

## **New Jersey Department of Education Special Education Receiving School Monitoring**

**Receiving School:** The Children's Institute

**County:** Essex

**Monitoring Dates:** February 6 and 7, 2006

**Monitoring Team:** Mark Lanzi, Greg Margolis, Heather Mills-Pevonis

### **Background Information:**

During the 2004–2005 school year, The Children's Institute conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided The Children's Institute with an opportunity to evaluate its strengths and areas of need with regard to:

- The provision of a free, appropriate public education (FAPE) for students with disabilities in the least restrictive environment;
- The development and implementation of policies and procedures resulting in procedural compliance; and
- The organization and delivery of programs and services to meet the needs of the students with disabilities.

The self-assessment was designed to identify areas of strength, promising practices, areas that need improvement and areas that may be noncompliant with state and federal requirements. The Children's Institute developed an improvement plan to address identified areas of need.

The New Jersey Department of Education (NJDOE) conducted an on-site monitoring to verify the self-assessment findings, to assess the appropriateness of the improvement plan, and to determine the progress in implementing the plan.

During the monitoring process, the monitoring team reviewed The Children's Institute's documents such as policies and procedures, student records from sending districts, lesson plans, services as indicated in individualized education programs (IEPs), staff evaluations, student count information, master student lists, class lists, schedules of students/teachers/related service personnel, and other relevant information. Interviews were conducted with The Children's Institute's special education administrators, building principals, special education teachers, parents and related service personnel.

Noncompliant items reflected in this report may result in nonallowable costs imposed by the Division of Finance in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:23-4.1 through 4.16.

### **School Strengths:**

The Children's Institute is commended for providing their students with extensive opportunities for transitioning into the community. The school provides opportunities for community based work experience for students ages 14 year and older. These work oriented experiences permit students to apply academic and life skills outside the classroom setting. Currently, the program has 20 community work sites that serve 43 students. All students are supervised on the job site by job coaches and receive instruction and support from a full-time transition coordinator. Experiences range from

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customer service and retail to food preparation and banquet hall set-up. To prepare students for these work experiences, the school has developed a variety of job opportunities within the building. The school also prepares the students to live independently through weekly lessons in the school's simulated apartment. This facility is also used as part of a weekend respite program in which students engage in practical learning experiences for functioning independently and practicing social skills.

The Children's Institute implements a comprehensive social skills curriculum throughout the school. Based on the students' developmental level, the program focuses on different social issues and skills. The school also implements a comprehensive behavior management program that is interconnected to the social skills curriculum.

The Children's Institute also provides access to an extensive after school program to help facilitate student's success in community based activities. Areas of focus include instruction in baseball, swimming, volleyball, tae kwon do and bowling.

### **Areas Demonstrating Compliance With All Standards:**

**General Provisions, Staff Requirements, Facility Requirements, Discipline, and Programs and Services** were determined to be areas of compliance by The Children's Institute during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

### **Section II: Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, The Children's Institute accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding length of school day and year, provision of physical education, maintenance of hearing aids, services at no cost to parents, extended school year programs and services provided in accordance with IEPs, program open to observation by LEA and NJDOE, provision of occupational therapy (OT) and physical therapy (PT) services as per IEP.

During the self-assessment process, The Children's Institute identified concerns in the areas regarding provision of speech language therapy and counseling services as per the IEP. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the receiving school has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

### **Section V: Individualized Education Program/Annual Review**

#### **Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, The Children's Institute accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP meeting conducted with students, as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, current IEP prior to service delivery, communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and

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providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement and statewide testing.

During the self-assessment process, The Children's Institute identified concerns in the areas regarding IEP conducted with required receiving school participants and implementation of IEP components relating to informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives. The receiving school's improvement plan is sufficient to address these areas of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records and staff interviews indicated that the receiving school has appropriately implemented specific activities to bring about correction in these areas.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

**Section VIII: Student Records**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, The Children's Institute accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas regarding conformance to pupil record code, return of records upon termination of student placement, access to records limited to authorized persons, access sheets, location of other records specified in central file, daily attendance available to LEAs, written notice of placement to county office and maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, The Children's Institute identified concerns in the areas regarding written communication to LEAs regarding tardiness and absences. The school's improvement plan is sufficient to address this area of need. During the on-site visit, a review of records determined that the school has appropriately implemented specific activities for correction in this area.

No additional areas of need were identified during the on-site visit.

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## Summary

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in The Children's Institute on February 6 and 7, 2006. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify The Children's Institute's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the Children's Institute's improvement plan.

The Children's Institute is commended for the comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review, the receiving school was able to identify all areas of need and develop an improvement plan that will bring about systemic change. The receiving school is further commended for the many areas determined by the receiving school and verified by the NJDOE as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

**General Provisions, Staff Requirements, Facility Requirements, Discipline and Programs and Services** were determined to be areas of compliance by The Children's Institute during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

Additional areas identified as consistently compliant by The Children's Institute during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included length of school day and year, provision of physical education, maintenance of hearing aids, services at no cost to parents, extended school year programs and services provided in accordance with IEPs, program open to observation by LEA and NJDOE, provision of occupational therapy (OT) and physical therapy (PT) services as per IEP, IEP meeting conducted at least annually, IEP meeting conducted with students as appropriate, signatures of participants present on IEPs, current IEP prior to service delivery, communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components, IEP accessibility to teachers and providers, informing teachers and providers of IEP responsibilities, timely implementation of IEPs, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, conformance to pupil record code, return of records upon termination of student placement, access to records limited to authorized persons, access sheets, location of other records specified in central file, daily attendance available to LEAs, written notice of placement to county office and maintenance of student health records.

During the self-assessment process, The Children's Institute identified areas of need regarding provision of speech language therapy and counseling services as per IEP, IEP meeting conducted with required receiving school participants, implementation of IEP components, informing parents of progress toward goals and objectives and written communication to LEAs regarding tardiness and absences.

The Children's Institute is not required to submit revisions to their improvement plan since all areas of noncompliance have been identified and corrected by the school.