

Social Emotional Learning for the Visually Impaired: An Adapted Curriculum Approach

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Introduction

Social Emotional Learning (SEL) has shown to have positive effects in the development of both prosocial behaviors and preventative outcomes in students. The School Association of Special Education in DuPage County is adapting several SEL curricula to meet the needs of a student population with vision impairments.

Who is SASSED?

The School Association for Special Education in DuPage County (SASSED) is a special education joint agreement, commonly referred to as a special education cooperative.

SASSED's mission is to maximize student outcomes. As an extension of each member district, SASSED is there to create, provide and support a complete continuum of programs and services for all students with disabilities ages from 3 through 22.

What is the SASSED Vision Program?

The SASSED Visually Impaired Program serves students who are blind/visually impaired from the 92 member school districts from early childhood through the transition years. A full continuum of programming is available from Early Childhood through Transition for those students who are determined to need an intensive and /or specialized instruction due to their visual impairment.

The classrooms are located in one DuPage County High School district and its feeder Elementary district, which allows for continuity of curriculum (SASSED, 2016).

Vision Impairments & Social Emotional Learning

Incidental learning involves using naturally occurring opportunities and interactions with the environment to teach skills, provide information and increase a desired behavior. Students with visual impairments have little if any opportunity to obtain incidental information from their environment. The lack of vision severely interferes with a child's ability to read social cues as well as to seamlessly gain information that surrounds them.

in the SASSED Visually Impaired classrooms, special attention is paid to various educational supports and acquired skills (i.e., Braille reading and writing, abacus, use of low vision aids for near and distance, use of speech output programs, enlarging software, taped texts, closed circuit televisions, etc.).

Support staff including school psychologists, social workers and teachers of the visually impaired (TVI), as well as administrators are working together to adapt and modify several SEL curricula resources to meet a cooperative-wide initiative. Specifically, this initiative focuses on teacher implementation of SEL instruction within the special education setting.

Current SEL Curricula Development

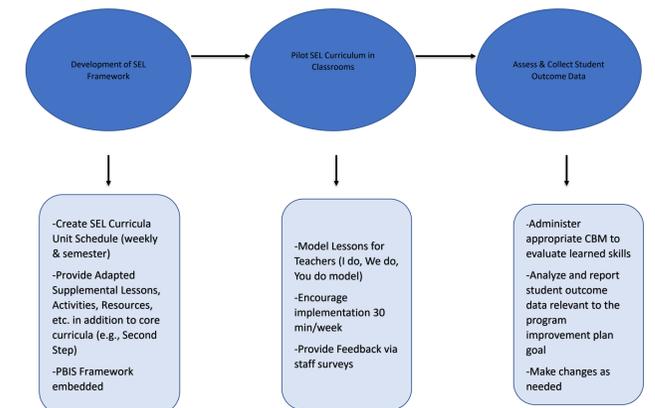
Adapted SEL curricula will focus on utilizing appropriate educational supports in order to promote the expected outcome of SEL instruction. In order to successfully develop adapted lessons for teachers and support staff, SEL curricula such as Second Step and Overcoming Obstacles, will be modified with additional activities, materials, and resources from various evidenced-based social thinking curricula.



Expected Outcomes

Expected outcomes for adapted SEL implementation program-wide are that students within the SASSED Vision Program will gain a greater sense of self-awareness including social competence, self-esteem, and improved social interactions and inclusion with their peers as well as adults as evidenced by curriculum based measure data and an increase in prosocial behaviors program wide.

Future Implications for Practice & Research



References (APA 6th Edition)

Stanfield, J. (2015, March 23). How Social & Emotional Learning Helps Special Needs Students. Retrieved January 1, 2019, from <https://www.stanfield.com/blog/2015/02/sel-how-social-emotional-learning-helps-special-needs-students/>

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