

# ***PHILIPPINES***

## **EDUCATIONAL ADMINISTRATION FOR CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (The Cupertino Center Experience)**

### **I. INTRODUCTION**

This is a case study of a private special school in the Philippines which has been in existence for 41 years. Presently called “Cupertino Center for Special Children”, I was asked to manage this SPED school after I finished my Master’s degree in Special Education in 1980. My son who is autistic also started his schooling in Cupertino that same year.

### **II. CLIENTELE:**

Only three children registered in at the start of the school year of 1964 but the number rose to 44 at the end of the year. After the first decade the enrollment rose to 139 students which is more than what was expected since the physical facilities could only accommodate 90 students at a time. This happened at the time when there were few private special schools in the Philippines.

In the late eighties, when special education was fully established and well accepted in the Philippines, more special schools began to be established and in the nineties, regular schools have SPED groupings within their regular programs especially in the pre-school category. This made enrollment in the center fluctuate especially since mainstreaming and inclusion were practiced.

In the past, only children from three years up to fourteen were accepted to enroll, however there was a need to expand the vocational and therapeutic programs. At present, the age of the student depends on the program he/she would choose to enroll.

### **III. Services Offered / Programs**

The school was established to provide educational and therapeutic management and remediation which are not available in a regular school or clinic. The thrust of all educational and therapeutic efforts at Cupertino Center evolves around the whole person, reflection of the Center’s holistic philosophy. The child is viewed as an individual with specific needs that must be satisfied and potentials that need to be stimulated for maximum functioning. Every student at school has an individualized (IEP) education and therapeutic program that is geared towards the facilitation of such potentials and satisfaction of such needs.

Among the services offered by the school are:

- A. SPED Elementary (based on the Department of Education Curriculum 4 to 14 years admission age)
- B. Independent and Productive Living Skills (15 to 21 years admission age)

Cupertino Center for Special Children is the first school in the Philippines that offer a sheltered workshop which is still in existence. The workshop is a handmade papermaking “factory” where the “employees” make the hand-made paper products like cards, picture frames, albums, lamps, etc. under the supervision of a manager/teacher. These products are sold and the income given to the workers. Aside from the sheltered workshop, the program includes on the job training such as office assistance, cooking and restaurant assistance, and janitorial, laundry and car wash assistance.

C. Therapeutic Programs for Adults (20-30 years admission age)

1. Art Therapy: Drawing, painting, crafts
2. Music Therapy: Instrument playing, singing, dancing, etc.
3. Therapeutic Sports: Swimming, basketball, badminton, etc.

D. Support Programs:

1. Staff Development
2. Parent Involvement
3. Caregiver Training

#### **IV. Collaboration based on partnership Among Related Fields For Appropriate Services to Individuals with Special Needs**

A. Schools

1. For research. The following are some master’s theses conducted with Cupertino students:
  - a) Art Workshop as Work Transition for Persons with Mental Retardation, 2006 (SPED).
  - b) Parents Expectations and Independence Training Programs for Students with Down Syndrome, 2006 (SPED)
  - c) The Effects of Fingermath Teaching on the Mentally Challenged Children 1999, (Childhood Education)
  - d) Curricular Provisions in Career Preparation for Filipino Adolescents with Mental Retardation, 1996 (SPED)
  - e) Cognitive-Behavior Modification “Training of Impulse Control in Hyperactive Children”, 1988 (Psychology)
  - f) The Verbal Output of the Educable Mentally Retarded Children of Cupertino Center, 1983 (SPED)
  - g) Perceptions of Parents and Teachers on the Effect of the Educational Program of St. Joseph of Cupertino on the Educable Mental Retardates, 1981 (Education)
  - h) Creative Dramatics as Therapy for the Communication Problems of Educable Mentally Retarded Children, 1979 (Occupational Therapy)

My own Doctoral Dissertation (1992) entitled “Factors Related to the Learning Style and School Performance of Special Children; Implications for Administration of Special Schools” had Cupertino students and their parents as participants with other special schools both private and public.

## 2. Practicum and Field Exposure:

The center is also open to practicum students from different colleges and universities in the country.

During their many festivities, the center opens its doors to grade school and high school students of different regular schools for socialization and friendly association.

Nursing students of regular schools are also accepted especially those in their senior year for their field exposure.

## 3. Mainstreaming and Referral Services:

The center refers its students to other regular schools like Montessori, some regular parochial schools, and the regular public schools.

### B. Government Agencies:

In the year 2000, the Center developed a manual for detection of special children in day care centers throughout the country. This was in collaboration with the Department of Social Welfare and Development.

The Department of Agrarian Reform donated seeds and garden equipments for the center.

The National Housing Authority opens its doors for the on-the-job training programs.

### C. Psychiatry, Psychology, Medicine, Occupational, and Physical Therapies, Speech Pathology

Psychiatrists receive numerous referrals from the center for children who need medication, psychologists do some I.Q. tests on some students, medical doctors and neurologists refer some of their patients to us.

The Center also hires occupational, speech and physical therapists for some children who might need them.

## **V. Present Issues / Concerns:**

With the numerous opportunities from other countries (such as higher salaries) the center is losing many of its dedicated SPED teachers and therapists.

Sometimes the collaboration among the different agencies does not take place immediately because of ignorance of the other agencies about special children.