

Final Report
Document Processes and Outcomes

Study Group Topic: "Special Education Topics"

List of group members: Patricia Mangan and Michele Rozen

Describe the initial goal of the group noting any adjustments that had to be made as time passed.

To better educate ourselves about the differently abled children in typical classrooms. We studied social and emotional behaviors, sensory integration dysfunction, medical conditions, and therapy routines of children with autism and pervasive developmental disorders.

Describe the ACTION PLAN that the group followed.

We read and discussed the *Out of Sync Child Book* as well as literature written and distributed by Liz Anderson on Sensory Integration Dysfunction. We looked at examples of sensory manipulatives and techniques used in the classroom in addition to OT and PT sessions. We met with a licensed professional and discussed the effects of medications on children with asthma and allergies. He gave us ideas on how to avoid additional stress during seasonal reactions. We observed a speech therapist treating an autistic child for pragmatics and oral motor therapy.

Describe how the action plan was implemented.

We ordered additional materials to use in the classroom in the fall in anticipation of children with special needs. We are getting prepared to implement varied techniques within the classroom by the suggestions of therapists, teachers, aides, and doctors. Parents of children with special needs were contacted for their input on what coping strategies work best for their child. Children were observed in structured and unstructured settings.

Evaluation of the impact of the study group effort on teacher/student performance.

The research offered us insight into how to adapt our teaching styles and classroom design to better meet the needs of special needs children. Yes, we plan to accommodate the needs of children with PDD, Autism, ADHD, and Sensory Integration Dysfunction by utilizing our new knowledge and techniques.

With our new manipulatives and coping strategies it is our hope that instruction will be improved within the classroom setting with less disruption from a frustrated child. We plan on improving communication between classroom teachers and therapists because of our observations and research this summer.

At this point with the new knowledge and research, it is our hope that improvement will be ongoing throughout the school year and earlier recognition of the dysfunction might become more apparent. Our confidence level has increased allowing us to approach the situation more prepared and an increased willingness for flexibility. Communication over the summer with the parents will have us better prepared for meeting the children's individual needs in September.

Comment on the value of the study group process. Did it work for you?

We found our research to be invaluable and a useful tool to help potentially identify children with special needs earlier in the school year. Yes, the value of the study group was successful by allowing us to acquire additional information the best learning environment for all students.

How can we make this study group program better?

This program could be better improved if money was available during the school year to allow for follow up discussion and ongoing research.