

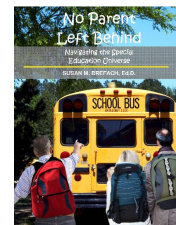
Making School Work A Toolbox for Parents

Based on the book

*No Parent Left Behind:
Navigating the Special
Education Universe*

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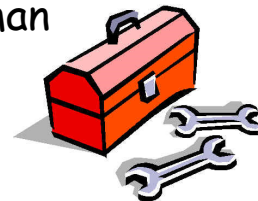
Susan M. Brefach, Ed.D.

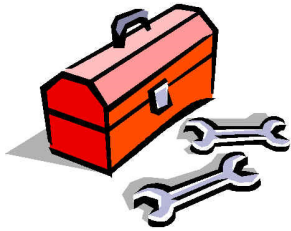


You Are the Expert on Your Child

"Parents have become so convinced that educators know what is best for children that they forget that **they** are the experts."

Marion Wright Edelman





Making School Work

Agenda

- Session 1 - Speedbumps on the Road to Success: When to Watch, When to Worry
- Session 2 - Understanding Independent Evaluations
- Session 3 - 7 Habits Of Highly Effective Special Needs Families
- Session 4 - Effective Progress



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Introduction

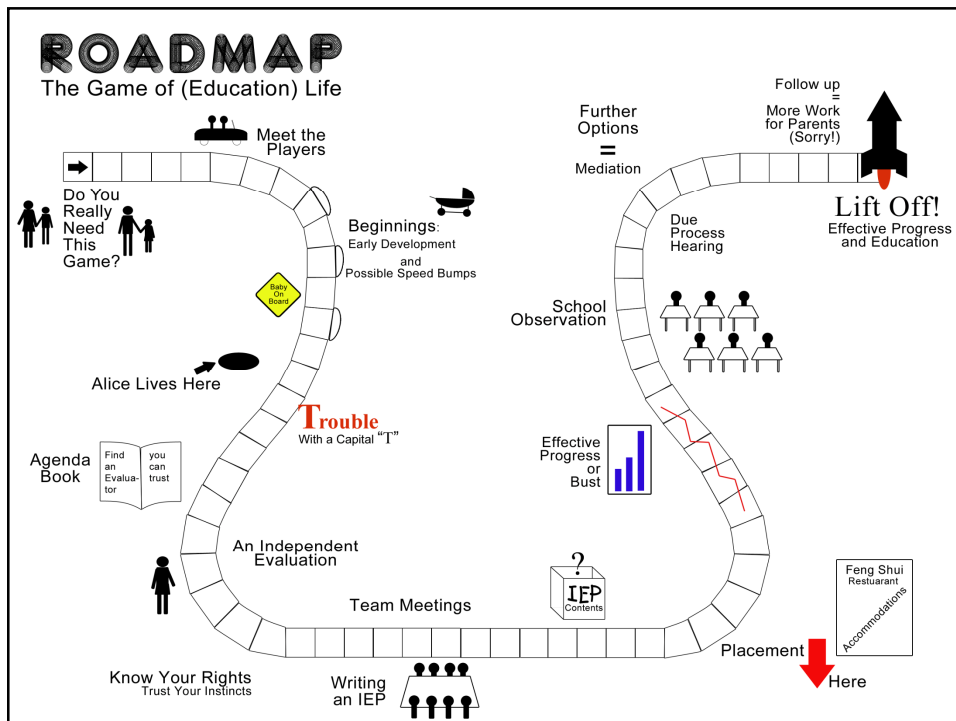
- Who decides "effective progress"?
- What is "effective progress"?
- How do you measure "effective progress"?
- What to do if you feel your child is not making "effective progress"?



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Introduction

- Who decides "effective progress"?
- *You do*, because *you* are the expert on your child



What is "Effective Progress"

- It depends on who you ask
- The Federation for Children with Special Needs does not define it on their web site



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What is "Effective Progress"

- Federal government says it does not mean maximum progress, but
 - It must be meaningful
 - Documented
 - Based on each child's individual learning profile
 - Can include non-academic needs



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What is "Effective Progress"

- Effective progress means that a child is mastering as much of the curriculum as he or she possibly can in a given year



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What is "Effective Progress"

- Mastery
- Curriculum
- Time frame
- Potential



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Mastery

- Can children understand, remember and use what they are taught
- Children with special needs learn in different ways
- A good match between teaching style and learning style



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Curriculum

- What are the skills and knowledge an average learner will be taught
- Get a copy of the actual curriculum
- Your child may be working on different goals
- Use the IEP goals
- Is your child catching up or falling behind
- Compare sets of skills and goals
- Grade equivalents are important



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Time Frame

- Generally a 12 month period
- IEP may not start in September
- Find out your child's skill levels in September
- Ask for screening or review test from special educator



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Potential

- Average curriculum is a "whole"
- How much of the "whole" can your child master
- Is the material being taught in the right way for your child
- An independent evaluation will give a true, complete picture of current skills and potential



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How Do You Measure "Effective Progress"

- School based measures
- Home based measures
- Independent evaluations



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How Do You Measure "Effective Progress"

- School based measures come in many forms
 - Individual testing done by the school
 - Group testing done in school
 - State testing (MCAS)
 - Teacher grades and evaluations
 - Progress reports
 - Progress testing as part of an IEP



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How Do You Measure "Effective Progress"

- Individual testing done by the school
 - Speech and language testing
 - Academic testing
 - Reading evaluation
 - Occupational therapy evaluation
 - Psychological testing
- Initially used to qualify a child for services



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How Do You Measure "Effective Progress"

- Group testing done in school
 - GRADE testing for reading and math at beginning of the school year
 - Stanford diagnostic testing



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How Do You Measure "Effective Progress"

- State testing (MCAS)
 - Designed to show whether a child has made expected progress compared to the school district and the state as a whole
 - Percent growth since previous testing



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How Do You Measure "Effective Progress"

- Teacher grades and evaluations
 - Letter grades for quarter or trimester
 - Parent conferences
 - Grading on individual assignments and tests
 - Often difficult to compare because teachers may not all use the same criteria for grading



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How Do You Measure "Effective Progress"

- Progress reports
 - These are written by the specialists who provide remedial help as specified in the IEP
 - They are essentially subjective because they don't include updated testing for each report



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How Do You Measure "Effective Progress"

- Progress testing as part of an IEP
 - This is often done at the end of an IEP period but may not be done until the 3 year re-evaluation
 - Certain remedial programs include progress testing as part of instruction
 - Lexia
 - WADE
 - Symphony math
 - Lindamood Bell reading and phonics programs
 - SRA self-checking reading programs



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How Do You Measure "Effective Progress"

- Home based measures
 - If your child is being helped in school, you should be able to see positive results
 - Speech/language services
 - OT
 - PT
 - Reading
 - Learning center/organization skills
 - Sensory integration therapy



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How Do You Measure "Effective Progress"

- Home based measures
 - Use of the white board
 - Post goals from IEP
 - Talk with your child about what areas he or she needs to work on
 - Add these to white board
 - Set up schedule to work on skills
 - Help your child practice skills that need to improve



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How Do You Measure "Effective Progress"

- Home based measures
 - Parents can tell how things are going by looking at their child's
 - Energy level
 - Mood
 - Social skills
 - Sleep and eating patterns
 - Outside interests



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How Do You Measure "Effective Progress"

- Independent Evaluations
 - Can be scheduled as often as needed to monitor progress
 - Use instruments that are nationally normed and provide actual performance levels in grade equivalents
 - Are thorough and cover all necessary areas
 - Objective
 - Can help parents advocate for child's needs



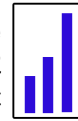
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How Do You Measure "Effective Progress"

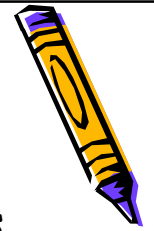
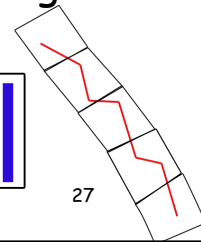
- Parents decide effective progress
- Parents should be able to *see* growth
- If not, work to change the amount or type of help your child receives
- The goal - mastery of individual goals and success without an IEP



Effective
Progress
or
Bust



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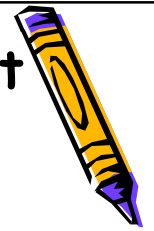


If You Feel Your Child Is Not Making "Effective Progress"

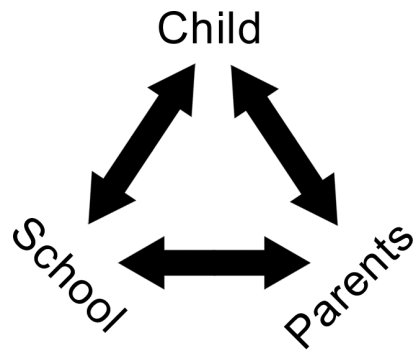
- If you *don't* see something, *say something!*



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If You Feel Your Child Is Not Making "Effective Progress"



Flow of Communication
and Responsibility

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If You Feel Your Child Is Not Making "Effective Progress"

- Start by talking to your child

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If You Feel Your Child Is Not Making "Effective Progress"

- Set up an appointment with your child's primary teacher or special educator
 - Be specific about which skills do not seem to be improving
 - Set up a plan to focus on the areas of least progress
 - What can the teacher do?
 - What can you do?
 - What can your child do?



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If You Feel Your Child Is Not Making "Effective Progress"

- Additional steps
 - Set a date for a followup meeting
 - Request additional testing using objective measures
 - Schedule independent evaluation to compare with school testing
 - Ask to re-convene the TEAM to discuss changes to your child's service delivery



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If You Feel Your Child Is Not Making "Effective Progress"

- Your child may need *more help*
- You and the school have the same goal
- Necessary skills + strategies = less need for special ed services
- More help = faster progress



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If You Feel Your Child Is Not Making "Effective Progress"

- Use of communication notebook
- Keep track of
 - Practice
 - Progress
 - Feedback from school
 - Feedback from your child



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What Parents Need To Do

- Keep your eyes on the prize:
 - The goal is to get your child *off* an IEP
 - Make sure your child consistently receives services agreed to
 - Monitor your child's growth



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What Parents Need To Do

- It is the school's job to improve your child's skills
- It is your responsibility to hold the school accountable when your child is not showing effective progress
- If you don't see progress, say something and do something



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Effective Progress!



Lift Off!
Effective Progress
and Education

