

Curriculum, Instruction, and Assessments

Curriculum and Instruction

The Early Childhood Special Education curriculum and instruction are guided by several factors:

- 1) The Illinois Early Learning Standards
- 2) The individual needs of the students enrolled in the class at any time
- 3) Developmentally appropriate practice guided by a tool such as the Creative Curriculum
- 4) Data collected through progress monitoring

The Illinois Early Learning Standards can be found on the VASE website in the Early Childhood Special Education section

(<https://sites.google.com/a/vase.k12.il.us/home/home/forms/early-childhood-special-education-handbook>).

The needs of the students should be documented in each IEP. The teacher should have a system for documenting each child's progress to help determine when an objective/benchmark has been achieved so that they can move on to the next benchmark/objective or determine that the child is now functioning at the expected level and should be dismissed from special education.

The Creative Curriculum and other curricula that work from a premise of developmentally appropriate practices should provide the framework for all early childhood classrooms. They are designed for use with children who do not have identified disabilities as well as students who do have identified disabilities. These curriculums give guidance on room set up and suggestions for evaluating the effectiveness of the room arrangement. They also address the kinds of skills that children can be expected to learn in each area of the classroom and how a teacher can guide students' learning.

Progress Monitoring should be the corner stone of a special education classroom. Simple data collections methods of various kinds should be set up to guide the teacher in what instruction is necessary for her students as well as, and maybe more importantly, what instruction is no longer needed in the classroom so that she can focus on new skills and moving the class forward.

While progress monitoring of individual goals is essential, it is also necessary to monitor how the class as a whole is gaining skills. The Individual Growth and Development Indicators (IGDIs, aka Get it! Got it! Go!), PALS Pre-K, and Getting Ready to Read are available tools to document the "current status" and "the rate of development" of the individuals and the group in terms of expressive vocabulary development (picture naming), as well as listening and early literacy skills (alliteration and rhyming), name writing, letter recognition, and print concepts. This helps teachers to know what skills she needs to address more in both individual work and group activities as she is planning.