

The SELPA Dispatch

Published for our beautiful Butte County SELPA community

Volume 8 - December 2025 to February, 2026

From the Director ...

After a restful Winter Break, the work began anew, and with a flurry of activity. In the midst of the daily grind, I was pleased to read a piece of good news reported by Emma Gallegos in *EdSource*. She wrote that the current administration had formally dropped its appeal of an adverse 4th Circuit ruling from last August that prevented it from stripping federal funding from schools and colleges that promote diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives. I recalled helping author a letter on behalf of our statewide association who chose to weigh in on that original “Dear Colleague” letter sent by the U.S. Department of Education. I remembered all the conversations about whether or not we could even use these words in our daily work anymore, and how many shied away out of concern of being de-funded. I thought about the leadership I witnessed from so many who understood the dangers involved. While we steer clear of politics as a rule in education, we recognized the significance of the moment and the difficulty of being asked to do the work of special education without the necessary funding or without being able to address these three core tenets of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA), which is celebrating 50 years this school year. That March 2025 letter read, in part:

“The regional structure of the SELPA Administrators of California ensures that educational equity exists for students with disabilities across the entire State so that no matter where a student attends school, they will have access to the specialized programs and services they need to achieve educational benefit. Our work requires that we support our schools in addressing issues of disproportionate representation by race or ethnicity in special education assessment, discipline, and placement. We provide extensive professional development to reduce stigma and remove barriers to the inclusion of students with disabilities in the general education classroom, as research informs us that inclusive practices improve student outcomes in academics, behavior, social skills, communication, and self-advocacy. It is essential that educators, special education practitioners, policymakers, and advocates continue to use language that reflects the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion, principles that are integral to ensuring all students, regardless of ability, will have access to a high-quality education. To do anything less would only serve to negate the hard-fought victories of the disability rights community.”

Indeed, 50 years later, the IDEA has changed millions of lives for the better. Here is to a bright 2026 for you and yours, and to borrow the signature line of a dear friend...

“Toward equity and inclusion,”



Stay in touch with SELPA and community events by liking and following us at [“Butte County SELPA Community Connection.”](#)



Visit our website at: www.buttecountyselpa.org for information, contacts, resources, trainings, and more!



The A-B-C of Behavior: How Our Children Learn From Every Moment

Joshua Kuersten, SELPA Behavior Specialist



We've all learned life's little lessons the same way: through experience. Eat a little ice cream? Delightful. Eat too much? Regret. Wear comfy shoes? Great day. Wear the fancy but painful ones? Long night.

Over time, these patterns teach us what works... and what doesn't. Children learn the exact same way. In fact, every single choice they make is shaped by a simple A-B-C pattern of behavior. Once we understand this pattern, we can use it to support the students in our classrooms far more effectively.

What Is A-B-C?

The A-B-C model stands for:

A – Antecedent

The situation or trigger that happens first.

- *Example:* A child walks into a noisy classroom and upon entering sees another student's pencil as the teacher gives a verbal direction to the class.

B – Behavior

What the child chooses to do in response.

- *Example:* The child grabs the pencil, covers their ears, drops to the floor and ignores the teacher's direction.

C – Consequence

The feedback the child receives after the behavior, not punishment, simply what *happens* next.

- *Example:* The teacher attempts to comfort the child while simultaneously trying to wrestle the pencil out of their hand and get it back to its owner as the rest of the class watches and waits for the lesson to start.

Here's the big idea: **Consequence is anything that happens after the behavior, and whatever is most meaningful to the child becomes what teaches them.**

Behavior Grows Where It Gets Attention

Just like we may choose uncomfortable shoes again because someone complimented them, children repeat behaviors that “pay off,” even if the payoff isn't what the adult intended.

A consequence can accidentally reinforce behavior even when we think we're discouraging it.

For example:

- A student blurts out.
 - **Adult response:** The teacher stops instruction and lectures.
 - **Intended consequence:** The lecture is supposed to reduce blurting.
 - **Actual consequence:** Blurting gets attention and often continues.

- A child refuses to work.
 - **Adult response:** The child is sent out of class.
 - **Intended consequence:** Removal is meant to discourage refusal.
 - **Actual consequence:** The child escapes the task making refusal more likely next time.

This is how behavior gets *accidentally* strengthened. Not out of malice, but out of habit.

The Most Important Question to Ask Ourselves: What Happens Over Time?

In applied behavior analysis:

- **Reinforcement** = consequences that increase or maintain behavior
- **Punishment** = consequences that decrease behavior

We don't know which one we created until we look at the pattern over time.

If a behavior stays the same or gets worse, the consequence, whatever it was, acted as reinforcement. That means something in the environment is paying off the behavior, even if unintentionally.

This isn't about blame. It's about clarity. When we can spot the pattern, we can change the pattern.

Where to Start: Examine the Consequence

Try this reframe: **“I am the consequence.”**

Not in a negative or punitive sense, but in a feedback sense.

Our facial expressions, tone, redirection, comfort, frustration, attention, and actions all become the “C” after a child's choice.

This week, simply observe:

- What typically happens right before the behavior? (A)
- What does the child do? (B)
- How do I respond? (C)
- Does this pattern reduce the behavior, maintain it, or increase it?

There is no pressure to fix anything yet. The first step is awareness. Once we clearly see the pattern, change becomes natural and far more effective.

A Final Word of Appreciation

If you've read this far, you're already doing the work. You're reflecting, learning, and thinking about how to better help the children in your care.

That matters.

You matter.

And the students you serve are already benefiting from your intention to grow.

Thank you for the heart you bring to education, and for helping shape healthier, more supported school communities.



Training Up the Field: Building on SELPA School Psychologist Collaboration

Patience Hervey, PPS, LMFT, ERMHS Coordinator



Over the past five years, we have grown the level of training and collaboration provided to school psychologists from all over Butte County and beyond. The quantity and quality of trainings we sponsor has been praised by our own staff, neighboring SELPA staff who attend, our Chico State Graduate School Psychology Department, and most recently by Jenny Ponzuric, who recently provided her expert knowledge to our school psychologists on updates in assessment tools for students with potential learning disabilities.

With over 75 school psychologists from Butte County and surrounding areas in the room, Ponzuric spontaneously commented on the first-class treatment our school psychologists and partners received, from the latest updated content in the workshop itself, the fact that it was free, and the venue and other perks. She validated our care and our progress as we love hosting these events for school psychologists based on their identified needs.

Ponzuric provided us with updates to the “Patterns of Strengths and Weaknesses Model” (PSW) for assessment of Specific Learning Disability (SLD), a framework used by school psychologists to identify SLD by assessing cognitive abilities, academic achievement, and neuropsychological processes that allows the examiner to reliably and validly analyze a student's profile of cognitive strengths and significant weaknesses, showing a disconnect between their potential and their achievement.

Attendees learned the importance of using methods like Cross-Battery Assessment (XBA) to measure a wider range of skills and constructs, than what can be represented by a single stand-alone assessment, as well as, changes which now include 8 Broad Abilities areas for which we assess a student. It moves beyond simple IQ scores to understanding why a student struggles, focusing on processing deficits (like working memory, processing speed, auditory processing) linked to academic underachievement. Not every specific skill within each broad ability is tested, but rather a choice of skills that are most relevant to how students learn in school.

This approach helps provide a clear picture of a student's cognitive strengths and areas where they may need added support. It is also important to understand these are just tools in analyzing a student's potential need for special education services, but it is not the final determination. One must also take into consideration information gathered from a student's record review, interviews and observations. A student who appears to have a pattern of strengths and weaknesses, but academically is getting A's and B's in all their classes may not necessarily need special education services in order to be successful. In fact, for some students placing them in special education could be detrimental to their educational progress. It is more than just analyzing numbers, one must always consider the whole picture.



Professional Learning Everywhere!!

Please make sure to check out all the wonderful training opportunities for staff and parents, which are posted on our website at www.buttecountyselpa.org/calendar or on Facebook at [Butte County SELPA Community Connection](https://www.facebook.com/ButteCountySELPACommunityConnection).



Chico State Psychologist Training

BEHAVIOR SUPPORTS IN THE HOME SETTING

Struggling with your child at home? Learn some strategies to be prepared, proactive, calm and reflective when met with challenging behaviors in the home setting.

DETAILS:

- 2/19/26 from 4-5:30 pm
- The Center
655 Oleander Ave.
Chico

[REGISTER NOW](#)

Butte County SELPA
Special Education Local Plan Area

SCHOOL SAFETY AND CRISIS PREPAREDNESS

NASP PREPARE TRAINING CURRICULUM

Co-Trainers:
Dorina D. Kreskay, PhD, LEP, NCSP
Leesa V. Huang, Ph.D., NCSP
Patience Hervey, M.A., NCSP, LMFT

January 30, 2026 8:30 a.m - 4:00 pm

Shelley R. Hart, PhD, NCSP CSU, Chico - Tehama 116

From Guesswork to Guidance: Strengthening Functional Behavior Assessments and Behavior Intervention Plans in Schools

April 14, 2026 9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m.
A full-day, virtual event
Continuing education available!

Program Description
Presented by the Positive Environments Network of Trainers (PENT) and JRG Legal Consulting, Inc., this workshop provides educators with guidance, best practice recommendations, and structured tools for conducting high-quality Functional Behavior Assessments (FBAs) and developing effective Behavior Intervention Plans (BIPs). The goal of the workshop is to increase educators' awareness, knowledge, and understanding of the FBA-BIP process by offering tools and resources that provide structured support at each step, ensuring that their FBAs and BIPs are comprehensive, consistent, and aligned with best practices. Newly-developed PENT resources will be shared, and a review of the most recent statutory and case law will help ensure practitioners are using the most recent and defensible practices.

PREPare Workshop 1, Third Edition, Comprehensive School Safety Planning: Prevention Through Recovery

Developing effective school emergency operations plans (EOPs). Participants will learn how to establish and sustain comprehensive school safety efforts that attend to both physical and psychological safety. The workshop addresses critical components needed to develop, exercise, and evaluate safety and crisis teams and plans and conduct building vulnerability assessments. The model also integrates school personnel and community provider roles in providing school-based crisis preparedness and response activities. Additional topics addressed also include media/social media, communication, reunification, students with special needs, culture, and memorials. After this workshop, participants will be better prepared to improve their school's climate, student resilience, and crisis response capabilities of school personnel. With updated research and strategies, this workshop makes a clear connection between ongoing crisis prevention, mitigation, protection, response, and recovery.

School Safety Teams - Administrators, Teachers, School Psychs, Social Workers, Counselors, Support Staff, SRO/Law Enforcement

[REGISTER HERE](#) Breakfast and Lunch Provided

FREE to LEA's within Butte County SELPA \$75 for Outside LEA's

NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF **Butte County**

Literacy Supports for Students with Extensive Service Needs (ESN) Staff Workshop

Friday, February 6, 2026

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary of I.D.E.A.

The SELPA Administrators of California has created some resources in English and Spanish for each month to recognize the impact of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act. A special video compilation was also released December 1, featuring powerful messages from our students, parents, a variety of statewide educational partners, state officers, state

and federal legislators, keynote presenters, SELPAs from across California!



Click here to enjoy the final version of the [SELPA IDEA 50th Video Compilation](#), with a run time of over 2 hours 45 minutes.

