

DCD Messages[©]

MN Regions 5 & 7 DCD Community of Practice

Volume 18, Issue 5 – January 2016

DCD Committee Members

Sponsored by MN Regions 5 & 7

For the 18th year, a representative from each of the special education agencies in Central Minnesota (Regions 5 & 7) attends a quarterly meeting regarding topical issues in the area of Developmental Cognitive Disability. Each meeting has a topic and information shared is compiled in **DCD Messages** to assist staff in the field and parents stay informed. The representatives assume the responsibility of bringing information shared at the regional meeting back to their local area staff, parents, and administrators in person and through the electronic newsletter.

YOUR COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES:

Benton-Stearns	Sandra Haller/Debra Kuzma
Buffalo District #877	Lori Anderson
Elk River	Audra Wells
Freshwater	Cari Grenier
Little Falls	Tanya Bergman
MAWSECO	Shawna Moe/Linda Wharram
Mid-State	Jennie Stumpf
Paul Bunyan	Pam Stock
Regions 5 & 7 DCD	Barb Lhotka
Regions 5 & 7 RLIF	Mary Ruprecht
Rum River	Tanya Tacker
St Cloud	Danielle Mehr
SCRED	Connie Sim
Sherburne N Wright	Monica Lewis
West Central	Becky Bartz

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Calendar of Events

Dates and Topics 2015-2016

September 22, 2015—Sauk Rapids-Rice High School, Sauk Rapids, MN; 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM—Quality Indicators for DCD Programs: Program Structure, Technology, Behavior Support Systems.

October 2015—NO MEETING.

November 19, 2015—Sauk Rapids-Rice High School, Sauk Rapids, MN; 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM— Quality Indicators for DCD Programs: Standards-Based IEPs, State Testing, Transition, Recreation/Leisure.

December 15, 2015— Sauk Rapids-Rice High School, Sauk Rapids, MN; 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM— Quality Indicators for DCD Programs: Family Involvement, Collaboration, Transportation, Related Services, Curriculum, Instructional Methods, Emergency Procedures, Transition.

January 2016—NO MEETING.

February 2016—NO MEETING.

March 23, 2016—Sauk Rapids-Rice High School, Sauk Rapids, MN; 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM—Quality Indicators for DCD Programs: Personnel, Classrooms, Training, Scheduling; Planning for 2016-2017.

April 2016—NO MEETING

May 2016—NO MEETING

Information from meetings is published in the newsletter. The *DCD Messages* is distributed by the Committee members. Barb Lhotka, Facilitator blhotka@mawseco.k12.mn.us

DCD Resources

DCD Listserv

Are you a member of the Minnesota DCD Listserv? It is a wonderful resource for educators who work with students in the DCD category of special education. Members ask questions, share information, and discuss topics that are relevant to our day to day work with students birth through 21. Emails are automatically posted on your email account.

How to Join: Send an e-mail to garrett.petrie@state.mn.us. In the subject line, type “subscribe” and send the e-mail.

To Post on the Listserv: Send messages to dcd@lists.state.mn.us. Complete the subject line identifying your post. Type your message and send it.

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DCD Wiki

A wiki is like a filing cabinet website. You join the wiki and are able to access information as you need it. The only emails you will receive are the invitation to join and notification of updates. MN has a wiki for DCD staff and team members. It grows as new resources are found.

How to Join: Send an e-mail stating your name, email address, and where you teach to barblhotka@embarqmail.com. You will then receive an invitation to join the wiki. You will choose a password and will have access to all files and pages (categorized). Please write down the website address and your password for future use.

PARAPROFESSIONAL EVALUATION

A frequent question that arises in DCD programs is the evaluation of paraprofessional work performance. It is the goal of this newsletter to present some online resources that will help districts determine possible options for paraprofessional evaluation. Each tool has been examined to determine the following:

1. Areas/categories of evaluation
2. Frequency of evaluation/timelines
3. Persons involved in the evaluation
4. Rubrics or scales used
5. What happens next?
6. Reference source

Bloomington School District

The Bloomington, Minnesota, annual checklist for paraprofessional evaluation was developed in 2009.

1. Includes 3 areas
 - Student and Classroom
 - Documentation
 - Communications
2. End of the first week of school and reviewed when changes are made; Spring.
3. Supervising teacher, program lead or principal
4. Discussion checklist only with a job description and ethics statement
5. Unspecified
6. [Bloomington MN Para Job Checklist](#)

Connecticut Assessment Checklist for Paraprofessionals

The state of Connecticut developed this manual in 2007, to train and evaluate paraprofessionals.

1. Includes 6 Responsibilities and Competencies in reading, math and writing
 - Para assists teacher with building and maintaining effective instructional teams
 - Para assists teacher with maintaining learning-centered, supportive environments
 - Para supports teachers with planning and organizing learning experiences
 - Para assists teachers with engaging children and youth in learning experiences
 - Para assists teachers with assessing learner needs, progress, and achievements
 - Para meets standards of professional and ethical conduct
2. Unspecified
3. Supervisor and paraprofessional
4. Scale: 5—always; 4—most of the time; 3—sometimes; 2—not often; 1—never; NA—not applicable
5. Need areas are identified and training is provided in those areas (prioritized) in a plan
6. [Connecticut Guidelines for Training and Support](#)

Epping School District

The Epping, New Hampshire, school district developed their evaluation tool in 2011.

1. Includes 5 areas
 - Meeting the needs of students
 - Assisting in classroom
 - Work habits and behavior
 - Work relationships
 - Contribution to school environment
2. Unspecified
3. Unspecified: evaluator
4. Scale used for single statements

- Exceeds Standard—“The ‘exceeds standard’ level is reserved for truly exceptional performance.”
 - Meets—“Independently performs assigned duties at an expected level.”
 - Needs Improvement—“The ‘needs improvement’ level is indicative of performance that clearly needs to change.”—must be accompanied with a written comment(s).
 - Does Not Meet Standard—“This rating denotes unacceptable performance that will result in job action if it does not improve.” —must be accompanied with a written comment(s).
5. A copy of the evaluation is placed in the para’s personnel file
 6. [Epping NH Para Evaluation](#)

Oak Park School District

The Oak Park, Michigan, school district developed their evaluation tool in 2012.

1. Includes 8 standards with sub-categories
2. Schedule:
 - Prior to October 1: meet with para to explain evaluation program and instrument used
 - Prior to November 30: evaluation of all paras
 - Prior to March 30: evaluation of all paras who received “does not meet expectations” from prior school year
 - May 15: all paras must be notified of their evaluation
 - May 20: evaluation of all paras signed and returned to Human Resources
3. Administrator or designee
4. Rubric or scales used: “meets expectation” or “does not meet expectation”
 - “After the first ‘Does Not Meet Expectations’ evaluation, that is based in whole or in part upon classroom performance, the administrator shall conduct a follow-up evaluation prior to November 30th of the school year.”
 - “If a ‘Does Not Meet Expectations’ evaluation is based upon other than classroom performance, then the designated administrator must clearly convey the reasons in writing to the paraprofessional and follow prescribed procedures for progressive discipline.”
5. Individual Development Plan based on evaluator’s findings. Para is given the opportunity to comment in writing. The plan is used for future meetings.
6. [Oak Park MI Para Evaluation](#)

West New York School District

The West New York School District of Hudson County, New Jersey, developed their evaluation tool in 2014.

1. Includes 4 Domains with sub categories
 - Planning and Preparation
 - Supports Classroom Environment
 - Instruction
 - Professionalism and Self-Reflection
2. Unspecified timelines
3. Unspecified but states: evaluator and contributing evaluator
4. Unsatisfactory (1), Basic (2), Proficient (3), Distinguished (4) in rubric format
5. All scores are forwarded to a “Summative Rating”: 1.00-1.84—Ineffective; 1.85-2.64—Partially Effective; 2.65-3.49—Effective; 3/50-4.00 Effective. Optional area for evaluator comments.
6. [West New York NJ Para Evaluation](#)

Techniques to Promote Independence and Fading of Support

1. Watch before assisting. Can the student ask for help from teacher or peer?
2. Can the student problem solve on his/her own?
3. Have high expectations as to what the student understands or can do independently.
4. Provide consistent classroom schedule (posted, visual, at desk if needed, reinforcement periods included). Teach student how to use it.
5. Start with the least intrusive prompts to get student to respond:
 - a. gestural, hand or facial signals
 - b. timer
 - c. verbal
 - d. light physical
 - e. hand over hand
6. Prompt, then back away to allow independent time.
7. Use strengths and weaknesses, likes and dislikes to motivate student participation and interest.
8. Model; guide (watch and assist); check (leave and check back).
9. Teach independence skills (raising hand, asking for help, modeling other students).
10. Direct the student to answer the teacher.
11. Prompt the student to listen to the teacher's instructions. Repeat only when necessary.
12. Encourage age appropriate work habits. See what other students are doing.
13. Be aware of proximity. Sit with the student only when necessary.
14. Encourage peer assistance and partnering. Teach peers how to help, but not enable.
15. Utilize self-monitoring checklists for students.
16. Color code materials to assist with organization.
17. Use transition objects to help student anticipate/complete transition (i.e., head phones for listening center).
18. Break big tasks into steps.
19. Use backward chaining (i.e., leave the last portion of a cutting task for the student, then gradually lengthen the task).
20. Assist in encouraging a means for independent communication (i.e., PECS).
21. Provide positive feedback (be specific to the situation).
22. Ask facilitative questions ("What comes next?" "What are other students doing?" "What does the schedule say?" "What did the teacher say").
23. Give Choices.

Source: Ventura County CA SELPA