|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Overcoming Bias in Special Education AssessmentCAUSES  * Narrow and Erroneous Staff Perceptions regarding Students from Diverse and Different Backgrounds * Staff Biases regarding Students who are Racially, Ethnically, Culturally, Economically Disadvantaged, and Behaviorally Variant and Attribution Errors * Negative Staff Beliefs and Assumptions Limiting Student Growth and Learning Capacity * General Education Staff Challenges in Reaching and Teaching Students from Challenging and Diverse Backgrounds leading to Untenable Referrals * One Dimensional Evaluation Process * Lack of Thorough Evaluation Process  CONSEQUENCES  * Disproportionality * Overrepresentation * Poor Student Outcomes * Woman in the darkDenied opportunities & rigor |  | | Person carrying child on shoulders | |  | | Multidisciplinary Team Evaluation **Advocate:** assists parents/guardians in ensuring student’s needs are met  **Behavior Specialist:** assesses etiology of behaviors, Functional Behavioral Analysis  **School Nurse**: reviews medical records, hearing/vision tests, consult/refer to outside doctors  **Speech-Language Pathologist:** screens for developmental speech/language challenges  **Physical and Occupational Therapists:** assessgross/fine motor functioning assessments, self-help, living skills  **Audiologist:** assesses hearing, recommend assistive technology  **Officers of the Court:** if the student is or was involved with juvenile justice system | |
| Multidisciplinary Team Evaluation **The STUDENT is the NUCLEUS**  **Their Perspective, Input, and Context**  **Parents or guardian:** important allies who provide student’s history/background/needs  **Classroom teachers**: create optimal learning environments  **Special education teacher**: interviews parents/teachers, educational/perceptual tests, observes across contexts, recommends intervention/instructional strategies; administers diagnostic norm-referenced, criterion-referenced tests  **School psychologist:** administers aptitude tests, intelligence tests, personality inventories, observations across contexts  **Administrator:** ensures the evaluation process is meeting procedural and substantive standards of the law  **School Social Worker**: gathers/provides data on family systems through interviews, observations, conferences | | | | | |
| **Thorough Evaluation Processes**   * **Records**   “Cum” files; academic achievement; test scores, standardized tests, attendance, teacher reports, discipline referrals; SST referrals, medical history, progress reports, program changes, CPS referrals   * **Student & Parent collaboration** * **Naturalistic Observations** * **MTSS** | |  | | Staff Education & Training  * Learn effective, evidence-based methods for curriculum building, instruction, & intervention * Learn special education law * Be aware of ambiguous socially constructed categories of disability * Learn facts regarding disproportionate identification and overrepresentation * Understand impacts of context factors: poverty, historical & present sociopolitical oppression and discrimination, multilayered and transgenerational trauma, home living conditions, community and neighborhood contexts * Understand the impact of marginalizing those who do not fit the dominant cultural “norm, ” ableism, labeling, stigmatizing, & limiting potential * Understand impact of trauma on neurobiological development, functioning, behavior, and learning * Learn Restorative Justice, Social Justice & Equity, and Culturally Responsive Approaches   Smiling father standing with child on shoulders outdoors, in front of with house | |  | | Staff Coaching & Support   * Introspection, self-reflection, and self-evaluation to identify biases, negative beliefs, erroneous assumptions and alter them * Recognize personal triggers and choose responses over reactions * Gather data and evaluate the efficacy of instruction and interventions and modify if necessary | |
| * **Medical, hearing, & vision exams** * **Classroom management, instructional, behavioral, & ecological assessments** * **Norm & Criterion-Ref. tests** * **Curriculum-Based Assessments** * **Authentic assessment** * **Task/work sample analysis** * **Learning styles assessment** * **Intelligence-aptitude tests** * **Language-Perceptual abilities** * **Social-Emotional skills** * **Portfolio assessment** * **Progress monitoring** * **Rating scales/checklists** | | **Reducing Bias in Assessment Improves Student Outcomes**   * Reduces disproportionality and overrepresentation * Improves student: * academic achievement * social-emotional skills-life functioning * self-esteem * school engagement * academic attitudes * wellbeing * persistence * ability to navigate discrimination   **References**  Bryant, D. P., Bryant, B. R., & Smith, D. D. (2020). *Teaching students with special needs in inclusive classrooms* (2nd ed.). SAGE.  De Lapp, J. (2023, March 5). *Equity-centered trauma-sensitive interventions to prevent disproportionate identification and overrepresentation of marginalized populations in special education*. Sanford School of Education, National University.  National Center for Learning Disabilities. (2020). *Significant disproportionality in special education: Current trends and actions for impact.* https://www.ncld.org/  Pierangelo, R., & Giuliani, G. (2008). *Understanding assessment in the special education process*. Corwin. | |