

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) works to improve the educational success of children with disabilities and/or gifts and talents and supports the professionals who work on their behalf.

CEC Gives Special Educators the Tools to Help Their Students Succeed

An essential element in CEC's vision for special education is having well-prepared special education teachers working with all students with special needs. To achieve that goal, CEC provides special educators with the latest information on effective instructional strategies through professional development, publications, and journals. Some of CEC's most popular programs and services are:

- **Cutting-edge information through CEC's member publications**—TEACHING Exceptional Children (award-winning, practice-based journal), Exceptional Children (research journal), and CEC Today (electronic newsletter)
- **CEC SmartBrief**—CEC's electronic news service providing critical information about special education five times each week
- **CEC Annual Convention & Expo**—the world's leading special education conference
- **Resources, products, and instructional strategies** educators can use in their classrooms
- **Networking**—Electronic and face-to-face opportunities that help special educators collaborate and implement effective teaching practices

CEC Advances the Special Education Profession

CEC's respected and vital voice has been instrumental in improving special education practice. Our initiatives include:

Professional Standards for Special Education

CEC developed the first certification standards for new special educators and the advanced role content standards for experienced special educators. These standards represent a vital step toward developing consistent quality in special education and provide the groundwork for reciprocal certification from state to state. CEC has also spearheaded the:

- Development of innovative and model policies for special education practice
- Campaign to improve special education teaching
- National accreditation of university special education programs

New Developments in Special Education

CEC provides guidance on new developments affecting special education practice. CEC is the leading authority on current initiatives affecting the field, such as:

- Response to Intervention
- Evidence-based practice
- Effective assessment of students with exceptionalities

Continued

CEC Ensures Education Legislation and Policy Support All Children

CEC's vision that all children and youth, particularly those with special needs, receive a high quality education is reflected in its critical legislative work. As an advocate for special education, CEC makes sure the needs of children with exceptionalities, and those of special educators, are heard—and heeded—at the local, state/provincial, and federal level. Among others, CEC's legislative initiatives include:

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

One of CEC's milestones was the passage of Public Law 94-142, now known as *IDEA*, which established the right to a free, appropriate public education for children with disabilities. Recently, CEC worked to ensure *IDEA* includes provisions to:

- Improve academic results
- Reduce special education paperwork
- Decrease special education litigation
- Increase special education funding
- Reduce the misidentification of students from diverse cultures for special education

No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB)

CEC's advocacy has ensured *NCLB* takes into account the needs and abilities of children with exceptionalities. CEC has advocated that:

- Children with disabilities are fairly and appropriately assessed
- Special education teachers are well-prepared
- Special education teachers should be able to straightforwardly demonstrate their knowledge of core content
- Children with gifts and talents are included in *NCLB* provisions
- Low performing schools receive assistance
- *NCLB* be fully funded

An equally important facet of CEC's work is enhancing educational services for students with gifts and talents. CEC is a staunch supporter of the *Javits Gifted Program* and funding for gifted programs.

CEC Promotes International Special Education Services

CEC has developed relationships with special educators throughout the world. In addition to CEC's International Outreach Program, CEC has joined the Open Society Institute to include children with disabilities in Step by Step Programs. Step by Step promotes equal access to quality education for children from birth through age 10 in 29 countries.

CEC's 17 Special Interest Divisions

CEC's 17 special interest divisions focus on particular aspects of special education. Each division publishes journals and newsletters, sponsors conferences and other professional development activities, facilitates political action on issues that affect special education practice, and provides networking opportunities. CEC's divisions are:

- Council of Administrators of Special Education (CASE)
- Council for Children with Behavioral Disorders (CCBD)
- Division for Research (CEC-DR)
- CEC Pioneers Division (CEC-PD)
- Council for Educational Diagnostic Services (CEDs)
- Division for Communicative Disabilities and Deafness (DCDD)
- Division on Career Development and Transition (DCDT)
- Division on Developmental Disabilities (DDD)
- Division for Culturally and Linguistically Diverse Exceptional Learners (DDEL)
- Division for Early Childhood (DEC)
- Division of International Special Education and Services (DISES)
- Division for Learning Disabilities (DLD)
- Division for Physical and Health Disabilities (DPHD)
- Division on Visual Impairments (DVI)
- The Association for the Gifted (TAG)
- Technology and Media Division (TAM)