

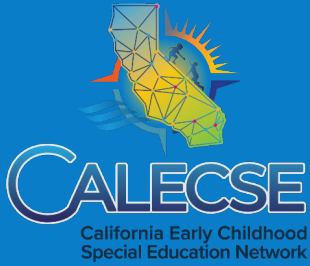


California Early Childhood
Special Education Network



**Funded by the California Department of Education (CDE),
Special Education Division**

**Setting Up for Success - Developing an Assessment Team for Early
Childhood Special Education
February 25, 2025**



CalECSE



California Early Childhood Special Education Network

Funded by the CDE

Implementation Leadership

Co-Executive Director- Dr. Scott Turner, East San Gabriel Valley SELPA

Co-Executive Director- Melanie Hertig, Irvine USD

Project Coordinator, Marion Springett

Program Specialist (Northern Calif), Carrie Rodrigues

Program Specialist (Southern Calif), Laura Clarke



CalECSE

California Early Childhood Special Education Network
Funded by the CDE



<https://www.calesce.org>

CalECSE is a technical assistance project funded under the California Department of Education (CDE) that supports Local Educational Agencies (LEAs), Special Education Local Plan Area (SELPA)s, County Offices of Special Education (COEs), and other Agency Partners in the areas of IDEA Part C to B Transitions, Preschool Assessment Practices, and Preschool Child Find by providing technical assistance, professional learning, and demonstration of tangible practices *that have been proven successful*.

The CalECSE Network leverages collaboration amongst agencies, disseminates resources, highlights existing exemplar practices, and provides direct technical assistance to improve the capacity, knowledge, collaboration, and implementation of evidence-based practices across agencies throughout California.

The CalECSE Network is committed to improving outcomes for children and their families by eliminating and addressing barriers to successful transition for California's youngest children with disabilities.

Today's Presenters

Thomas Crocker

CalECSE Exemplar Lead, Assessment Team Leadership

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Guest Presenters:

Megan Tupper - Preschool Director

Blair "Nikki" Sons - School Psychologist

**Michelle McClurg - Speech and Language
Therapist**



Challenges in Timely Assessment in Rural Communities



- Transportation/Travel Distance to School
- Family hesitation to send their child to preschool
- Adequate Assessment Staff
- Delay in Part C Referrals and Late Regional Center Referrals
- Child Find- Limited Inclusive Opportunities for Toddlers
- 68% Second Language Learners

- 9,000 + total students
- Covers approximately 1,000 square miles
- Three Part Time Assessment Teams for Part C to Part B Transitions
- 55 full assessments (2023–24)
- 60% were eligible under Autism
- Nine State Preschools
- Two HeadStart
- Two Migrant HeadStart

Kings Canyon Unified School District (KCUSD)- Unique Opportunity to Build Relationships



- Kings Canyon Unified School District (KCUSD) is the local Part C program for its students and eight other Local Education Agencies (LEA)
- KCUSD's Part C staff are the Part C to Part B Assessment Teams
- Part C staff /assessment team attend transition meetings and provide on-going support for same family through the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) process
- KCUSD Part C program: regional inclusive toddler groups that allow observation with typical peers
- Relationships Build Trust with Parents

System Improvement Lead (SIL) Project



- KCUSD + Savana Unified School District
- Goals identified through staff interviews suggested staff felt confident conducting assessment and sharing information with families.
- However, while parents may sign the initial IEP, staff indicated that:
 - They were uncertain whether or not parents/guardians fully understood the IEP process;
 - There was limited parent participation at the IEP itself;
 - Parent/guardian questions arose both after the initial IEP as well at the annual IEP review.
- Change ideas were developed to address parents understanding and increase parent participation and questions in the initial IEP process
<https://systemimprovement.org/professional-learning>

System Improvement Lead (SIL) Project- Change Ideas



- Conduct Family Interviews at Transition to understand the families':
 - Previous IEP experience
 - Preferred preferences to learn new information
 - Initial worries/concerns
- Reader friendly infographic timeline describing the Part C to Part B transition process
- Observation in typical setting (community toddler group/State Preschool)
- Pre-IEP meeting with the family to share
 - Student strength sentence frames to support parent's participation and sharing,
 - List of typical IEP questions,
 - Infographic describing the preschool continuum,
 - IEP meeting agenda,
 - IEP assessment results

Sharing Process and Other Ideas



- Organizational Structure of Assessment Teams
 - Speech Language Pathologist (SLP), School Psychologist, Part C Special Education Teacher, Registered Nurse (RN), Occupational Therapist (OT), Physical Therapist (PT)
- Naturalistic observations inform decisions for Free and Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)
 - Developed a template for gathering information
- Monthly Assessment Team Meetings
- Cast preschool continuum infographic at IEP meeting while discussing
- Collaboration with Preschool Services Team
 - Arrange preschool visits
 - Share assessment information
 - Student health needs
 - Share family concerns prior to the meeting

Currently:

- Nine State Preschools
- Three Special Day Class (SDC) preschools
- One infant/toddler center
- Significant expansion within last 10 years
- Mixture of funding sources
 - California State Preschool Programs (CSPP) funding
 - Supplemental Concentrated Money- Local Control and Accountability Plan (LCAP)
 - Quality Rating Improvement System (QRIS) block grant

- Background in Special Education
- Combined oversight of both General Education and Special Education Preschools
- Relationship with Kern County **K**ings Canyon, **I**nfants, preschoolers, and their families, **D**eveloping together, with **S**upport (KIDS) program - communication and trust
- Elimination of requirement for students to be toilet trained
 - State Regulations - requiring child to be toilet trained is considered discrimination
- Established one primary inclusion site
 - Co-teaching model
 - Student numbers increased
 - Required expansion
- Switched to inclusion at **all** state preschool sites
 - Roaming special education teacher

- Requested a waiver to hold state preschool spaces for children on IEP
 - Not all students on IEP met income guidelines
 - Most spaces filled using state priority guidelines by October
- Eventually became a state preschool requirement (special needs set aside spaces) - 5%, 7.5%, 10%
- Allows us to reserve spaces to meet the need *throughout* the school year without losing contract funding
- Last year - 18% of all enrolled state preschool students on an IEP
 - Does not include SDC preschool students

- Teaching Pyramid Positive Behavior Strategies
 - Saturday modules
 - Follow up coaching
 - Repeated refresher trainings
- Beginning Together - caring for young children with disabilities in inclusive settings
 - Training modules
 - Director and Supervisor participated
 - Mini trainings with all lead teachers
- Director, Supervisor, and Early Learning Support Facilitator Positions
- Extra aide in every class
- Roaming aides and special education technician

March 2025

Child Find: Early Intervention Essentials: Empowering Preschool Teachers to Identify Special Needs and Make Effective Referrals

March 11, 2025 6 p.m. to 7 p.m.

April 2025

Innovative and Inclusive Practices: Inclusive Programs Overview & Panel

April 22, 2025 3 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Assessment Practices: Play-Based Assessments

April 29, 2025 noon to 1 p.m.



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Thank You