Task Request 1
Special Education Annotated Bibliography

The goal of this annotated bibliography is to identify, evaluate, and summarize relevant special education resources within WestEd to inform the work of the Special Education Task Force. Three areas of special education were initially identified as areas of inclusion: (1) Personnel Preparation, (2) Finance, and (3) Services/Programming for Students with Disabilities. WestEd recognized additional resources in which the task force might be interested and included them as well. They are: (4) Strategies, Approaches, and Interventions for Students with Disabilities, and (5) Early Childhood. A total of 20 resources from 2004-2014 were included based on the following criteria:

- Relevancy in the area of special education,
- Applicability to a variety of students with disabilities, and
- Usefulness to the Special Education Task Force in determining current best practices in the field.

The first area of focus, Personnel Preparation, includes resources on current certification requirements across states. Five key articles discuss a variety of issues impacting personnel preparation ranging from ways of collaborating among special education and general education directors, professional development and support for special education teachers, and a possible plan to address teacher shortages. One key article describes state’s current certification requirements for general education teachers who work with students with disabilities, and highlights required coursework and professional development support provided.

The second area of focus, Finance, highlights two articles that provide an overview of special education expenditures, revenues and provisions in California. The second article describes how charter schools can tap categorical funding for specialized services. Both articles provide a description of special education spending in California and across the nation, and how to improve the efficacy of special education services.

The third area, Services/Programming for Students with Disabilities focused on articles around the issues of current services, programs, and supports offered for students with disabilities. However, there were no articles or other publications that met the criterion set within WestEd.

The fourth area of focus, Strategies, Approaches, and Interventions for Students with Disabilities, includes seven resources that focus on effective transition and strategies for students with disabilities, evidence-based approaches to engage students, and effective approaches for implementing the common core and Response to Intervention (RTI). Three key articles feature states’ definition and policies and procedures around RTI, ways in which teachers can integrate special education within an RTI framework, and additional documents and approaches available.

Key articles on Early Childhood are included in the fifth area of focus, which highlight effective early childhood transitions, mental health awareness, and life skills for children in preschool- kindergarten. Topics in this area range from describing training for early intervention assistants in California, describing common psychological disorders in young children, and essential life skills for children.
Personnel Preparation


This report discusses the collaboration between special education directors and their general education counterparts to promote inclusive learning as a primary goal of the Special Education Leadership Academy. Funded by the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (MA DESE), the Academy aims to build directors’ capacities to do their jobs effectively and minimize burnout. This article adds value to the literature on special education, by highlighting a possible way to bridge gaps between professionals in special and general education.


With more than half of children with disabilities being educated in the general education classroom, and with federal education law requiring improved learning outcomes for these students, preparing general education teachers to work effectively with all students is critical. This report adds value to the literature on teacher credentialing by highlighting jurisdictions that require some coursework in teaching students with disabilities for initial licensure of general education teachers. The report also finds commonalities and differences both in how jurisdictions require general education teacher candidates to develop knowledge in special education and in the specific knowledge and skills required as part of teacher preparation.


This issue of *Centerview*, examines the professional development and support that teachers receive to help them work with students with special needs. California’s growing population of special education students is held to the same high standards of achievement as its general education peers even though there is a significant shortage of credentialed special education teachers. This article adds value to the literature on teacher preparation as it describes teacher reported disparities of training and the impact it had on effectively teaching students in special education classrooms.

   This article contributes to the literature on teacher retention by providing resources to increase awareness on persistent shortages of teachers, including those in special education. It also describes a framework for action that can be used to create a plan at the school or district level, or to strengthen existing plans. Target audiences include state and local administrators for general and special education, including superintendents, curriculum coordinators, principals, special education coordinators, and leaders of personnel development and professional development.

   This document is organized into six sections that provides research to assist stakeholders in understanding why retention is such a compelling issue; focuses on the improvement of working conditions; provides strategies for administrative support at the district and building levels; emphasizes the importance of induction and mentoring programs as part of a retention initiative, providing several model programs and strategies; articulates the key role played by institutions of higher education in supporting recruitment and retention; and provides implementation and evaluation suggestions for states and local school districts. Each section includes resources and references.


   California’s growing population of special education students is held to the same high standards of achievement as their general education peers even though there is a significant shortage of credentialed special education teachers. The problem is particularly prevalent in schools serving high proportions of poor and minority students. This article adds to the literature by highlighting a few factors that contribute to this quandary, including a teacher development system that fails to address special education, lack of funds for recruiting, and preparation and credentialing issues. Several steps the state could take to begin to address the problem are also presented in this issue of CenterView.

       Finance


   This paper provides an overview of special education spending across the nation and, more specifically, in California and investigates how special education service provision can be more efficient with limited resources. The author finds that while California’s special education spending per student has been increasing, it is the third lowest-spending state with regard to special education and the fourth lowest for educational outcomes for students with disabilities.
The report highlights two California districts—Sanger Unified School District and Val Verde Unified School District—that are achieving better outcomes for students with disabilities with fewer funds compared to other districts. The two districts attribute their success to the use of Response to Intervention (RTI) strategies as well as integrating students with disabilities into the general classroom. The paper concludes with possible policy implications, such as the need for better data on special education expenditures and revenues and changing the focus from special education spending to general education spending. This article adds value to the current literature on special education financing by using data to compare and contrast current special education expenditure and revenues across districts in California, and highlighting cross-district collaboration to enhance efficiency of provision of services.


This report explores state policy that impacts access to funding for specialized services for charter schools. Results from this study aim to help state policy makers understand the national legislative and policy landscape for charter school finance and governance, the range of approaches available to states, and the opportunities and constrains theses approaches present for strengthening charter school finance and governance practices. The National Resource Center on Charter School Finance and Governance is a collaborative effort of the Center on Educational Governance at the University of Southern California, The Finance Project, and WestEd.

Services/Programming for Students with Disabilities

The third area, Services/Programming for Students with Disabilities focused on articles around the issues of current services, programs, and supports offered for students with disabilities. However, there were no articles or other publications that met the criterion as a WestEd developed resource.

Strategies, Approaches, and Interventions


This guidebook offers concrete ways to engage all middle and high school students—especially English learners and students with other special needs—in successful learning. The guidebook provides practical, evidence-based approaches for teaching standards-based content in any subject area, and for school and district leaders school-wide and district-wide practices that respect diversity and support inclusion. In addition, this guidebook includes:

- A framework for teaching diverse learners in any core discipline
- Specific steps and resources for helping students organize concepts, develop appropriate use of academic language, and communicate ideas effectively
- Rubrics identifying key characteristics of five English language proficiency levels, along with teaching strategies appropriate for each
• Methods for scaffolding assessments to ensure every student has a fair and accurate way to communicate what he or she is learning
• A lesson plan template for combining and putting into practice all of the ideas, approaches, and tools included in this guidebook

This guidebook includes relevant information to the field of special education by highlighting multiple ways to include diverse learners in the classroom, a relevant area of research.


This updated edition focuses on how teachers and students can boost literacy, engagement, and achievement. Specifically, this book walks readers on how to use the Reading Apprenticeship® framework to increase student engagement and academic achievement in subject area classes. In addition, this book:
• Presents a coherent framework for improving the reading and subject area learning of all students, including English learners, students with other special needs, students in honors and AP courses, and those in technical and community colleges
• Includes research-based strategies tested and proven effective in thousands of classrooms
• Amplifies key points with authentic “classroom close-ups” of students’ and teachers’ interactions
• Provides concrete instructional and assessment tools
• Offers a clear vision of how to address the Common Core State Standards.

This book advances the field of evidence-based practices in reading, by highlighting a reading program that has been proven effective in its approach for developing disciplinary literacy among middle and high school students of all abilities.


This article describes how to better integrate and align standards, combine flexibility with high expectations for all students, embed literacy learning in all subjects, and how to put ideas into practice. This article is most relevant to teachers getting ready to implement the Common Core State Standards, while emphasizing the opportunity to impact students who have previously been least well served.


This article highlights a school-wide reform at Lennox Middle School in southern California, where reading proficiency rate for sixth-grade special education students jumped from 8
percent to 43 percent in one year. The report focuses on two fundamental changes in the school, the creation of an inclusionary learning center, and the implementation of a Response to Intervention (RTI) model. This article adds value to the research on student achievement and teaching practices, by focusing on how the same teaching strategies that are effective for students with learning disabilities, other mild to moderate disabilities, and ADHD are also valid for all students.


This resource provides practical tools and step-by-step guidelines for school and district teams to implement Response to Intervention (RTI) with all students—including students with disabilities and English language learners—within an integrated, standards-aligned system. The book also provides research-based interventions and instructional strategies that teachers can put in place in their classrooms and offers guidelines for selecting additional evidence-based curricula and strategies to support students with diverse needs. The book includes information for teachers, providing:
- Evidence-based practices that foster good teaching and positive outcomes for every student
- Step-by-step guidelines to facilitate the change necessary for initial implementation
- Concrete advice on developing an effective action plan
- Processes for identifying essential standards that focus instruction for all students
- Best practices for implementing school-wide positive behavioral supports (PBS)

This resource advances the current research in RTI, by highlighting ways in which teachers can integrate special education and services for English learners within the RTI framework.


This report documents the results of a search of state education agency websites in the nine Northeast and Islands Region jurisdictions for publicly available information related to response to intervention (RTI). The report finds that seven jurisdictions have developed state documents on RTI that address core features of RTI identified by the National Research Center on Learning Disabilities:
- High-quality classroom instruction,
- Research-based instruction,
- Classroom performance,
- Universal screening,
- Continuous progress monitoring,
- Research-based interventions,
- Progress monitoring during interventions, and fidelity measures.
It finds that RTI is supported in seven of the jurisdictions as an overall school instructional improvement approach or an approach to determining special education eligibility. This report provides evidence of documents on RTI available on state education agencies on nine jurisdictions, and serves as a foundation for future groups to further examine evidence of impacts of different RTI strategies on student outcomes, including academic achievement and identification for special education.


Contributing to the very limited literature on state-level approaches, this report describes how nine states define and support RTI at the state level, based on data collected between June and August 2008. Developed by REL West, the report also is designed to inform and support state policymakers and administrators in developing and implementing state-level response to intervention (RTI) policies and practices.

**Early Childhood**


This guide identifies required elements for transition and recommended practices to support families and their children as they successfully navigate transition from Early Start to other services at age three. References and tools for professionals involved in the transition process are also provided. This guide is most relevant for Early Start community; including regional center and LEA service coordinators, service providers, family resource centers, and receiving LEA providers.

This article is relevant to the field of special education, as it presents evidence-based practices that highlight assessing infant-parent relationships and working with families in culturally and socially sensitive ways. The California Center for Infant-Family and Early Childhood Mental Health serves as a statewide hub for infant-early childhood mental health services in organizational development, research, and evaluation. Created 20 years ago, the Center’s goal is to increase awareness about the human and social costs of untreated mental health problems among children ages birth to five.


This report examines California’s efforts to foster preservice preparation of early intervention assistants for infants and toddlers with special needs through the Community College Personnel Preparation Project, a certificate program offered by participating community colleges. The study finds that colleges could develop preservice training programs for early intervention assistants that meet requirements such as those for awarding a Chancellor’s certificate, although not all participating colleges were successful, despite receiving state funding for startup expenses. This study adds to the literature on special education personnel preparation by providing an overview of data on the evolving national picture and the Western Region states. Specifically, it describes how California is the only Western Region state that is addressing recruitment into the early intervention field at the Associate of Arts level through articulation agreements between community colleges and BA and MA granting institutions with related majors.


This book is relevant to early childhood professionals as it highlights the most common childhood psychological disorders in a reader-friendly style with examples and recommended practices specific to early childhood settings. It also details the causes, symptoms, typical behaviors, effective interventions, and common medications and side effects for each disorder. This guide is simply formatted and the disorders are organized under headings used in the DSM-IV-TR, the standard diagnostic guide of the American Psychiatric Association. Topics include:

- The contributing factors toward both mental illness and mental health
- Observation techniques for recognizing and documenting challenging behaviors
- Classroom and child care setting strategies
- Parental involvement and communication tips

Leading experts in infant/toddler development have contributed succinct essays drawn from research, theory, clinical case studies, and carefully documented practice. Each essay represents current thinking in the field of infant/toddler development and care. This collection of essays provides a guide for infant/toddler professionals and students in the field to reflect, discuss, and further explore to enhance and strengthen their programs.


The book contains reflective questions, charts, and scripts to assist children in their interactions with both adults and other children. This book serves as a resource for any preschool–K teacher wanting to manage children’s behavior in ways that will help them to learn and grow. This book is relevant to early childhood teachers as it guides teachers on how to build six essential life skills: attachment, affiliation, self-regulation, problem-solving, initiative, and respect.