

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

**Receiving School:** Princeton Child Development Institute      **County:** Mercer

**Monitoring Dates:** March 10-11, 2003

**Monitoring Team:** Carmen Fanucci, Paul Bilik, Judy Vazquez

**Background Information:**

During the 2001– 2002 school year, the Princeton Child Development Institute (PCDI) conducted a self-assessment of policies, procedures, programs, services, and student outcomes. This self-assessment component of the monitoring process provided the school 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 PCDI 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 receiving school documents such as policies and procedures, student records from sending districts, lesson plans, services as indicated in 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 receiving school's special education administrators, building principals, special education teachers and related service personnel.

**School Strengths:**

The PCDI instructional staff provides comprehensive home programming services to family members of students, to promote generalization of skills across a variety of social situations and environmental settings. The school is also commended for its intensive transition services to students. Planning for experiences in public school classrooms and/or community settings begins upon enrollment and continues after discharge for as long as the student demonstrates a need. PCDI staff members have published research, replicated nationally and internationally, on effective instructional programs for persons with autism. PCDI is recognized for promoting innovative teaching strategies such as photographic and written activity, incidental teaching, and script fading, through world-wide seminars, lectures and professional internship programs with organizations in the United State, Canada, Russia and Norway.

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

**General Provisions, Free, Appropriate Public Education (FAPE), Facility Requirements, Discipline and Student Records** were determined to be areas of compliance by the PCDI during self-assessment and by the NJDOE during the on-site visit.

### **Section III: Staff Requirements**

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

During self-assessment, the PCDI accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of certified/licensed staff, private school dual employment, criminal history verification and having an approved professional development plan.

An area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding employment/job descriptions of paraprofessionals.

#### **Area of Need:**

**Employment/Job Descriptions of Paraprofessionals-** During the on-site visit, it was determined through record review and interviews with Mercer County Office of Education staff that job descriptions for classroom aides have not been submitted to their office since June 2002.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure that job descriptions for classroom aides are updated and submitted to the county office of education. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent implementation of procedures.**

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

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

During self-assessment, the PCDI accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of IEP meeting conducted annually, IEPs conducted with appropriate participants, signatures present on IEPs, current IEPs, IEP accessibility, inform teachers/providers of IEP responsibilities, no delay in implementation, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, and progress reports.

During the self-assessment process, the PCDI identified concerns in the areas of implementation of IEP components and communication to sending district regarding missing IEP components. The school's improvement plan in the area of implementation of IEP components is sufficient to address this area of need. The school's improvement plan is insufficient to address the area of communication to sending districts regarding missing IEP components because it lacks procedures for obtaining current and complete IEPs. **The school will revise its improvement plan to include procedures to ensure the school communicates with sending districts when IEP components are missing. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure the consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

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**Section VII: Programs and Services**

**Summary of Findings:**

During self-assessment, the PCDI accurately identified themselves compliant in the areas of class size/age range, exceptions, description of special class programs, certifications, special classes implementing IEP and preschool programs.

During the self-assessment process, the PCDI identified concerns in the area of core curriculum content standards, including core curriculum content standards for students with severe disabilities (CCCSs/CCCSSSD). The school has developed an improvement plan that is sufficient to address this area of need.

An additional area of need was identified during the on-site visit regarding nursing services.

**Area of Need:**

**Nursing Services-** During the on-site visit it was determined through staff interviews that the PCDI does not employ a certified school nurse.

- **The school will revise its improvement plan to include written policies and procedures governing nursing and medical services in accordance with N.J.A.C. 6A:16, as applicable. The plan must include an administrative oversight component to ensure consistent, compliant implementation of the procedures.**

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## **Summary**

On-site special education monitoring was conducted in the Princeton Child Development Institute (PCDI) on March 10-11, 2003. The purpose of the monitoring visit was to verify the PCDI's report of findings resulting from their self-assessment and to review the receiving school's improvement plan.

The PCDI is commended for the exceptionally comprehensive review conducted during the self-assessment process. As a result of that review the receiving school was able to identify nearly all areas of need and develop an improvement plan that with some revision will bring about systemic change. The receiving school is further commended for the many areas determined by the receiving school and verified by the Department of Education as compliant with federal and state statutes and regulations.

Areas identified as consistently compliant by the PCDI during self-assessment and verified during the on-site monitoring visit included policies and procedures, staff development, annual reports, amendments, programs provided in nonsectarian settings, length of day/year, physical education, hearing aids, services at no cost to the parents, extended school year programs, observation of programs, provision of services and related services as per IEP, certified/licensed staff, private school dual employment, criminal history verification, having an approved professional development plan, programs provided in approved facilities, certificates of occupancy and inspections, fire drills, IEP meetings conducted at least annually, IEPs conducted with appropriate participants, signatures present on IEPs, current IEPs, IEP accessibility, inform teachers/providers of IEP responsibilities, no delay in implementation, observation of proposed placement, statewide testing, progress reports, standard disciplinary procedures, removal of student pending mediation or due process, changes to program/placement, suspensions, interim alternative educational setting, termination of student program, class size/age range, exceptions, description of special class programs, certification, special classes implementing IEP, preschool programs, conformance to pupil record code, return of records, access to records, access sheets, location of records, daily attendance, tardiness/absences, written notice of attendance and student health records

During the self-assessment process, the PCDI identified areas of need regarding communication to sending district regarding missing components, implementation of IEP components and core curriculum content standards/core curriculum content standards for the severely disabled (CCCS/CCCSSD).

The on-site visit identified additional areas of need within the various standards regarding employment/job descriptions of paraprofessionals and nursing services relating to staff requirements.

Within forty-five days of receipt of the monitoring report, the PCDI will revise and resubmit the improvement plan to the Office of Special Education Programs and to the county office of education to address those areas that require revisions.