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In-school factors associated with the SENCO role that influence
the rate of referral to the RTLB service.

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of

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New Zealand

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Declaration

I certify that the thesis entitled “In-school factors associated with the SENCO role influencing the rate of referral to the RTLB service” and submitted as part of the degree of Master of Educational Psychology is the result of my own work, except where otherwise acknowledged, and that this research paper (or part of the same) has not been submitted for any other degree to any other university or institution..

Signed _____

Dated _____

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SENCO REFERRING TO RTLb

Abstract

This research investigates what responsibilities and supports allocated to the Special Education Needs Coordinator (SENCO) are associated with lower referral rates to the Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour (RTLb) service. A SENCO that is referring at a lower rate will allocate less time to collaboration and liaison with RTLb and therefore will have more time to allocate to other tasks that can be supporting students with special education needs (SWSEN). This research compares the results from a survey of the responsibilities and supports for SENCO within 20 primary schools to the rate of referral to RTLb. The SENCO indicated what they considered influenced whether a student was referred to RTLb. Rates of referral less than the mean for the 20 schools were associated with experienced SENCO and SENCO that were part of a team referral process. The literature supports SENCO having a leadership role but this research shows that the SENCO who are part of a school management team do not always have influence or control of key special education decisions. The responsibility that was most frequently given a high priority by SENCO was liaison with external agencies. Experienced SENCO more frequently indicated that the most important factor influencing whether a referral was made to RTLb was the effect of the student on the classroom, which is an observation supported by literature on referral rates of boys to special education services. This research indicates that schools could decrease the amount of SENCO release time used for collaboration with RTLb by appointing an experienced SENCO and providing a team to support the SENCO in the referral process.

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Glossary

ERO	Education Review Office
FTTE	Full Time Teacher Equivalent
GEP	Group Education Plan
ILST	Institution-Level Support Team
IAT	Intervention Assistance Team
IEP	Individual Education Plan
IWS	Intensive Wraparound Service
IYT	Incredible Years: Teacher
LSC	Learning Support Coordinator
MLD	Moderate Learning Difficulties
MoE	Ministry of Education
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
ORS	On-going Resourcing Scheme
PB4L	Positive Behaviour for Learning
RTLB	Resource Teacher: Learning and Behaviour
SAER	Students Educational Risk team
SEG	Special Education Grant
SENCO	Special Education Needs Coordinator
SWSEN	Student with special education needs