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The Vital Role of School Bus Drivers in Supporting Students with Special Needs

Georgina Solano Zepeda

A Capstone Project for the Bachelor of Science in Human Development and Family Science

Introduction

This capstone project addressed the challenges faced by new and experienced bilingual school bus drivers who transport special education students. According to the California Department of Education, transportation must be provided at no cost to those special education students ages 3-21 who are eligible as part of related services. The training for school bus drivers typically covers safe driving, vehicle operation, and basic student management. However, they often receive minimal or no specialized training to work with students with special needs. California had an estimated 38,000 school bus drivers in 2020, making it one of the states with the highest number of school bus drivers (California Department of Education). Over a million students are transported in California every day, 200,000 of whom are special needs students (California Associations of School Transportation Officials). Inadequate knowledge and training among drivers in effectively handling and interacting with children with special needs pose a significant challenge in the transportation system. The lack of expertise makes navigating bus routes more difficult, because school bus drivers have difficulties interpreting and responding appropriately to the diverse behaviors exhibited by children with special needs. Therefore, a comprehensive workshop is needed to teach school bus drivers about essential special education skills and knowledge. This workshop addressed three areas: some of the most common types of student special needs and their characteristics, strategies that bus drivers can employ to effectively interact with special needs students, and stress management techniques for bus drivers. The one-hour workshop was conducted at the Aromas-San Juan Unified School District and engaged six school bus drivers.

Needs Statement

Bus drivers are integral workers in school districts because they are responsible for keeping the students safe and maintaining order while on the bus. They ensure that everyone boards and gets off the bus safely and operates it securely. Drivers often form close relationships with the students they pick up and drop off, providing a familiar presence daily (Sims, 2014). Every year in the United States, 23.5 million children cover a distance of 4.3 billion miles while commuting on 450,000 school buses (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration, 2023). Even though school bus drivers are responsible for transporting students with various disabilities, they are frequently not adequately trained to meet their special needs. Consequently, drivers might need more knowledge about the students and their unique needs. There is a service needed to promote comprehensive training about special needs students to school bus drivers. This project taught school bus drivers about the three most common special needs and their characteristics, how they can implement strategies to support these students and their needs, and stress management techniques they can use to cope with the challenges.

Becoming a school bus driver requires meeting strict requirements to ensure the safety and competency of those responsible for transporting students. In the United States, the school bus is by far the largest method of transporting students to and from school (Crale, 2016). Prospective drivers must meet criteria such as being 18 years old, maintaining a clean driving record, and passing written exams issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) and the California Highway Patrol (CHP). Additionally, they are typically required to complete at least twenty hours of training (classroom), which covers various aspects of safe driving practices, emergency procedures, and laws and regulations. Once they are driving, bus drivers also have to make sure children get on and off the bus safely, help students who need extra assistance, keep everyone safe while traveling, make sure everyone follows the school

bus rules, and let the school and parents know about any problems (United States Department of Labor).

However, the role of a school bus driver working with special needs is filled with challenges. Regarding transportation, not every bus driver in a district can be utilized to transport students with special needs because the students need particular amenities (Kamali et al., 2013). Transportation personnel must have a deep understanding of the potential needs of these students to respond effectively when the need arises (Access and Mobility, 1999). Working as a school bus driver with special needs students is indeed demanding, primarily because of the specialized accommodations necessary for the transportation department. School bus drivers must possess a profound understanding of the potential needs of these students to respond effectively in various situations, as highlighted by Access and Mobility (1999). Three of the most prevalent disabilities among individuals receiving special education services are autism, emotional disturbances, and ADHD. Understanding the distinct needs associated with these disabilities is essential for ensuring the safety and well-being of special needs students during transportation. Due to inadequate training, bus drivers may struggle to meet the various needs and behaviors of special education students, potentially compromising their safety and well-being during transportation. It is essential to recognize that bus drivers often need more training to handle the needs of special education students on their buses. As a result, they may need help managing these students' various behaviors and requirements while driving.

According to the Center for Diseases Control and Prevention, a developmental disorder brought on by variations in the brain is known as Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD). It affects the way children interact, communicate, and perceive their environment. The causes of ASD are still not completely unknown (Alhowikan et al., 2019). According to scientists, ASD is caused by a combination of factors that alter the typical ways in which people develop. In general, signs of autism usually start to become

apparent in children between the ages of one and three (Shirian & Dera, 2015). Warning signs of autism include limited eye contact, lack of response to their name, difficulty in shared attention, challenges with imitation and imaginative play, and issues with nonverbal communication (Shirian & Dera, 2015). It might seem simple at first to drive autistic children to and from school on a daily basis. But difficulties occur when they might have trouble understanding traffic, refuse to wear seat belts, or feel anxious during the ride. These challenges may complicate the transportation process and necessitate more assistance and accommodations.

Children with emotional disturbance present another set of challenges that school bus drivers have to deal with. As stated by Access and Mobility, 1999 children with emotional disturbance disorder may experience a general feeling of dissatisfaction or depression. They may also exhibit an inability to learn, which cannot be explained by intellectual, sensory or health-related issues (Reddy et al., 2008). Additionally, such children may display physical symptoms or worries that are related to academic or personal problems. They may struggle to establish or maintain appropriate interpersonal relationships with their classmates and teachers (Cullinan et al., 2003). Unusual types of behavior or feelings in normal circumstances may also be indicators of emotional disturbance disorder. Transportation challenges may manifest when inappropriate behavior, such as refusing to remain seated, screaming, attempting to exit the bus while it is in motion, and incidents of spitting and fighting occur. In addition to addressing emotional disorders and autism, it is essential to consider ADHD disorder as well. According to the Center for Diseases Control and Prevention, one of the most prevalent neurodevelopmental disorders in children is ADHD. Some children with ADHD may exhibit behaviors such as talking excessively, acting recklessly, or taking unnecessary risks (Huggins et al., 2012). Additionally, they may find it challenging to resist temptation, take turns, or have difficulties getting

along with others (CDC). Transportation problems can include children not staying seated, not listening to the bus driver, trying to crawl under seats, and hitting other students nearby.

The lack of proper training and resources for drivers presents significant barriers to supporting the unique needs of each child with special needs. It is essential for school bus drivers to have a complete understanding of the special needs of the students in their transport. This knowledge allows them to offer the right support and make necessary accommodations. According to Mastros (2019), school bus drivers need to recognize that maintaining eye contact can be challenging for students with autism or other emotional spectrum disorders. Drivers must understand that a student's lack of eye contact does not necessarily indicate disinterest or inattention. Instead, they should be aware that the student may still be listening and paying attention, even without eye contact. Since every student is unique, school bus drivers ought to adapt their behavior to suit each individual student. They ought to modify their actions to fit the behavior of the pupil. Drivers can effectively engage with students with special needs by highlighting the significance of seeking out approaches and being adaptable in their interactions. Children with ADHD may show aggression toward peers, teachers, or other people; this aggression can manifest in physical violence, verbal threats, or disruptive behavior (Cervin, 2022). Children with ADHD may act impulsively without thinking through the consequences of their actions. They may have difficulty sitting still or staying seated in situations where it is expected. These challenges can significantly impact school bus drivers who are responsible for maintaining a safe and orderly environment while transporting students. When children with ADHD exhibit aggressive or disruptive behavior on the bus, it can create a stressful and potentially dangerous situation for both the driver and the other students

School bus drivers often face stress when supporting students with special needs during transportation. It is crucial for drivers to manage their stress effectively to create a safe and positive

transportation experience. The challenges and pressures associated with stress can make it difficult for bus drivers to experience joy or a sense of fulfillment in their work (Lazarus, 2006). By managing their stress, drivers can focus better on driving and ensuring everyone's safety. This ability to stay calm under pressure allows them to handle unexpected events on the road, such as issues with special needs, heavy traffic, or bad weather, ultimately safeguarding the well-being of the students. Deep breathing and relaxation techniques are indeed effective ways for school bus drivers to manage stress, especially when interacting with students with special needs. In the United States, 12% of adults affirm using deep breathing techniques for health (Birdee et al., 2023). By incorporating deep breathing exercises, such as inhaling deeply through the nose and exhaling slowly through the mouth, drivers can activate the body's relaxation response, which helps reduce stress and promote calmness (Balters et al., 2020). Additionally, peer support creates a space where bus drivers can connect with coworkers going through comparable struggles and exchange experiences, advice, and encouragement.

In conclusion, the critical role of school bus drivers is to ensure the safety of students, including those with special needs. Effective training ensures the physical safety of special needs children and contributes significantly to their emotional well-being and overall positive school experience (Benn et al., 2012). It emphasizes the need for drivers to have a comprehensive understanding of the diverse needs of the students they transport, including those related to autism, emotional disturbances, and ADHD. Also, it underscores the challenges that drivers may face in managing these needs, such as difficulties with maintaining eye contact or addressing behavioral issues. Furthermore, it highlights the importance of drivers adapting their behavior and communication strategies to meet the individual needs of each student. Additionally, the conclusion emphasizes the significance of stress management for drivers, as their ability to remain calm and focused is essential for ensuring the safety of students during transportation. For school bus drivers to have more knowledge and better understand these students'

needs, I conducted a one-time workshop focused on three sections. The first part covered three special needs students and some of their characteristics, including autism, emotional disturbances, and ADHD. The second lesson focused on how bus drivers can positively interact with special needs students on board. The third and last sections of the workshop focused on practicing stress management techniques to help drivers handle difficult situations with special needs. The workshop was held at Aromas-San Juan Unified School District, and six bus drivers, ages 32-62, participated.

Theory

Urie Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems theory categorizes an individual's context of development into levels, from family and school (microsystem) to culture and society (macrosystem), illustrating how their environment influences their growth. According to Soyer (2019), in Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, there are four different ecological systems that have an impact on an individual's development, each with its own specific set of influences. The microsystem, mesosystem, exosystem, and macrosystem are the four systems that impact moral, relational, and cognitive development changes. The child's immediate social circle, which includes their family, close friends, and the people they attend school with regularly, is known as the microsystem. Then we have the connection between the past system and this one, such as the communication between parents and the school, known as the mesosystem. Next is the exosystem, which is responsible for managing non-direct interactions. For example, children's social understanding and interactions are shaped by various factors such as local government policies, extracurricular activities, extended family, and community events. The macrosystem, which focuses on culture and how it affects a child's development, for instance, religion, education level, socioeconomic status (SES), media and technology, customs, or beliefs, comes last (Guy-Evans, 2020)

Bronfenbrenner's ecological theory is relevant to my project because school bus drivers interact with special needs students daily during their transportation to and from school, which is a crucial aspect of the microsystems and mesosystem of children with special needs. School bus drivers face several challenges, such as addressing the needs of special needs students, managing challenging behaviors, maintaining onboard safety, and building positive relationships with students and parents. It is essential that the drivers are well informed about the needs of the children so that they can anticipate and address any accommodations or support required during their routes. If the district does not provide adequate training or resources to address their needs, and bus drivers struggle to support and interact with special education students during transit, the exosystem of the child may be affected. The social development of the students can be significantly affected by the quality of these interactions (Soyer, 2019). To ensure that children with special needs receive consistent support and care throughout various environments, parents, bus drivers, and the school must maintain open communication. Through open communication in the mesosystem, parents, bus drivers, and the school can identify obstacles to inclusion and accessibility for special needs students and work collaboratively to address them.

Consideration of Diversity

The participants of my project currently work at Aroma San Juan Unified School District which is located in San Juan Bautista CA, This small district is in charge of San Juan School, Aromas School, Anzar High School and two preschools The transportation department operates eight bus routes: two for special needs and six for regular students. According to the transportation department of Aromas San Juan Unified School District, an average of 250 regular students are transported daily and 20 special needs. In the department there are nine bus drivers in total: six are males aged between 36 and 62 years, and the remaining three are females aged between 36 and 47 years. Both Spanish and English are spoken fluently by the 70% of participants who identify as Hispanic or Latino. Out of all the bus drivers, 10%

have been driving for more than ten years, 80% have been driving for more than five years, and the remaining 10% have only one year of driving experience.

The workshop was conducted in English and Spanish to ensure all participants could fully engage with the presentation. Both male and female participants were encouraged to share their experiences transporting students with special needs. This approach aimed to create an inclusive learning environment where everyone's perspective was valued. The workshop recognized the valuable experience and knowledge that older participants brought. At the same time, it provided opportunities for new bus drivers to learn and improve. Additionally, all participants were encouraged to discuss what worked well and what could be improved in similar situations. This collaborative approach helped everyone in the workshop gain new insights and strategies for handling challenges while transporting students with special needs.

Learning Outcomes

The workshop focuses on the following learning outcomes to ensure school bus drivers have the knowledge and skills to handle the unique challenges of transporting students with special needs and create a safe and supportive environment.

1. School bus drivers will identify two key characteristics associated with autism, emotional disturbances and ADHD.
2. Participants will demonstrate proficiency in executing two interaction strategies that have been proven effective in engaging with special needs students while transporting them.
3. Participants will apply, explain, and utilize at least two stress management techniques tailored to handle the difficulties when transporting special needs students.

Method

Location and Participants

The workshop presentation lasted one hour and ten minutes in person at the Aromas-San Juan Unified School District in San Juan Bautista, California. Six bus drivers participated in the workshop, including three males aged 36 to 62 and three females aged 36 to 47. Four of the participants were Hispanic or Latino and proficient in Spanish and English, while the remaining were white and spoke only English. Among the participants, the bus drivers with the most experience held commercial licenses for six to fourteen years. Additionally, the manager of the transportation department was present during the workshop. The workshop coincided with the department's regular weekend meeting, held every Thursday, providing a convenient opportunity to conduct my presentation.

Procedures and Materials

During my one-time workshop, I used Google Slides and YouTube videos as visual aids to support my presentation (see Appendix A). The first segment of the workshop, lasting around twenty minutes, aimed to introduce the definition and characteristics of three special needs (see Appendix B). After that, I engaged the participants by asking how familiar they were with transporting special needs children and allowed them some time to respond. Then, I shared some of my experiences as a driver working with special needs children and encouraged them to share their experiences as well. Two of the school bus drivers that I work with have children with special needs so they shared their thoughts, which were particularly valuable for the new bus drivers with no prior knowledge on the topic. Afterward, I asked if they remembered which unit of their school bus driver training covered students with special needs. Some of the participants remembered, while others did not.

In the second part of the workshop, I presented the importance of effective interaction between school bus drivers and special needs students. I explained three key points (see Appendix C). Each point was carefully explained to make sure everyone understood them well. This section lasted more than twenty minutes. Following this, we opened up a discussion where all the drivers were involved, even those who did not yet have experience transporting this type of student. The most experienced drivers shared their advice on how they work with these children and their families. Even the manager, who has held her license for more than ten years, reinforced the information mentioned earlier. This was the section of the workshop where the participants engaged and exchanged their thoughts and ideas the most.

The third and final part of the workshop focused on teaching school bus drivers how to manage their stress. Effective stress management can enhance bus drivers' mental and emotional well-being, allowing them to stay focused and make quick, safe decisions, and improve the safety of school transportation overall. I presented three techniques through videos (see Appendix D). The first video of breathing exercises lasted around two minutes, we repeated it three times to ensure the method was learned thoroughly. The second video lasted for approximately three minutes and provided drivers with methods to use their five senses to manage stress. The participants enjoyed practicing these techniques, and we discussed the importance of controlling stress and its benefits to the well-being and safety of the drivers and students on board. They mentioned that practicing stress-management techniques is essential, especially when dealing with special students' needs. They also agree that experienced drivers can offer valuable insights and practical tips for handling challenging situations effectively during transportation. To assess the learning outcomes of my project, I used a small quiz of seven multiple-choice questions that took approximately six minutes to complete (see Appendix E).

Results

The first learning outcome was for school bus drivers transporting students with special needs to learn about three specific conditions: Autism, Emotional Disturbance, and ADHD, along with two characteristics of each. To assess participants, I created a seven question quiz they completed at the end of the workshop. The quiz was given on paper since some participants were unfamiliar with technology. Five questions were dedicated to learning outcome 1. Participants were asked to select the definition and two characteristics of each of the three special needs categories. All six participants correctly identified the definition of each special need. However, five out of six participants (90%) were able to identify two characteristics for each condition, such as avoiding eye contact and hand-flapping for Autism, difficulty making friends, feelings of sadness for Emotional Disturbance, and difficulty paying attention and excessive talking for ADHD. One out of 6 participants (10%) almost passed, selecting only one characteristic. Overall, this learning outcome was fully met. See table 1 for more information and detailed descriptions of each criterion.

The second learning outcome of the workshop focused on participants' ability to identify two effective interaction strategies for engaging with special needs students while transporting them. Question six of the quiz was explicitly designed to assess participants' understanding of this learning outcome and their knowledge of effective interaction strategies. Participants were asked to select two strategies from the multiple-choice options provided. Five out of six participants (90%) successfully identified two effective interaction strategies: establishing clear communication and getting to know the students. See table 2 for more information. Unfortunately, one participant did not pass this learning outcome, as their answers were incorrect. Despite this, the participants' overall performance indicates that the objective was fully met, with 90% of participants demonstrating an understanding of effective interaction strategies.

The third and last learning outcome was that participants demonstrated which of three stress management techniques they will use to manage their stress when driving gets challenging. Also, all participants practiced some exercises following a youtube video which all of them enjoyed. To assess bus drivers I asked them to select which technique they will use. Based on the question “ What are effective stress management techniques for bus drivers?” all six bus drivers listed at least two stress management techniques. This learning outcome was met at 100%. See table 3 for a detailed explanation of each criterion and the full rubric. The most frequently mentioned stress technique was practicing breathing exercises. The second most frequently mentioned stress management technique was seeking social support from colleagues .

Discussion

The focus of my project was to provide school bus drivers with information to ensure they have the knowledge and skills to handle the unique challenges of transporting students with special needs. I introduced them to three types of special needs (autism, emotional disturbances, and ADHD) and some characteristics, as well as some strategies to help drivers interact with these students effectively. I also presented them with some stress exercises to implement if needed. The participants fully met all three learning outcomes. One of the comments of the bus driver was that the transportation department should provide more workshops like this. There were several factors that contributed to the success of my project. Firstly, all participants showed a great deal of interest and respect towards the workshop. The sharing of their personal experiences was particularly beneficial for the new drivers. The activities that the participants engaged in facilitated a better understanding and knowledge of the subject matter. Lastly, the involvement of the department manager played a crucial role in the success of the project. The project aimed to accommodate the participants' diverse developmental characteristics and backgrounds. To ensure everyone could understand and enjoy the workshop, I incorporated practical

examples and real-life scenarios that resonated with their experiences. This made the content more relatable and applicable to them. Regardless of their age or language, whether they spoke English or Spanish, everyone was able to participate and learn something useful.

Despite achieving all three learning outcomes, the project faced limitations impacting its delivery. One limitation of the workshop was the time restraint. I was allocated only one hour and ten minutes for the presentation, which proved challenging because the drivers often had comments or questions that extended beyond the allocated time. This meant that some parts of the workshop had to be rushed or cut short to accommodate the discussions. As a result, I could only cover some of the planned content in as much detail as I had intended. Overall, the participants were very focused during the presentation; there were no problems with noise or any other interruptions.

Although my project was successful, I believe there is a scope for improving its focus and content. Firstly, I suggest conducting this workshop specifically for drivers who transport students with special needs, instead of offering it to all drivers in general. Some drivers prefer smaller bus routes that transport students with special needs, while others select larger bus routes designated for regular students. Therefore, it would be beneficial to have a workshop tailored to the needs of drivers who transport special needs students. In addition to this, involving parents and teachers in the workshop is crucial. I would suggest flexible scheduling options, including evening or weekend sessions, to accommodate their busy schedules. Moreover, it is important to provide Spanish-speaking sessions for those parents who feel more comfortable speaking Spanish.. Furthermore, I would expand the content of special needs covered in the project and invite guest speakers, such as special education experts or parents of children with special needs, to share their insights and experiences. This would provide a more comprehensive and insightful experience for everyone involved. Finally, to allow for thorough

discussions and interactions without feeling rushed, I would assign more time for the presentation. This will ensure that everyone has enough time to express their opinions and ideas.

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Table 1

	Autism Meaning	Emotional Disturbance Meaning	Two Autism Signs	Two Emotional Disturbance Signs	Two ADHD signs
Bus driver 1	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bus driver 2	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bus driver 3	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bus driver 4	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Bus driver 5	✓	✓	✓	✓	☐
Bus driver 6	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓

Table 2

	#1 strategie to facilitate interaction with special needs students	#2 strategie to facilitate interaction with special needs students
Bus driver 1	✓	✓
Bus driver 2	✓	✓
Bus driver 3	✓	✓
Bus driver 4	✓	✓
Bus driver 5	□	□
Bus driver 6	✓	✓

Table 3

	#1 stress management technique (Breathing exercises)	#2 stress management technique (Social support from colleagues)
Bus driver 1	✓	✓
Bus driver 2	✓	✓
Bus driver 3	✓	✓
Bus driver 4	✓	✓
Bus driver 5	✓	✓
Bus driver 6	✓	✓

Appendix A

Workshop Slides

SCHOOL BUS DRIVERS SUPPORTING SPECIAL NEEDS

CSUMB CAPSTONE PROJECT
PREPARED BY GEORGINA SOLANO
March, 2024

Who is considered a child with special needs?

Child with a disability means a child evaluated in accordance with §§300.304 through 300.311 as having an intellectual disability, a hearing impairment (including deafness), a speech or language impairment, a visual impairment (including blindness), a serious emotional disturbance an orthopedic impairment, autism, traumatic brain injury, an other health impairment, a specific learning disability, deaf-blindness, or multiple disabilities, and who, by reason thereof, needs special education and related services

California's transportation system is responsible for the safe and secure daily transport of over one million students, including 200,000 students with disabilities.




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- 02 Effective interaction between school bus drivers and special needs students
- 03 Stress management techniques for the bus drivers


Learning Outcomes

- School bus drivers should identify two key characteristics associated with Autism: Emotional Disturbances and ADHD.
- Participants will demonstrate proficiency in executing two interaction strategies that have been proven effective in engaging with special needs students while transporting them.
- Participants will apply, explain, and utilize at least two stress management techniques to handle the difficulties when transporting special needs students.


Three types of special needs



Autism



Emotional Disturbance



ADHD

What is AUTISM

Autism spectrum disorder (ASD) is a developmental disability caused by differences in the brain. Some people with ASD have a known difference, such as a genetic condition. Other causes are not yet known. Scientists believe multiple causes of ASD act together to change the most common ways people develop.

Characteristics

- Avoids or does not keep eye contact
- Gets upset by minor changes
- Flaps hands, rocks body, or spins self in circles



Emotional Disturbance

Emotional disturbance refers to difficulties in forming and maintaining positive relationships with others. It often results in a pervasive sense of sadness or depression.




Characteristics

They have difficulty expressing their emotions


Children struggle to form positive relationships with peers and teachers

They often feel sad or down




What is ADHD?

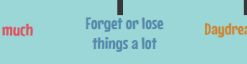
Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) is a prevalent neurodevelopmental disorder that typically occurs during childhood and can persist into adulthood.




Characteristics



Talk too much



Forget or lose things a lot



Daydream a lot

Effective interaction between school bus drivers and special needs students

- Get to know the students
- Establish clear communication
- Don't take it personal



Stress management techniques for the bus drivers

- Deep breathing
- Coping skill 5, 4, 3, 2, 1
- Social support



Time for practice

Box Breathing



Box Breathing

5-4-3-2-1




Things not to do

<https://www.busdriver.com/2018/05/10/10-things-not-to-do-when-driving-a-school-bus/>

Things that may happen while driving

<https://www.busdriver.com/2018/05/10/10-things-that-may-happen-while-driving-a-school-bus/>




"All children with special needs have a right to be part of a family, community and society"

—Angela Stone



Thank you



Appendix B

Identifying three types of special needs and their characteristics:

- Autism
 - Avoid eye contact
 - Get upset by minor changes
 - Flap hands, rocks body, spin in circles
- Emotional Disturbances
 - Children struggle to form positive relationships with peers and teachers
 - They have difficulty expressing their emotions
 - They often feel sad or down
- ADHD
 - Talk too much
 - Forget or lose things a lot
 - Daydream a lot

Appendix C

Effective interaction between school bus drivers and special needs students

- Get to know the students
- Establish clear communication
- Don't take it personal

Appendix D

Stress management techniques for the bus drivers

- Deep breathing
<https://youtu.be/tEmt1Znux58?si=XU5odmAQ3mBPqyIY>
- Coping skill 5, 4, 3, 2, 1
https://youtu.be/BsKpumL-ohQ?si=0yo9_ZwjxLXoeVlv
- Social support

*Appendix E**Quick Quiz*

Select all the answers that apply

What is another term for Autism?

- a) Asperger's Syndrome
- b) Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)
- c) Down Syndrome
- d) Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

What are two characteristics of Autism?

- a) Excellent social skills and high levels of empathy
- b) Avoid eye contact
- c) Flap hands, rock body, or spin in a circle
- d) Strong interest in sports and musical talents

What is emotional disturbance?

- a) Trouble making friends and feeling sad
- b) Feeling extremely happy all the time
- c) Being very confident

The common characteristics of emotional disturbance are:

- a) Often feeling sad or down.
- b) Strong interest in buying the newspaper.
- c) Having difficulty expressing one's emotions.

What are common characteristics of Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD)?

- a) Difficulty in paying attention, controlling impulsive behavior, and excessive activity
- b) Excellent concentration, thoughtful decision-making, and calm behavior
- c) Daydream a lot
- d) Talk too much

How can school bus drivers facilitate effective interaction with special needs students?

- a) Avoid getting to know the students personally
- b) Establish unclear communication methods
- c) Take any behavior from the students personally
- d) Get to know the students, establish clear communication, and avoid taking it personally

What are effective stress management techniques for bus drivers?

- a) Drinking alcohol before driving
- b) Engaging in deep breathing exercises
- c) Seeking social support from colleagues
- d) Avoiding breaks during shifts

*Appendix F**Capstone Project*

Introduction

School bus drivers are essential employees for school districts as they are responsible for the safe transportation of students to and from schools.

Why did I choose school bus drivers?

I have worked as a school bus driver for the past ten years. During my time on the job, I noticed that drivers need adequate training to work with special needs students.

Need Statements

Problem:

- School bus drivers do not have knowledge or understanding of the different types of special needs students and their characteristics..
- They struggle on how effective interact with special needs students
- Difficulties managing stress

Need:

- Educate school bus drivers about the various types of special needs students and their characteristics.
- Provide resources to support students with special needs
- Introduce and practice stress management techniques.

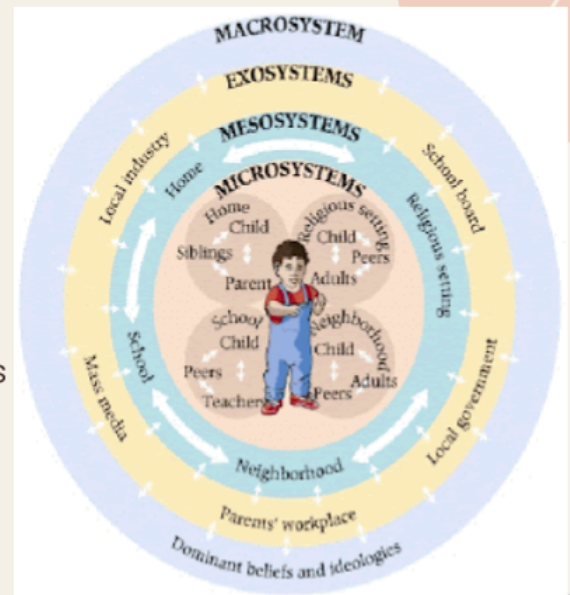
Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory

Microsystem: Immediate environment (e.g., family, school, peer groups).

Mesosystem: Connections and interactions between microsystem (e.g., family-school relationship).

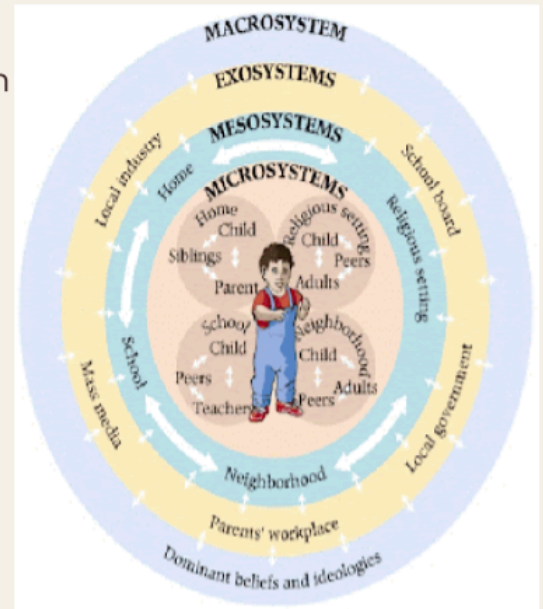
Exosystem: External environments (e.g., parent's workplace, community resources).

Macrosystem: Broader cultural, societal, and historical context (e.g., cultural norms, values, laws).



Bronfenbrenner's Ecological System Theory

- **Microsystem:** Bus drivers have daily direct interactions with students, which makes them an integral part of their immediate environment.
- **Mesosystem:** Bus drivers often serve as intermediaries between parents and school staff, sharing observations and concerns about students' behavior.
- **Exosystem:** Bus drivers may find it challenging to provide effective support and interact with these students during transit if the district does not provide information.



Learning Outcomes

I designed a one-time workshop for school bus drivers who work with special needs students

1. School bus drivers will learn to recognize two key characteristics associated with autism, emotional disturbances and ADHD.
2. Participants will demonstrate two effective interaction strategies with special needs students during transportation.
3. Participants will apply, two stress management techniques designed to handle the difficulties when transporting special needs students.

Location and Participants

- **Location**

Aromas-San Juan Unified School District
It is located in San Juan Bautista, CA.

- **Demographics**

- Six school bus drivers
- Three males & three females
- Age range 36 and 62.
- Hispanic (4) White (2)
- Bilingual (4) English Speakers (2)

Implementation of my project

- I presented my one-day workshop using Google Slides in person at Aromas-San Juan Unified School District.
- The workshop was divided into three sections.
 1. I covered three different types of special needs and some of their characteristics.
 2. How can school bus drivers effectively support special need students.
 3. Practice three stress management techniques
- After each section, we had a discussion to address any questions or concerns.
- At the end, there was an assessment

Assessment/Results LO1

School bus drivers should recognize two key characteristics of Autism: Emotional Disturbances and ADHD.

- Five out of six drivers were able to recognized two characteristics of each condition.
- This learning outcome was fully met

Assessment/Results LO2

Participants will demonstrate two effective interaction strategies while transporting special needs students.

- Five out of the six bus drivers were able to name two effective interaction strategies.
- This learning outcome was fully met



Assessment/Results LO3

- Participants will learn and practice two stress management techniques to handle difficulties while transporting special needs students.
- All six bus drivers were able to practice two stress management techniques
- This learning outcome was fully met

Discussion

- All learning outcomes were met
- The participants actively participated

Limitations

- Two bus drivers were unavailable to attend the workshop.
- The discussion part took longer than expected.

Future Direction

- Expand the workshop
 - Add more types of special needs
 - Invite teachers and parents

Thanks!

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