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ABSTRACT
        This packet of materials describes the experience of
personnel at Poultney (Vermont) Elementary School in transitioning a
student with multiple disabilities from a special day school into a
regular third grade classroom. The materials outline pros and cons of
the inclusion concept, requirements for inclusion to be successful,
the collaborative teaming process, the mother's perspective, and a
classmate's point of view. Guidelines are offered for completing an
action plan for transition. Steps include: (1) identify planning
team; (2) create a home-school partnership; (3) create and share
forms that outline student strengths and needs; (4) identify
potential classroom placements; (5) select initial classroom
placement; (6) determine student's core teaching team and service
coordinator; (7) identify existing available resources; (8) identify
resources currently provided for the student and those anticipated
for next year; (9) consider accessibility issues; (10) describe a
typical week's schedule; (11) determine when individual
goals/objectives might be addressed within the schedule; (12) develop
daily schedule; (13) do lesson adaptations; (14) develop specific
transition activities; (15) plan for peer power; (16) determine
inservice needs; and (17) develop a system for planning team
communication. (JDD)

ED 372 555

INCLUSION: EXCEEDING EXPECTATIONS THROUGH COLLABORATION IN A RURAL VERMONT SCHOOL

OUR EXPERIENCE TRANSITIONING A STUDENT
WITH MULTIPLE DISABILITIES FROM A
SPECIAL DAY SCHOOL DIRECTLY INTO
A REGULAR 3RD GRADE CLASSROOM

STRATEGIES THAT HAVE WORKED FOR US

Presenters:

Betty Battles, Ricky's Mother
Linda Leach, Classroom Teacher
Rosemary Carter, Special Education Teacher
Jonathan McIntire, Administrator

POULTNEY ELEMENTARY SCHOOL
POULTNEY, VERMONT

The CEC Convention
Denver, Colorado

April 9, 1994

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The attached information consists of focusing comments from different members of the team who have been involved with the integration of Ricky. In addition, our thoughts on what must exist for inclusion to be successful are provided as well as some of the Pros and Cons of inclusion from our experience. Finally, the components of an Action Plan our team used planning for the transition of Ricky from his special day school into his local community school are provided. We hope this information is of some help to you.

PROS & CONS WITH THE INCLUSION OF SEVERELY DISABLED CHILDREN WITHIN REGULAR CLASSROOMS IN THE CHILD'S LOCAL COMMUNITY SCHOOL FROM OUR PERSPECTIVE:

PRO

1. Inclusion increases the understanding of stff regarding the nature and needs of severely disabled children as well as developing the knowledge for appropriately educating these children within the regular public school environment.

2. Provides training and on-going consultative support to staff which not only helps them more effectively serve the "included" student but also improves their ability to effectively address the special needs of other students within their class.

3. Significantly changes the perceptions of staff regarding the appropriateness of including more severely disabled students and their own ability to effectively accomplish inclusion.

4. Enhances collaboration among all staff throughout a building.

5. Staff share the workload and are mutually accountable for the success and problems.

6. Inclusion leads to a "relaxation of the staff and a removl of their fear of the unknown" which, in itself, can lead to a significant change in the behavior of the staff not only to the disabled students but toward other disabled people they encounter throughout society.

7. It builds the self-esteem of the disabled students as well as their non-disabled peers. It is "a great benefit to all of the kids in the school system".

8. It improves the overall development of the disabled student, especially in the areas of social/emotional and behavioral growth by:

   - Providing more appropriate role-models.
   - Increasing the disabled student's motivation to decrease innapropriate behaviors in order to be accepted by their friends and allowed to "belong".
   - Improving natural peer interaction.
   - Making the disabled student more attractive to the classmates and more desired for friendships.

9. Provides opportunities for disabled students to function within cooperative group learning experiences and heterogeneous groups.

10. Provides a sense of belonging for the disabled student, increasing their opportunity to develop friendships and be included in normal activities such as community sporting events, dances, etc.

11. Special education teachers become viewed by students and others as teachers for everyone rather than the teacher for the "special" kid. They increase their hands-on experience collaboratively with the students and staff in the regular classroom programs.

12. The growth and development of the disabled students is often much higher in many of the developmental areas, especially social skills, communication skills, behavior, and self-concept.

13. Disabled students are no longer required to ride up to three hours daily to and from school but, rather, can often walk (or wheel themselves) to school with their friends.

14. It creates an honest, natural shift in the paradigm regarding what people believe about disabled people. The disabled person is no longer viewed as a disabled person but, rather, as a person who happens to have a disability.

CONS:

1. The planning involved can be quite time-consuming, especially in the beginning.

2. The process initially causes anxiety until:

    - teachers have had sufficient experience with the process to understand they do have the skills and knowledge to successfully handle it.
    - teachers realize they have a team of people supporting them and they are not alone.

3. There can be an increase in the number of people working at the same time within the regular classroom.

4. Appropriate time for planning for the student and responding to immediate difficulties can be very difficult at times to access.

5. There is a higher visibility when difficult behavior exists within the regular classroom and other students and parents can get upset. Also, effective behavioral interventions can sometimes be perceived as aversive and "not appropriate in a public school" by some people.

6. Non-disabled students need to share their teaher's expertise and time with the disabled student which, in the beginning, can be considerable.

7. There can at times be too much of a focus on inclusion at the expense of the regular academic curriculum. There also can be too little.

8. Parents and other community members can become uncomfortable with the process if there is not sufficient communication and clarification regarding the why and how of inclusion.

REQUIREMENTS FOR INCLUSION TO BE SUCCESSFUL

1. Personnel must believe in the appropriateness of inclusion (or be open to the concept of inclusion) before it happens.

2. Staff must be provided with training addressing both WHY a student should be "included" and HOW to do it successfully.

3. A Collaborative Team must exist including the child's parents, the classroom teacher, the special educator, the paraprofessional, and others as needed (the principal, therapist, consultants, etc.)

4. Every member of the team must realize and accept that they ALL are responsible for the education of the student. Responsibility is shared.

5. On-going consultative support from specialists in areas of importance to the child (eg. physical therapist, behavior specialist) must be readily available.

6. Depending upon the individual child's needs, the provision of an "individual studant assistant" may be necessary.

7. There must be adequate TIME built into the schedule of the team members for them to meet weekly to brainstorm solutions to any difficulties that may exist.

8. Necessary material and equipment must be available.

9. There must be administrative support for the Inclusion of the student.

10. Training, training and more training must be available as necessary to ensure the staff teaching the child are equipped with the knowledge and skills necessary.

11. A planning room or other quiet place where the student can be taken when agitated to calm down is very helpful.

12. A clear understanding of the role and function of the different members of the student's team must exist -- not only among the immediate team members, but also among other personnel within the school.

COLLABORATIVE TEAMING

Training in the collaborative teaming process has been the key to Rickey's successful integration into a regular classroom at Poultney Elementary School. This is the first time that a special education delivery model used the teaming process at our school. As a Special Educator, I no longer operate alone or feels solely responsible for the successful integration of a severely disabled youngster.

The members of this team bring many talents and strengths to the team meetings. In thirty minutes per week we are able to brainstorm and problem solve:
> when Rickey's progress comes to a plateau,
> when Rickey exhibits new behavior problems,
> when health problems present themselves.

We dig in when Rickey takes a step backward and mobilize. We cheer together when a new milestone is reached. We have had many ups and downs during the past two years. The celebrations are real morale boosters for all of us, and keep us going forward during the rough times. I have a lot of respect for my fellow team members. We are growing every week.

This experience has enabled us to train several new teams to wrap around other severely disabled youngsters in our school.

Rosemary Carter, Learning Specialist

Poultney Elementary School

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Integrating a special needs student into a regular classroom is not only beneficial to the special needs child, but it also provides important learning experiences for the entire school community. All of the people involved with inclusion students learn not how different these children are from them, but rather how alike everyone is. The school community discovers that these children learn, love, and laugh at many of the same things they do, only at a different level of understanding. To their amazement, these children can teach them things, become their friends, and even make their day by a word or deed. Inclusion childen have enriched our lives as well as theirs being enriched by us.

Three main ingrediants need to be in place to make including a special needs child into a regular classroom possible. A team needs to be formed made up of the key people involved with the child's education. Second, the team needs to be trained in collaboration and how to write a plan of action. Finally, the team needs to have the necessary time to prepare for the child. Integrating a special needs child into a regular classroom successfully is possible if all the above are done.

Linda Leach

Linda Leach

Classroom Teacher
Poultney Elementary School
Poultney, Vermont

A MOTHER'S THOUGHTS

This has been the hardest decision with the greatest rewards possible. When Jonathan McIntire came to me with the idea of mainstreaming Rickey into a public school, I was very much against the idea because of behavioral difficulties, learning disabilities and daily living skills which we take for granted, are a major obstacle for Rickey. I couldn't even begin to imagine Rickey in a "normal" classroom environment. But with further persuasion from Jonathan, I began to allow for the thought of this to become a reality. I was blessed with the perfect classroom teacher, Mrs. Leach, who actually wanted my special child in her classroom. Along with Richard Conover as his paraeducator, the team was unstoppable even though Rickey tried his best to do so the first few weeks of school.

My son has friends for the first time in his life, he can be active in his community and best of all graduate from high school right along side of his classmates.

Betty Battles
Parent

FROM A KID'S POINT OF VIEW

I've learned that Rickey is sometimes a bad boy and sometimes he is a good boy. Most of the time he is a good reader and he knows how to write and read good. I learned that Rickey is a friend only when he is a good boy. I've learned that Rickey is not a healthy boy.

Hi, my name is Heather. I am going to tell you the good and bad things about Rickey. I will start with the bad things. the first thing is Rickey is so loud that I can't concentrate and he disturbs the class. The good thing is that it helps me learn more about the handicapped. Another thing is it is fun to talk to him.

I've learned that from the time I met him he likes animals and books. I've learned that from the time I met him he sometimes has bad days and good days. He definitely likes my penguin and likes to play the computer.

I like Rickey because he can be nice. I don't like when he gets out of control.

I don't find that Rickey has problems, only he swears sometimes.

I like Rickey because he's in my class. He is nice to me in class. I feel good with Rickey in my class because he has taught me how to feel about myself. The bad thing is he makes noise when the teacher is talking.

Probably in VAC there were lots of kids like Rickey and they made a lot of noise so he couldn't concentrate and now where he is he can concentrate. And where he was the people didn't do anything and our people do. He goes to time out for 3 minutes.

I think it is good for Rickey to work with the class.

I have learned a lot about Rickey. I think it's fun to have Rickey in the class because he is learning what we do and when we are being good it shows him that he should be good. I don't like having Rickey in the class sometimes because he acts up and he sometimes scares some people. Some people are not scared because they have been with him for two years. He can be fun because sometimes he tells funny stories. The bad things are that he doesn't know that he can't kick people, and hit them.

I like when I get to work with him and help him work on the computer. The bad thing is when he fights and has to go to time out.

I think that almost every person in this class treats Rickey nice. I like to have him in my class. Sometimes I think it is not so great having him in my class because he hits and distracts us. He really can be mean if he doesn't get his own way.

I don't believe in mainstreaming because I think that it doesn't do the child any good. When they grow up they will probably have to live in a home for retarded people. He interrupts us in class and hurts us and everyone pays more attention to him than to class work.

Guidelines for Completing the Action Plan

STEP 1   IDENTIFY "EXTENDED" PLANNING TEAM

The extended planning team includes all people who have an interest in the child's education. This could include the following: parents, future teachers, specialists (related service providers: occupational, physical, and speech/language therapists; specials teachers: physical education, art, music), teaching assistants, administrator, current teacher, special educator.

Criteria to consider when selecting/recruiting "extended" team members :

> Those who have expertise in an area of need.
> Those who will be affected by decisions made by the team.
> Those who have an interest in the child's education.

STEP 2   HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP

How will you arrange for ongoing parent involvement? The team needs to arrange a workable parent/teacher communication system and other activities which facilitate parent involvement in their child's school program. In some cases, it may be appropriate for one team member to be designated the primary parent contact person.

STEP 3   CREATE AND SHARE "PROGRAM AT A GLANCE"

STEP 3a   CREATE AND SHARE "IEP AT A GLANCE"

IEP's have a tendency to become quite lengthy. The IEP at a Glance is used as a quick reference to the child's IEP. To complete this step, look at the IEP and restate the major goals and objectives in a few key words.

STEP 3   CREATE AND SHARE "PROGRAM AT A GLANCE"
(CONTINUED)

STEP 3b   CREATE AND SHARE "POSITIVE STUDENT PROFILE"

All too often, it becomes easy to focus on the needs of the child without looking at what strengths the child has, what s/he is good at, enjoys doing, is interested in. In order to complete this step, you need to get to know the student. This can be done by: talking with parents and current staff, observing the student, and reviewing records (look for the positive). This step allows you to look at other aspects of the student and gives you a picture of the whole child.

STEP 3c   IDENTIFY INSTRUCTIONAL MANAGEMENT NEEDS

Instructional Management Needs refer to aspects of the educational program that are done to or for the student. At times, management needs must be attended to in order to allow the student adequate access to learning opportunities or to allow pursuit of learning outcomes. Some examples may include: teaching classmates how to use an augmentative communication device, administering medication, changing positions, providing passive stretching, giving assistance in toileting, etc.

STEP 4   IDENTIFY POTENTIAL CLASSROOM PLACEMENTS

Criteria to consider when determining a classroom placement include:

> Teaching Style/Learning Style
> Family Preference
> Teacher Willingness and Abilities
> Total Classroom/Student Characteristics
> Age Appropriate (plus or minus 2 years)
> Maintain with Peers from Grade to Grade

STEP 5   SELECT INITIAL CLASSROOM PLACEMENT(S)

Select the placement that meets the most important criteria for your student utilizing a collaborative teaming process. In addition, it is important to incorporate any new people onto the team as required by the placement choice.

STEP 6   DETERMINE STUDENT'S "CORE TEACHING TEAM" AND "SERVICE COORDINATOR"

The "Core Teaching Team" includes those who are involved on a regular basis with the student's educational program. This team may include: the teacher, parent, assistant, special educator, etc. This group focuses on the ongoing planning that is necessary throughout the school year. Other members from the "expanded team" or outside of the team may need to be involved in the core team on an "as needed" basis (e.g., an administrator or a peer).

STEP 7   IDENTIFY EXISTING AVAILABLE RESOURCES

Believe it or not, there are a variety of resources available to you, and you may not have to search much farther than your own back school yard, so to speak. Team members as well as personnel throughout the school and district bring with them a variety of experiences and knowledge. Discovering and accessing these resources can provide you with some significant support. Use the resource list included in this packet to gain some ideas of what resources may exist in your district. You, however, know your district better than we do, and are better judges of what resources exist.

STEP 8   IDENTIFY RESOURCES CURRENTLY PROVIDED FOR STUDENT AND THOSE ANTICIPATED FOR NEXT YEAR

For this step, list what resources are currently provided for the student (e.g., occupational and physical therapy, consultation from the state I-Team, assistance from the Visiting Nurse Association. . .), then list which resources you anticipate you'll need for next year. Will these same resources be needed? What additional resources do you think you'll need for the student next year?

STEP 9   ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS

Accessibility issues need to be considered (e.g., playground, bus, modification of the physical plant, new equipment). Not having things/areas accessible is not an option.

STEP 10   TEACHERS DESCRIBE A TYPICAL WEEK'S SCHEDULE

The master schedule is used to assist in determining how the student's IEP goals and overall educational needs will be addressed throughout the context of the day. It is used in conjunction with the IEP-General Education Matrix.

STEP 11   IEP-GENERAL EDUCATION MATRIXING

The matrixing activity is used to determine when in the classroom schedule individual goals/objectives in addition to general curriculum outcomes might be addressed.

Steps: 1. Fill in the classroom schedule across the top and note the length of each activity (e.g., reading, 75 mins., math, 45 mins.).

2. Fill in IEP goals/objectives (this is where the IEP-at-a Glance is helpful) and management needs down the side of the grid.

3. Beginning with the first goal, move across the grid considering the possibility of addressing that goal during the coordinate classroom activity.

4. Mark an "X" in the box if there is a possible match. Leave it empty if there is not a possible match.

NOTE: There are several ways to fill in the matrix. It can be as simple as marking it with X's to denote where a possible match could occur, or it can become quite complex by coding the type of match that could occur

STEP 12   DEVELOP INITIAL DAILY SCHEDULE

This step is completed in order to specify what the student's day will look like. There is no one form that is best for this. It will depend on what type of scheduling format you find most useful.

STEP 13   DO LESSON ADAPTATIONS

Lesson Adaptation Plans are used to assist in adapting regular class lessons to accommodate IEP goals/objectives or other instructional outcomes for the student. It provides a format for looking at what preparation will be needed in order to meaningfully include the student in a particular lesson. Use one of the Lesson Adaptation Forms in your packet to practice adapting for the sample student OR do a real adaptation for your student.

STEP 14   DEVELOP SPECIFIC "TRANSITION" ACTIVITIES

In developing specific transition activities, it is important to consider who needs information regarding the transition (e.g., the student, peers, school personnel, family). What are major areas of strengths and needs which need to be shared in order to provide for as smooth a transition as possible, from grade to grade, school to school, etc?

STEP 15   PLAN FOR "PEER POWER" IN SCHOOL AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTS

To complete this step, ask and answer for yourselves, "In what ways can we plan for 'peer power' to support our student in school and other environments?" The plan might focus upon classmates serving as buddies, tutors, or as student planning team members; or it might focus upon more systems-wide activities such as training in cooperative group learning.

The team should consider activities to include in the **Implementation Proposal for Financial Support**, as this is one very valuable financial resource available only to Summer Institute and School Development Institute participants for gaining technical assistance and training needed to carry out the Action Plan for the 1992-93 school year.

STEP 16   DETERMINE INSERVICE NEEDS

Given the planning you have done thus farm and the information you've taken in over the week, what inservice training do you feel will be important in supporting your efforts to become an inclusive school? To complete this step, ask and answer for yourselves, "What inservice training do we need for students, school staff, the community, or the family to promote a successful educational experience for our student OR more heterogenous educational experiences for all students?"

The team should consider activities to include in the **Implementation Proposal for Financial Support**, as this is one very valuable financial resource available only to Summer Institute and School Development Institute participants for gaining technical assistance and training needed to carry out the Action Plan for the 1992-93 school year.

STEP 17   DEVELOP ONGOING SYSTEM FOR STUDENT PLANNING TEAM MEETINGS AND COMMUNICATION

This step challenges you to develop a system for meeting together after "The Institute" is over and the reality of the school year begins. The success of your plan will depend on your ability to meet face-to-face and to plan creatively for your student. You will need to meet at least once before September 13th to complete this Action Plan and the **Implementation Proposal for Financial Support**.

STEP 18   CELEBRATE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

   YOU DESERVE TO!!!

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CREATING THE TEAM

STEPS	ACTION NEEDED	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	WHEN START	WHEN END	NOTES
1. IDENTIFY "EXTENDED" PLANNING TEAM (e.g., parents, future teachers, specialist, teaching assistant, administrator, current teacher)	a. How to recruit needed members?				
2. HOME-SCHOOL PARTNERSHIP (team participation, communication system)					

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GETTING TO KNOW THE LEARNER

STEPS	ACTION NEEDED	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	WHEN START	WHEN END	NOTES
3. CREATE AND SHARE "PROGRAM AT A GLANCE" (brief list of major goals)	Use "Program-at-a-Glance" form				
3a. CREATE AND SHARE "IEP AT A GLANCE" (brief list of major goals)	Use "IEP-at-a-Glance" section of "Program-at-a-Glance" form				
3b. CREATE "POSITIVE STUDENT PROFILE" WITH TEAM	a. Complete and share "Positive Student Profile" from "Program-at-a-Glance" form				
	b. Review records, videos				
	c. Observe in current settings				
	d. Talk with parents and current staff				
	e.				
	f.				
3c. IDENTIFY MANAGEMENT NEEDS	Use "Program-at-a-Glance" form				

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SELECTING PLACEMENTS

STEPS	ACTION NEEDED	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	WHEN START	WHEN END	NOTES
4.	IDENTIFY POTENTIAL CLASSROOM PLACEMENTS				
5.	SELECT INITIAL CLASSROOM PLACEMENT(S) [Consider the curriculum, how teachers teach, how students are involved in learning, the class routines - see teachers' "Master Schedule"]				
7.	DETERMINE STUDENT'S "CORE TEACHING TEAM" AND "SERVICE COORDINATOR" [To monitor implementation of IEP and student progress] How will you monitor: o student progress? o team functioning? o peer support? o satisfaction of family? o satisfaction of staff in regard to support? o what else?				

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GETTING TO KNOW RESOURCES

STEPS	ACTION NEEDED	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	WHEN START	WHEN END	NOTES
7. IDENTIFY EXISTING AVAILABLE RESOURCES	a. Check out "Ability Awareness and Resource Library" by Friday and complete Worksheet				
	b. Complete "I am a Resource" & "School/District/County Student and Family Services" forms				
	c.				
8. IDENTIFY RESOURCES CURRENTLY PROVIDED FOR FOR STUDENT & ANTICIPATED FOR NEXT YEAR (e.g., related services, support from teaching assistant, community-based instruction)					
9. ACCESSIBILITY CONSIDERATIONS (e.g., bus, playground, modification of physical plant, new equipment)					

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DEVELOPING THE SCHEDULE

STEPS	ACTION NEEDED	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	WHEN START	WHEN END	NOTES
10. TEACHERS DESCRIBE A TYPICAL WEEK'S SCHEDULE	Teacher(s) fill out "Master Schedule" form				
11. IEP-GENERAL EDUCATION MATRIXING	Complete "IEP-General Education Matrix"using "IEP-at-a-Glance" & "Master Schedule"				
12. DEVELOP INITIAL DAILY SCHEDULE					
13. DO LESSON ADAPTATIONS	Use "Lesson Adaptation Plan" form to adapt for lessons. Practice one in team meeting on Thursday				

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PLANNING FOR ONGOING INSTRUCTIONAL ADAPTATION, SUPPORT AND COMMUNICATION

STEPS	ACTION NEEDED	PERSON(S) RESPONSIBLE	WHEN START	WHEN END	NOTES
14. DEVELOP SPECIFIC "TRANSITION" ACTIVITIES (e.g., ability awareness activities, school visits, map of school)	Complete Implementation Proposal for Financial Support?				
Student:					
Peers:					
School Personnel:					
Family:					
15. PLAN FOR 'PEER POWER' IN SCHOOL AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTS (e.g. classmates to serve as buddies, tutors, student planning team members)	Complete Implementation Proposal for Financial Support?				
16. DETERMINE INSERVICE NEEDS, (building, team, school staff, parents)	Complete Implementation Proposal for Financial Support				
17. DEVELOP ONGOING SYSTEM FOR STUDENT PLANNING TEAM MEETINGS AND COMMUNICATION [includes school personnel, parents, student(s)]					
18. CELEBRATE!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!					

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PROGRAM-AT-A-GLANCE
(Facts about the student)

Student Name:_____   Date:_____

IEP-AT-A-GLANCE   POSITIVE STUDENT PROFILE
(Objectives in a word)

MANAGEMENT NEEDS:

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PROGRAM-AT-A-GLANCE
(Facts about the student)

Student Name: Richard Battles   **Date:** 6/24/92

IEP-AT-A-GLANCE
(Objectives in a word)

1. Will answer why and how questions and when.
2. Turn taking.
3. Functional reading.
4. Increase math skills(counting, money use, time, clock)
5. Increase positive social skills.
6. Uses names of peers.
7. Self initiate toileting
8. Eat Indepent & approiate peer behavior.
9. Dressing/undressing independently.
10. Improve community behavior.
11. Learn to ride bike and swim.

POSITIVE STUDENT PROFILE

1. Sense of Humor
2. Uses peer names
3. Loves books, animals, music and dancing, T.V.
4. Very friendly.
5. Good eye contact, facial, expressi
6. Swimming

Peer Imput

MANAGEMENT NEEDS:

1. open mouth when speaking for
2. timed toileting
3. medication
4. dressing 7 undressing(assistant)   31

INDIVIDUAL EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM / GENERAL EDUCATION MATRIX

Regular Class Schedule

Name: _____

Grade: _____

IEP GOALS	MGMT NEEDS

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