

CEC Releases Evidence-Based Practice Standards

New standards define quality indicators and criteria for evidence-based practice

Arlington, Va., Jan. 23, 2014 – The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC), the leading voice in special education, has released its *CEC Standards for Evidence-Based Practices in Special Education*.

A workgroup comprised of seven special education researchers developed, vetted, and piloted the new standards for determining evidence-based practices (EBPs) in special education. CEC's goal is that the standards will be applied to better understand the effectiveness of a range of practices for learners with disabilities.

“The new *CEC Standards for Evidence-Based Practices in Special Education* will change the landscape within the special education research community and their application will be critical to the future success of research in our field,” said CEC President Robin D. Brewer.

The standards were guided by and build upon the separate standards for identifying EBPs in special education previously developed by Gersten, Fuchs, Compton, Coyne, Greenwood, and Innocenti (2005) and Horner, Carr, Halle, McGee, Odom, and Wolery (2005) for group comparison and single-subject research, respectively.

“Our Workgroup owes a tremendous debt to the pioneering work of Gersten et al. and Horner et al.,” said Bryan Cook, chair of CEC's EBP workgroup. “Our goal was to build on their work by creating a single set of standards that incorporates both group comparison and single-subject research studies and ensuring that the standards reflect the views of the special education research community.”

The workgroup accomplished these objectives by developing a set of standards that considers both group comparison and single-subject studies, and conducting a Delphi study to solicit and incorporate the feedback of a group of expert special education researchers.

Rather than classify practices simply as evidence-based or not, the new standards provide more detailed classifications of practices' evidence bases.

Specifically, the new standards result in instructional approaches being categorized as:

- Evidence-based practices.
- Potentially evidence-based practices.
- Having mixed effects.
- Having negative effects.
- Having insufficient evidence to categorize their effectiveness.

“We hope the new standards will be helpful to the special education research community in classifying the evidence base of instructional practices in special education and that their application will, in turn, provide a knowledge base that special educators can use to improve the instruction they provide to exceptional children and youth,” Cook said.

Brewer acknowledged CEC’s appreciation to its expert members in the workgroup. “I would like to express CEC’s deepest appreciation to Bryan Cook, chair of the workgroup, and all the workgroup members – Virginia Buysse, Janette Klingner, Tim Landrum, Robin McWilliam, Melody Tankersley, and Dave Test – for their dedication to this important effort over the past five years,” she said.

Download [*CEC Standards for Evidence-Based Practices in Special Education*](#).

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) is an international community of educators who are the voice and vision of special and gifted education. CEC’s mission is to improve the quality of life for individuals with exceptionalities and their families through professional excellence and advocacy. Visit us at www.cec.sped.org.



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