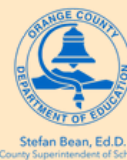


UPK Needs Assessment Case Study: Mitchell Child Development Center

Funded by: Universal PreKindergarten (UPK) Mixed Delivery Planning Grant

Authored by: OCDE's Research, Evaluation and Data Inquiry in Collaboration with Early Learning Services



Background

As part of the UPK Mixed Delivery Grant funding, counties were required to conduct a needs assessment to gain a landscape understanding of early childhood education within Orange County, including the needs, priorities, and areas of concern for both families and providers. In addition to gaining a better understanding, the needs assessment conducted this past year also aimed to document the practices of high-quality child care and preschool providers. This case study documents the practices of a child development center at a school district. This case study documents the teaching, learning, and professional development practices of educators as part of a work group that has the goal to improve inclusion practices in the district.



Methodology

- 1-hour interview with a Special Education Program Specialist
- 1-hour focus group with 4 preschool teachers
- Inductive qualitative coding methodology of transcriptions
- Attend two working group meetings
- Member checks on final written case study to ensure accuracy



Understanding and Supporting Students' Individualized Needs

- The co-teaching model ensures that both special and general education teachers share ownership of the entire classroom.
- Teachers embed assessments into daily instruction to minimize disruptions to students, ensuring that special education students do not feel isolated from their general education peers.
- Teachers at Mitchell focus on true inclusion; students are treated equally and differences are openly acknowledged and then addressed with scaffolding strategies.



Reducing Bureaucratic Barriers and Restrictions to Supporting Students

- Educators at Mitchell advocate for system change through their Innovators of Early Education work group. This work group is actively seeking to build upon a strong foundation of inclusion in the district
- Educators at Mitchell seek greater administrator buy-in, training and flexibility in school policies to ensure they are best serving student's needs
- Work group members champion district-level adoption of teaching models that normalize and promote true inclusion (e.g., co-teaching)



Ensuring Academic and Social/Behavioral Growth for All Students at the Center

- Educators at Mitchell define true inclusion as a social-emotional environment where differences are normalized
- Educators use scaffolded lessons where all students work on the same content at the same time, even if it be in slightly different ways
- Educators shape instructional planning to keep students in the classroom during assessments to ensure they are not isolated from their peers
- The co-teaching model supports and promotes more innovative teaching practice



Building Trust With Families to Help Them Navigate the System and Provide Access to Support and Resources

- Teachers co-plan and collaborate to create unified educational teams that include both teachers as well as families
- Educators strong emphasis on student belonging leads to a natural relationship building with families since all parties involved have the same number one priority, the student

The entire case study can be found [here](#).