

Preface

Special educators wear many hats and must be lifelong learners to be effective in their many roles. This calendar has been designed to provide you with some practical suggestions as you work to meet the needs of students with disabilities.

Because both of us, as authors of *The Special Educator's Reflective Calendar and Planning Journal*, come from an extensive background in special education, we aim to compile our experiences and present them to you, the reader, in a concentrated form. By selecting a specific theme each month, we invite you to focus with us on important topics that determine the success of any special educator. By doing so we offer other ideas to apply to your work setting through our daily reminders.

As we partner with you through a twelve-month cycle, we suggest that you note on the space available for each day a response to the thought of the day or a personal reflection based on what you noted in your job setting, an idea you wish to try, or a frustration you experienced. We also encourage you to take time to think about ways to apply the ideas from your reflection as you grow in your role as a special educator.

Take time to go back over your reflections and our offerings as you review in your mind the events of your day, week, and month. Place on your calendar time for brief or extended reflection to secure benefit for your students, families, and certainly for yourself. Be ready to add anything you believe to be your next step to the goals list provided. Check off when you have accomplished this. Include comments on how your situation was impacted by inclusion of this goal.

Special educators must, of necessity, be deadline oriented. Also note the space available for listing important deadlines. This includes IEP due dates and important meeting and conference dates. Though you may have these noted in your files or on a desk or district calen-

dar, we recommend that you list them here as well so that you can see them in the context of the daily input we offer, as well as your plans gleaned from consistent daily reflection. It is by doing this that you will then bring the dimension of your reflection into your professional planning, meetings, and experiences with others.

Once you have begun the routine of reading an idea and reflecting on it, as well as on your teaching day, on a regular basis we ask you to consider how this will bring a broader scope to your work. Being in the habit of observing, noting, and reflecting, you may then respond to your professional reading, conferences, district meetings, and other experiences in a mode of alertness for material for reflection and, consequently, insightful, reflective time leading to strategic application.

To special educators who set aside time daily to reflect on the importance of their mission to offer instruction, support, and dignity to children with special needs.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Corwin Press gratefully acknowledges the contributions of the following reviewers:

Sharonjoy A. Jackson
President-Elect, Illinois Council for Exceptional Children
Past President, CEC Pioneers Division

Beverly Levitt
Special Education Teacher
Round Lake School District 116, IL

Mary Beth Schafer
Special Education Consultant
Elk River, MN