



Module 1 – Understanding IEPs and School-Based Services Supplemental Materials

***“The best preparation for tomorrow is doing your best today.” H.
Jackson Brown, Jr.***

Instructions

Please view the Understanding IEPs and School Based Services video before completing the checklists and worksheets. The video provides a comprehensive overview of the topic. While completing these worksheets, you may need to reference additional resources and reading. We have listed some resources that we have found helpful in the Additional Resources section.

Topic Summary

The process of transitioning from adolescence to adulthood is a journey, one that can be particularly challenging for individuals living with disabilities and their families. It is crucial to understand the supports and resources that are available to you along the way beginning with services offered through special education as part of formal schooling. In the IEP's and School Based Services module, we review the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act and the special education services that are mandated by law. In addition, we discuss desirable adult outcomes ,i.e. what the desired adult lifestyle for your child will be. We further review the important elements of the IEP in relation to transition.

Checklists and Actionables

No matter how well-intended your child's public school staff may be (and it is always best to assume that they do mean well and what's best for your child!), not everyone will have the same knowledge and skill competencies you will have after completing these Modules.

Here is a checklist you can use to make sure you have prepared as fully as you can for your future interactions with your school district's representatives. Be sure to collect your child's most recent assessments, evaluations, including the Triennial Evaluation



(completed once every three years by the school district), and any other psychological evaluations or testing.

Review of Transition Related Assessments and Evaluations

- Have I looked over copies of the transition-related evaluations and assessments already used by the school to determine whether or not:
 - Do results align with my own impressions of my son's/daughter's strengths, interests and preferences?
 - Allow for supports, accommodations, or modifications so that they best depict my child's strengths and needs?
 - Offer a hopeful, rather than a highly restricted/hopeless view of my child?
- If the answers to any of the above are "no," have I asked school staff not to administer the specific transition-related evaluations/assessments for which I have concerns?
- Has transition-related evaluation/assessment included a broad process of discovery to determine what can be considered as a career for my child with or without supported or customized employment for the short- or long-term?
- Has my son/daughter had a paid job with evaluative feedback from his/her actual supervisor (and not a write-up by school staff!)?
- Does my son/daughter need situational assessments by school staff to identify areas where s/he may need support or a re-written job specification that will meet the employer's needs?
- Has the assessment included a functional curriculum-based component – i.e., has it allowed staff to interview me about what my child can do at home or observe what my child can do so s/he can be exempted from parts of the curriculum that do not apply to him/her?



Definitions

Adaptations: Changes to HOW the person with a disability accesses he/her physical or social environment. Generally speaking, people with more significant disabilities rely on more individualized and/or complex adaptations.

Adult services: Employment, residential, and other community-based supports if your child is eligible AND there is funding.

Age-Appropriate: Treatment and opportunities appropriate to the individual's chronological age.

Assistive Technology: High or low technology devices that facilitate greater independence.

Chronological Age: How old your son/daughter is in actual number of years since birth. Everyone who is 21 years of age, for example, needs to be treated and given the same opportunities as other adults in their early 20's, even if they need supports.

Deficit thinking: What your child cannot do because of his/her disability

Mandated v. Non-mandated services: No one can deny your child school-based services. If there is no money for adult services, your son or daughter may not get services even if s/he meets eligibility requirements.

Modifications: Changes to requirements so that the individual can participate as fully as she/he can. An example may be that someone with limited math skills is only given less complicated invoices, inventory sheets, etc., whereas an employee with better math skills would do the more complicated tasks. In other words, modifications alter essential functions so they person with a disability can, minimally, participate partially.

Natural supports: Unpaid supports such as a nondisabled roommate, co-workers or supervisors, members of the community. (NOTE: In some instances, those providing natural supports may need specialized training to be able to support your son or daughter effectively. Also note that these may be the ONLY available supports when budgets are tight.



Reasonable Accommodations: Changes required to physical and social environments, as well as other ways of doing things, that allow an individual with a disability EQUAL ACCESS to the same things (e.g., housing, work, community resources, transportation, communication, etc.) as someone without a disability has *provided they do not result in an “unreasonable burden.”* For work, an accommodation is only “reasonable” if the individual is “otherwise qualified” to do what the employer needs done. For example, someone who is blind would NOT be otherwise qualified to drive a bus but, with Braille and text-to-speech technology, might be otherwise qualified to schedule transportation. “Reasonable accommodations” can include both adaptations and modifications that do not fundamentally change what everyone without a disability is doing.

Special education services: End either when your child ACCEPTS his/her diploma or ages out during the year in which s/he turns 21.

Strengths-based thinking: What your child’s unique gifts, talents, strengths, and preferences are REGARDLESS of his/her disability.

Transition: The process, steps, and supports provided to students with disabilities who are exiting school based IEP led services and entering the adult world. Transition is most commonly thought of as school to work transition.

LifeCourse Integrated Services and Supports Planning Worksheet

Remember it is essential to think always about integrating services as in the following diagram by first identifying your sons/daughter’s personal strengths and assets. Then, in order, consider how those strengths can be enhanced by technology (maybe even resulting in independence!), then what relationship-based supports you already have or can develop, then what community resources are available to EVERYONE, and only lastly consider eligibility-based supports ONLY where and when needed! The diagram shows only some general categories of ideas that you may want to include with an example of IEP based supports. A blank worksheet is provided at the end of this packet.

Module 1 IEPs and School-Based Services

CHARTING the LifeCourse



Integrated Services and Supports

Technology

- Personal laptop or mini
- Cell phone to keep track of classes/activities/appointments
- AAC including a communication book if words fail
- Mobility devices
- Graphic organizers
- Color coded materials by class
- GPS/inconspicuous monitoring device to allow independence
- FIT or other device to monitor physical activity

Personal Strengths & Assets

- Self-advocacy skills
- Ability to communicate through speech or other means
- Social strengths
- Interests and preferences

Relationship Based Supports

- Friends without disabilities
- Friends with disabilities
- Classmates
- Students in other grades
- Students in the same study halls, lunch wave, gym class, after school activities, etc.
- Friends and siblings of students in the same school
- Building and district administrators
- General education teachers
- Special education teachers
- Related services providers
- Family members
- Advocates
- Transition coordinator
- Paraprofessionals
- Other school staff members (e.g., secretaries, custodians, guards)

Name: _____

Age: _____

Date: _____

- Academic general education courses
- Non-academic general education courses
- Extra- or co-curricular activities (e.g., clubs, sports, yearbook, other committees or organizations)
- Field trips
- DECA or other business-oriented connections within and outside of the school
- Student Success Plan

Community Resources

- IDEA services according to an IEP
- Transition services according to the IEP
- 504 plan
- Coordinate with representative of adult services agency for which your child is eligible

Eligibility Based Supports

Developed by the UMKC Institute for Human Development, UCEDD.

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Additional Resources:

<https://www2.ed.gov/parents/needs/speced/iepguide/index.html>

“The purpose of this guidance is to assist educators, parents, and state and local educational agencies in implementing the requirements of Part B of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) regarding Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) for children with disabilities, including preschool-aged children.” - www.2ed.gov

<http://www.lifecoursetools.com/>

“Charting the Life Course is a framework that was developed to help individuals with disabilities and families at any age or stage of life think about what they need to know, identify how to find or develop supports, and discover what it takes to live the lives they want to live”. – lifecoursetools.com

Below is an additional checklist to help you prepare for PPT Meetings

Before, During & After the PPT Meeting

Preparing for the PPT Meeting & Development of The Individualized Education Program (IEP)

BEFORE THE PPT MEETING:

COMMUNICATE WITH YOUR CHILD TO:

- check on current preferences, perceptions, needs, concerns, issues, desires;
- discuss your child's participation (if appropriate) in the PPT meeting; and
- determine what, if anything, your child wants to share with the team, and how you can assist.

COMMUNICATE WITH SCHOOL STAFF TO:

- establish current status of your child's performance/achievement and schedule observations, if necessary;
- clarify information contained in recent evaluations, obtain answers to puzzling questions and understand the connections between assessment information and instruction; and
- notify the PPT chair of any individuals, professional or not, you are planning to invite to the meeting, any agenda items you want addressed, and ask what the school staff plan to discuss.

GATHER AND COMPILE:

- recent and all other relevant evaluations pertinent to this year's issues;
- the current and other relevant IEPs, to evaluate the extent of progress toward identified goals and objectives;
- the most recent and other relevant report cards;
- copies of any other important school records;
- a list of your concerns, issues, questions, ideas;
- documentation to support your request for any new services;
- a blank copy of the district's IEP form in order to be familiar with its requirements and to use it to guide your participation in program planning;
- all relevant correspondence and electronic and phone communication notes with school personnel and outside professionals;
- statements from you child regarding his/her concerns, questions, issues, goals; and
- possible solutions to challenges you have identified.

INVITE:

- appropriate professionals who know the child and have information and insights to share with the team concerning any of the issues or areas of concern;
- a friend/companion for moral support; and
- an advocate, if necessary.

DURING THE PPT MEETING:

MAKE SURE YOU HAVE:

- a translator if you need one;
- been offered a copy of the procedural safeguards;
- been given advance notice of the reason for the meeting.

BE A CONSTRUCTIVE AND COLLABORATIVE MEMBER OF THE TEAM BY:

- focusing on your child's strengths and needs;
- being a listener as well as a contributor;
- requesting explanations of any information/terms you do not understand;
- generously and appropriately sharing your extensive knowledge of your child;
- working with the rest of the team to develop an appropriate IEP that utilizes your child's strengths to meet his/her needs in the least restrictive environment.

DISCUSSION WITH ALL OTHER TEAM MEMBERS ON:

- your child's strengths, needs and current levels of performance;
- what your child's progress has been in meeting the goals and objectives of the IEP that is being reviewed;
- accommodations and/or modifications needed for your child to benefit from instruction in the general classroom or other instructional setting;
- what portion of the program, if any, needs to be in a setting other than the general curriculum regardless of instructional setting;
- filling out the Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) checklist;
- your child's access to school-sponsored extracurricular activities;
- your child's level of participation in statewide assessments;
- when and how you and staff members will communicate with your child about his/her progress;
- how all staff members providing services to your child will have access to the IEP;
- the tasks for which individual members of the team are responsible (including you and your child);
- when the PPT will reconvene if additional time is needed;
- whether there is a need for an Assistive Technology Evaluation;
- whether there is a need for Extended School Year Services;
- whether your child is of appropriate age to begin formally planning for transition to the adult world.

IF AGREEMENT HAS NOT BEEN REACHED:

- check to make sure the written prior notice section of the meeting paperwork (page 3) has been discussed by the team and filled in; and
- ask questions that you need to so that you understand why an agreement was not reached.

AFTER THE PPT MEETING:

- review the IEP received from the school for accuracy; and
- follow through on all home activities that will support school efforts and tasks that you, as a team member, have agreed to undertake.



Starting Small

List the first 5 things you will do/assure gets done to work with your school-based services and develop an IEP that moves your child toward the valued life outcome your child (and you) want to have.

Action Steps	Who's responsible	Completion date
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

CHARTING the LifeCourse



Integrated Supports

People need supports to lead good lives. Using a combination of lots of different kinds of support helps to plot a trajectory toward an inclusive, quality, community life. This tool will help families and individuals think about how to work in partnership to support their vision for a good life.



Access the LifeCourse framework and tools at lifecoursetools.com