

## Introduction to the Tool Kit

The U.S. Department of Education strives to expand educational opportunities and to improve instruction for all students. To achieve excellence in education for students with disabilities, Secretary of Education Margaret Spellings launched an initiative focused on improving teaching, learning, and assessing by increasing states' capacity to provide rigorous assessment, instruction, and accountability for these students. The keys to this effort are instruction and assessment, relying on the most current and accurate information on how students with disabilities learn while also measuring student performance to ensure continuous growth and progress.

Student achievement is front and center in all our efforts. The Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services (OSERS), the Office of Elementary and Secondary Education (OESE), and the Institute for Education Sciences (IES) are collaborating and linking their programs together to support states' efforts to improve instruction and assessment of all students with disabilities.

To support this initiative, the Department has developed a *Tool Kit on Teaching and Assessing Students With Disabilities (Tool Kit)*, which offers a compilation of current information that will move states forward in improving results for all students with disabilities. The Tool Kit will be added to over time to include more information designed to support states' efforts and to communicate the results of research on teaching, learning, and assessments.

The Tool Kit brings together the most current and accurate information, including research briefs and resources designed to improve instruction, assessment, and accountability for students with disabilities in a format that is easy to access and to understand. The Tool Kit will assist state personnel, schools, and families in their efforts to ensure that all students with disabilities receive a quality education.

The Tool Kit includes information about the Department's investments, papers on large-scale assessment, technical assistance (TA) products, and resources. The section on large-scale assessment includes a collection of seven papers and a glossary that address key issues related to the participation of students with disabilities in these standards-based assessments. The TA products are divided into four substantive areas:

Assessment, Instructional Practices, Behavior, and Accommodations. Materials in each substantive area are color-coded so that they are easily recognizable and contain subcategories of resources:

- Assessment
  - Large-Scale Assessment
  - Alternate Assessment
  - Progress Monitoring
  - Response to Intervention (RTI)
  
- Instructional Practices
  - K–3 Literacy
  - Social Interaction and Communication
  - Adolescent Literacy
  
- Behavior
  - Schoolwide Behavioral Interventions
  
- Accommodations
  - Instructional and Assessment Accommodations

Primary access to the Tool Kit is through the Office of Special Education Programs (OSEP) Ideas That Work Web site (<http://OSEPIdeasThatWork.org>). The Web site contains a table of contents that lists all Tool Kit resources and links to each of the items listed. Users will find a description of each resource, including its citation and target audience. The Web site contains the master list of Tool Kit documents and will be updated as new products become available.

This Tool Kit is an example of the Department of Education's ongoing commitment to ensuring that states, local school districts, schools, and families have the most current and relevant information about practices that will improve and enhance educational opportunities for students with disabilities throughout the nation.