reviewing her schedule and point sheet. I also showed her the prize choices and asked her which one she might want to pick today. She chose to send a text to her mom when she earned her reward. I went to Remind on my computer and typed what she wanted to say to her mom. I think that it is great to tie communicating with her mom during the school day to positive behaviors rather than only when she is not behaving.</p> <p><i>CEC 1.1, 5.5, 7.3</i></p> <p>October 12, 2018 Our students’ progress on their IEP goals are reported to parents quarterly, at the time of</p>	<p>Yes, it was great!</p> <p>That might be a good motivator for him,</p> <p>Good!</p> <p>Good!</p>
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	<p>report cards. We are nearing that time, so I am making sure that appropriate data is being gathered to show that those goals are being monitored. Before the school year began, I read through all of the students' IEPs and corresponding goals. I had attended a two-hour inservice on writing and tracking IEP goals this summer. The presenter had suggested putting each of the goals into an individual table. The table is divided into the following columns: goal, date, number correct out of number possible, activity, and comments. Each table has at least 5 rows, as the majority of the IEPs call for the goal to be reached at a certain percentage in 4 out of 5 trials. I have a separate GoogleDoc for each of my students. The document contains any goals for reading, math, writing, or behavior. Each of the goals is in a separate table. I printed out the tables for easier access, but I do plan on transferring the data back into the tables on GoogleDocs.</p> <p>As stated in the first journal entry, I have caseloads of students at both of the elementary schools that I serve. Consequently, the instruction of those students is shared with other teachers. In order to make sure that all of the IEP goals are tracked, I emailed the other special education teachers and teacher assistants with the goals I would like for them to track. I will also give them the paper copies of the tables so they can write in the data. I will then transfer that information to the system we use for IEPs and progress monitoring, SPED Advantage. I have excellent people that I work with, but I am ultimately responsible to ensure that the needs of students on my caseload are being met. I think that entering the data will give me the opportunity to see how they are doing with the goals that I do not specifically teach. I will also ask the other teachers any questions I have before conferences with parents and</p>	<p>Yes! Indeed!</p> <p>Good idea! I think I will use that.</p> <p>Nice work!</p>
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	<p>annual IEP meetings. <i>CEC 4.2, 5.6</i></p> <p>October 15, 2018 Today we worked on tracking IEP goals in addition to the regular curriculum. I put the data in the charts that I created. I will continue to assess the goals this week since most of them require 5 trials. The other special education teacher and the teacher's assistant are working to track the goals in areas that I do not specifically teach. I was not the one to write the goals, so sometimes it can be difficult to determine how do assess the goal. It is helpful to talk about the goals and assessments with other teachers so that we are consistent.</p> <p>I am also going to need to talk to the classroom teacher of some of the students. They are in inclusion writing, so they are served in the general education classroom rather than the learning center. A paraprofessional goes to the classroom during that time for support, but many times the classroom teacher says that she doesn't need her help. I questioned that when I talked to another special education teacher. She said that as long as we are offering the support, that is fine since it is inclusion. <i>CEC 2.1, 4.3, 7.3</i></p> <p>October 16, 2018 In the mornings, I teach math and writing to a second grade boy who will be called, "Ian." He has had trouble with appropriate behavior in the past, but this year he has struggled even more profoundly. When I am doing individual math work with him, he often gets frustrated and says that he doesn't want to do math. He often walks out of the classroom and starts walking through the hallways of the school. We have been instructed by the school psychologist that it is best not to give him too much attention when he does this. Instead of</p>	<p>That is correct. If you didn't write them it might not be as clear as it was for the author.</p>
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	<p>chasing after him, we may wait for a minute or two and then walk to check on him. There are many times where he is just outside the classroom door. We have cameras in the public areas of the school, so we can ask the school secretary to watch for him on there as well. That way we know that he's safe, but he is not getting a big reaction from us. There are times when he does get physical with adults. If that happens, trained teachers escort/transfer him to a room where he can safely calm down with adult supervision. We have met as a team to discuss how we can help him to have more compliant behavior. The team that met included the school principal, school psychologist, two special education teachers, the speech language pathologist, and a paraprofessional who spends most of her morning with him. We did not make any changes to his IEP or behavior plan, but used the time to discuss what behaviors are occurring and what strategies we can use. Many of the strategies listed in his behavior plan are already being implemented, but it did serve as a good reminder of approaches that we could use. Since he especially does not like math, the suggestion was to make that time more pleasant for him. We decided to break the instructional time into smaller chunks. We also thought of things that he likes that might be fun/motivating. He really likes the characters Mario and Sonic. We thought that some simple math puzzles with the characters might help him transition into math with a more positive attitude. I found a picture from a Mario game that we will cut into strips and put multiples of 10 on (10, 20, 30...). I also found one with Sonic that we will use to make a puzzle with the numbers used to count by 5s. In addition, I found a social story entitled "Sonic Loves Math." It talks about how math can be challenging for Sonic, but he tries his best to work hard and get better at it. I am starting to use those</p>	<p>Good idea to use what he likes.</p>
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	<p>materials when I teach math to him. He is excited to see them, but they have not kept him from walking out of the room when he gets frustrated.</p> <p>The principal was in my room observing when a paraprofessional was working with Ian and another student on handwriting. He left the room when he got frustrated because he could not make his letters properly. Forming letters is difficult for him given that he receives occupational therapy for his lack of good fine motor skills. It is, however, something that he needs to do as part of school and to get better with practice. We will keep encouraging him.</p> <p>The principal and I talked about whether his behavior had improved since our last meeting and she questioned if there were other things we could try. When I told her about the changes I made with Ivy's behavior chart, she suggested that it might be good for Ian to also have a morning and an afternoon checkout time. I agreed because getting the reward after a shorter period of time might serve to motivate him more.</p> <p>In addition to all of this, he is in the process of changing medications. He needs the medications, but the hope is that the change will help him to better control his behavior. It is therefore a tricky balance to be understanding that some behaviors are very difficult for him to control, but also to hold him accountable to his actions. Even though the medications are inhibiting him now, we think that it is important that he does not develop habits of misbehavior.</p> <p>CEC 1.2, 2.3, 7.3</p> <p>October 17, 2018 Ivy's behavior continues to be inconsistent. Yesterday morning, she earned 89% of her smileys. In the afternoon, she only earned 25% of her smileys. This morning she earned</p>	<p>You are having excellent experiences with a variety of students.</p> <p>This fact could partly explain what you are noting.</p>
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	<p>50% of her smileys, but she turned her day around and earned 75% of her smileys in the afternoon. One of her main problem behaviors is that she “shuts down” when work gets difficult or she doesn’t want to do something. She uses the words, “this is very difficult” or “I don’t want to do it.” She will put her head down on the table or lay on the floor and refuse to work. I encourage her to work hard because she can do it. I have talked with her mom when Ivy is struggling and she encouraged her in the same way when she knew she was capable of the task. It is difficult to determine which behaviors are due to defiance and what is related to her cognitive impairment. Today she fell asleep when she was laying down refusing to work, even though I was periodically giving her verbal prompts. I decided that it may be a good idea to talk to her mom at that point. I sent her a Remind message letting her know what was going on and questioned whether she had an adequate amount of sleep the night before. Her mom said that she had plenty of sleep, but to keep an eye out for any seizure activities. Ivy has had some seizure activity in school already this year where she is not responsive to our voices. She also has staring spells. There was another time this year where she had been unusually tired and ended up having a couple of instances of seizures. One of those times the nurse came down to check on her. We moved her from her chair to the floor and the nurse noticed she was smiling. She talked to Ivy and her mom about concerns that it might not have been a true seizure. Her mom agreed and said that she wonders if sometimes she gets herself into staring spells on purpose, but cannot easily get out of them. For these reasons, her mom said not to take every episode seriously, but not to make a big deal out of it in case she is trying to get attention. Just as it is difficult to determine which behaviors are related to her cognitive</p>	<p>Note for me: (DBH 10/?)</p> <p>If you do/did an FBA it is likely the function is “avoidance” but I don’t know that for sure.</p>
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	<p>impairment, it is also hard to know the effect the seizures are having on her. I will continue to hold Ivy to our expectations, but also keep myself aware of any health issues that could be having an effect on her behavior.</p> <p>CEC 1.2, 2.1, 4.4</p> <p>October 18, 2018</p> <p>We had an informal meeting this morning to discuss Ian's behavior. The meeting included one of the other special education teachers, the paraprofessional who spends most of the day with him, and myself. His misbehaviors have been increasing. The day before, he left school and walked a block to his house. We need strategies to make sure that he stays in the building and in the classroom. He has a behavior chart that he brings with him to each class. He earns points for following instructions, keeping his hands to himself, and completing assignments. On days when he receives 70% or more, he earns a prize. We had discussed dividing his day so that he had two checkout times. We decided that he needed even more immediate feedback than that. The other teacher made him a laminated sheet with 10 slots. Each slot has a velcro dot to put a marker on when he follows an instruction. They are Mario and Sonic characters because he likes them a lot. He also has a sheet with reward options for when the chart is completed. The teacher chooses 3 to 5 items to put on the choice board. When he is following instructions, he is able to fill up his chart several times during the day. The rewards should be good periodic breaks and a chance for the teachers to reinforce his positive behaviors. We will begin the program tomorrow.</p> <p>CEC 2.2, 7.3</p> <p>October 19, 2018</p> <p>Today we implemented Ian's new behavior plan. I happily greeted him when I saw him</p>	<p>Ivy is a very complex student! Probably "trial and error" is the best approach for now.</p>
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	<p>walking to school. He said to me, "I don't want to do math anymore." Math is his least favorite subject and the only one that he does one-on-one with me. Hearing this comment along with previous comments made me realize that I need to find a way to make math more pleasant for him. He does not like the direct instruction because it takes a lot of responses from him. Writing the answers to the problems is also unpleasant because he does not have strong fine motor skills. He meets each with an occupational therapist, but his writing is messy and big. Given that his behaviors are making it difficult for him to learn anything, getting his behaviors under control is the top priority. We found some activities from a lower level math curriculum. One of those involved rolling dice and putting that number of creatures of the mat. The hope is that using easier materials will enable him to have success and be willing to stay in the classroom.</p> <p>When he came in with the paraprofessional, I had a poster on the floor for him to work on. It is divided into 16 rectangles with a number between 1 and 16 on each of them. He had started working on the activity another day, putting the appropriate number of stickers in each rectangle to correspond with the written number (1 sticker in the 1st rectangle, 2 stickers in the 2nd rectangle, etc.). I also had cut out some small, colorful pictures of Sonic. He decided that he wanted to glue those on the paper. By the time he had completed one rectangle, he had also filling in half of the spaces in his chart for following instructions. I also had a Mario puzzle that I made with the numbers for counting by 5s. I had put magnets on each of the pieces and put them out of order on the metal desk. I asked him to help me fix them. He did and seemed to really enjoy that it made a Mario picture when the numbers were in the right order. He stayed in the math class the whole time, which was a big</p>	<p>The plan looks good. I'm eager to see the results.</p> <p>This top priority is good to remember.</p>
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	<p>improvement for him. I am going to spend a few more math periods with simple math activities that involve little or no writing. Then I will put in one academic activity at a time. The positive reinforcement from his chart seems to be helping him to stay on task so that he can work to earn a prize more quickly than with the previous arrangement. <i>CEC 1.2, 2.1, 5.1</i></p> <p>October 22, 2018</p> <p>Today was another good day with Ian's behavior in math. When he came in, I had him do a Halloween math game with me. It involved rolling two dice, adding the numbers, and covering the corresponding number on your board. I used his chart to reinforce the positive behaviors during the game. After that, it was time for him to work with the paraprofessional during my planning time. I did a first/then approach with him. First he needed to work on an addition sheet, then he would get to play "Teach Your Monster to Read." He was resistant, but he was able to get through it with many prompts. It was an 8 minute assessment, so we took the paper away when the timer went off. We praised him and gave him Marios and Sonics on his chart for working. The big positive was that he stayed in the room rather than trying to walk out. I think the visual reinforcement was good as he worked towards his reward. He was able to play with cars for 5 minutes and later he was able to play a game. I will continue to mix the "fun" math activities with some activities that he doesn't prefer, but needs to do. He also worked on writing and social studies in the Learning Center and his general education classroom, respectively. He checked out with me before lunch. His percentage was high enough to reach his goal, so he received two stickers on his Learning Center chart. When all of the spots on that chart are filled in, he will be able to choose a prize from a basket. I</p>	<p>(and presumably stayed in the building!)</p> <p>Very encouraging to read this!</p>
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	<p>like the change of him having a morning and afternoon checkout time. It is a shorter amount of time, he gets to connect a positive checkout with me, and it is a good transition to the afternoon.</p> <p>The two checkout time periods also has been working well with Ivy. Today she struggled with following instructions during a few class periods. She seems to do well when she first works with me, but she sometimes seems upset when she comes back to the Learning Center from specials. I am going to talk to the P.E. teacher to find out if anything is going on there that I should be aware of. Another factor is that she is working with Ian and the paraprofessional when she comes back, rather than having the one-on-one attention of a teacher. Sometimes the two of them don't get along, so she doesn't want to work. She was able to get back on track and earn enough smileys to get her reward. She chose sending a text to her mom from the choice board. She sent about 25 emojis on Remind to her mom. Her mom responded soon enough that Ivy was able to see the smiley face emojis her mom sent back. I like having the communication with her mom to be on a positive note, so I'm glad that she is choosing that as a reward. <i>CEC 2.1, 2.2, 3.3, 5.1</i></p> <p>October 23, 2018</p> <p>I tried a more "academic" math task with Ian after we did less structured activities. One of his goals is to solve word problems, so I made up a word problem for him that involved Mario. He struggles with his fine motor skills, but needs to be able to show that he can set up the correct equation for addition or subtraction. Instead of having him write the numbers, I had some magnetic numbers and magnetic symbols for plus, minus, and equals. He had been able to explore with the magnets first, so we did not get right into the work part.</p>	<p>Are you able to identify which of the many procedures effect the greatest impact on his positive behavior? You have many things going on at the same time. It might not be possible to tease out the salient pieces.</p> <p>Yes!</p>
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	<p>Despite my best efforts, he still refused to put the magnetic numbers on the board to make the first problem. He said it was boring and knocked all of the letters off of the table. There were not any other students in the classroom at the time. I just told him that he needed to pick them up. He walked out of the classroom. Instead of following him, I kept in contact with the secretary via text message. She was able to tell me where he was by looking at footage from cameras around the school. This kept him safe without giving him any extra attention. He walked in and out of the classroom several times during the next half hour. We either ignored him or gave him the prompt that he needed to pick up the numbers. The other students were in the classroom by that point, and did a really good job focusing on their work. Some of them kindly wanted to pick up the numbers for him, but I told them thank you, but it's his responsibility. Eventually, he did come in the classroom and pick up all of the numbers. He did one word problem with the paraprofessional, using the magnetic letters. He was given a final Mario on his chart and was able to play with Legos. He did not earn a reward at the end of the morning, though, since he had so much time that he hadn't been working.</p> <p>I am also working to build a positive relationship between Ian and Ivy. They can both be self-centered, so it can be difficult. Getting along with others is a skill they both need to work on, especially with each other since they are often paired together. Ian brought a book from the library and I asked him if we could read it with Ivy. They both enjoy listening to books and laughed at the funny book. When Ivy was at specials, I asked Ian to help me make something for her. I had cut apart a simple puzzle for her with numbers on each strip so that it could be put in the right</p>	<p>Wow! Amazing! Great!!</p> <p>You handled this tough situation very well, Sarah!</p>
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	<p>order. It was the same type of puzzle as I had made for him with Sonic and Mario. He helped me put magnets on the back of some of them. I asked him to put them on the metal filing cabinet or my desk. He wanted to hide them from her. I said that was fine as long as they were sticking on something metal. He put them on the back of the filing cabinet. When she came back in the classroom, I told her that he had hidden something for her to do. She found it and put it together. She was excited, because it made a picture of a unicorn (something she really likes). It was also a fun transition for her to come back into the classroom after specials without focusing on things that had frustrated her during that time. <i>CEC 1.2, 2.3, 3.3</i></p> <p>October 24, 2018</p> <p>Ivy and Ian continue to be inconsistent with their day to day behavior. Sometimes I feel like I focus too much on the behavioral aspects, maybe because I used to work in the alternative education setting. Talking to other teachers and the principal, however, the behaviors need to be under control before learning can effectively take place. With Ian, we are mainly trying to get him to be compliant at this point. I did try using the magnetic numbers with him to do some word problems. I showed him his Sonic/Mario chart and that he would receive one of the characters for each equation that he did. He had three spots to fill before he earned his reward of playing with cars for five minutes. For each problem, I asked him if he wanted me to use Sonic or Mario characters in the story. He successfully completed setting up and solving all of the word problems, so he got to play with the cars. The rest of his morning went well also. He checked out with me and earned two stickers on his chart. He won a prize for filling it out during class today. Giving him</p>	<p>As you stated earlier, his behavior is the highest priority.</p>
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	<p>the stickers when he checks out has helped him get to his tangible prize more quickly, which does motivate him.</p> <p>When Ivy came back from specials, she looked grumpy again. Instead of asking her what was wrong, I told her that Ian had hidden a surprise for her again. She perked up and found the unicorn puzzle for counting by tens. She happily put it together and was able to transition to her next activity. After working for awhile, she struggled to follow instructions. She ended up getting sad smileys for that time as well as her two specials. When it was time to checkout, she asked if she could text her mom. We went over her behavior sheet together, pointing out what went well and what needs to improve. She scored 69%, but her goal was 70%. She was disappointed that she didn't get her reward, but I think it was good for her to see us being consistent with her. Our expectations are getting higher, as many days she gets well above 70%. After school I got a message from the teacher who works with her in the afternoon. She had only received 14% for that time period. This was because she refused to follow directions, such as when she put her head down instead of working. When it was time to come in for recess, she stayed outside an extra 5 minutes after she had been prompted to go again. We are having parent/teacher conferences next week, so that will be a good time to talk with her parents about any strategies we might use to help her improve her behavior.</p> <p><i>CEC 2.2, 5.1</i></p> <p>October 25, 2018</p> <p>The end of the first quarter is on Friday, so I have been spending time tracking the students' IEP goals for their quarterly progress monitoring reports. It has been a valuable opportunity to see where they have grown</p>	<p>I agree.</p>
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	<p>academically and behaviorally, as well as areas that they still need to work on. It has been interesting to see how different special education teachers write goals. As I said in an earlier entry, interpreting their meanings can sometimes be difficult. There are also different philosophies on how many goals should be written for each student. Most of my students have between 1 and 3 goals for each area that they qualify for- reading, math, writing, and/or behavioral. Ivy's IEP goals were written by a teacher who is no longer in the district. She has more than 20 goals. She does have high needs, but it makes it hard to focus on a particular area when there are so many goals. I was able to assess them all with at least 5 trials, as they call for. I feel that having that much assessing can take away from teaching, however. Almost all of the goals would be addressed in our curriculum and activities anyway. We are meeting for parent/teacher conferences on Thursday. Her mom has talked about wanting to change some of her goals. We said that we would update her on Ivy's progress, but there won't be time to rewrite them in that 15 minutes. Her IEP is not due until March, but her mom has been concerned about meeting since the beginning of the school year. Ivy transferred from another school in the district (the one where I work in the afternoon) because her mom was unhappy with some of the things that were going on there, so that may be part of why she wants to meet as well. It will be interesting to find out if her mom was the one who pushed for her to have so many goals or if they all came from the special education teacher. Depending on how things go at the conference, we may decide to have a meeting to talk about amending some of her goals. Moving her annual IEP to an earlier date would also be an option. If she is willing, we could narrow down her goals to a more manageable, focused amount. I am glad that I</p>	<p>You have several very challenging students, but you seem to be handling the challenge very well!</p> <p>Note for me: (DBH 10/26)</p> <p>It is extremely difficult to monitor that many goals!</p> <p>Yes, it will be good to find</p>
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	<p>have been communicating with her mom regularly, because I feel we have been able to build a trusting relationship. I have told her many positive things about her daughter as well as areas (mainly behavioral) that we need to address. I think that taking the time to communicate has shown her that I do care about what's best for Ivy, and that's the assurance that many parents need.</p> <p><i>CEC 2.1, 4.1, 4.3</i></p> <p>October 26, 2018</p> <p>I was out of the building in the morning because I had a meeting with some of the special education teachers in the district. It was led by the curriculum director for the district with the input of the special education director. The teachers at each grade level have been meeting periodically for a few years, but having a meeting for the special education teachers is a fairly new development. At each of the grade level meetings, there was one special education teacher as a representative. One of those teachers was at our special education teachers' meeting, so she was able to share some of what was discussed amongst the general education teachers. Our district has adopted a new math curriculum for grades K-6 this year. There was discussion on how to use that curriculum, especially in the special education classroom. The curriculum does have differentiating options, so it was recommended that we use those if possible. The move in some schools has been towards an inclusion model, keeping students with special needs in the general education classrooms with support when possible. We also discussed literacy as our district plans to adopt a new english language arts curriculum for next school year. The curriculum director asked what materials we had been using and what needs we had as special education teachers. The consensus was that students in both the general and special</p>	<p>that out.</p> <p>Great! That collaboration can only be of help to Ivy.</p>
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	<p>education classrooms would benefit from a stronger writing component. There was some dissatisfaction with SRA's Reading Mastery program as well. The program is research-based as a means to help our students improve their reading skills. Some major problems with it are that some of the versions we have are dated and that the stories are not very interesting to the students. Also, there is not really any focus on students meeting any of the literacy standards that are taught in the general education classroom. It was a good discussion, as teachers shared ways that they have been able to supplement the curriculum. One way to do that was to periodically read a novel that is at an appropriate instructional level in order to get "real" literature in the hands of students. This, along with teaching mini-lessons related to the literacy standards are things that I would like to try with my students.</p> <p>Finally, we talked about ways to include students who need special education services in the general education classroom. Even though they do need individualized instruction, they should still be able to access the general education curriculum. Being able to do that will help them feel like they are part of the classroom, as well as make transition into the general education classroom more feasible when they are academically ready. The teachers agreed that we would like to take steps to develop more of a partnership with the general education teachers.</p> <p><i>CEC 6.2, 6.4, 6.5, 7.3</i></p> <p>October 29, 2018</p> <p>Today I had an annual IEP meeting for one of the 4th grade students on my caseload. He receives special education services for math, reading, writing, and speech because of a learning disability. At the meeting were his mom, the general education teacher, a special education teacher, the speech/language</p>	<p>You are getting some very valuable experiences, Sarah. Don't forget to match them with the CEC</p>
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	<p>pathologist, a teacher's assistant who works with him, and the school's principal. I shared his updated strengths and needs based on assessments and observations. Input from the teacher's assistant, a certified general education teacher who teaches his math class, was helpful in making those changes. I also had updated his goals based on the areas in which he had qualified for special services. The speech teacher had updated language goals for him. In his previous evaluation, he had qualified in the areas of basic reading, reading fluency, reading comprehension, mathematics reasoning, mathematics calculation, and written expression. I wrote one goal for each of those areas and two goals for written expression. The reason that I wrote two for written expression was because I wanted one to address areas of English language conventions and the other to focus on the content of his writing. I wrote the goals so that they were observable and measurable. Most of them required an accuracy level of 80% in 4 out of 5 trials.</p> <p>During the meeting we also discussed how we could continue to support him. We agreed that he would benefit from retaining the same amount of time in the Learning Center 60 minutes each for math and reading and 30 minutes for writing. He has progressed and his moving towards being able to be served with supports in the general education classroom. If the school decided to use an inclusion model with any of his classes, he may benefit. I have seen him working in the general education classroom in social studies. He does have some trouble focusing in the large group setting, so that would be something to make his teacher aware of.</p> <p>CEC 3.1, 4.3, 5.5, 7.3</p> <p>October 30, 2018 Ian's behavior continues to be unpredictable depending on the day and his mood. On</p>	<p>standards.</p> <p>This is certainly a very reasonable approach.</p>
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	<p>Monday, he did very well in our math class. He did oral counting with me and we completed a Sonic puzzle for counting by 10s. He got a little frustrated, but he was able to work through it. He was even willing to write the answers to two math problems and trace some numbers on his worksheet. This was good progress since writing and math are both frustrating activities for him. I think it helped that I had used a yellow marker to underline what we were going to do. This showed him that the task would not be too overwhelming. He was given visual rewards on his Mario chart as well as stickers on his classroom reward chart.</p> <p>My plan for today was to start with word problems that he would form on the board using magnetic numbers. I used Sonic as the main character as I told the story problem ($3 + 4 = 7$). He knew the first number was 3, but refused to even put it on the board. Instead, he slid it across the table and onto the floor. He told me to pick it up, but I told him that he needed to. He got frustrated, saying that the math was boring and that he didn't want to do it. After a couple of minutes, he walked out of the classroom and closed the door (it was locked). He started to walk through the halls as he had done other times, so I asked the secretary to watch on the cameras so that he's safe without giving him extra attention. When he leaves the classroom, he cannot go back in until he completes a task. I decided to sit on the floor outside the classroom by the lockers and wait. The lockers are magnetic, so I put the + and = sign up so he could fill in the numbers. When he walked past me, he kicked me, but I ignored it for the time being. It was an office referral, but I was by myself and wanted to have someone to help me if he needed to be transferred. He walked to the outside doors of the building, but didn't go inside. Instead, he pulled the fire alarm. At that point, all of the surprised students and</p>	<p>Good progress!</p>
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	<p>teachers at the school began exiting the building. I informed the secretary that Ian had done it, but we still had to wait outside for 10-20 minutes until the fire department was able to come through and shut off the alarm. Ian complained about it being cold, so the paraprofessional and I did point out that we were outside because of his actions. I wanted to see how the principal wanted to handle the situation before saying too much. I was afraid to give him too much undue attention, especially because it served as an escape for him as well. When the students were allowed back in the building, I walked Ian to the office so that I could find out what we were going to do. The principal called him mom, the social worker, and the school resource officer. They talked to him and he was given an in-school suspension for the rest of the day, working one-on-one with an adult in an empty room. I think we need to have another meeting that includes his mom in order to discuss how to handle his behavior as it is not improving. We have been simplifying his work, giving him more breaks, and giving him a lot of positive reinforcement.</p> <p><i>CEC 2.3, 4.4, 5.1</i></p> <p>October 31, 2018</p> <p>After the excitement of yesterday, today was a fairly good day for behavior. A teacher who was in my room commented on the good attitudes of the students and that was encouraging to hear.</p> <p>We have recently implemented a change in how we conduct inclusion writing. In the beginning of the year, the classroom teacher would teach the lesson and then she would assign a group of three to four students to work with me at a table in the classroom. The group consisted of one or two students who were identified for special education and two students who did not receive special services.</p>	<p>An extraordinarily difficult situation, for sure!</p> <p>This sounds like the best approach based on what you know so far.</p> <p>Very encouraging, indeed!</p>
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	<p>This was a good plan, but behaviors in the classroom made it hard to implement successfully. Despite her great classroom management and use of PBIS strategies, at least a third of her students are regularly behaving inappropriately. These behaviors include talking, getting out of seats, and not following directions after being prompted (often multiple times). One day I had the two students who have inclusion writing on their IEPs come to the Learning Center to finish up their writing projects. There was no one in the room, so it was a quiet place where they were able to focus. It was definitely a better work environment for their needs. I talked to the special education director and the teacher about how well it had worked to take them to the Learning Center, but that I did not want to give up on inclusion writing. The director said that it would still be inclusion if the students with inclusion were grouped with general education students. Now the teacher has been presenting a mini-lesson on using writing strategies. She then sends a group of three students with me. One of the students is always a student with special education needs and the other two are general education students. A paraprofessional takes another group and the rest of the students stay in the classroom with the teacher. I think decreasing the number of students in the group has been helpful to the teachers and students. When I work with a group, one or two of the students are generally lower in confidence and/or writing skills. They are usually quieter kids who may have been missed if the teacher did not notice that they could use extra assistance. The small group setting has been a positive experience because they are getting individualized attention and instruction. I think that it would be ideal for the students to all work in the classroom together for writing, but that behaviors are too much of a hindrance to doing that right now. I'm glad that we were</p>	<p>Good plan!</p>
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	<p>able to reflect on what was happening in the classroom and find ways to help all of the students to be more successful.</p> <p>CEC 2.1, 3.3</p> <p>November 1, 2018</p> <p>Today we had parent/teacher conferences for the school I am at in the morning. For most of the meetings, I went into the classroom and the general education teacher gave me a chance to talk to the parents about their child's progress towards his or her IEP goals. Ivy's mom had requested a special meeting, so we held it in the Learning Center, knowing that it would last longer than an hour. Her mom had said that she wanted to have the whole IEP team get together to rewrite Ivy's IEP. We had explained that her annual meeting was not until March. After talking to the school psychologist, we figured out that what she really wanted to do was revise her Student Intervention Plan that had been written last January. In the afternoon before the conference, we gathered some of the teachers who work with Ivy to discuss her behavior. We looked at the old plan first. Most of the positive behaviors were the same. Some of the problem behaviors had changed or were not an issue anymore, which was great to see. The document included strategies and skills to teach following instruction, positive transitions, and positive peer interactions. It was a good chance to look at which of the strategies that we had been using with success and what wasn't working.</p> <p>At the conference, the whole IEP team was present with the exception of the PT and speech teachers. The school psychologist explained the differences between the IEP and SIP. We gave her parents an update on how she had been doing in the Learning Center and general education classroom. We shared that her main coping strategy for not wanting to do something is to put her head down on the table</p>	<p>Yes. Good observation.</p> <p>Sounds like a good review.</p>
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	<p>or lay on the floor. The parents had been willing to give her a time out when we had talked about consequences we might use in addition to all of the positive reinforcement. We decided that would not be an effective consequence since she is basically taking her own time out. Her parents said that we could tell her we would talk to mom, but that connection with mom is also may be a reinforcer. They shared that she listens to her dad right away at home. We decided that we would tell her that we were going to send a message to dad if she did not follow instructions. This would mainly be used when she's not following instructions for a longer period of time, such as laying on the floor for 15 minutes.</p> <p>We will continue to reinforce the positive behaviors. The school psychologist and her mom thought that it had been beneficial to divide up her day so that she has a morning and afternoon check out. Overall, the meeting was a positive experience. It was nice to have the whole team together to talk about ways that we can help Ivy to be successful.</p> <p><i>CEC 1.1, 1.2, 6.1, 7.3</i></p> <p>November 2, 2018</p> <p>This week I decided to make an instructional change for my group of 4th grade reading and writing students. As I stated in the first journal entry, I team teach the seven kids who are on my caseload with a certified teacher's assistant. (There are also five of them that qualify for math that she teaches in the morning.) I have been taking a group of students for reading while she takes another group. Then we switch the groups we teach for writing. This has given me the opportunity to interact with all of the students on my caseload each day. Given that it is the end of the quarter, we decided to switch which group each of us have for reading and writing. Now I'm seeing the group for reading that I had</p>	<p>Good! I'm glad it turned out well.</p>
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	<p>been seeing for writing and vice versa. It has been a good change, as I am getting to spend more time with the students in one of the groups since reading is a longer class period. I am also getting to know them more as readers. I had heard them all read when I administered CBMs, but now I have a chance to work with them more closely. This has given me a chance to not only see how they perform on assessments, but also their process of learning. Conversely, I have been able to find out more about the other group as writers. They are a very different group than the other one, especially in that they need to build their writing stamina.</p> <p>Another benefit of the change is that we have parent/teacher conferences next week. Working with different groups has equipped me with more information and experiences to share with parents. I believe that we will switch groups again for the third quarter. It would be nice to switch more often, but I think it may be too many adjustments for the students. They know both of us teachers, but it takes some time to adjust to our different teaching styles. Once again, I am glad that I get to see all of them for a literacy component each day.</p> <p>I rely on the teacher's assistant with math since I'm not in the building when that class is held. I have had her track goals so that I can see their progress. She administers CBMs, but I grade them and look at work samples so I can learn how they are progressing.</p> <p>CEC 3.1, 7.1</p> <p>November 5, 2018</p> <p>One of the tough balances to maintain as a special education teacher is assessing enough but not too much. It is so important to track student progress. Obviously, assessing is essential in order to track progress on IEP goals. It also assists teachers in determining what areas students are showing growth as</p>	<p>Sounds like a valuable change.</p> <p>Good observations regarding the change.</p> <p>Good!</p>
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	<p>well as which areas still need improvement. I think that CBMs are a good resource for tracking student progress. Our district uses the AIMS Web site in order to manage student data. Students are tested weekly in reading and math. The reading test involves reading a passage for one minute in order to track reading fluency. The math test consists of a set of 25 computation problems that students have 8 minutes to complete. We set goals for the end of the year based on their expected rate of growth according to norm-based charts. In addition to these assessments, I have started administering a reading comprehension assessment called MAZE. This is a three minute cloze reading where the students circle the word that makes sense in context. Another good math assessment is the AIMS Web progress monitoring for math concepts and applications. This one is also an 8 minute test, but it does involve reading the questions aloud if the students need that assistance. It gives a broader view of students' math knowledge than that determined by an assessment of fact fluency. Finally, AIMS Web has a writing assessment. Students are given a writing prompt to think about for one minute. They then have three minutes to write a response. After the assessment, scores are determined based on total words written in that time period. Again, this is put into the database so that progress can be tracked during the school year. I believe that the time spent assessing is worth using. Some of the assessments also can be used to track individual student IEP goals, such as reading fluency rate.</p> <p><i>CEC 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.2</i></p> <p>November 6, 2018 This afternoon and evening, I had parent/teacher conferences at the other school where I teach. The parents went to the general education classroom where that teacher talked</p>	<p>Another great experience for you. Once again, don't</p>
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	<p>about the student's progress and the special education teacher that worked with that student got a chance to talk as well. The speech/language pathologist was also able to come talk to the parents of the students she serves as well as the teacher's assistant that works for me. It was a good chance to bring everyone together to talk about how the students are doing in school. The amount of time I spent talking to the parents depended on the student. Some of the students spend two and a half hours in the Learning Center, so the special education staff had a lot to share. Those students are with their general education teacher for morning meeting, social studies, science, and spelling. I was glad that even in those cases, the meetings were held in their classroom rather than the Learning Center. I think it sent a good message that those children are part of the classroom community and have a connection to the classroom teacher. Overall, the conferences were positive, with some areas of suggested improvement.</p> <p>One parent of a particularly quiet child asked if we thought he had autism because someone had suggested that to her. He talks with his classmates that he knows well, but is somewhat withdrawn with adults. I explained to her that was not something that we diagnose, but I did explain the spectrum to her. We agreed that he was happy and that his quiet behavior is not getting in the way of his learning. One of his IEP goals is to initiate interactions with adults, and the teacher's assistant said that he had improved with that since last year.</p> <p>Another concern is a child who I have for inclusion writing, but is also served for reading and math in the Learning Center. He has trouble focusing and staying on task. His grandma had told us a few weeks ago that they were going to the doctor. She told us that they went, but she was not comfortable with putting</p>	<p>forget to connect it the the CEC standard(s).</p>
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	<p>him on medication. She does not want him to become dependant on it and only thinks he should have it if he is doing harm to himself or others. The special education teacher who works with the student more did a good job talking with her. She said that the decision was her choice, but she also gave some anecdotes of how he seems to be unable to handle his behavior. The classroom teacher pointed out that we appreciate all of her concern and involvement. It is evident that she wants what's best for her grandson. The speech/language pathologist and a teacher's assistant that works with him were also at the meeting. We all had positive things to say about him as well as our areas of concern. I think that we are building a caring, trusting relationship with her. I think that if his behavior does not improve despite what she is doing at home and we are doing at school, she will be more willing to take the medical route knowing that we want what's best for him.</p> <p><i>CEC 1.1, 4.4, 5.4, 7.3</i></p> <p>November 7, 2018</p> <p>As part of being a new teacher to the district, I am participating in a mentor program. My mentor is a special education teacher at a school other than the two that I teach at. We talk about different topics throughout the year, such as classroom management and curriculum. She is a teacher at a structured learning center, so her experiences are different than mine. She has, however, served in a resource setting in the past. Our conversations have been good because it helps me to reflect on what I'm doing well and ways that I can improve. She came to observe my classroom while I was teaching and provided good feedback. Talking with her is a way to collaborate with someone who isn't in my environment. All of the subjects we talk about are confidential, so I feel free to share my experiences and questions with her. We can</p>	<p>Again, it looks like you handled this very well!</p>
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	<p>compare and contrast our particular situations. Today she had a good question about how the misbehaviors of students in special education are handled in the general education classroom. I told her that there are times that I am called to help with a student, but it does not happen a lot since I am not in one building all day. We talked about how we want to support the classroom teacher, but also want the students to listen and show respect for that adult.</p> <p>I think that the need for outside intervention depends on if the behaviors of a student are being disruptive to the other students. If a student is laying his or her head down refusing to work in the general education classroom, that can be ignored. Ignoring the behavior may also serve to teach the student that that kind of behavior will not lead to attention. Calling a special education teacher to help, however, will give that attention.</p> <p>A student who is yelling or throwing items in the classroom, for example, is being disruptive to the learning of other students. That is a good time to call the special education teacher and/or the principal. We also talked about whether or not certain students in special education receive office referrals. We agreed that it depends on the student and his or her ability to understand that consequence. My students with learning disabilities may receive office referrals, but students with cognitive disabilities like Ivy do not follow that process. As I said before, having a chance to sit down and talk with another teacher was a good use of time because of the collaborating and learning we both experienced.</p> <p><i>CEC 6.5, 7.2</i></p> <p>November 8, 2018</p> <p>I got a chance to talk to one of the literacy coaches about progress monitoring today. I wanted to be sure that I was using good tests and that I was not overtesting the students.</p>	<p>Excellent! I'm glad you were able to get some direct observation feedback. The internship normally would have this as a regular feature, but yours is considerably different than a typical internship.</p>
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	<p>First, we talked about the reading and writing assessments on AIMS Web. The one minute reading of a passage is widely used and a good sign of growth in fluency, so I was not questioning using that. I had heard differing opinions about the AIMS Web MAZE test for comprehension. The literacy coach agreed with its limitations, but said that it can be a good tool to measure growth. I think that it makes students slow down and think about if what they are reading makes sense. I believe that three minutes once a week in order to gather that data is justified. We also talked about the AIMS Web three minute writing assessment. There were also differing opinions as to its usefulness. After talking and telling her about how our students struggle to produce much writing in a given time period, we agreed that the test is a good way to track their growth.</p> <p>Finally, we talked about the math computations and math concepts and applications progress monitoring tools on AIMS Web. The teacher's assistant I work with had been concerned about having enough time to administer both tests each week because they each take eight minutes. I thought there would be enough time, but the literacy coach made a good point about how two tests of that length could be tiring for students. Usually students score better on the first one of the assessments given because they are "fresh." I think that they both serve good purposes, so we decided that it would make sense to alternate which weeks we would administer each test. That way each test would only be given every other week, but the data gathered would probably be more accurate.</p> <p>The overall view I got from our conversation was that the assessments are good if they have been shown to be effective and they have a purpose. They all generate data that can show student progress. I think that I will also make</p>	<p>Great! Many valuable experiences which will serve you well in the future.</p>
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	<p>an extra effort to use the results to drive my instruction. For instance, last week I noticed that my two third graders both missed questions dealing with counting money on the math assessment. We looked over those questions and practiced counting the money. This was especially important for them because they both have math goals on their IEPs related to being able to count money. During the week, we have also been focusing on counting money as extra practice as well as when it comes up in the curriculum.</p> <p><i>CEC 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 5.2</i></p> <p>November 9, 2018</p> <p>Given that today is a Friday of a week that had seemed long for some of the students, I decided to make some changes to my lesson plans. As I have written before, more than one of my students has a dislike for math. I thought of a way that I could teach the math concepts, but in a more enjoyable way. The idea had first come to me because of Ian. The day before, he had needed some calm down time in the quiet room because he did not want to follow directions in math class. I had printed off some cards containing different numbers of clip art pictures of Sonic. On the bottom of each page are three numbers. He has to choose the one that matches with the number of Sonic pictures. Ivy had hidden some of them in the room for him to find and solve before, but he had complained a little about it being hard because he was not good at finding things. I decided to give him clues in a scavenger hunt style so that he would know where to look. It also allowed me to use locations throughout the school. This would serve the purpose of being fun and also get him moving. I wrote the clues in simple language so that he could read the words with some assistance for the more difficult words. The first clue was to look in a desk. He had to find the Sonic card with 17 pictures on it. I</p>	<p>Good plan.</p> <p>Good use of assessment results.</p>
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	<p>had written the corresponding numbers for all of the cards on sticky notes. He had to read the clue on the back of the sticky note labeled 17. The places that he would need to go included the door of the principal's office, under a mat, and in locker number 304 (an empty one).</p> <p>When I got to school, I hid all of the cards in the appropriate places. On Fridays, Ian has art, so I have Ivy by herself for an hour. I decided to do some written math work and then let her try out the scavenger hunt. I told her she was going to be able to help test it out for Ian. She was excited. She read each clue, found the cards, and counted the Sonic pictures. This was good reading practice for her as well as math work. In addition, her mom had said she had been tired from staying up later than usual for her sister's concert, so it was good to get her moving. She was so excited to find all of the Sonic cards. We left them in their places for Ian to find later. As we walked around the school, different teachers and the principal asked Ivy what she was working on. I was glad that she was able to get some good, positive attention and that they were able to see how happy she was.</p> <p>After art, Ivy goes to her specials. A paraprofessional works with Ian for my thirty minutes of planning and then I do math with him. Before doing the scavenger hunt with me, he had to do the back side of a math page. Ivy had told him about the scavenger hunt, so he was excited to do it. He began to demand that he do the fun scavenger hunt before the math page. We told him no, he needed to do the math page and then the scavenger hunt. He got upset and left the classroom. He started to get destructive and began hitting us, so we had to transfer him to a quiet room. We used a mat to protect him and ourselves since he was hitting and kicking (unfortunately, this was a procedure he had done many times before). We gave him the instruction to sit on</p>	<p>Good plan.</p> <p>Excellent! Two for the price of one.</p> <p>Yes! Good point!</p>
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	<p>the floor quietly for 5 minutes. It took him about 15 minutes to calm down. After a while, the principal came in to check on him and asked about the scavenger hunt. She said that she wanted to see him do it before she had to leave for a meeting. It took some additional prompts from us, but he did complete his math page.</p> <p>We then started on our scavenger hunt. He did so well and had a lot of fun. He did not complain about reading and let me help him with the hard words. He did all of the counting himself. It was wonderful to see the joyful boy that he can be. Just as he gets very emotional when he is angry, he also gets very emotional in a positive way when he is excited and/or happy. He was smiling and laughing throughout the scavenger hunt.</p> <p>The two students, other teachers who saw us, and the principal responded so positively to the activity that I decided to design another one for next Friday. I'm looking forward to seeing how the next one goes. It also involves walking around the school, but it is in more of a worksheet format. I was able to think of seven questions involving telling time, adding, subtracting, finding shapes, and measuring. They just have a few numbers to write, so I am hoping that the fun aspect will overshadow the "work" aspect.</p> <p>CEC 2.3, 3.3, 5.1</p> <p>November 13, 2018</p> <p>As I gain more experience as a special education teacher, my understanding of related services is growing. For example, in the past I thought that speech/language services were mainly for students who struggle with articulation. Looking at the IEPs and talking with the SLPs has helped me to see more of the language side as well. These services extend beyond helping a student to be understood by others when he or she speaks. They also are involved in developing receptive</p>	<p>I was hopeful that this was going to go well for him.</p> <p>The comment from a caring concerned resourceful teacher!</p> <p>I'm looking forward to it, too!</p>
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	<p>language abilities.</p> <p>I have a few students who receive physical therapy and/or occupational therapy. We are doing a three year reevaluation for a third grade boy. In the past, he had qualified for physical therapy. His mom and teachers had also voiced a concern that he may need occupational therapy as well. I assumed that the test would be for fine motor skills. When I talked to the occupational therapist, however, she said that he would be more likely to qualify under visual motor. After she assessed his needs, she determined that he could benefit from occupational therapy services. When we hold our IEP meeting, we will propose that he receive services for 30 minutes 2 times a week.</p> <p>A final area that I am learning more about is the role of the school counselor. Today the special education teachers had a meeting with our school principal, the director of special education, our school psychologist, the school social worker, and the school counselor. There was a concern that students who did not have counseling written on their IEPs were receiving counseling services on an ongoing basis. These services consisted of social groups held by the school counselor or social worker for thirty minutes once a week. The reason this had been implemented was because those students behaviors were impeding their learning. The director of special education said that they should only have counseling written on their IEPs if it is directly related to their disability. For example, a student diagnosed with EBD would need counseling. A student with an SLD who struggles with behavior should not be receiving those services. The needed social skills should be taught in the context of the general and special education classrooms.</p> <p>In addition, students who do not have counseling on their IEPs should not be getting long-term services. I thought that it was</p>	
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	<p>interesting that I had been told something from some people, but was getting other information. I think that a desire for uniformity in the district was the main reason that the special education director got involved in the discussion. I was glad to have some clarification and left with a different understanding of the role of a school counselor. She made a good point that she was spending most of her time with a minority of students. Instead, she wants to spend the majority of her time with the most students possible. This is done when she goes into the classroom to teach social-emotional skills through curriculum such as Second Step. I appreciate that this is a proactive and preventative approach to school counseling rather than a more reactive one.</p> <p>Learning more about the related services areas has made it easier to collaborate as well as showing the need to work together. Often, similar experiences and findings are shared by teachers in different areas. Communicating with the occupation therapist, for example, gives me strategies that I can use to help a student to write his numbers. Together with the other members of the IEP team, we work to make sure the students are served in the best way so that they can continue to grow.</p> <p><i>CEC 4.2, 7.3</i></p> <p>November 14, 2018</p> <p>After doing fairly well for a couple of weeks, Ian is beginning to struggle with behaviors again. We have made several modifications so that the workload is not too heavy for him and he has positive reinforcement, but there are still many times when he gets upset when he has to work or does not get his way. I have talked about some of the things we have been doing for at least a month, but I thought making a list might be helpful. Instructional changes include giving him Mario and Sonic math puzzles because those characters are of</p>	<p>Very good experiences for you.</p>
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	<p>high interest to him, breaking instructional time into smaller chunks, using magnetic numbers so that he does not always have to write, playing more math games, and setting up a scavenger hunt. We have also increased his opportunities for positive reinforcement by implementing a morning and afternoon check-out time. He also has his laminated sheet that gets filled up with Marios and Sonics so that he can have an activity of his choice.</p> <p>Despite all of these efforts, today was another very tough day. We have reached a point where his medications should be stabilized, so we feel it is a matter of him not wanting to comply. Today he did fine completing a short math lesson with a paraprofessional. It involved cutting out tens frames and glueing them into his math journal. She had told him that if they finished in time, they would read a book. I had a few math books I had checked out from the library because he (and other kids) does enjoy listening to books. I gave him two to choose from. He said that he wanted a different one from the group. We both reiterated that he had the choice of two books. He got mad, refusing to make a choice. He ended up both throwing the books and leaving the classroom. We did our usual procedure of making sure that he was safe, but not giving him undue attention. When he walked out of the school, the paraprofessional followed him at a distance. He ended up crossing the street and walking about half a block to his house. We stood waiting by the school as his mom walked him back to the building. She told him that he needed to do his math. We got him to the building, but then he refused to walk. It ended up requiring myself and a paraprofessional (both CPI trained) to transfer him to a calm down room. We needed to use a mat as a shield because he started hitting us. It took him about thirty minutes to calm down and complete his work.</p>	
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	<p>He was brought back to the classroom for a short time, but then it was time for him to go to the general education classroom.</p> <p>I am not at the school in the afternoon, but I was told that he struggled during spelling time. He left the building and again walked to his house. This time his mom was not home and three people needed to bring him back to school.</p> <p>We have a special education case study tomorrow. The other special education teachers and I are going to ask to discuss his behavior. There is concern that he is not receiving adequate consequences for his actions. He is hitting almost daily, has left school grounds, and pulled the fire alarm. He has lost privileges and had to spend time in the calm down room as a result, but there has not been much remorse or change in behavior. I compiled the list of strategies that we have tried with him. I am looking forward to getting suggestions from the principal, school psychologist, and director of special education. We want him to be successful while maintaining appropriate expectations for his behavior.</p> <p><i>CEC 1.2, 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 7.3</i></p> <p>November 15, 2018</p> <p>We were able to discuss Ian's behaviors at our case study today. The principal did comment that it seems that he is de-escalating more quickly when he is angry. The school psychologist recommended that we start reading a behavioral script with him so that everyone is consistent. He has used one in the past, so we are going to model it after that one. He is someone that we need to be very straightforward and consistent with. I appreciated that we had the time to discuss how to approach the behaviors as a team. I had asked the occupational therapist if she could attend our meeting, even though she</p>	<p>This is a very challenging student. When was the last time an FBA was completed? You might have mentioned that and I forgot.</p>
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	<p>does not usual attend the case studies. I thought it would be valuable to hear how he is behaving in a variety of situations with different people. The speech/language pathologist was also at the meeting, so she also shared her thoughts.</p> <p>We all had noticed an increase in his tic behaviors over the past couple of days. He will start squinting his eyes really hard several times. His case manager is going to let his mom know and recommend telling the doctor as well.</p> <p>Another concern that was brought up at the meeting was that we wanted to make sure we are not burning out our paraprofessionals who help us with student behaviors. Ian is not the only student at that school who has escalated behaviors- he is just the main one that I work with. The special education professional who are CPI trained are getting called to help de-escalate students in both special education and general education classrooms. They are both going to school to be teachers and do a wonderful job staying calm and helping with the students. It is evident, however, that they are getting stressed out. We talked about ways that we could alleviate some of that burden by getting other people to help if possible. The preschool staff members are CPI trained, so they could help on Fridays since they do not have any students. I also plan on taking the time to talk to them and let them know that they are appreciated. I think that it can be easy to take for granted the people who are so reliable. They need to know that they are valued and we see all that they are doing.</p> <p><i>CEC 6.6, 7.3</i></p> <p>November 16, 2018</p> <p>There was more discussion on how to handle Ian's behavior after I left the meeting yesterday. Unfortunately, the principal was not there for input, but the others talked about</p>	<p>(DBH 11/15/18)</p>
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	<p>having clear cut consequences for his behavior. We are going to need to have another meeting just to talk about Ian. I did the math scavenger hunt around the school with Ivy and Ian today. I do not have them at the same time for math, so Ivy completed it with me first. She enjoyed going around the school to count how many chairs were in the office, look at the time on the library clock, etc. She did have to write numbers in, but she did not get frustrated. Her attitude towards erasing and fixing mistakes has improved so that it has not been upsetting her.</p> <p>After Ivy left for specials, Ian came to my room. He had remembered that we were going to do a scavenger hunt and was excited about it. He had to work with the paraprofessional for half an hour first because that was my planning time. I showed him what the time on the clock needed to show for it to be time to do the scavenger hunt. He did a great job completing his math worksheet and even had extra time to have some books read to him. He was very excited to start the scavenger hunt. First, we went to the library to draw the hands on a blank clock face to match it. I had him tell me what numbers the hands were pointing to and I drew them in. Writing hands on a clock was not something we had done before, so I decided to help him with that part. Next, he needed to find something shaped like a circle and draw it. He found a circle hanging up and drew it. After that, he had to add the number of chairs in the office to those in our classroom. I only meant for him to count the ones in the main area, but he counted all of them and ended up with 32. He wrote it in the blank. He asked it we were doing math. I told him that we were, but we were getting to do it in a fun way where we can move around and find things. We walked back to the classroom to count the chairs there. He counted 22 and wrote in that number. He then had to add the</p>	<p>Good thing to consider.</p>
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	<p>32 and 22. I told him that we needed to add the 2 and 2 first. He told me I should do it. I said, no, that he needed to do it. He wrote the incorrect answer in a couple of times, so we erased it. He started getting frustrated, so I told him that next we get to measure how tall the chairs in the office are using unifix cubes (that part had been really fun for Ivy). Since he was escalating, I told him that he could tell me the answer and I would write it in. He refused to do that, even when I gave him my fingers to count. He left the table where we were working and started walking around the classroom. I offered him a chance to take a break, but he refused. He left the classroom and started walking in the halls. I followed at a distance and saw that he was in the office. When I got in, he was sitting in a chair. I told him that he needed to come back to the classroom. He told me that his walking around was his break. I told him that no, that is not the procedure. He tried to grab for the cubes that I had, but I told him he needed to go back to the classroom first. He left the office, went down a hallway, and went outside. I went outside to make sure that he was safe. He had not gone far- probably because the weather was cold. I sent a message to the principal as to what his consequence should be so that I knew before we were let back in the building. It took awhile before we were let in (we were in the inside vestibule area), but I thought that was a good natural consequence for Ian. We escorted him to the calm down room to work as his consequence. He did walk very calmly with us. I had to change the last 2 questions on the scavenger hunt so he could complete them in the room. He had to measure the height of the whiteboard in the room with cubes rather than an office chair. Then I just had him write how many doors were in the room instead of counting all of the ones between the office and our classroom. The paraprofessionals and teachers who work</p>	<p>Good to note!</p> <p>Wow! Great!</p> <p>Interesting that he would ask this. What do you make of that? <i>I think that he saw numbers and saw math. He just has such an aversion to math, it's a challenge even when I'm trying to make it fun.</i></p>
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	<p>with him came into the room to work with him at the usual times they go into his classroom. We are hoping that having him stay in the room for the remainder of the day rather than just until he calms down and does some work will show him the seriousness of his actions. He qualifies for special education under SLD, so he is fully capable of understanding actions and consequences. Hopefully it won't take long for those consequences to change his behavior. Of course, we will continue to give him positive praise as well. When the paraprofessional went in the room with him, I told her to bring his Mario/Sonic card so that he could still earn a positive reward. We just had to limit his choices to things that he could do in the room (play with slinky, play with playdoh, read a book).</p> <p>CEC 2.3, 4.4, 7.3</p> <p>November 19, 2018</p> <p>Before school started this morning, one of the other special education teachers came to me with a plan for implementing consistent consequences with Ian. She had made a list of his common types of misbehaviors and appropriate consequences. We decided that we need to show him that there are some behaviors that will not be tolerated. These include hitting, throwing chairs, kicking, and leaving the school building without permission. The consequence for one of those actions is that he will need to work with a teacher in a calm down room (empty room) for the rest of the day. He has said that he does not like going there, so having to go there should deter him from committing those behaviors. Previously, the consequence of going to work there had been followed. However, he only had to go there until he calmed down and completed work. We are hoping the longer time period will be more of a consequence for him. His mom does know</p>	<p>He was giving clear signals that things weren't going well for him.</p>
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	<p>that he goes to work there when he does one of those behaviors.</p> <p>The other (less serious) behaviors that we want to address are not following instructions after repeated prompts, running away from a teacher, and leaving the classroom without permission. One of those acts will result in him spending 30 minutes actively working in the calm down room. After that, he gets to return to class.</p> <p>I started the day being positive with Ian. I had made a Mario themed worksheet for solving word problems. There was a scene from the game on the top of the page and the 3 word problems involved the characters and items in the picture. I had made squares for each of the numbers and symbols he needed to write. He has been writing his numbers huge, so the OT suggested that strategy to give him clear parameters.</p> <p>He started out by asking why we always had to do math. I told him that math was on our schedule. He did the first problem fine. He accepted having to erase and rewrite a number he had written backwards. When we wrote the next problem, I told him that he needed to erase his equals sign and write it correctly. He started to get upset. I read him the social story for taking a break. He wouldn't ask me for a break, but left the classroom instead. He has been told that is not a break that he can take on his own without permission. I told him that he needed to do his work in the calm down room. I told him that he would work in there for 30 minutes for leaving the classroom- not the whole day. He said that he wasn't going to go. He tried to leave the building a couple of times, but I warned him that he would spend the rest of the day in the calm down room if he did that. He wandered the hallways with our supervision and prompts to go to the room and do his work. Eventually, he did leave the building. He came back fairly quickly, but was taken to the calm down room to work for</p>	<p>That seems logical. He is a very challenging boy.</p> <p>You handled this tough situation very well.</p> <p>Yes. Looks good.</p>
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	<p>the rest of the day.</p> <p>I don't like to see him earning the consequences, but we need to clearly show him what behaviors are unacceptable. We are continuing to use positive praise whenever possible. When I was doing the word problems with him, he had earned a Mario on his card after completing the first problem.</p> <p>CEC 2.2, 2.3, 7.3</p> <p>November 20, 2018</p> <p>In the morning I heard that Ian and Ivy had an altercation on the playground involving pushing and hitting. The issue was addressed by talking to each of them since no teachers had seen the incident. When Ian came in to work in my classroom, Ivy apologized without any prompting. Ian also apologized and accepted her apology. I was so proud of them that they initiated and took care of the situation themselves. I gave them each two stickers on their charts for apologizing and accepting an apology. The rest of the day went well for them too. Ivy has not had many behavior issues lately, but Ian had those behaviors that were relayed in earlier journal entries.</p> <p>When he came into the classroom, he needed to cut out numbers and then glue them to the appropriate spots in a book. He followed the instructions to cut, so I told the paraprofessional that was working with him that he should earn a Mario on his chart. I want to encourage to give those to him more readily. There are ten spots on the chart, so it will take him a long time to earn the break choice that he's working for if he only earns Marios for completing assignments.</p> <p>Sometimes it can be hard to tell people what they should do, especially when they have been working with the child more closely and for a longer period than I have. I want to help them to focus on the positive things the</p>	
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	<p>student is doing even though the misbehaviors can be tiring at times.</p> <p>When I worked with Ian, I gave him a choice of math worksheets since I had two Thanksgiving-themed options that I had made. He chose the one where he had to color turkeys based on the sum of the addition problem in each of them. I think that he liked that choice better because it looked more appealing and he didn't have to write any numbers. He doesn't like coloring either, but I told him that he just needed to put some of the appropriate color on each turkey. His coloring was sloppy, but I don't think it really mattered for that assignment. The important part was that he worked with me to find the correct sums.</p> <p>Ian also took a big step today by asking for a break when he was frustrated. He laid down for awhile and returned to the activity before his break timer went off. He went back calmly and finished his work. I gave him a sticker for asking to take a break and another one for coming back from the break appropriately. It will be interesting to see his behavior after a five day break.</p> <p>The fourth graders I work with had a chance to read with second grade buddies. They are in the Learning Center for reading, so the general education teacher forgot to include them the first this year that they did the activity. That was a few weeks ago and the kids were pretty sad. She felt bad about not including them, so she gave us a date for the next time they were doing reading buddies. We had a chance to help each student pick out a book that was a good fit for them. They also had a chance to practice reading the text fluently. It seemed like they enjoyed the activity, so I was glad they got to experience it. Sometimes the classroom teachers have trouble remembering the students who receive special education. It's wonderful when they have the chance to participate and have that time with their</p>	<p>That is correct. Based on my observation from a distance it seems like the behaviors are a combination of avoiding and control.</p> <p>Yes. Good!</p>
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	<p>classmates. CEC 2.1, 6.6</p> <p>November 26, 2018</p> <p>I teach inclusion writing with a second grade classroom teacher. Each day she teaches a short lesson on the skill the students are going to work on. Then I will work with a small group of students. Some of the students have writing on their IEPs and some of them are general education students. I take them to my classroom to write so that they have a quieter environment to focus. One of the students is sometimes resistant on days when he is in the group going with me. The last time I took him, he made disrespectful comments and refused to work. I talked to the general education teacher and a special education teacher who works with him for reading and writing. We agreed that he wants to be in the classroom, but needs to have special education services as that is in his IEP. The special education teacher shared that he does not do well with accepting change or being surprised. The general education teacher chooses a group of students to work with me each day. The students do not know ahead of time if they will be going to work with me, staying in the classroom, or working in a small group with a paraprofessional. We asked his teacher if we could have the schedule beforehand so we could prepare him. The special education teacher does a check-in with him each morning. When she went through his schedule this morning, she told him that he would be working with me today and marked a plus sign to remind him. I got a chance to talk to him some before the transition. I talked to him about his Thanksgiving break because I wanted to have a positive conversation with him. When it was time to go, he came with me and the other student. He shared his writing and listened as she shared hers. They</p>	<p>Exactly!</p> <p>That was of primary importance.</p> <p>Yes. I'm very eager to see how this evolves.</p> <p>Not uncommon, of course.</p>
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	<p>both gave each other feedback and then added to their stories. I am glad that letting him know what to expect seemed to make such a positive difference. Collaboration between myself, the classroom teacher, and the other special education teacher made the plan possible.</p> <p>In the afternoons, I also teach reading to a group of fourth grade students. They are working on decoding and comprehension skills, so I use direct instruction. The Reading Mastery program is good, but I have found that it does not address some of the skills they would be learning in the general education classroom. I have been working to teach those skills as a mini-lesson, connecting them to the Reading Mastery story when possible. Today we talked about inferring. I had found some resources to teach students how to infer. First, we looked at a stock photo of a beach scene. We made a T-chart with their observations from what they see and inferences they can make. We bridged that over to inferring when reading by reading a short passage and making inferences about what was happening. The two parts of the lesson took about ten minutes and then we did our Reading Mastery lesson. As we were reading the story, I showed the students how they can make inferences from that text.</p> <p><i>CEC 2.1, 3.3, 7.3</i></p> <p>November 27, 2018</p> <p>I teach reading and writing to a group of fourth graders directly after their social studies class in the general education classroom. They are often finishing the lesson when I come to get them, so I wait and observe. Today they were learning about the Louisiana Purchase. They each had a worksheet containing a map of the territory and a few short paragraphs about its history and significance. The teacher only had</p>	
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	<p>time to read and talk about one of the paragraphs before it was time to switch subjects. I noticed that she had all of the students circle the word “acquisition” because many of the students did not know what it meant. She explained its meaning and said that there would be other new words to learn when they finished reading the worksheet tomorrow. I asked her if it would be alright for the students I take for reading and writing to bring the worksheet with them so we could preview the content and explain the meaning of any unfamiliar words. Even though this was not in my plans for reading, I decided that it would be valuable to spend some of our reading time on the worksheet. Some of the words and concepts were challenging for the general education students, so I knew that they could be even more difficult for students with learning disabilities.</p> <p>The students were surprised when I asked them to bring the worksheets because they were not part of reading class. I explained to them that as they advance in grade levels, they would be expected to learn more social studies and science information and concepts using written text. Reading the content in advance would help them to have a better understanding when it is presented in the large group setting of the general education classroom. I am also going to offer to pre-teach concepts and vocabulary in the future. I think this will help the students to better participate in the general education science and social studies lessons.</p> <p><i>CEC 3.2, 3.3</i></p> <p>November 28, 2018</p> <p>Today I met with my mentor, another special education teacher at a different school. We had a chance to talk about classroom management. The good news is that I didn’t even think of mentioning Ivy. She has had a</p>	Great!
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	<p>few behaviors, but none of the refusals to work that carry over a long time period. When we met at parent/teacher conference, her parents suggested that we tell her we are texting dad if she doesn't do her work. If that doesn't help, we will call dad and have her talk to him. We have only needed to do the phone call once. I texted dad once and he asked if he should call. I told him that she started working when she knew I was sending him a message. She has been doing great getting smileys on her chart. Sending a message to mom has been a positive motivator. Ivy will send her emojis or a video clip of her talking. She is such a fun, kind girl and it's been great to see her improve. Unfortunately, the same can not be said for Ian. He has been struggling with behavior all week. We established working in the "calm down" room for the rest of the day if he leaves the building or for any physical aggression. He resorted to those behaviors on Monday and Tuesday when he did not want to do a task. On Wednesday, the paraprofessional read him social stories about staying in school and following directions before he started his work. I was glad to see her do that. He did well for the first hour, but he did end up leaving the building. When he first went in the room, we had to put up the mat because he was trying to hit teachers. He did calm down and sit quietly for five minutes. I was not at school in the afternoon, but the paraprofessional said that he got 100% on his behavior chart. It was good to see that he was able to follow directions and that he was recognized for his good behavior. Hopefully, he will think and make wiser choices tomorrow.</p> <p><i>CEC 4.4, 7.3</i></p> <p>November 29, 2018 Today I learned that there are times when I need to be more clear when I communicate with teachers. After helping the fourth graders</p>	<p>Good observation.</p>
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	<p>read through the Louisiana Purchase material, I sent an email to the social studies and science teachers. I said that we could pre-teach some of the reading material for those subjects. I am not sure, but they may have interpreted that to mean that we would help the students finish work from those classes in the Learning Center. When I went to get the students from social studies, the teacher asked if they could finish up some of their social studies involving copying what she wrote. I agreed, but it took more time out of our reading lesson than I would have liked without working on their reading skills. The science teacher also gave us some work from a research project that one of our students needed to catch up on. It may not have been because of my email, but I wanted to make sure before sending the students with unfinished work became a regular occurrence. I let them know that I could preview reading material for a short part of our reading class up to once a week. I hope that I was clear and they were not offended. I know that it can be difficult to make accommodations when teaching a full class of students. I would be willing to discuss ways to help them in social studies and science since they do not have any special education support during those times. I did remind the teachers that many of the kids go to an after-school program to finish school or homework. The TA who teaches reading, math, and writing for those students helps run that program. She could definitely help them during that time.</p> <p>We had a three year reevaluation and IEP meeting for one of the students on my caseload. The team members present were his mom, the principal, school psychologist, classroom teacher, two special education teachers besides myself, the school counselor, physical therapist, occupational therapist, and speech/language pathologist. He receives special education services for the academic</p>	<p>Wonderful news!</p> <p>That's disappointing, but not really unexpected.</p>
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	<p>areas of reading, math, and writing. There was a large amount of material to share with his mom because we talked about all of those evaluation results. He currently qualifies for services under specific learning disabilities. His mom had talked to the school psychologist and had him tested for autism. She was concerned about his behaviors, including some quirks he has. He did not qualify for autism based on the evaluation. His mom was upset because his behaviors are under greater control at school than at home. She is struggling to get him to comply and she often has people ask her why he's not "normal". She was almost in tears because she felt that the category of specific learning disabilities does not account for his behaviors. She is a single mom of two children, so I think that some of the things she has to face are overwhelming to do alone. His mom agreed to set counseling up for him (she actually had been trying to get in since April, but our social worker can get him in more easily). We would also like to start home based services because that is the environment where he is struggling the most. She agreed to that, so she is going to work with the social worker to get that started. We also reassured his mom that we had seen improvements in his behaviors at school in the past year and that the counselors could help them at home. I felt that the meeting ended positively with all of the team members agreeing to do what is best for him.</p> <p><i>CEC 1.1, 2.1, 2.2, 4.2, 4.3, 7.3</i></p> <p>November 30, 2018</p> <p>I did a math scavenger hunt with Ivy and Ian as I had done on the other Fridays. I enjoy the chance to get them moving around. I am also able to address some standards that do not come up very much in the curriculum. Today's scavenger hunt involved identifying coins, making a bar graph, place value, and</p>	<p>You did a good job with this tricky situation.</p>
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	<p>measurement. Some of the questions required the use of higher level thinking skills in that they had to determine what they had to do (such as count) to answer the questions. The scavenger hunt went well for Ivy. First, she had to ask the administrative assistant for a cup with coins. (We read the directions and questions together, giving her the chance to read the simpler words.) As we walked to the office, I asked Ivy what she should do if the administrative assistance was speaking with someone else. She said she would wait, which she did. In this way, the activity gave us the chance to practice both math and social skills. When Ivy got the coins, she had to sort them by type and color in a spot on an empty bar graph for each of them. She was doing well, but I noticed that it was taking her awhile to complete the graph. I did not want her to get frustrated from having too much to do, so I discreetly took some of the coins from the pile. Sometimes I have to change assignments from what I originally planned. I was also anticipating when Ian would work on the scavenger hunt. He can easily get frustrated and overwhelmed if he sees too much work. Ian also did well on the scavenger hunt. I told him that he could just put a dot in each of the spots on the bar graph. That allowed him to show that he understood the concept without getting into a battle because he was getting tired of coloring. Ian was able to fill up his chart so he could pick a prize from my basket. At the same time, he had filled up his chart to play with cars (his choice) for five minutes. He picked out vampire teeth and wanted to put them on and play with them. We do not usually let them play with toys they pick out. We said that he could, but he would be doing that instead of playing with cars. He agreed and we set a timer. He walked around the school with the paraprofessional and showed some of the teachers who were available. When he came back to the classroom, he</p>	<p>Very interesting.</p> <p>(DBH 11/30)</p>
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	<p>decided that he wanted to play with the cars. We said that he had said he was switching, but he could work for playing with cars when he filled up his chart again. He got very angry. We offered him a chance to take a break. He did not want to. Since he often leaves the classroom when he is upset, we said that one of us would take a walk with him. (That was something that the school psychologist had suggested to try so he gets to walk, but he is not alone.) He ended up leaving the classroom and sitting outside the door. I went out to him and reminded him that he needs permission to leave the classroom. I told him that I would count to 10 for him to come back inside, or he would need to work in the calm down room for 30 minutes (the consequence that we had told him before). He did not come in, so the paraprofessional prepared to take him to the calm down room. He became angry and hit the paraprofessional, earning the consequence of working in the calm down room for the rest of the day. It was disappointing to me, the principal, and the other teachers, but I believe that we need to stay consistent. (We were hoping that he would do well today. We thought that some of the issues might be sensory related, so the school psychologist had found him a tight compression shirt. She had even put an iron on Mario picture on the front.) He has been struggling with behaviors for most of the school year, so it will take time for him to unlearn those behaviors. It is our job to stay patient and for everyone to be consistent when he needs consequences and to take time to praise his good choices.</p> <p><i>CEC 2.3, 3.3, 5.1, 5.4, 5.7, 6.6, 7.3</i></p> <p>December 3, 2018</p> <p>I conducted a writing assessment with my fourth grade students today. The assessment involves giving students one minute to think about the prompt they are given. Then they</p>	<p>I love this idea!</p> <p>The mark of a flexible teacher!</p> <p>I'm surprised, but happy about that.</p>
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	<p>have three minutes to write as much as they can about the topic. When they are finished, I count the total words each student writes. This is then recorded in the Aims Web system. It has been positive to see their growth in writing fluency and confidence. This was the fourth time for us to do this assessment and most of the scores went up. One student had fewer words written, but his content was better related to the writing prompt. He is the student who has had the greatest growth in confidence. The first time we did the assessment, he said that he could not do it. He did not know what to write. We worked through a sample prompt and what we could write about it. That first time was difficult for him, but he did complete it. This time, he was able to start without any hesitation. When the timer went off, all of the students were disappointed. They wanted to continue their writing. I let them share what they had already written and drew a line under their last words. I gave them the opportunity to add more to their paragraphs. They all chose to write more, and wrote for the last five minutes of class. I am so glad that they are getting this writing assessment practice. They have not taken standardized writing tests yet, but they will be expected to in fifth grade. Although they are not currently writing at grade level, they are gaining the confidence to try and do their best work.</p> <p><i>CEC 4.1, 4.4</i></p> <p>December 4, 2018</p> <p>Today there was a substitute teacher for the paraprofessional who usually spends the most time working with Ian. The way we do his consequences and rewards was not clearly written in the substitute plans. In the future, we need to make sure those are available because Ian's behavior before he came to the Learning Center would have earned him time</p>	<p>Staying close by seems like an improvement.</p> <p>I understand your disappointment.</p> <p>Exactly!</p>
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	<p>in the calm down room. I told the teacher not to worry about what already happened, and went over our procedures for handling his behaviors. She is often in our building, so she was already familiar with working with Ian. Ian came back to the classroom after his physical therapy session to work with the paraprofessional during my planning time. He had ripped up a paper earlier, but she had a new copy for him. We told him that he needed to complete it. He got upset and walked to the door. I reminded him that leaving the classroom would earn him thirty minutes of working in the calm down room. He left the classroom anyway. We supervised as he walked around inside the building for about fifteen minutes. We directed him to go to the calm down room. Eventually, he did go on his own. That was his first time going without his behavior escalating to earning the rest of the day in there. We set a timer and I did the worksheet with him. He often got frustrated and stopped working. I pressed the stop button on the timer when he did that. I reminded him that I would restart the timer when he started writing. It took about an hour, but he did complete thirty minutes of work time in the calm down room. He was able to return to his class before lunch. I was so glad that he did not escalate to hitting, kicking, or leaving the building. He was able to complete the thirty minutes and see that he was not working in there all day. We will continue consistently enforcing consequences and praising him for when he does follow instructions.</p> <p><i>CEC 4.4, 6.6</i></p> <p>December 5, 2018</p> <p>Next week, we are holding an annual IEP meeting for one of the fourth graders with a learning disability. He spends sixty minutes of his day in the Learning Center for reading. He</p>	<p>Good!</p> <p>Great!</p>
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	<p>does not have services for writing, math, or related areas. I have new goals to write for him, so I looked at his evaluation report in his file to see what he qualified for. I was surprised to see that he only qualified for reading fluency. I have some students at my other school with that qualification who I only see for twenty minutes a day during RTI reading. I went to talk to the special education teacher who had him on her caseload last year. I wanted to know why he had so much time in the Learning Center. She said that when he was struggling with behavior last year when he qualified for special education. They did not feel like he was able to focus and be successful in the large group setting for reading. His behaviors have been much better this year. In fact, there have not been any issues other than a few redirections. I asked if he still needed that much time in the Learning Center, given his improvement in behavior. The special education teacher agreed and I also talked to the general education teacher. I wanted to know when a good time would be for him to get his twenty minutes. She identified some times and said that he would probably do better with her morning reading group, rather than the afternoon. That will change his schedule for math, but I think he will be able to adjust. When we meet for the IEP, we will talk to his mom about him spending more time in the general education classroom for reading.</p> <p>CEC 4.2, 4.3, 5.5</p> <p>December 6, 2018</p> <p>As we talked about different students and their families in our special education case study today, I was reminded of the diverse group of students we serve. The majority of students are white with families from South Dakota. There are other ways that they vary, though. Each student's family background and economic status may influence his or her's</p>	<p>This procedure hasn't been in place that long. He is gaining evidence that the consequences will always take place.</p> <p>Yes!</p> <p>Good plan.</p>
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	<p>behavioral, social, and emotional state. The two schools where I teach are in the poorer areas of town, so I do not know of any families who would be considered “well off.” There is a difference between those who are making enough money to have what they need and those that are living at or below the poverty level. There are students who come to school hungry because they did not eat the night before. Fortunately, our schools offer free breakfast for those who qualify. It is so hard for students to function academically if their bodies do not have the energy they need.</p> <p>There are also a range of differences when it comes to who they live with. Some students live with both of their parents, while others may live with only one. They may have their grandparents as their primary caregivers. This may be due to parents leaving by choice or having to leave for other circumstances, such as serving jail time. If they do live with a parent, different boyfriends or girlfriends of that parent may come in and out of their lives. I think that many of our behavior problems can be attributed to unstable home conditions. This is true for students in general education as well, but it is even more difficult for students who have disabilities. Those students who have parents that will encourage them to read and do homework are at an advantage. Our schools try to remedy that problem with a free after school program where students can get their homework done. That has been a positive influence for students who had been missing many assignments or doing poorly on spelling tests.</p> <p>In addition to the demographic differences between the students, there is also a range of disabilities. Just because there are two fourth graders identified as needing services in math does not mean that they can be taught together. There is a wide range of abilities and needs. Some students may struggle to function even in a small group due to behavior issues. Even</p>	<p>Excellent question.</p> <p>Good.</p>
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	<p>though a student with autism and one with a learning disability may test at the same reading level, that does not necessarily mean that they will be able to work well together. That is part of why scheduling for special education can be so difficult. We want all of the children to be successful, so we need to be ready to teach them where they are at. That is where the aid of a teacher's assistant or a paraprofessional becomes important. With guidance from the teacher, they can help us with small groups or individual students.</p> <p><i>CEC 1.1, 6.3</i></p> <p>December 7, 2018</p> <p>I have not been very impressed with the writing curriculum we are using with the fourth graders in the Learning Center. It is a direct instruction program called "Language for Writing." I like that it is a straightforward approach that is easier for the students with learning disabilities to understand. However, there is very little authentic writing. It mostly consists of workbook pages with activities like finding the subject and predicate of sentences. While the skills are good, I believe that students become better writers by writing more and practicing the writing process. There are inclusion writing classes at both of the schools where I teach. At this point, I do not think that would be a good fit for all of the fourth graders we work with at the Learning Center. Most of their day is spent in the small group setting and that particular class would be even larger than other whole group settings. I did take the time to talk to the general education writing teacher about what she is doing right now with her students. I asked her if I could have copies of the materials she is using. (She is not using an actual curriculum, but is pulling from a variety of resources. She hopes a good curriculum will be available next year since the district is adopting a new</p>	<p>Good to note this in the CEC standards. I'm not sure, offhand, where it goes</p> <p>Very good observations on your part.</p>
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	<p>literacy curriculum.) I plan on mirroring what she is doing in the small group setting at a level that is accessible for the students in the Learning Center.</p> <p>The teacher's assistant who works with some of the kids questioned the approach because we would not be using a Tier III intervention. I know that the district and the special education director have been encouraging inclusion, so I thought it would be fine. Just to make sure, I sent an email to the director explaining what I planned to do. She thought it was a great idea, especially because the students would be getting standards-based instruction. She said that we would be leveling the playing field by making accommodations for the students who needed that. It would be using Tier I writing instruction in a small group setting, differentiating with specialized instruction to meet their needs.</p> <p>I plan on making the curriculum switch after Christmas break. I am excited to teach the students more about the actual writing process. I would like to do some supplementing with mini-lessons reviewing language and grammar. I think that using a similar approach to the general education classroom will make it easier if students transition out of the Learning Center environment. I also will like being able to collaborate with the general education teacher. I may be able to share strategies and approaches I have used that would be helpful for the lower-level students who are the general education classroom.</p> <p><i>CEC 3.2, 3.3, 7.1, 7.2</i></p> <p>December 12, 2018</p> <p>I have been working on Ivy's annual IEP, as her meeting date is approaching. As I noted in another entry, her current IEP contains 19 academic goals and 5 behavior goals. Those are in addition to her goals for the related</p>	<p>Great experiences for you.</p>
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	<p>service areas of speech, OT, and PT. Ivy's case manager from last year is no longer in the district, so we have not been able to ask why she had so many goals. We are not sure if the drive for all those goals came from the special education teacher or her parents. As I am working with another special education teacher on her new IEP, we are including one goal for each of the academic areas where she qualified for special education services. This will reduce the amount of goals to 6 academic goals (1 each for basic reading, reading fluency, reading comprehension, written expression, math computation, and math problem solving). In addition, she will have a behavioral goal and an adaptive behavior goal. The other special education teacher who works for her believes that is a better approach. We will still cover those other areas that were outlined in her goals, but will have more time to teach rather than assessing goals.</p> <p>Ivy is the first student who I have written an IEP for who is eligible for alternative assessments. We justified that based on her IQ being below 70 and her current inability to work at the same academic level as her classmates. Since she will be taking the alternative assessment, we needed to write two short term objectives for each of her goals. Our IEP meeting for her is tomorrow. I am looking forward to meeting with her parents again. The last time we met was to work on her SIP, so the conversation was mainly about behavior. Ivy has met many of her academic goals, so that will be good news to share. She has also adapted to her new school and new teachers well.</p> <p>CEC 4.1, 4.4, 5.1, 7.3</p> <p>December 13, 2018</p> <p>Today we had Ivy's annual IEP meeting. Her mom met with the team, which included the usual members in addition to OT, PT, and SLP.</p>	<p>It's good that you are considering what is best for your students.</p> <p>You demonstrated commendable initiative.</p> <p>Good. I imagine you will do a very fine job with it.</p>
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	<p>Her mom was glad to see the progress Ivy has made in all areas, but especially in PT. She asked for suggestions of things to work on at home- such as balancing and jump roping. It was good to hear that she wanted to work with us.</p> <p>The SLP shared how Ivy has progressed in her articulation and language. She gave some suggestions for things they could work on at home, such as moving a Cheerio around in her mouth to strengthen her tongue. They also talked about how to help Ivy better understand concepts related to time. She wants her to understand having to wait, as well as “yesterday” and “tomorrow.” She said that they were doing a countdown to Christmas at home. The team thought that was a great way to help her visualize the passage of time. The SLP said that practicing before and after with objects would be a good precursor to understanding “yesterday” and “tomorrow.” She explained that the abstract concept of time can be difficult for a child to learn, but we would continue to work on it.</p> <p>I shared Ivy’s progress in the areas of reading, math, and writing. Her mom was concerned because sometimes Ivy memorized the words in a book. I said that can be alright for an emergent reader, as long as she is looking at and pointing to those words as she reads. Learning many individual words, such as sight words, requires memorization through repeated exposure. Her mom asked about book level suggestions as they are working to build a better library at home.</p> <p>After we shared Ivy’s present performance levels, we talked about goals for each of her qualifying areas. I was so glad that her mom did not question the amount of goals or want us to make more. She seemed to understand that we would work with Ivy in a broad sense, not just on those individual goals. We will still be covering the concepts that were outlined in her extensive goal list from before, but will</p>	<p>Good. (12/10)</p> <p>This sounds more practical</p> <p>I assume the case manager is in agreement before this is proposed to Ivy’s parents. <i>I actually am the case</i></p>
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	<p>have more time to teach because there will be less assessing.</p> <p>Finally, we talked about ESY with mom. Her mom was concerned with being able to know Ivy's schedule and that transportation would be provided. In the past, there had been some confusion. We told her mom that we will be cognizant of that when plans are made at the end of the school year. There are many pieces that need to be lined up to meet the needs of students, so it is good to be aware of that area of concern.</p> <p>This was not directly related to the IEP, but her mom did share that Ivy was in the process of applying for the "Make-a-Wish" program. She is hoping to be able to go to Disneyland. (It's actually Disney World, but she doesn't understand that they are two different places.) We are very happy for Ivy, but her mom was concerned about her not understanding the passage of time very well. The OT assistant said that we could make a paper chain for the number of days when we found out the date. Each day Ivy would tear off one chain (good fine motor skill practice). This will be a good visual for Ivy.</p> <p>On a personal note, I was gone for two days because of a back injury. Ivy's mom told us that the day after she found out about going to Disneyland, all she was concerned about was hoping that her teacher's back was feeling better. When I saw Ivy, she was yelling my name and jumping up and down with excitement. That child truly has a big heart and I am glad that I get to work with her.</p> <p>Ian also came up to me and said that he missed me. He gave me a big hug. It is so wonderful that despite behavior issues we might deal with, I get to see the positive impact I am having with these children.</p> <p>CEC 1.2, 3.3, 4.4, 5.5, 7.3</p> <p>December 14, 2018</p>	<p><i>manager for her. The special education teacher who is working in a mentor role is in full agreement.</i></p>
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	<p>One of the more challenging tasks I have encountered as a special education teacher is directing the paraprofessionals who I work with. It seems easier to teach children than adults, but it is important to remember that they do not have the education or experience of a teacher. Every one of the paraprofessionals I work with wants to do what is best for the children, but they often need to be taught the best way to do that. Training in the area of how to handle student behavior is the most difficult. I think the most important skills they need are patience and consistency. Those can be hard to teach and may need time to develop. I try to model as much as I can, while still giving them a sense of autonomy with the students.</p> <p>We have a new person working with Ian for an hour of his day. He had been spending almost his entire morning with one paraprofessional, and the principal felt that might not be the best arrangement given the struggles he is having with behavior. The paraprofessional sometimes has trouble being patient and calm with him. Some of that is demeanor, but I think that it is also because of how much time they were spending together. The new paraprofessional has been in the building and worked a little bit with Ian. I can tell that she is nervous because she has heard that he is struggling with behavior. I took time to tell her the procedures for working with Ian, especially his "Mario" chart that he uses to work towards an incentive of his choice. I also made myself available to help her if she needed it. It is hard to know how to handle every situation that comes up. When Ian left the room without permission, I explained to her how we would handle the situation with the calm down room. I told her to be calm and to be consistent with his directions. With help, she was able to get him to go into the calm down room after some time. Today I encouraged her in what she is doing. She said</p>	<p>Right!</p> <p>Good!</p>
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	<p>that is difficult because she feels like she does not have any control with him. I told her to keep being consistent and to give him choices when possible so he can feel a sense of control. I said that it will take time to understand how to work with him, but I appreciate her calm voice and demeanor. I will need to make a point of checking in with her daily to give her suggestions and build her confidence.</p> <p>One other balance when working with support staff is to give correction when necessary, but still preserve their dignity as well as your relationship with them. I was forced to do that this morning. The paraprofessional who had been working with him the most still is with him for the first forty-five minutes of the day. She knows the procedures to follow when Ivy earns time in the calm down room because they were written out for her and we have been using them for several weeks. When she brought Ian to the room, she told me about a situation she had with him earlier that morning. He came in upset, so she tried to work with him to calm down. (She also had the help of the two occupational therapist assistants. One of them works with Ian twice a week and is familiar with his behavior. The other one has very little experience with him.) When Ian was escalated, he threw his socks at the teachers. He also walked outside, but did not shut the door and actually leave the building. Throwing small items at a teacher (not chairs) was outlined as a behavior which earns thirty minutes in the calm down room. Leaving the building earns him the rest of the day in the calm down room. We have had numerous occasions where he has walked out, but is still holding the door and comes back on his own. We have said that earns him thirty minutes in the calm down room. The paraprofessional knew that from modeling and talking with us in other situations. Instead of enforcing those consequences, she said that he</p>	<p>How nice is that! I can imagine all of your students think highly of you whether they express it or not.</p> <p>See! There you go!</p> <p>Wise observation.</p>
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	<p>stepped outside without his socks on and felt it was cold. After that, he came back in and his behavior was fine. I know that it can be difficult to enforce consequences when they start to turn it around, but we have to be consistent with him. When we are inconsistent, we lengthen the time it will take him to learn from the consequences.</p> <p>When I had heard the story about what had happened twenty minutes before, I did not feel like it would be appropriate to put him in the calm down room since I had not been in the situation. I did talk to the paraprofessional and told her that those behaviors should have earned him time in the calm down room. She said that the OTAs did not say anything about that, so she thought he was fine to go back to class. I had to say that they do not know his procedures, since they only work with him on a limited basis. She does know the consequences and should have enforced them. It was a fairly good interaction, although I could tell that she was upset. I believe that I handled the situation the right way, but I need to find the opportunity to notice something she is doing well with him and say something. Adults need that positive affirmation just as children do. Once again, I am glad that she will be working with him for shorter periods of time. The special education teachers, including myself, will need to make sure that Ian's procedures are communicated to everyone who works with him. That way we will be consistent with him so that he realizes some behaviors have consequences. Then we will be better able to teach him positive replacement behaviors.</p> <p>CEC 2.2, 6.6</p> <p>December 17, 2018</p> <p>I am happy to report that the new paraprofessional working with Ian had a great day with both him and Ivy today. Behavior</p>	<p>True, but the para will become more familiar with your expected procedures as time goes on.</p> <p>Yes!</p> <p>Another wise observation!</p>
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	<p>was not perfect, of course, but she was able to redirect both of them appropriately. I think that it was a combination of them having good behavior and her efforts. They both received 100% on their charts. There are always many factors that contribute to behavior, but I am glad that she got to have a good day working with them. Last week she had said that she did not feel like she had any control. Today she was able to have them cooperate with her instructions. There were times when I did step in to redirect them as well. It can be especially challenging when working with them together because they each do things that bother the other person. As she gets more comfortable working with them, I will try to give her more autonomy. I need to balance helping her so that she does not get overwhelmed with giving her a sense of ownership. It will take time and modeling, especially because Ian's behaviors have been difficult to manage despite everything we have in place. In addition to intervening, I am modeling using positive praise with Ian (also Ivy, but she is not nearly as intensive). I have shown her that we frequently give him Marios on his chart (even for small positive behaviors) so he is able to earn his break more quickly. The other important thing I have focused on modeling is naming the positive behavior when he earns an incentive. That specific praise is so essential for teaching him positive replacement behaviors.</p> <p>Today I was taught how to use the form for checking students' special education services. As case manager for seven students at one school and eight students at the other school, it is my responsibility to keep an accurate record of services. The reason that we were checking it at this point is because December is when special education directors report child count to our state. This determines what funding the school district receives. The form was a spreadsheet listing all of the students who</p>	<p>Exactly.</p>
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	<p>receive special services. We needed to check that they were listed with the correct primary disability, program, and inclusion status. I saw the importance of this as statuses change, because I found two errors. One student was not listed on the record at all, so I had to add her. She is in the system, but there was probably an error since she switched schools this year. She has high needs, so I am sure that it is important that the school district gets the needed funding. The other mistake I found was for a student who only started receiving services at the end of last year. He was listed as being serviced through a general education classroom with modifications rather than the resource room. I checked the numbers with another special education teacher and he does meet the qualifications for resource room given the percentage of time he is away from the general education classroom. Sometimes “on the job training” can be difficult, but I appreciate those special education teachers who have helped me learn along the way so that I can best serve the students.</p> <p>CEC 6.1, 6.6</p> <p>December 18, 2018</p> <p>This morning I had an annual IEP meeting for a student who spends the majority of his day in the alternative education setting due to behavior. He was referred to the program in the middle of first grade and he is now a third grader. He only spends the first thirty minutes of the day in the general education classroom. The alternative education program teacher and the general education teacher reported his current progress in both settings. He has made big improvements in the alternative education classroom compared to last year. His behavior in the general education setting is inconsistent depending on whether or not he chooses to use his coping strategies when he gets upset. There have been a few major incidents</p>	<p>Good plan.</p> <p>12/17</p>
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	<p>involving hiding in the school and running out of the building.</p> <p>His mom expressed her concern because he has not had more time added in the general education classroom. He has spent two years in the alternative education setting. She believes that being with other students who have behavior issues is having a bad influence on him. The program serves students from kindergarten through fourth grade, so she is concerned that he is not with his same-age peers. The rest of the team agreed that we wanted him to have more time in the general education classroom, but he will need to earn it by having consistently positive behaviors at that school. We have been saying that to him, but we are developing a plan to make it more concrete for him. He uses a point card with a 3, 2, 1 scale in both classrooms. In order to earn more time with his general education peers, he will need to earn 80% for 13 out of 15 days. He will chart his progress towards that goal in order to give him more ownership and responsibility. His mom was less upset when we told her that plan, but still very concerned. We always share positive things about him, but unfortunately we do have to talk about his negative behaviors in order to discuss how he is progressing towards his goals.</p> <p>Although I will continue working with the same students as a special education teacher, this is my last official day of this internship. I have learned so much from my various experiences. Reflecting on each day has been a valuable process. It gave me the opportunity to think about using best practices as I continue to grow as a special education teacher.</p> <p>Although I am not currently serving as a teacher in a WELS school, I have been able to indirectly use my experiences to help students at our local Lutheran elementary school. I have had some of the teachers who know I</p>	
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	<p>work in special education ask me advice about how they might handle certain situations. In my teaching capacity, I have been able to see the use of a variety of resources and strategies. One teacher talked to me about a student who may have sensory issues. I suggested a scheduled chew break with crunchy foods such as celery may be a better choice than a chewing device. As students get older, that may not be a sustainable method without the potential for embarrassment.</p> <p>I also have had a teacher who has a child with special needs who she teaches Sunday school to. She has recently had an increase in negative physical behaviors. We are planning to meet to talk about her needs and possible strategies she could use to modify the behaviors. I think that the social story resources I have may be a good place to start. It has been a blessing to be able to collaborate with those teachers using the knowledge I have from special education.</p> <p>In addition to those specific cases, there are times when our Lutheran elementary school has students who need special education services from the school district. The school district works well with the private schools, although the students usually need transportation to the school (with the exception of speech services). In the future, I could have students from the Lutheran school whom I provide special education services to at the public school for part of the day. I would be able to give them the support they need academically, but they could still go to a school where they can hear God's Word every day.</p> <p><i>CEC 1.2, 2.2, 5.5, 7.3</i></p>	
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