



Each and Every Child

Quick news for Parents, Teachers and Students

An e-newsletter by the Iowa Department of Education's Bureau of Student and Family Support Services

Let's talk...

Parent-teacher communication is key

We say all along that the parents and teachers should work as a team when it comes to successfully implementing an Individualized Education Plan (IEP). But what can derail a team?

- **Absence of trust.** Do you trust one another? Do you understand one another?
- **Fear of conflict.** We all fear it. But we need to have honest, candid conversations.

- **Lack of commitment.** Is the teacher fully committed to the IEP and the child? How about the parent? If the two don't work equally hard, the IEP will not work as well as it should.
- **Avoidance of accountability.** Everyone on the team must share equally in the victories, or lack thereof.
- **Inattention to outcome or results.** Is everyone paying attention to the progress the student is making? Or is the child



falling short of expectations? There's always time to change course with an IEP.

If you don't feel your team is as good as it should be, talk about it to all team members. What can be done to improve the team? After all, the child's education is in the team's collective hands.

INNOVATION

IEP students learn for life

When the students of the 18- to 21-year-old class needed to develop a service project, they didn't have to look far: the preschoolers who also share the same Des Moines building.

With the help from the nonprofit Community! Youth Concepts, the students decided they wanted to create a mentorship program for the young children, showing them the ropes to develop the skills they will need going forward.

But the young children aren't the



only ones benefitting.

"It seems like a little thing, but actually it's a very big thing," says Kirsten McCollaugh, transition coordinator for Des Moines' Department of Special Education.

"Most of the older students have never been in a leadership position, so it's good for them."

The older students spend 15 minutes each Thursday interacting with their younger charges by playing and reading. The mentors hone their social skills through the interaction, which is a key part of developing their employability as well as their community and life skills.

Contact McCollaugh at Kirsten.mccollaugh@dmps.k12.ia.us for more information.

Share your news!

Have you created a novel program? Had an "a-ha" moment while teaching? We would like to share your news in this e-newsletter. Send your thoughts, successes and innovations to jim.flansburg@iowa.gov

Working to offset interpreter shortage

All children deserve the very best education. That's why, starting July 1, all sign-language interpreters working with students will need to be certified.

This is the culmination of a six-year project in which local school districts have worked to get interpreters certified. Certification ensures that interpreters can translate everything, from elusive nuances to complex calculus terms, to their students.

Despite the lead time, Iowa is still going to be facing a shortage of qualified interpreters for the next school season.

In the coming months, the Iowa Department of Education, your local school districts and Area Education Agencies will be focusing on solutions.

We're working hard to get solutions in place by fall. We will keep you posted.



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