

Developing Assurances for Service Delivery Models

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This chapter examines ways in which a school or school district can look at its service delivery models to ensure that certain strategies are in place, such as monitoring, evaluation, supervision, inspection, and quality control. These procedures can then be reviewed, either by an outside agency or by the special education program itself, as an evaluation tool to determine if the service delivery model is meeting the standard as well as identifying areas that need improvements. The chapter also discusses the standards that the Council of Exceptional Children has established—which all stakeholders, administrators, teachers, paraprofessionals, and parents—must abide by in order to have a distinguished special education program. The chapter concludes with a discussion about future trends in regard to the quality that should be visible for all service delivery models in special education.

INTRODUCTION

A successful quality strategy begins with an organization environment that fosters quality, followed by an understanding of the principles of quality, and then an effort to engage employees in the necessary activities to implement quality. —Swaleha Sindhi (2013)

Service delivery models are designed to adapt to their population. They can change as often as the needs of each individual student within special education program changes. These models are not solidified based upon creation; they can be transformational. Best practices in special education lean toward meeting the individual needs of students with disabilities and following the legal mandates proposed in the federal law, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA; Wehmeyer & Schalock, 2001). Just as IDEA (2004) has assurances in place to support its practices, such as teachers being highly qualified, holding a license to teach special education, and “utilizing research-based interventions, curriculum, and practices” (§ 665[b][2][D]), there must be assurances for service delivery models too.

Increasing demands on and concerns in the special education community revolve around IDEA and No Child Left Behind’s (NCLB, 2002) mandates “to provide access to the general curriculum on the education of students with special needs” and to ensure the adequate yearly progress of all students (Wehmeyer & Schalock, 2001, p. 1). Developing assurances for service delivery models cannot only improve programs but also enhance the quality of life for special needs students as they embark on their educational journey. The quality of life for special needs students is embedded in the teacher’s ability to work with special needs students in all aspects of the general education curriculum and provide quality education for all students.

IDEA (2004) stipulates that service delivery to students with special needs is of the utmost importance. Researchers believe that the concept of service delivery is dynamic and no one model should be used exclusively (American Speech-Language-Hearing Association [ASHA], 1999). In any circumstance, a service must be provided with quality. The only way that this can happen is if a process has been formulated to ensure that the best possible products or services are being provided. This process is called quality assurance. This chapter will not only define quality assurances in service delivery models but also offer a process-centered approach to their development for special needs programs.

This chapter will:

- Describe quality assurances.
- Explain and summarize how service delivery models in special education programs are developed.
- Justify the criteria for the development of assurances in these programs.

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