

# FOCUS on Special Education

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## New Beginnings, New Perspectives

The beginning of every new year brings with it the hope that things will be different, that somehow the problems of the last year are no more and that the simple flip of the calendar will make everything new again. The reality is that effecting any kind of improvement is a process, and one that takes dedication and perseverance to achieve. As we begin our ECKCE IEP analysis, we will be using the IDEA file review process as our starting point for improvement, but also will encourage each of you as case managers to look beyond simply



Dhru Flory, center, was crowned King at this year's Winter Royalty Ceremony At Baldwin High School. Congratulations Dhru!

meeting the requirements that are highlighted in that annual state audit. We know that each of you are in the profession to find ways to help students reach their full potential. The focus of this analysis is to remind each of you

that crafting an appropriate IEP is the foundation of that success and that we all have room for improving that outcome. In the IEPs that we have reviewed so far, there are a lot of encouraging things, and  
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## ESY DATA COLLECTION DUE, PLANNING STARTS NOW

It may only be January, but it's the perfect time to start talking about ESY. The winter break typically gives us the best window to determine whether or not

regression is occurring or will occur over the course of the extended summer break. Please keep in mind that regression is the primary factor in qualifying for ESY, even though we

have considered compensatory services in the past ESY sessions for various reasons. Please see the website for ESY criteria and paperwork requirements.

*Often in Special Education, questions arise which you may need the answer to and others may benefit from that answer as well. Each month we will include a few of these questions, so please don't hesitate to ask.*

## FREQUENTLY (RECENTLY) ASKED QUESTIONS

**Q:** At a recent IEP we determined that a student required the alternate assessment. When we got to the goals, we were told that we needed to do benchmarks?

**A:** Yes, for students who have been determined to be eligible for the DLM, short term objectives or benchmarks are required for each of their goals. These can take the form of scaffolded objectives, where you break up the goal into shorter time frame objectives, or to simply use the benchmarks under the standard to which the goal that has been written is linked. This has been a requirement since the revision of the IDEA in 2004 but has often been overlooked. Because we are discovering more IEPs that do not meet the requirement, we are making it a focus to correct the IEPs for these students as they become due.

**Q:** We have been writing outcome statements in IEPs for our high school students to address their employment after graduation. Now we are being told that they need goals in this area too?

**A:** Measurable Post-secondary goals (MPGs) are a requirement for every student with a disability beginning with the IEP during which they will turn 14. Case managers have been given training on how to write these MPGs in response to the indicator 13 (transition) guidelines. But part of the requirement of this indicator is to make certain that there is a connection to at least one IEP goal for the areas of post-secondary training or education and post-secondary employment. In addition, for students with needs in the life skills area, there will need to be an outcome statement addressing those needs. Often, the connection between these outcome statements in the transition section of the IEP and the actual IEP goals is not obvious. In these cases, we need to make certain that there is a clear correlation between these MPGs and the measurable goals written for the student. For example, if the outcome statement is that the student will take a class in banking at a local technical school after graduation, there should be a corresponding goal that addresses success in a similar high school course. It doesn't have to be such a 1:1 correspondence, but the connection must be obvious to meet the requirement set forth in Indicator 13. For more clear guidance on how to make the connection, our transition specialist will guide you in the development of both MPGs and the IEP goals at her annual Indicator 13 training, but if you have specific questions, you can reach out to her earlier or to one of us here in the office.

**ACCOUNTABILITY TO THE IEP (CONT. FROM PG. 1)**

There are certainly things that we can improve upon. One of the initial obvious needs is for collaboration with general education, both in the classroom as well as participation in IEP development and the meeting itself. As we progress through the review, we will look for

similar trends and when those are discovered, we will bring them to the group as a focus.

Another outcome of the review is the need for a consistent template for the WEBKIDSS IEP due to changes that have been made since the last such template

was created. We are currently working on creating this and will roll that out to all of you as a part of the review later this semester and as a focus of future PD. Remember that this review is not meant to be critical, but rather to make each of our IEPs more accurate and functional for the students you serve!

**Extended School Year Applications Due End of February**

As we begin to identify the students eligible for Extended School Year, we need to begin thinking about how to provide those services. For both teachers and paraprofessionals who are interested in working ESY this summer, applications are on our website and

can be filled out and sent to Dan via email. We are still working on locations of the ESY services, but the dates are June 5-15 and July 10-20 from 8:00-12:00 for staff, students will be in attendance from 8:30-11:30. If you have additional questions about ESY, please

email me and I will try and answer them. As we get closer to the end of the school year, we will finalize locations and assignments. Applications will be considered based upon the need and on a first come first selected basis until needs are filled.

**IEP Progress Report Deadline Reminder**

Just a reminder that your IEP goals MUST have corresponding progress reports submitted on a regular basis, as indicated in the IEP itself. Progress

reports are due at the end of each quarter and the deadlines are listed in the calendar on our ECKCE website. The requirement is that the progress must be

reported out at the same frequency as general education reports are given. Please do not overlook this requirement as it may deny your students demonstrated growth.

*Thank you to all of our service providers for helping us get this year off to a great start. Your efforts are greatly appreciated and do not go unnoticed!!!*

## Don't Forget About the Employee Assistance Program



### ECKCE

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The holiday season, while delightful and full of hope, can also be a very stressful time at home and in the workplace.

All ECKCE employees have access to our Guardian Uplife Employee Assistance program. This benefit allows you access to many helpful resources, including financial resources,

legal resources, counseling and life coaching to name just a few. We recognize that life in the workplace presents a number of challenges, today more than ever. You don't have to feel alone in your struggle.

To access this free benefit, just go to the link included at the end of this article and enter the access code

“worklife”, all lowercase when prompted. You'll see all of the things that are available to ECKCE employees as well as some outside resources when your request may fall outside of these things.

We care about our employees well-being; please take advantage of this resource. <https://worklife.uprisehealth.com/employee-resources/>

### PARAPROFESSIONAL NEWS AND NOTES

With the new year comes the need to wrap up the required in-service hours that are a part of your paraprofessional job duties. If you have not turned them in, please do so. Starting next week, I will be coming around to let you know how many hours you still need. Also, please remember that when you are assigned to working with students in the classroom,

you should not be on your phones. Please be mindful of distractions that will take away from your ability to help our struggling learners to be successful. Next, there are still a few of you who are not remembering to clock out for your required 30-minute lunch. This is not optional, and I will be coming around to discuss with you if this is the case.

Finally, don't forget that we appreciate you as much as the students that you support do. Without your dedication we could not provide our students with the things they need to be successful. I hope each of you have a great rest of the year, and remember that we are still giving out gift cards to folks who refer friends to be paras too!