

Report on SELPA III CAC Workshop: “Homework Strategies That Really Work!”

Compiled by Tom Cobourn, November 19, 2007

Event Info

Date: Tuesday, November 13, 2007

Time: 7pm – 9pm

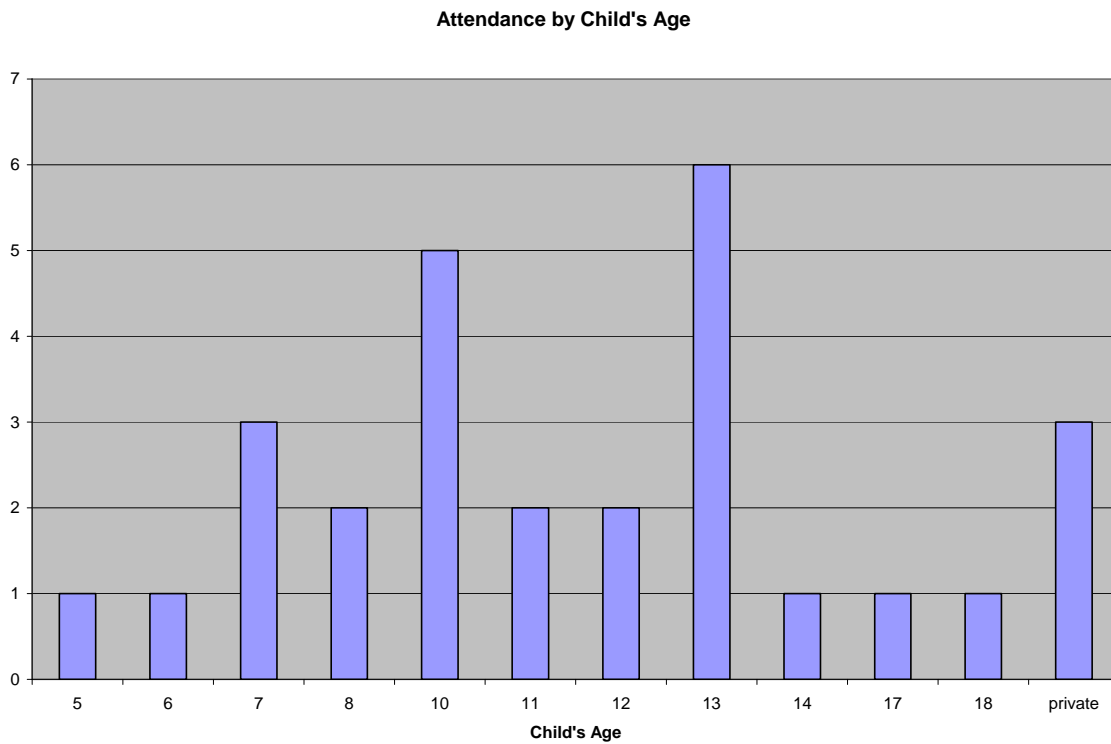
Location: Union School District Office

Speakers: Judy Meyer, Program Specialist for Los Gatos Union School District, and Jamal Splane, Student Services Director for Moreland School District.

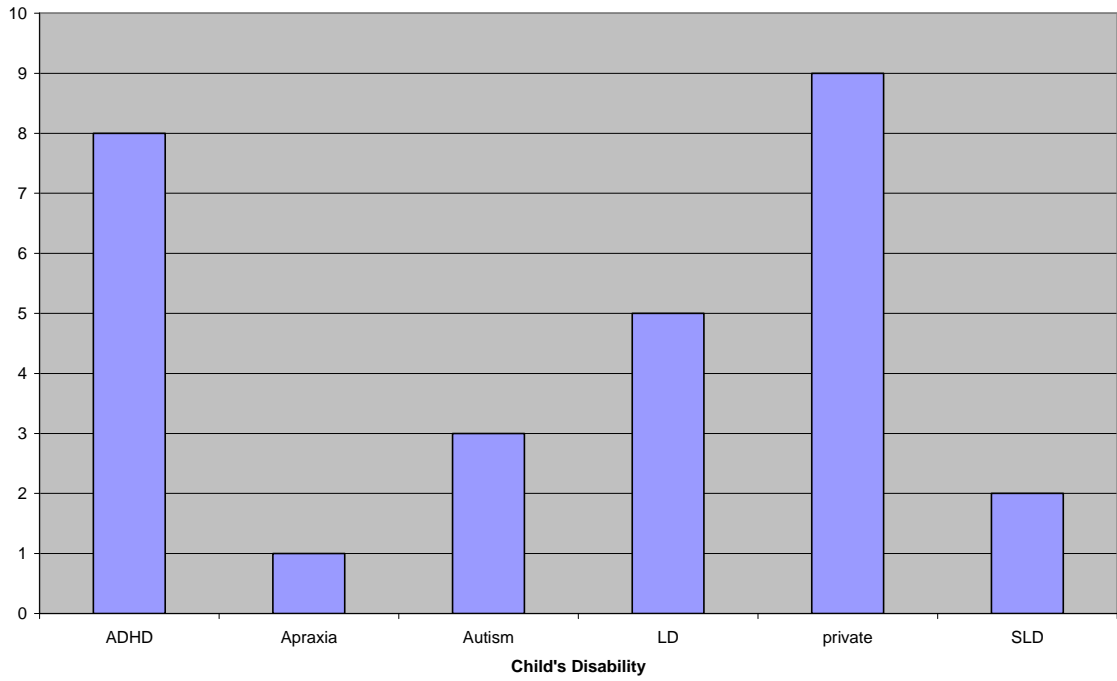
Attendance

Approximately 38 (including speakers, CAC members, and a few children)
29 names on sign-up sheet (includes 7 CAC members).

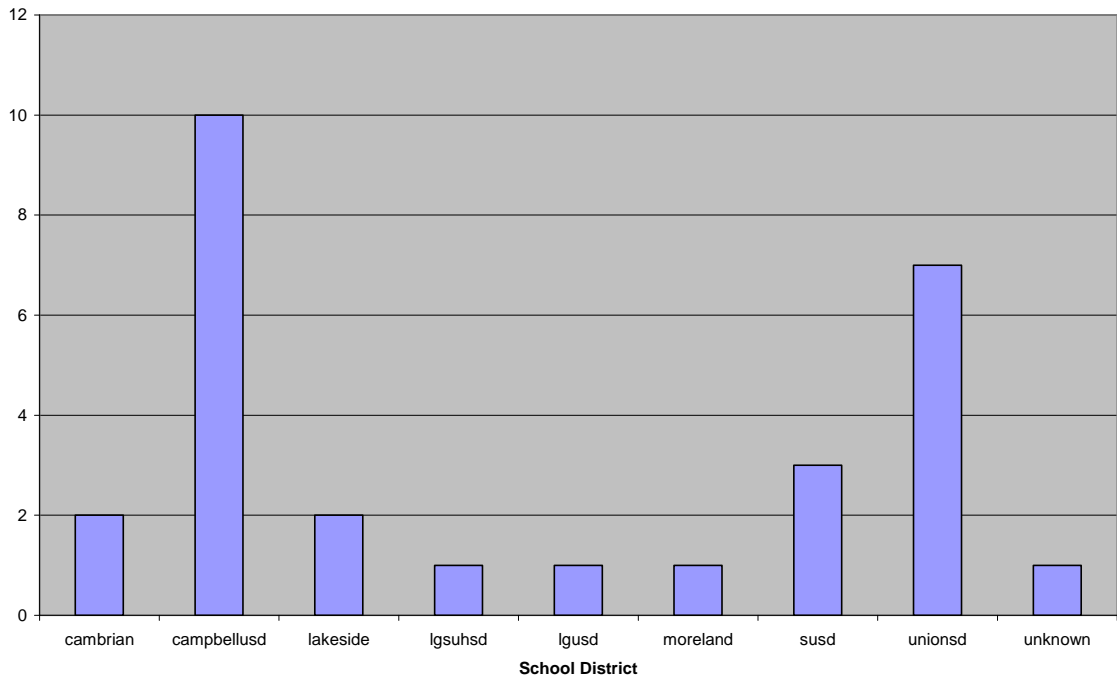
Attendance breakdown by category:



Attendance by Child's Disability



Attendance by School District



Attendance by District compared with SELPA III percentages by district:

District	Workshop % Attendance	SELPA III % Pupils
Cambrian	7.1%	6.0%
Campbell USD	35.7%	14.4%
Campbell UHSD	0%	18.9%
County Office of Education	0%	19.7%
Lakeside	7.1%	0.2%
Loma Prieta	0%	1.3%
Los Gatos USD	3.6%	6.3%
Los Gatos Saratoga UHSD	3.6%	7.2%
Luther Burbank	0%	0.6%
Moreland	3.6%	9.7%
Saratoga USD	10.7%	4.7%
Union	25.0%	11.0%
Unknown	3.6%	0%

Questions and Feedback

Two separate presentations were given. Jamal explained why homework is so challenging for our kids, and then described a 3-box “Homework Survival Kit”. Judy explained the responsibilities of parents and children, and then focused on research-proven methods such as Cornell style notes, SQ3R, study cards, study center, frequent reviews, and study partners.

Many of the parent questions are listed below:

- How does a time card system differ from a timer?
 - A time card system uses physical cards that a helper changes periodically to show how much time is left to complete a task. (E.g., 10 minutes remaining, 5 minutes remaining.) The cards are less distracting than a ticking egg timer.
- Doesn’t setting a time limit for homework tasks result in too much pressure on the child?
 - It depends on the characteristics of your child. The parent should decide whether it is appropriate.
- Does the 3-box survival kit work for all kids (disabled and non-disabled)?
 - Yes, it works for both. Additionally if you do it for all the kids in your household, the disabled children will feel more confidence when they see their non-disabled siblings using the same homework strategies.
- How do you deal with a teacher who is hard to work with regarding homework adjustments for a disabled child?
 - Start with your case manager, not the teacher.

- If my child is having trouble in History, can I get the History teacher to attend the IEP?
 - If History is an issue, then name that teacher on the IEP attendee list and they must attend. Note, however, that they only have to stay for the portion of the meeting where you discuss the History class issues.
- What if a book needed for homework does not come home?
 - Explain to your child that it's a give and take situation. If they bring the book home, then they get your help. If they don't bring it home, no help!
- What is "yellow overlay"?
 - It is tinted plastic that you place over reading material to help with visual issues like tired eyes. You can get it from Lakeside, Learning Express, fabric/art stores, Office Max (as color dividers), or your eye doctor.
 - It was noted that color overlays can be very effective but unfortunately work for very few students.
- How do you pre-teach vocabulary for a subject?
 - Look through your child's textbook for the words in bold. These are usually defined in the text and/or in an appendix.
 - Read the textbook with your child to see what words they are having trouble with. Explain these words in "kid language".
- How do I get an IEP for a child not yet identified as disabled?
 - Ask in writing for an assessment. Note that the school will try classroom "accommodations" before re-classifying a student as special ed.
- Who do you see if having difficulty getting an IEP?
 - #1 – Case Manager (resource specialist or classroom teacher)
 - #2 – Psychologist or Behavioral Specialist at school site
 - #3 – Principal of school (they are paid to oversee ALL students and programs)
 - #4 – Dept. of Special Ed for your district
 - #5 – Pamela Ptacek, County Office of Education
- Can you send a child to another district?
 - Only if you and the school agree that you cannot get a FAPE (free appropriate public education) in your resident district. The school then farms out your child to another district or the county/regional program.
 - Be aware that the school is not obligated to provide a perfect educational program for your child, just an *appropriate* one.
- Can the CAC give a talk on the IEP process?
 - We already did in September.
 - For additional opportunities see PHP (Parents Helping Parents) at www.php.com.
- What does the CAC do?
 - At the moment we are focusing on educational outreach.
 - We could do more if we had more volunteers.
- Some parents said they had difficulty getting CAC information from the Campbell Union High School District.
- Some parents expressed difficulty in attending CAC meetings during the day.

Follow Up Actions

Add new names, phone numbers, and email addresses to our contact list.

Lessons Learned / Suggestions

- Distribute handouts at the sign-in sheet table. This will help get more people to sign in.
- Develop a standard procedure for contact following an event. E.g., all new names should be sent an email or given a phone call to thank them for attending, give them more information about the CAC, and tell them how to become more involved.
- Use time cards to cue speakers so we can make sure adequate time is left at the end for questions.
- Develop a one-page feedback questionnaire that we place on each chair. It should have questions like, “How Useful Was This Workshop?” and “How Can We Do Better?”. Provide a box at the exit so the audience can submit them anonymously when leaving.
- Provide opportunity for others to review and contribute to these workshop reports.