

Dear Colleague ...

Purpose: This tool provides suggestions for sharing enthusiasm for learning about high-leverage practices.

Activity Overview

When starting a new initiative on high-leverage practices in special education, school leaders may want to share their enthusiasm and invite their colleagues to become knowledgeable about the practices.

A “Dear Colleague ...” letter is one way to share initial information about high-leverage practices. For example, school leaders might write a letter to:

- Other school leaders, inviting them to share their thoughts about learning more about high-leverage practices.
- School staff members, alerting them to new offerings such as resources and professional development opportunities.
- Coaches and mentors, requesting that they begin to consider the role of high-leverage practices in their programs.
- Parent groups and advocates, informing them of the high-leverage practices’ focus and the reasons they can improve student learning.
- The school community, notifying them about the high-leverage practices’ focus. This letter could be posted on the school or district website, in a newsletter, or other form of communication.

A sample letter is found in the text box, “*Dear Colleague ...’ Sample Letter.*”

The two-page flyer that is in this tool can be included with the “Dear Colleague ...” letter. Since it is digital, it can be printed out, attached to an email, or uploaded to a website.

“Dear Colleague ...” Sample Letter

I am pleased to share information about a new focus of inquiry we are undertaking, “High-Leverage Practices in Special Education.” The twenty-two practices are intended to be used by all teachers who work with students with disabilities. The practices are supported by research evidence that shows their significant potential for improving academic and behavioral outcomes for students with disabilities and others who struggle to learn.

The high-leverage practices were developed by the Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the Collaboration for Effective Educator Development, Accountability, and Reform (CEEDAR) Center.

I have attached a flyer that presents additional information on the practices.

In the coming weeks, I will share more information on how we are working toward ensuring that all teachers use these practices on behalf of our district’s students.

Resources You Will Want! Resources You Can Trust!



There's a lot of talk these days about **high-leverage practices**—frequently occurring, essential educational practices that all special educators should know how to do. High-leverage practices are evidence based, meaning that they reflect effective methods that when successfully implemented can improve results for struggling learners.

The twenty-two high-leverage practices—covering the areas of collaboration, assessment, social/emotional/behavioral, and instruction—are designed to serve as a road map for guiding teacher preparation, professional development, and/or current self-assessment.

Defining Skills, Preparing Teachers, Improving Student Outcomes: Learn More

The Council for Exceptional Children (CEC) and the CEEDAR Center provide solid resources to help you learn about high-leverage practices in special education and how to use them effectively in educational settings. Take a look on page 2.

“High-leverage practices are essential to effective teaching and fundamental to supporting student learning.”



Collaboration

1. Collaborate with professionals to increase student success.
2. Organize and facilitate effective meetings with professionals and families.
3. Collaborate with families to support student learning and secure needed services.

Assessment

4. Use multiple sources of information to develop a comprehensive understanding of a student's strengths and needs.
5. Interpret and communicate assessment information with stakeholders to collaboratively design and implement educational programs.
6. Use student assessment data, analyze instructional practices, and make necessary adjustments that improve student outcomes.

Social/Emotional/Behavioral

7. Establish a consistent, organized, and respectful learning environment.
8. Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior.
9. Teach social behaviors.
10. Conduct functional behavioral assessments to develop individual student behavior support plans.

Instruction

11. Identify and prioritize long- and short-term learning goals.
12. Systematically design instruction toward specific learning goals.
13. Adapt curriculum tasks and materials for specific learning goals.
14. Teach cognitive and metacognitive strategies to support learning and independence.
15. Provide scaffolded supports.
16. Use explicit instruction.
17. Use flexible grouping.
18. Use strategies to promote active student engagement.
19. Use assistive and instructional technologies.
20. Provide intensive instruction.
21. Teach students to maintain and generalize new learning across time and settings.
22. Provide positive and constructive feedback to guide students' learning and behavior.

Resources Available from the Council for Exceptional Children

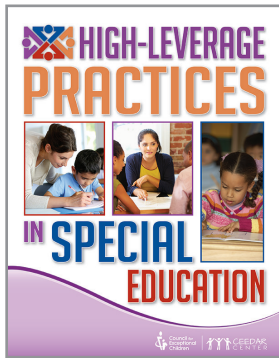


www.highleveragepractices.org

The High-Leverage Practices website is your one-stop resource for learning about high-leverage practices in special education. Here are just a few of the many resources you can find on the site.

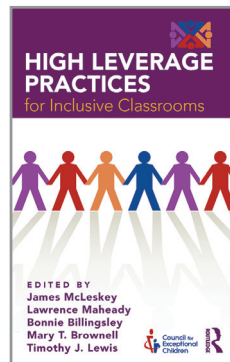
- **Overview**—Learn about the development of the high-leverage practices.
- **Links to Publications and Other Resources**—Find books, reports, handouts, and materials that expand your knowledge about high-leverage practices, including birth-to-five resources from the Division for Early Childhood and modules from the IRIS Center.
- **Videos**—Watch concrete, accessible examples of high-leverage practices in action, in real classrooms, with real students.
- **Webinars and Presentations**—Keep up to date with future events; watch archived events.
- **Research Synthesis**—Understand the evidence for high-leverage practices in each of the practice areas (collaboration, assessment, social/emotional/behavioral, and instruction).
- **Professional Development Guide for School Leaders**—Introduce high-level practices in special education to your colleagues with professional development tools.

Learn More About These Resources at www.highleveragepractices.org/resources/



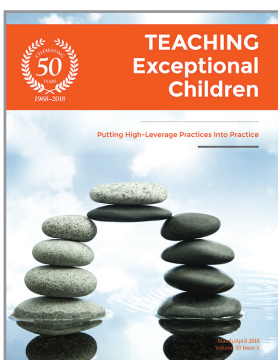
High-Leverage Practices in Special Education

What constitutes an effective special educator? What instructional practices are best for fostering student engagement and learning? How can teachers be better prepared for the classroom? These and other questions are answered in *High-Leverage Practices in Special Education*. The book describes four interrelated areas of teacher practice and breaks down twenty-two high-leverage practices that teachers should learn and master.



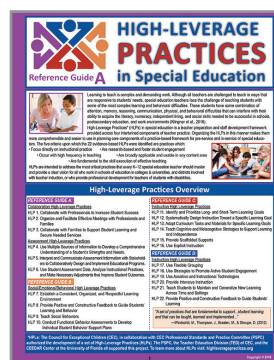
High Leverage Practices for Inclusive Classrooms

High Leverage Practices for Inclusive Classrooms delves deep into the set of practices that are essential to effective teaching and fundamental to supporting student learning. The book focuses primarily on Tiers 1 and 2, or work that mostly occurs with students with mild disabilities in general education classrooms. The book provides rich, practical information on each of the twenty-two practices.



TEACHING Exceptional Children (Special Issue)

This special issue of *TEACHING Exceptional Children*, “Putting High-Leverage Practices Into Practice,” presents nine published articles that reflect and embody specific high-leverage practices. The articles align with the four core areas (collaboration, assessment, social/emotional/behavioral, and instruction) and are intended to be a springboard for discussion and instruction related to “how-to” guidance.



High-Leverage Practices in Special Education: Reference Guides

From National Professional Resources, these laminated quick-reference guides fold out to present strategies, tips, and resources. The guides cover the areas of high-leverage practices—collaboration, assessment, social/emotional/behavioral, and instruction.



Download the CEC Catalog at www.pubs.cec.sped.org



Council for Exceptional Children
2900 Crystal Drive, Suite 100
Arlington, VA 22202
www.cec.sped.org