What School Counselors Need to Know about Special Education and Students with Disabilities

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Revised and includes information on postsecondary scholarships for SWD

Understanding Special Education

• Special Education Rules:
  • [http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/default.aspx](http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/default.aspx)

• Student Success: Imagine the Possibilities:
  • [http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/SSIP-.aspx](http://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Pages/SSIP-.aspx)

• Special Education Day: December 2
  • Activities for Students: Meet the Counselor, Check-in
  • Activities for Teachers: Provide them with resources
  • Activities for Parents: Provide them with resources, Meet the School Counselor
IDEA Eligibility

- Autism
- Deaf-blind
- Emotional & Behavioral Disorder
- Hard of Hearing/Hearing Impaired
- Significant Developmental Delay
- Intellectual Disabilities
- Orthopedic Impairments
- Other Health Impairments
- Speech and Language Impairment
- Traumatic Brain Injury
- Vision Impairment
- Specific Learning Disability

Ways to Support your SWD

- Providing school counseling curriculum lessons, individual and/or group counseling to students with special needs within the scope of the comprehensive school counseling program
- Providing short-term, goal-focused counseling in instances where it is appropriate to include these strategies as a part of the IEP
- Encouraging family involvement in the educational process
- Consulting and collaborating with staff and families to understand the special needs of a student and understanding the adaptations and modifications needed to assist the student
Ways to Support your SWD (cont.)

• Advocating for students with special needs in the school and in the community

• Contributing to the school’s multidisciplinary team within the scope and practice of the comprehensive school counseling program to identify students who may need to be assessed to determine special education

• Collaborating with other related student support professionals (e.g., school psychologists, physical therapists, occupational therapists, special education staff, speech and language pathologists) in the delivery of services

• Providing assistance with developing academic, transition and postsecondary plans for students with IEP’s as appropriate

That’s Not My Responsibility…

• Making singular decisions regarding placement or retention

• Serving in any supervisory capacity related to the implementation of the IDEA

• Serving as the school district representative for the team writing the IEP

• Coordinating, writing or supervising the implementation of the IEP

• Providing long-term therapy (That’s why we have the opportunity to provide referrals.)
Comprehensive Counseling Program & SWD…

Direct Services

- School Counseling Curriculum
  - Instruction & Group Activities
    - Core Curriculum Lessons
    - Resource Classes
    - Specialized Topics
- Individual Student Planning
  - Appraisal and Advisement
    - Setting personal and future goals (graduation)
    - Postsecondary Planning (courses)
    - Assessing Strengths, interests, skills, and abilities
    - Monitoring strengths and challenges.
    - Reviewing test scores
- Responsive Services
  - Individual & Small Group Counseling
    - Relationships
    - Personal Concerns
    - Developmental Tasks
    - Affective Skills

80%

Comprehensive Counseling Program & SWD…

Indirect Services

Referrals
- Compile referral resources to utilize with students, staff and families to effectively address issues
- Develop a list of community agencies and service providers for student referrals
- Suggestions by Domain:
  - ACADEMIC: Tutoring
  - CAREER: College Planning Websites
  - SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL: Community Agencies
- Business and Industry
- Physical Health
- Community based mental health agencies
- After-school/Educational services

Consultation
- Understanding School Services
- Understanding Disabilities
- Supporting Behavior Plans
- Developmental Considerations

Collaboration
- Multidisciplinary Team
- Transition Activities
- Mentoring/Peer Counseling Programs (Buddy Club)
Sample Counseling Goals for SWD

• Increase Attendance
• Comply with school/classroom rules
• Interact appropriately with peers and/or adults
• Identify motivation behind behavior
• Improve academic performance

• Demonstrate attention to tasks and task effort
• Exhibit appropriate verbal behavior
• Manage anger
• Address errors in thinking
• Behave in socially appropriate ways

School Counselor’s Role

• Advocacy (FOUNDATION)
• Transition planning (DELIVERY: DIRECT AND INDIRECT SERVICES)
• Behavior modification (MANAGEMENT/DELIVERY/ACCOUNTABILITY)
• Collaborating with parents (DELIVERY: INDIRECT SERVICES)
• Making referrals to specialists (DELIVERY: INDIRECT SERVICES)
• Improving self-esteem (DELIVERY: DIRECT SERVICES)
• Working as part of the school multidisciplinary team (DELIVERY: COLLABORATION)
• Teaching social skills (DELIVERY: DIRECT SERVICES)
• Serving as consultants to parents and school staff (DELIVERY: INDIRECT SERVICES)
School Counselor & Promoting Positive School Behavior

Role of the School Counselor

- Understanding behavior issues of students with disabilities
- Providing behavior interventions to students
- Support for general education teachers in managing classroom behaviors

**Additional Handout:** Exceptionality Characteristics and School Counseling Program Support

Behavior Intervention Resources

- Teacher Behavioral Strategies: A Menu
- Behavioral Interventions
- PBIS by Behaviors
- PBIS Tier 1 Interventions
- PBIS Tier 2 Interventions
- PBIS Tier 3 Interventions

School Counselor & Providing Transition Services for SWD

Support for students & parents with transitions

Resource for postsecondary planning

Advocacy for students and parents in accessing appropriate school & community resources

12/2/2016
Transition Activities
Elementary School to Middle School

• Help students develop self-awareness (interests, skills, abilities) in an effort to help develop self-advocacy skills
• Social skills
• Organizational skills
• Study Skills
• Affective Skills
• Meeting of the Minds (IEP Meeting for 5th Grade)
  • Supports
  • Instructional Strategies
  • Extracurricular Activities
  • Student Preferences
  • Transition Activities

Transition Planning and Best Practices: Priorities for 2016-2017

• Increased knowledge and understanding of:
  • Career Clusters and Pathways
  • Move on When Ready

• Strategies to integrate the increased knowledge of MOWR and Career Pathways to impact every IEP meeting

• Meaningful annual goals in transition plans to lead to intentional, incremental steps to reach the student’s post-secondary goal
### Priorities for 2016-2017

- Transition plans should not be developed in isolation but as a part of the IEP meeting
- Increase student and parental involvement in the planning and meeting process
- Assistive technology must be considered and integrated to support students
- Transition planning must begin early
  - Emphasis on middle school
- Essential partners are GVRA and school counselors
  - Must be true partners in our work beginning in middle school and each step along the continuum
  - Utilize the Individual Graduation Plan in the IEP meeting
  - Collaborate rather than duplicate career assessments

### The Postsecondary Transition

#### Tasks
- College Entrance Exams
  - College Board
  - ACT
- Understanding services available at the college level
- To disclose or not disclose
- Recommendation Letters
- The Right Fit
- Occupational Readiness
- Self-Advocacy Skills

#### Resources
- Students With Disabilities Preparing for Postsecondary Education: Know Your Rights & Responsibilities (US DOE)
- Transition of SWD to Postsecondary Education: A Guide for High School Educators (US DOE)
- Starting and Keeping your Child on a Path to Graduation (GaDOE)
  - Pre-School
  - Elem
  - Middle
  - High
- PACER’s Postsecondary Education Resources
- National Technical Assistance Center on Transition

Career Interest & Self-Awareness Surveys, Work Readiness Courses, Résumé & Portfolio Creation, Mock Job Interviews & Interview Skills, Job Coaching, Career Pathways, Workbased Learning, Community-Based Mentorships & Internships
College Fair Specifically for SWD

• **Purpose:** Help find schools that best suit a student’s individual needs and are open to educators, students & parents

• **Difference:** The participating colleges will send reps who can provide specific information regarding accommodations

• **Informational Sessions:** Navigating *GAfutures* and Exploring Financial Options; *Accessing Accommodations at the Post-Secondary Level*; Preparing for College & Organizing Your College Search; Opportunities Available After High School

Resources on hosting a college fair for SWD:
- Gwinnett County Public Schools
- Choices

CCRPI Career Related Activities for SWD

**Career Awareness & Career Portfolio**

- Modify, modify, modify
- Flexibility
- Exposure to careers

**IGP & IEP**

- Counselor offers IEP team unique perspective on the relationship of the IGP and IEP
- Supports accommodations discussion to be sure there is a good match
- Provides key postsecondary information and advice.
• High Demand Career Initiative Spotlight: Film, Music, Digital Entertainment  
  Dec. 7, 2016, 11:00 AM Register

• Model Comprehensive School Counseling Program: Accountability  
  Dec. 7, 2016, 1:00 PM Register

• Helping to Improve the School Climate Score for Your School  
  Dec. 13, 2016, 1:00 PM Register

• High Demand Career Initiative Spotlight: Healthcare Sector  
  Dec. 14, 2016, 1:00 PM Register

December Webinars
Links for Scholarships for Students with Disabilities

- http://www.collegescholarships.org/disabilities.htm

Additional Scholarships for SWD

- http://www.aahd.us/initiatives/scholarship-program/
- https://www.abbviecfsscholarship.com/
- https://www.agbell.org/Tertiary.aspx?id=1231
- http://www.ncld.org/scholarships-and-awards/#scholarship-318
- http://acb.org/scholarship/
- http://www.candicessicklecellfund.org/scholarships/
- http://chasa.org/we-can-help/college-scholarships/
Table 5.1  School Counseling Program Support for Students With Disabilities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristics of a student with</th>
<th>May include ...</th>
<th>Typical classroom interventions may include ...</th>
<th>School counseling program support might include ...</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autism spectrum disorder</td>
<td>Does not respond predictably to instructions, transitions, or requests</td>
<td>Preparation for activity changes; individual schedules</td>
<td>Demonstrating social interactions and facilitating group work</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Often solitary; misinterprets social cues</td>
<td>Visual aids/graphic organizers</td>
<td>Modeling appropriate tone of voice and response</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulty modulating voice</td>
<td>Peer buddies/peer tutors who have been trained</td>
<td>Helping to teach alternative behaviors and expand repertoire of likes/dislikes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulty beginning, maintaining, and ending conversations</td>
<td>Shortened verbal requests</td>
<td>Teaching perspective and turn taking</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Prefers routines</td>
<td></td>
<td>Discussing student’s interest to build social skills in a group setting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention deficit hyperactivity disorder (included in IDEA category “other health impairment”)</td>
<td>Inattention; lack of impulse control</td>
<td>Incorporate time for physical movement in daily schedule</td>
<td>Providing consistent behavior supports; reinforcing appropriate behaviors</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulty finishing work</td>
<td>Time management tools (e.g., timer)</td>
<td>Offering psychoeducational groups to help students prioritize work, develop self-monitoring checklists, learn to break assignments into units/steps</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Makes choices not in his or her best interest</td>
<td>Break tasks into manageable units; clear due dates for short- and long-term assignments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blind and/or visual impairment</td>
<td>Slow processing of content/response</td>
<td>Written or graphic organizers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Disoriented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Delayed language development</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stereotypic behaviors (e.g., head weaving)</td>
<td>Instruction incorporates concrete materials and objects; multimodal/experiential approach</td>
<td>Modeling interactions for classmates and other adults (e.g., identify self when answering or asking questions)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Tactile/verbal cues</td>
<td>Providing psychoeducational group and one-on-one opportunities to practice metacognitive strategies</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Explicit directions</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Braille</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Large print materials</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Orientation and mobility instruction</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 5.1**  
School Counseling Program Support for Students With Disabilities (cont’d)

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<th>May include...</th>
<th>Typical classroom interventions may include...</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Deaf and hard of hearing            | Isolated from peers  
Frequent requests for directions to be repeated  
Difficulty following verbal directions  
Written language that reflects absence of appropriate syntax  
Difficulty communicating with others | Peer buddies who have basic signing skills  
Visual, illustrations, diagrams, models, pictures  
Assistive technology/multimedia  
Augmentative communication system  
Multimedia approach | Setting up buddy system for peer helpers  
Assisting students to develop a portfolio to highlight social successes  
Providing information to staff about disability and assistance that can be helpful to students and teachers |
| Developmental delay                 | Difficulty maintaining attention  
Frustration with tasks  
Delays in speech and language, fine/gross motor skills, and/or personal/social skills  
Difficulty playing/associating wth peers | Limit variety of activities  
Use picture schedules, sequence activities, establish routines  
Break tasks into manageable units  
Use songs or rhymes to reinforce information  
Support tasks with movement | Using drama and role-playing to teach problem solving  
Acknowledging effort and progress through positive reinforcement  
Promoting choices to foster positive social interactions |
| Emotional or behavioral disorder    | “Externalizers” may be aggressive, disruptive, or act out  
“Internalizers” may be withdrawn, anxious, or depressed  
Inadequate coping skills  
Choosing dangerous or inappropriate playmates/friends  
Difficulty maintaining positive, productive relationships | Break tasks into manageable units  
Peer buddies/peer mentors who are trained  
Offer choices for assignments  
Materials aligned to student’s instructional level | Offering to mediate interactions with peers and suggest/model how to compromise  
Teaching and providing opportunities to practice self-regulation skills  
Teaching problem-solving and coping skills  
Providing groups for social skill-building |
<table>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Intellectual disability</td>
<td>Inadequate understanding of social cues</td>
<td>Visual and verbal cues</td>
<td>Modeling and providing opportunities to practice appropriate social skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulty processing content and expressing ideas</td>
<td>Step-by-step instruction; acronyms to remember information</td>
<td>Teaching skills for studying and strategies for learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Learned helplessness”</td>
<td>Graphic organizers and/or written instructions</td>
<td>Teaching problem-solving skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulty making friends</td>
<td>Peer tutors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning disability</td>
<td>Difficulty understanding social cues</td>
<td>Students repeat/paraphrase directions</td>
<td>Coordinating peer-tutoring program</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>TOO negative. Difficulty following verbal or written directions</td>
<td>Peer tutors</td>
<td>Teaching, monitoring, and practicing social skills in a small group</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Demonstrates competencies in many areas but does not acquire academic skills without great effort</td>
<td>Mnemonics to remember instructions</td>
<td>Teaching self-monitoring devices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Misinterprets social skills</td>
<td>Graphic organizers/visual aids/written instructions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Extended time on assignments, tests</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Break tasks into manageable units</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Lesson delivery through multiple formats including technology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Multiple disabilities</td>
<td>Difficulty managing unstructured time</td>
<td>Choices in preplanned activities and assignments</td>
<td>Offering psychoeducational groups to present social stories to understand appropriate interactions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulty with social interactions</td>
<td>Visual cues for appropriate activities during unstructured time</td>
<td>Assisting in choice-making activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lack of understanding of time and scheduling</td>
<td>Daily schedule posted</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Table 5.1 School Counseling Program Support for Students With Disabilities (cont’d)

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</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Physical disabilities and/or orthopedic impairment</td>
<td>Sensory input needs</td>
<td>Adaptive equipment, sensory aids (e.g., weighted vest)</td>
<td>Providing out of classroom sensory breaks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Incomplete work, difficulty focusing on activity</td>
<td>Visual aids, labels, place markers</td>
<td>Providing opportunities to practice problem-solving skills with application to real life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Needs extended time to learn</td>
<td>Break tasks into manageable units; use time-management tools (e.g., timer)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Profits from revisiting early learning before new information presented</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech/language disorder</td>
<td>Difficulty with pragmatic language, articulation, composing full sentences</td>
<td>Give student “think time”</td>
<td>Providing opportunities to model and practice social and communication skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Difficulty conversing with peers which may affect social relationships</td>
<td>Visual aids/concrete examples in instruction</td>
<td>Offering psychoeducational groups with a focus on social skills</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Offer ways of presenting information that do not require lengthy oral expression</td>
<td>Coordinating peer collaboration opportunities and after-school or community projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traumatic brain injury</td>
<td>Poor impulse control</td>
<td>Visual aids, labels, checklists</td>
<td>Providing opportunities to model and practice self-regulation skills (e.g., deep breathing, positive self-talk)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Agitation and irritation</td>
<td>Assistive technology</td>
<td>Assisting with implementation of “memory notebook”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Lowered social inhibitors</td>
<td>Extended time to complete assignments</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* The characteristics noted in this table likely occur in all children from time to time. When they are manifestations of a disability, they occur along a continuum of severity and are marked by longer duration and higher frequency. See Appendix A for IDEA definitions of these disability categories.