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# Each and Every Child

Quick news for Parents, Educators and Students

An e-newsletter by the Iowa Department of Education's Bureau of Learner Strategies and Supports

## Detecting *myth*-information

Myths in education are akin to crabgrass: Hard to contain, nearly impossible to eradicate entirely. We hear myths perpetuated – from parents, teachers and administrators. Why? Because they sound as if they are based in fact.

But myths quickly dissolve when countered with facts. So as we wind down yet another school year, let's contemplate some of these myths.

This will prepare you when Cindy So-and-So tries to corner you with yet another myth. Don't turn your back: Set the record straight.

We will resume *Each and Every Child* this fall.



Department photo illustration by Deborah Darge

### Myths: Setting the record straight

**Children on Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) shouldn't be expected to achieve academic proficiency.**

It should be assumed that every child can excel and achieve academic proficiencies. To assume less can become a self-fulfilling prophecy: If you assume a child cannot make it, chances are you have sealed the deal. Alternatively, by assuming all children can succeed yields wonderful surprises for teachers, parents and students.

From the history of special education, we have learned that students with disabilities, even with significant disabilities, can far exceed what many "believed" they could achieve.

It's also important to note that more than 80 percent of students with IEPs have "mild" disabilities. These

students should receive evidence-based interventions and quickly exit special education services.

**All children with disabilities need to be on IEPs.**

Only children with disabilities that affect their abilities to progress in the general education curriculum – academically, behaviorally or socially – should receive an IEP.

There are children with disabilities who do not require special education. To be eligible for special services, there are two questions that must be answered "yes":

1. Does the student have a disability?
2. Are special education and related services necessary for the student to progress in the general education curricula?

Using data is fine for

**general education. But in special education, we are dealing with the very basics of education, and incorporating data would be a waste of time.**

If you're not using data and monitoring it regularly, how do you know if your student is adequately progressing?

Data will show where the student's achievement falls at any given time. Even more important, it shows when a student's achievement is stagnant or going south. Progress monitoring also lets the teacher know what skills the student has mastered, so valuable instructional time isn't spent on what the student already knows.

Using data to make decisions enables the

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teacher to change teaching strategies to best fit the individual student.

**It's only the special education teacher's responsibility to teach students receiving IEPs.**

Ownership by all has been proven in several studies to be a critical factor in achievement for students receiving IEPs. Everyone is responsible for the education of all students. No one should ever say, "I don't need to worry about her, she's not my student."

**General education and special education teachers are most effective when they collaborate separately.**

Special education teachers need to know general education curriculum and coursework, and assist the general education teacher with making needed accommodations. The general education teacher needs to know the most effective individual strategies for each and every child. Students receiving IEPs need to be taught the core standards.

**It's a privacy violation to share a student's IEP with general education teachers.**

Copies of IEPs need to be distributed to any staff member who provides instruction to a student receiving an IEP. When students with IEPs are in their classrooms, it is their responsibility that the goals and accommodations on the IEP are being implemented.

**Some students just aren't motivated to learn.**

Everyone is motivated to learn – even adults. The desire to learn is an inborn need. Children, youth and adults are learning every minute. It may not be what we want them to learn or focus on, but it is learning. Seeking to understand the reasons for the student's lack of interest is the first big step to improvement.



## Avoid losing education ground during break

Did you know students can back-slide in their reading abilities by a full month during the summer break? Even worse: A student can lose 2.6 months in math skills in the same time period!

Avoid the summer slide by joining the Council of Chief State Schools Officers' summer reading and math challenges.

Students can use the "Find a Book, Iowa" tool, which enables students and parents to create personalized reading lists. "Find a Book, Iowa" matches a reader with books that will interest the student and provide the right level of challenge to support reading growth.

The "Find A Book, Iowa" tool will take you to a page where you identify which grade the student is in, as well as whether the student finds reading difficult, easy or somewhere in between. From there, the student will be able to select from a variety of book cate-

gories, from adventure to sports.

Then the tool will take the student to a page listing book suggestions, as well as where to purchase the book (and don't forget you can simply borrow the book from the library!).

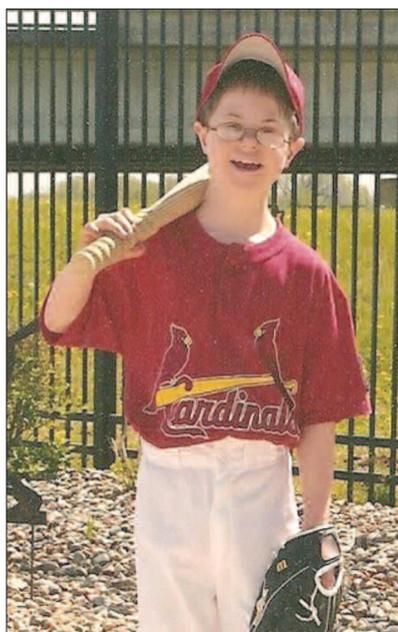
Unlike reading, the math challenge is structured, and requires registration. It's aimed at students who will be in the third through sixth grades in the fall.

The math challenge is a six-week, e-mail-based initiative designed to help students maintain math skills acquired during the previous school year. Families will receive a weekly targeted instructional activity and materials along with daily personalized email suggestions and resources.

The math challenge runs June 24 through Aug. 2.

To register for the reading and math challenges, click the live links below the newsletter.

## Good ol' summertime



What is summer without fun? There are lots of opportunities throughout Iowa for children with disabilities. Check them out below this e-newsletter!

## Stay in the loop!

Are you moving to a new district? Is your district changing email addresses? Have you hired new staff? Don't miss out on future issues of *Each and Every Child*: Let us know if your email address needs to change.

Send your new email address to [jim.flansburg@iowa.gov](mailto:jim.flansburg@iowa.gov).

Beginning right after Labor Day, we will resume our e-newsletter highlighting best practices in our schools. We also welcome feedback, whether they are tips, criticisms or even compliments.

We, at the Iowa Department of Education, are pleased to work with and for you. Have a safe and wondrous summer.