

**NEW HAMPSHIRE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION
PROGRAM APPROVAL VISITATION
CASE STUDY COMPLIANCE REVIEW**

**THE BIRCHTREE CENTER
FINAL SUMMARY REPORT**

**Sandra Pierce-Jordan, Ph.D., Acting Executive Director
Shelly Fagen, MIT, Director of Special Education**

Chairperson, Visiting Team:
Colleen Bovi, M.Ed.
Education Consultant

Site Visit Conducted on December 6-7, 2011
Report Date, **January 31, 2012**

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I. TEAM MEMBERS

Visiting Team Members:

NAME	PROFESSIONAL ROLE
Chairperson: Colleen Bovi	Education Consultant
Diane Bessey	Executive Director
Karen Davis	Education Consultant for Students with Autism Spectrum Disorders
Randy Welch	Chief Program Officer

Building Level Team Members from The Birchtree Center:

NAME	PROFESSIONAL ROLE
Erin Conlan	Board Certified Behavior Analyst
Naomi Diaz	Clinical Instructor
Shelly Fagen	Director of Special Education
Allison Heinback	Clinical Instructor
Kristen Johnson	Sped. Case Manager
Katie Kukesh	Clinical Instructor
Justine Mariano	Speech/Language Assistant
Stephanie Morin	Behavior Analyst
Debbie Patten	Transition Coordinator
Sandra Pierce-Jordan	Acting Executive Director
Rebecca Walsh	Behavior Analyst

II. INTRODUCTION

The Birchtree Center is a private, not-for-profit special education day school, established in 2002. Located in Newington, New Hampshire, this 12-month program is designed to provide specialized educational services to children and youth with autism. The Birchtree Center meets the requirements of nonpublic school approval through the New Hampshire Department of Education and is also approved by the Bureau of Special Education for students diagnosed with autism from ages 2 to 21 and grades preschool to 12. The Birchtree Center accepts students from other states. At the time of the December 6-7, 2011 visit, there were 29 students enrolled in the program including 17 from New Hampshire school districts, 8 students from Maine and 4 students from Massachusetts. During the visit, it was noted that one out of state student identified as deaf/blindness, had been placed at The Birchtree Center. The state placing the student was aware that the facility was not approved to serve this student population, however made the decision to continue with the placement. The school's approach to specifically designed instruction incorporates the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis and all student programs follow the New Hampshire curriculum frameworks. Students receive one-to-one instruction provided by highly trained clinical instructors supervised by certified teachers. The instruction is designed to build strong foundation skills, maximize individual strengths, develop strategies for challenges, facilitate functional communication systems and prepare for productive adult lives. The Birchtree Center has a 12-person clinical team comprised of experts in the field of autism that designs and oversees student programs and provides ongoing training, supervision and consultation to the instructional staff. The Birchtree Center's location in Newington provides ideal opportunities for students to interact with the local community and prepare for life. Students visit local playgrounds, museums, nature centers and the public library. They work with instructors to learn life skills such as shopping, laundry, and more. Some of the children attend local school programs for "typical peer" exposure and experiences.

The mission of The Birchtree Center is to improve the quality of life for children and youth with autism and their families through nurturing relationships, therapeutic programming and specialized education. The Birchtree Center's goals are to educate students to their fullest academic potential, advance the social competence of their students and to develop productive individuals who are capable of leading independent lives.

SCHOOL DEMOGRAPHICS	2010 - 2011	2011 - 2012
Student Enrollment <u>as of December 1</u>	27	29
Do you accept out-of-state students? If so, list number from each state in 11-12	Yes; NH (17), ME (8), MA (4)	
Number and Names of Sending New Hampshire LEAs (as of October 1, 2011)	14 LEAs: Dover, Farmington, Hampstead, Kingston, Manchester, Milton/Wakefield, Oyster River, Portsmouth, Raymond, Salem, Seabrook, Somersworth, Timberlane, Winnacunnet	
# of Identified Students Suspended One or More Times	0	0
Average Length of Stay for Students	3.41	3.52 years
<u>STAFF DEMOGRAPHICS</u>		
Student/Teacher Ratio (as of October 1, 2011)	1:1.45	1:1.31
# of Certified Administrators	1	1
# of Certified Teachers	6	3
# of Teachers with Intern Licenses	0	1
# of Related Service Providers	2	2

# of Paraprofessionals	30	32
# of Professional Days Made Available to Staff	11	11

SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM DATA		
Primary Disability Types:	2010-2011	2011-2012
Autism	26	28
Deaf / Blindness	1 (ME Student)	1 (ME Student)
Deafness		
Developmental Delay		
Emotional Disturbance		
Hearing Impairment		
Intellectual Disability		
Multiple Disabilities		
Orthopedic Impairment		
Other Health Impairment		
Specific Learning Disabilities		
Speech or Language Impairment		
Traumatic Brain Injury		
Visual Impairment		

III. PURPOSE AND DESIGN OF THE CASE STUDY COMPLIANCE REVIEW PROCESS

The New Hampshire Department of Education (NHDOE) conducted a Special Education Program Approval Visit to The Birchtree Center on December 6-7, 2011 for the purpose of reviewing the present status of programs and services made available to children and youth with educational disabilities. Program Approval Visits are conducted using a Case Study Model that is a focused review. This focused review permits the NHDOE to leverage its impact for change and improvement within private special education schools statewide, by focusing the attention of all educators on the following three areas of critical importance in the provision of FAPE for students with disabilities.

- Access to the General Curriculum
- Transition
- Behavior Strategies and Discipline

As part of this compliance review, students were randomly selected by the NHDOE prior to the visit, and staff was asked to present these students' case studies at the visit to determine compliance with state and federal special education rules and regulations.

Other activities related to this NHDOE Case Study Compliance Visit included the review of:

- ♦ All application materials submitted
- ♦ Status of corrective actions since the last NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Visit
- ♦ Personnel credentials for special education staff (verified by NHDOE)
- ♦ Program descriptions and NHSEIS verification reports

- ♦ All data collected during the visit
- ♦ Any new or changed special education programs seeking approval from the NHDOE

The New Hampshire Department of Education provided a visiting team of professional educators to work collaboratively with staff in each of the schools in conducting the Case Study Compliance Review and the varied data collection activities. Throughout the entire review process, the visiting team worked in collaboration with the staff of The Birchtree Center. Their professionalism, active involvement in the process and cooperation were greatly appreciated and well recognized.

Evidence of the work conducted and results related to student outcomes were gathered throughout the process, guided by the materials and templates provided by the NHDOE, Bureau of Special Education. Examples of evidence included student individual education programs (IEPs), progress reports, samples of student work, grades, extracurricular involvement, permanent records, curriculum, etc. Input was gathered from key constituents, including interviews with professional staff, parents, administrators, and in some cases the students. In addition, classroom observations were conducted for each of the case studies being reviewed. The collective data were summarized by the visiting and building level teams. The summaries, included in the following pages, outline identified areas of strength and areas needing improvement for each school reviewed.

IV. STATUS OF PREVIOUS NHDOE SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM APPROVAL REPORT AND CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

No citations of noncompliance were identified during the last NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Visit conducted on December 2-3, 2009 and reported on April 9, 2009. Suggestions for improvement included:

1. Exploring ways to expand instructional space to assist students with functional skill development.
2. Considering methods to enhance communication and involvement of the LEAs.
3. Researching best practices and curricula for the program development of students to age 21 and transition planning for adult services.
4. Continuing with your action plan to transition students to their local schools by developing transition contracts and timelines.
5. Continuing to work on increased access to the general education curriculum and greater participation with non-disabled peers by working with local school districts to develop joint ventures and activities.
6. Investigating options for providing transportation to and from schools to support better training of bus drivers and support effective transitions from home to school.

Improvement activities were carried out for all of the above suggestions and evidence of the impact on students was identified.

V. DECEMBER 6-7, 2011 CASE STUDY COMPLIANCE REVIEW RESULTS

Data collection is an important part of the NHDOE Special Education Case Study Compliance Review Process. In order to monitor whether or not special education programs are in compliance in the three focus areas, and determine any root causes of problems that may be identified through the case study process, it is essential that each case study team look deeply into the data that surrounds the three primary aspects of the Case Study Review. This process takes time, and the entire team working with the child being reviewed must be involved in collecting and analyzing the data, as well as presenting and summarizing the data with

the visiting team. As such, NHDOE works with private schools to determine the number and type of case studies to be prepared and presented, and to ensure that building teams are not inundated with more data than can be fully analyzed, allowing them to reflect upon and generalize their newly found knowledge of their programs, practices, policies and procedures.

Two students were randomly selected for the case studies presented by The Birchtree Center. The case studies included one 8 year-old male in 3rd grade who has been enrolled at The Birchtree Center since February of 2008 and a 19 year old female in grade 12, enrolled since October of 2007. Both students are identified with autism.

LEA SURVEYS

Private schools provide necessary options to New Hampshire students with educational disabilities. Effective partnerships with LEAs are an important part of establishing and implementing successful private special education programs that improve student outcomes. By surveying LEA perceptions of current program(s), private schools can self assess these relationships and determine if there are areas in need of improvement. To this end, The Birchtree Center distributed the LEA Survey to the contact people in all LEAs that have students currently enrolled in the school. They received a 50% response from the LEAs.

The administration of The Birchtree Center provided an analysis of the LEA survey. The common theme that was apparent was the LEA acknowledgement of the ongoing positive practices evidenced by The Birchtree Center. Based on the analysis of the data documented in the current LEA Survey compared to the survey completed on 2008, there is consistent and comprehensive evidence of increased LEA satisfaction with The Birchtree Center's ongoing practices in the delivery of all program components associated with meeting the needs of the students.

SUMMARY REPORT OF SENDING LEAs

Name of Private School: The Birchtree Center		
Total number of surveys sent: 20	Total # of completed surveys received: 10	Percent of response: 50%
Number of students placed by: LEA: 29 students	Court:	Parent:

SCALE: 4 STRONGLY AGREE 3 AGREE 2 DISAGREE 1 STRONGLY DISAGREE

	4	3	2	1	No Answer
1. The private school team has positive expectations for students.	7	3			
2. I am satisfied with the educational program at the above school.	6	4			
3. The school consistently follows special education rules and regulations.	6	4			
4. The school has an effective behavioral program (if applicable).	7	3			
5. I am satisfied with the related services provided by the school.	5	4			1
6. The school implements all parts of students' IEPs.	7	2			1
7. I feel the school provides the necessary skills to allow the student to make progress on the IEP goals.	8	2			
8. The school program measures academic growth.	7	2			1
9. The school program measures behavioral growth (if applicable).	6	2			2
10. The school completes a minimum of 3 comprehensive reports per year on each child with a disability enrolled.	7	2			1
11. Progress reports describe the child's progress toward meeting the IEP goals, include a record of attendance, and are written in terminology understandable to the parent.	7	2			1
12. Progress reports are provided to the LEA and to the parent of the child.	7	2			1
13. I am satisfied with the way the school communicates students' progress.	7	2			1
14. The school communicates effectively with parents.	8	2			
15. The school communicates effectively with the LEA.	6	4			

16. The school involves parents in decision-making.	8	2			
17. The school actively plans for future transition to a less restrictive placement.	5	4	1		
18. If the school finds it necessary to change or terminate placement, they notify the LEA by convening the IEP team to: review the concerns, review/revise the IEP, discuss the placement and determine if the facility can fully implement the IEP and provide FAPE.	2	2			6
19. The school team sets meeting times that are convenient for both parents and LEA.	8	2			
20. The school has met my expectations.	7	3			
21. I have a good relationship with the school.	7	3			
22. I would enroll other students at the school.	7	3			

PARENT PARTICIPATION

One of the defining features of effective schools is strong parent/community relations and open communication. Having parents as active stakeholders in the NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Process ensures broader perspectives and brings forth new ideas. In addition, including the parent perspective enhances and strengthens the teams' case study presentations, and makes for stronger school/parent relationships. As such, parent participation and input is a required part of the NHDOE Special Education Program Approval Process. In order to ensure parent participation and feedback, the NHDOE, Bureau of Special Education involves parents in a variety of aspects of the Special Education Program Approval Process. First, parents are encouraged to be active participants in the case study presentations; second, parents of the children presented in the case study process are formally interviewed; and third, the school is required to send all parents of students with disabilities a written survey with a request to respond. Below is a summary of the results of the parent survey, along with a summary of the comments/feedback provided to the visiting team during this Case Study Compliance Review.

Of the 31 surveys sent to the parents of students attending The Birchtree Center, a total of 16, or 52%, were returned. The Birchtree Center analyzed the parent responses and identified areas of relative strength as well as areas in need for improvement in each of the three focus areas: Access to General Curriculum, Transitions, and Behavior Strategies and Discipline and provided the following summary.

The information from the Parent Survey provides a platform for developing an action plan for program development and advancement. There were two definite topics worthy of attention and involvement in an action plan: 1) plan opportunities for Birchtree students to interact with non-disabled peers on a regular basis and 2) inform Birchtree students about school activities outside of the school day and encourage them to participate with the necessary supports.

Based on analysis of the data documented in the Parent Survey, there is consistent and comprehensive evidence of parent satisfaction with The Birchtree Center's ongoing practices in the delivery of program components associated with meeting the needs of the students. Additionally, information generated provides insight into possible areas needing improvement. All of this information combined is highly valuable to the leadership team at the school and will be used to guide improved program development and advancement.

Parents of the two students selected for the Case Study Review were interviewed during the two-day visit. Both sets of parents reported satisfaction with the progress their children have made at The Birchtree Center and acknowledged the professionalism and dedication of the staff. The parents stated they are actively involved in their children's programs and the development of their IEPs. Both sets of parents would like to see more community involvement and more typical peer interaction.

SUMMARY OF PARENT SURVEY DATA

Name of Private School: The Birchtree Center		
Total number of surveys sent: 31	Total # of completed surveys received: 16	Percent of response: 52%

SCALE 3 = COMPLETELY 2 = PARTIALLY 1 = NOT AT ALL

ACCESS TO THE GENERAL CURRICULUM:	3	2	1	No Answer
I am satisfied with my child's program and the supports that he/she receives.	14	2		
My child has opportunities to interact with non-disabled peers on a regular basis.	5	4	6	1
I am adequately informed about my child's progress.	14	2		
My child is informed about and encouraged to participate in school activities outside of the school day, and is offered necessary supports.	7	4	5	
My child feels safe and secure in school and welcomed by staff and students.	16			
A variety of information (observations, test scores, school work, parent input) was used in developing my child's IEP.	16			
I am satisfied with the progress my child is making toward his/her IEP goals.	15	1		
FOR PARENTS OF HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS ONLY:				
My child earns credits toward a regular high school diploma in all of his/her classes.	2		2	12
TRANSITION:				
I am satisfied with the planning and support provided for the moves my child has made from grade to grade and school to school.	10	3		3
All of the people who are important to my child's transition were part of the planning.	9	3		4
FOR PARENTS OF STUDENTS AGE 16 OR OLDER ONLY:				
I am satisfied with the written secondary transition plan that is in my child's IEP.	2	2		12
BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES AND DISCIPLINE:				
My child's classroom behaviors affect his/her ability to learn. <i>If the answer is yes, please answer the next two questions. If no, skip to OTHER.</i>		YES	NO	
	3	2	1	No Answer
I have been involved in the development of behavior interventions, strategies and supports for my child.	15		1	
I am satisfied with the way the school is supporting my child's behavioral, social and developmental needs.	15	1		
OTHER:				
I fully participate in special education decisions regarding my child.	16			
I have been provided with a copy of the procedural safeguards (parental rights) at least once a year	15		1*	

*Note: the parent indicated that the safeguards were not offered by the LEA.

SUMMARY FROM THE THREE FOCUS AREAS OF THE CASE STUDY COMPLIANCE REVIEW

Access to the General Curriculum

Implementation of Individual Education Programs (IEPs)

Provision of Non-Academic Services

Full Access to the District's Curriculum

Equal Education Opportunity

The Individualized Education Programs reviewed during the Case Study Compliance Review were comprehensive and well written. Current levels of academic achievement and functional performance clearly define the needs of each student and annual goals are written in measurable terms. Evidence is provided that multiple measures are used for decision-making in developing the IEPs. Parent involvement in the development of the IEP is clearly documented. All students at The Birchtree Center have individually designed instructional programs that are aligned with the NH State Curriculum Frameworks and based on a curriculum developed for students with autism. Most of the New Hampshire students at The Birchtree Center participate in the NH Alternate Learning Progressions Assessment and the IEPs reviewed provided evidence of connecting academic and assessment objectives to the frameworks. There is ongoing data collection for educational and behavioral programming and data are used to measure progress toward attainment of goals. While there is a written high school level general education curriculum, the preschool through grade 8 general education curricula are not clearly articulated. The Birchtree Center has certified staff and has contracted with consultants to meet the requirements outlined in ED 306.15. While there are limited opportunities for students within the school to participate with non-disabled peers, a strong community component provides integration in functional settings and enables students to generalize and transfer knowledge from school to community.

Transition

Transition Planning

Process: Provision of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE)

Transition Services

Students Achieving Independence for Life (SAIL) is an intensive, year-round instructional component within The Birchtree Center that supports transition services for students ages 14 to 21. The program has a full time coordinator and focuses on vocational skills, community participation, lifelong learning and independent living skills across multiple settings – in the classroom, throughout the school building and in the community. The Birchtree Center has a fully equipped life skills area where students learn self-care and independent living skills. Students have opportunities to develop shopping, vocational, social and leisure skills within the community. Partnerships with various community organizations have been formed to support students in community service programs. Transition plans developed for the students at The Birchtree Center are carefully designed to be results-oriented and are focused on the academic and functional needs of its students. Parents are actively engaged in the transition planning process. The Birchtree Center has developed a Home Priorities Document that assists families in identifying needs and guiding the team in developing an appropriate plan. Person-Centered Planning Conferences are also scheduled to identify the instructional, employment, community, recreational, functional and daily living needs of the students.

Transitions from grade to grade and from staff to staff are also carefully planned. Historical, assessment, instructional and behavioral information are shared with the receiving staff and student-specific training is designed and provided. One of The Birchtree Center's beliefs is that least restrictive environment is an achievable end goal given appropriate modifications and accommodations. The administration's goal is to facilitate the students' successful transition to the least restrictive environment through their Outreach Services for Schools. They are committed to students' full inclusion in their local school and community whenever and wherever possible.

Behavior Strategies and Discipline

The Birchtree Center has a clear and consistent school-wide behavior model that is based on the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA). Each student has a positive behavior support plan based on the results of assessments including Functional Behavior Assessment, parent reports, ongoing ABA data collection, frequency recording and informal classroom observation. Board Certified Behavior Analysts (BCBA) provide the program model and are instrumental in designing, monitoring and evaluating individual student behavior plans. The BCBA's define the interfering behaviors, develop hypotheses regarding the function of each behavior, identify the antecedents to the behavior and design proactive measures to prevent the behavior from occurring. Data are collected daily and analyzed. All program decisions related to student progress, or lack of progress, are based on the analysis of all data. The data are also used over time so the staff and parents can observe the progress made throughout the year.

Special Education Policies/ NHDOE Bureau of School Approval/ Non-Public School Application Materials

In addition to the above noted focus areas for the case study presentations, material submitted as part of the application for program approval included: Health/Fire Facility Inspection Reports, the Private School Self Study, Special Education Policies and Procedures, Administrative Policy and Procedures, Current Program Information, and Personnel Roster and Consultant Roster Review and verification of these documents found The Birchtree Center to be in compliance with all applicable New Hampshire Rules and the Education of Students with Disabilities and requirements for Non-Public Approval. In addition, The Birchtree Center completed the required documentation for approval as a "non public" school. While the school meets all of the curriculum requirements, The Birchtree Center is currently not planning on issuing high school diplomas. At the time of writing of this report, further guidance is being sought from the NHDOE regarding any specific policies that may need to be developed related to this topic.

Special Education Policies

In addition to the above noted focus areas for the case study presentations, all material submitted as part of the application for program approval included: the Private School Self Study, Policy and Procedures Manual, Administrative Policy and Procedures, Behavioral Interventions, Governance, Human Resources, Emergency Plan and Procedures, Professional Development Plan and Health and Fire Inspection Forms. Review and verification of these documents found The Birchtree Center to be in compliance with all the applicable New Hampshire Rules for the Education of Students with Disabilities.

NEW PROGRAMS SEEKING APPROVAL FROM THE NHDOE, BUREAU OF SPECIAL EDUCATION

The Birchtree Center is seeking approval to add Developmental Delay to the list of primary disabilities served by the school. By adding this primary diagnosis to their Special Education Program Approval, for students with Autism, The Birchtree Center will be able to provide individualized early intervention services to students who may not meet the educational eligibility criteria for Autism but require similar educational programming and therapeutic intervention.

As part of the December 2011 Case Study Compliance Review conducted at The Birchtree Center, supporting materials, including program descriptions, personnel rosters and contracted services rosters, were reviewed. This request has been determined to meet requirements and it is recommended that the NHDOE, Bureau of Special Education, issue full approval.

COMMENDATIONS

Upon the conclusion of the Case Study Visit at The Birchtree Center, the building and visiting team members combined their feedback and observations over the two days. Team members considered the case study presentations, IEPs, classroom observations, interviews of parents, administrators, as well as informal conversations with faculty and staff. What follows is a list of commendations, findings of non-compliance, and suggestions for improving program operations compiled by the visiting team.

1. The Birchtree Center's administration and staff possess great skill and expertise in the education of children with autism. Each staff member reflects the highest level of professionalism and compassion for their work.
2. The leadership team of The Birchtree Center is governed by a strong vision, values and motivation to support students with autism.
3. The Board of Directors is supportive and includes staff and parent participation.
4. The Board Certified Behavior Analysts ensure a consistent program following the principles of Applied Behavior Analysis that is responsive to individual student needs.
5. Data collection is well designed and used effectively to inform instruction and to evaluate and monitor student progress.
6. The administration has developed a program integrity evaluation.
7. Parents are actively engaged in their children's programs and within the school community.
8. The Birchtree Center's Outreach Program provides in-home supports and consultation to families to support the generalization of skills.
9. The Birchtree Center is committed to supporting students in the least restrictive environment and provides outreach services to public schools that may include Functional Behavior

Assessments, development of Behavior Support Plans, Teacher In-Service Presentations, Parent Training and Transition Support.

10. The Students Achieving Independence for Life Program (SAIL) is a comprehensive program that supports transition needs and services. Transition plans are well designed, coordinated and measurable.
11. The Birchtree Center's autism specialists offer educational workshops for educators, para-educators, parents, guardians, caregivers, and service providers working with children with Autism Spectrum Disorders at the Community Campus in Portsmouth.

**Number of Cases Reviewed During The Birchtree Center on December 6-7, 2011
NHDOE Compliance Visitation**

Preschool	
Elementary School	1
Middle School	
High School, Age below 16	
High School, Age 16 or above	1
Number of Noncompliance for Indicator 13	
Total Number of Case Studies Reviewed	2

**FINDINGS OF NONCOMPLIANCE IDENTIFIED AS A RESULT OF THE
DECEMBER 6-7, 2011 CASE STUDY COMPLIANCE REVIEW**

Findings of noncompliance are defined as deficiencies that have been identified through the Case Study Compliance Review Process, which are in violation of state and federal special education rules and regulations. Findings of noncompliance may result from review of policies and procedures and related application materials, case study presentations, review of student records or any other program approval activity related to the visit. **It is important to note that all findings of noncompliance listed below must be addressed in a corrective action plan and resolved within one year of this report. A template and instructions for such planning will be provided.** This section will need to include any findings of noncompliance noted in the three focus areas, issues of significance, building summaries or general review of policy, procedures, personnel roster, etc.

Issues of significance are defined as systemic deficiencies that impact the effective delivery of services to all students, including those with educational disabilities. Examples of such may include system wide issues related to curriculum, instruction and assessment.

As a result of the December 6-7, 2011 NHDOE Case Study Compliance Review at The Birchtree Center, many commendable strategies and practices were identified, including a comprehensive high school curriculum, strong instruction and ongoing assessment. While all student programs are aligned to the NH Curriculum Frameworks, a strong, viable curriculum for students preschool through grade 8 warrant a review and revision. This will enable students to have access to equal educational opportunities and full access to the general education curriculum.

Child Specific Findings of Noncompliance to be Addressed by Both the LEA and Private School Setting: *Please Note: The NH Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education requires that Child Specific Findings of Noncompliance be addressed and resolved within 45 days of notification.*

As a result of the Case Study Compliance Review, there were no child specific findings of noncompliance identified.

Systemic Findings of Noncompliance to Be Addressed by the Private School Setting

Please Note: The NH Department of Education, Bureau of Special Education requires that Systemic Findings of Noncompliance be addressed in a corrective action plan and met within one year of the date of the report; a template and instructions for such planning will be provided.

ED# 1114.05 (f) Program Requirements

The Birchtree Center has accepted a student with a disability for which the program is not approved.

ED# 1114.05 (g), CRF #300.320 Program Requirements

Access to equal educational opportunities. Access and ability to progress in general curriculum.

The Birchtree Center's preschool to grade 8 curriculum is not sufficient to enable students enrolled to have access to equal education opportunities and to progress in the general curriculum.

SUGGESTIONS FOR PROGRAM-WIDE IMPROVEMENT

Suggestions for improvement, simply stated, are recommendations provided by the visiting team that are intended to strengthen and enhance programs, services, instruction and professional development, and the NHDOE strongly encourages that serious consideration be given to the suggestions. However, discretion may be used in this area; suggestions for improvement are not considered to be required corrective actions and you may determine which suggestions most warrant follow up and address those in your corrective action plan. **System wide suggestions for improvement are listed below.** It should be noted that, in the Building Level Data Summary Report on the following pages, any suggestion made by a visiting team member that is actually a finding of noncompliance, has an asterisk (*) before it, and it is also listed above with the findings of noncompliance.

1. Continue to increase communication and involvement of the LEAs in the development of students' IEPs and the monitoring of their progress.
2. Plan opportunities for students to interact with non-disabled peers in academic settings on a regular basis.
3. Investigate opportunities for students to participate in non-academic activities with peers in their communities.
4. Expand opportunities with local school districts regarding development, articulation and alignment of general education curriculum.
5. Investigate expanding the early childhood program.
6. Continue researching a "permanent home" for The Birchtree Center.

USING COMPLIANCE DATA FOR CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT

BUILDING LEVEL CASE STUDY DATA SUMMARY

**NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
SPECIAL EDUCATION PROGRAM APPROVAL AND IMPROVEMENT PROCESS**

School: The Birchtree Center	Date: December 7, 2011	
Programs:	Number of Cases Reviewed: 2	
Recorder/Summarizer: Colleen Bovi and Team	Number of students reviewed age 16+: 1	Number of students age 16+ cited for Indicator 13: (# T12) 0

CLEARLY PRINT NAMES OF ALL COLLABORATIVE TEAM MEMBERS

Name: Diane Bessey	Position: Executive Director	Visiting
Name: Colleen Bovi	Position: Technical Assistant	Visiting
Name: Erin Conlan	Position: BCBA	Building Level
Name: Karen Davis	Position: Education Consultant for ASD Students	Visiting
Name: Naomi Diaz	Position: Clinical Instructor	Building Level
Name: Shelly Fagen	Position: Director of Special Education	Building Level
Name: Allison Heinback	Position: Clinical Instructor	Building Level
Name: Kristen Johnson	Position: Sped. Case Manager	Building Level
Name: Katie Kukesh	Position: Clinical Instructor	Building Level
Name: Justine Mariano	Position: Speech/Language Assistant	Building Level
Name: Stephanie Morin	Position: Behavior Analyst	Building Level
Name: Debbie Patten	Position: Transition Coordinator	Building Level
Name: Sandra Pierce-Jordan	Position: Acting Executive Director	Building Level
Name: Rebecca Walsh	Position: Behavior Analyst	Building Level
Name: Randy Welch	Position: Chief Program Officer	Visiting

SUMMARIZE YOUR BUILDING LEVEL DATA

ACCESS TO THE GENERAL CURRICULUM STATEMENTS					Fill in the combined number of times a statement is marked on all Data Collection Forms for this school or building		
Ed. 1109.01 Elements of an IEP CFR 300.320 Content of IEP Ed. 1109.05 Implementation of IEP 20 U.S.C. 1414 (d) Ed. 1115.07 Ed 1119.01(f) Provision of Non-Academic Services/Settings CFR 300.320(a) CFR 300.34 Ed. 1113.08 Full Access to District's Curricula Ed. 1113.13 Diplomas Ed. 1107.04 (d) Qualified Examiner Ed. 1119 Protections Afforded to Children with Disabilities CFR 300.320(a)(1)(i) "... general curriculum (i.e. ,the same curriculum as for nondisabled children)" CFR 300.320(a)(4)(iii) "To be educated and participate with other children with disabilities and non disabled children"							
A1.) Team uses multiple measures to design, implement and monitor the student's program.					2		
A2.) All IEP goals are written in measurable terms. Be careful with using terms that are not measurable					2		
A3.) Student's IEP has at least one functional goal.					2		
A4.) Student has made progress over the past three years in IEP goals. Goal 1					2		
A5.) Student has made progress over the past three years in IEP goals. Goal 2					2		
A6.) Student <u>has access to</u> the general curriculum (as outlined by the district, sending district or NH frameworks.)					2		
A7.) Student <u>participates in</u> the general curriculum <u>in a regular education setting with non-disabled peers</u> , as appropriate, with necessary supports.							2
A8.) When participating in a regular education setting with non-disabled peers with necessary supports, student <u>has made progress in</u> the general curriculum.							2
A9.) Student <u>participates</u> appropriately in state, district and school-wide assessments.					1		1
A10.) Student <u>shows progress</u> in state, district and school-wide assessments.							2
A11.) Student <u>has opportunities</u> to participate in general extracurricular and other non-academic activities with necessary supports.					2		
A12.) Student <u>does participate</u> in general extracurricular and other non-academic activities with necessary supports.					2		
A13.) Was the student's most recent individual evaluation (initial or reevaluation), including a written summary report and meeting, held within 45 days of parental permission to test? If not, was it due to: (check all that apply)					2		
a.) Extension in Place	b.) Lack of Qualified Personnel ___Psychologist ___Educator ___Related Services ___Other	c.) Evaluation Not Completed in Time	d.) Summary Report Not Written in Time	e.) Meeting Not Held in Time	f.) Other		
For High School Students:					YES	NO	
A14.) Student is earning credits toward a regular high school diploma.							1
A15.) <i>IF YES:</i> within 4 years?							
A16.) Student will earn an IEP diploma or a certificate of competency.							1
A17.) <i>IF YES:</i> within 4 years?							
A18.) Does this school or district have a clear policy for earning a high school diploma?							1

Access Strengths	Access Suggestions for Improvement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The IEPs reviewed are well written and comprehensive. 2. IEP goals are written in measurable terms. 3. The team informs their instruction, assessment and goal development through research based, data driven decision-making. 4. The Applied Behavior Analysis approach is exemplary. 5. Parents are actively involved in the development of their child's IEP. 6. Individualized instruction aligned to the NH Curriculum Frameworks is provided in the areas of academics, social skills, communication, life skills and community integration. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. * The Birchtree Center must expand upon the preschool through grade 8 general education curriculum to ensure articulation and alignment with the NH Curriculum Frameworks and to develop a scope and sequence at appropriate levels. 2. Review role descriptions of certified educators and clinical instructors to clearly define who is teaching content and supervising the process.

SUMMARIZE YOUR BUILDING LEVEL DATA

TRANSITION STATEMENTS		Fill in the combined number of times a statement is marked on all Data Collection Forms for this school or building		
Ed. 1102 Transition Services CFR 300.43 Ed. 1106 Process; Provision of FAPE CFR 300.124 Part C Transition Ed. 1109.01 Elements of an IEP (Transition Services) CFR 300.320(a)(7)(b) 20 U.S.C. 1402 (34) 20 U.S.C. 1414 (d)(1)(A) and (d)(6) Ed. 1103 IEP Team CFR 300.320(b) This includes movement from (a) Early Supports and Services (ESS) to preschool, (b) preschool to elementary school, or (c) age 16 or older, as well as from grade to grade and school to school.		YES	NO	
T1.) Transition planning from grade to grade takes place.	2			
T2.) Transition planning from school to school takes place.	2			
T3.) Collaboration has occurred between general and special education staff in IEP development and in transition planning.	2			
T4.) For a student who will turn age 14 during the IEP service period (or younger if determined appropriate by the IEP team), does the IEP include a statement of the transition service needs that focuses on the student's course of study, such as participation in advanced-placement courses or a vocational education program? Ed 1109.01 (10)	N/A			
For students under age 16, answer only the first 4 statements above. Then skip to the next page. If the student is age 16 or older during the course of the IEP, answer all statements on this page.				
T5.) Transition planning is designed as a results oriented process that promotes movement from school to the student's desired post-school goals.	1			
T6.) IEP team includes parent as part of transition planning.	1			
T7.) IEP team and process includes student as part of transition planning.	1			
T8.) IEP includes current level of performance related to transition services.	1			
T9.) There is documentation that the student has been invited to attend IEP meetings.	1			
T10.) A statement of the transition service needs is included in the IEP.	1			
T11.) The statement of transition service needs focuses on the student's course of study (e.g. vocational programming, advanced placement).	1			
T12.) Transition plan includes coordinated, <u>measurable</u> , annual IEP goals and includes transition services that will reasonably enable the student to meet the post-secondary goals. (required data for federal statistics purposes)	1			
T13.) Statement of needed transition services is presented as a coordinated set of activities.	1			
T14.) The IEP includes a statement of needed transition services and considers instruction.	1			
T15.) The IEP includes a statement of needed transition services and considers community experiences.	1			
T16.) The IEP includes a statement of needed transition services and considers development of employment skills.	1			
T17.) Student is informed prior to age 17 of his/her rights under IDEA.	1			
Only the following 4 statements may be answered N/A if appropriate. <u>All statements above must be answered Yes or No.</u>		YES	NO	N/A
T18.) There is documentation that representatives of other agencies have been invited to IEP meetings.	1			
T19.) The IEP includes a statement of needed transition services and considers related services.	1			
T20.) The IEP includes a statement of needed transition services and considers development of daily living skills.	1			
T21.) If the student is preparing to graduate this year, there is a summary of the student's academic achievement and functional performance , which includes recommendations on how to assist the student in meeting his or her post-secondary goals.	1			

Transition Strengths	Transition Suggestions for Improvement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Birchtree Center has a well-defined and executed transition program. 2. Person-Centered Planning Conferences are held to design effective and meaningful transition plans. 3. Students Achieving Independence for Life Program (SAIL) has been developed to support students prepare for adult life. 4. A Transition Coordinator oversees the transition of students and works with local employers to find opportunities to gain practical workplace experience. 5. There is strong community participation to develop leisure, social, vocational and independent living skills. 6. Community service projects have been developed and include maintaining public gardens, organizing food drives, and volunteering for nonprofit organizations. 7. There is strong parent and community support for transition services. 8. A parent group has been established specific to the SAIL Program. 9. Transitions plans are developed for each student throughout the day. 10. Professional development activities are built into the program. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. It is suggested that The Birchtree Center develop a presentation on transition services to share with colleagues within the state. 2. Continue to do outreach to community to expand opportunities for community service and post-secondary options.

SUMMARIZE YOUR BUILDING LEVEL DATA

<u>BEHAVIOR STRATEGIES AND DISCIPLINE</u> <u>Ed. 1109 Program</u> <u>CFR 300.324</u> <u>Ed. 1124 Disciplinary Procedures</u> <u>CFR 300.530-300.536</u> <u>20 U.S.C. 1415 (K)</u> <u>Child Management – Private Schools</u> <u>RSA 169-C Child Protection Act</u>	Fill in the combined <u>number of times a</u> statement is marked on all Data Collection Forms for this school or building		
	YES	NO	N/A
B1.) Data are used to determine impact of student behavior on his/her learning.	2		
B2.) Has this student ever been suspended from school?		2	
B3.) If yes, for how many days?			
B4.) If appropriate, a functional behavior assessment has been conducted.			2
B5.) IEP team has addressed behaviors that are impacting student learning.	2		
B6.) A behavior intervention plan has been written to address behaviors.	2		
B7.) All individuals working with the student have been involved in developing behavior intervention strategies.	2		
B8.) Specialized training for implementing interventions, strategies and supports has been provided to parents, providers and others as appropriate.	2		
B9.) Results of behavior intervention strategies are evaluated and monitored.	2		
B10.) A school-wide behavior intervention model exists.	2		

Behavior Strategy Strengths	Behavior Strategy Suggestions for Improvement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Behavior plans are data-driven. 2. Daily data sheets are used to track behaviors. 3. The Behavior Analysts use research-based methodology. 4. The Birchtree Center has developed a program integrity evaluation for all behavior plans. 5. There is a low Board Certified Behavior Analyst to student ratio. 6. Behavior strategies and plan development are embedded professional development activities. 7. All instructional staff are trained and certified in the Nonviolent Crisis Intervention Training Program. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Continue sharing knowledge of behavior strategies with private and public school personnel.

Please use this page to summarize the building level strengths and suggestions. At the report-out, the visiting team members will be asked to provide a brief overview of the building they visited. This summary will be the basis for that overview.

Strengths	Suggestions for Improvement
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The instructional staff are highly qualified and specially trained in Applied Behavior Analysis, special education, sensory integration, social skill development, communication sciences, and augmentative and alternative communication systems. 2. The Leadership Team is comprised of experienced experts in the field of autism and all hold advanced degrees. 3. The staff are professional, collaborative, positive, supportive and dedicated to the students and families they serve. 4. Parent engagement in their children’s program and the school is strong and positive. 5. Outreach staff support families by providing direct in-home training and consultation. 6. Outreach services are provided to schools and community agencies to design individual educational and behavioral programs that promote effective inclusion. 7. Educational workshops are offered for educators, paraprofessionals, parents, guardians, caregivers, and service providers working with children and youth with Autism Spectrum Disorders. 8. There is a positive school culture and climate. 9. The consultant model for related services supports integration of services. 10. The new leadership is willing to accept feedback and advance best practices for its students. 11. The Birchtree Center is building a strong center-based and outreach community for students with autism and their families. 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The Birchtree Center is encouraged to continue strategic planning to consider options for future growth and development. 2. The Birchtree Center is encouraged to research and develop more opportunities for participation with non-disabled peers.