



Activities for **Students, Teachers and IEP Support Team Members** to support student participation in the IEP process:

Not all students will participate in the same manner or to the same degree. Different levels of involvement include:

- 1) Attending the IEP meeting and sharing information: The student is present and treated as a full member of the IEP team. The IEP team leader directs questions to the student, such as “Why do you think you are having difficulty in science class?”
- 2) Co-presenting: The student shares responsibility for presenting information with the IEP team leader. For example, the student may read or present information that should be incorporated into the new IEP. There usually is a delineation of responsibilities, with the student knowing his or her responsibilities in advance.
- 3) Leading the IEP meeting: Actively taking charge of the meeting where the team participates, but follows the lead of the student.

Given the opportunity to actively prepare for their IEP meeting, students will begin to develop and enhance advocacy and leadership skills that will lead to more meaningful involvement not only in their IEP meeting, but in their transition to life after high school.

QUESTIONS:

Develop questions that you can rehearse with the student. Use these questions as “prompts” during the IEP meeting. Examples include:

- What do you see as your strengths?
- What do you think you need help with in school?
- What do you want your teachers to know about you?

More experienced students can turn these questions around and ask their IEP team: “What do you see as my strengths?” “What do you see as my needs?”

SCRIPT:

Prepare a “script” using:

- *Index cards*: To assist in staying organized, you may want to use: 1) Color cards or 2) Number the index cards or 3) Punch holes in the cards & place them on a ring.
- *“Highlighter” marker*: Ask students to “highlight” sections they will share with the team.
- *Tape recorder or other assistive device*: Have student record “their part” and play it back to rehearse what they want to say.
- *“Stickies”*: Use for brief notes or reminders.
- *Computer*: Type the script into a word document or even create a power point.

ROLE PLAY:

- This can be done in a group situation or one-to-one with a teacher or with a student leader/mentor.
- Encourage students to ask their parents or another family member to role play with them at home.

PRACTICE – The student’s part

Provide ideas and opportunities for students to practice their participation.

- Find a quiet place & simply read their script out loud.
- Practice with a family member or friend who can provide feedback
- Create a power point presentation of what the student will say (just working on the “creation” can be helpful in and of itself).
- Have students video tape each other. This is a very effective way for students to review “their performance” and make changes.
- Talk into a tape recorder or other assistive device and play back

PRACTICE

Review or provide instruction through examples and role playing of appropriate and effective social skills and social behaviors:

- Introducing yourself & Greeting someone – Discuss and show the difference between: 1) Casual greetings with friends and 2) More universally recognized greetings that show respect to people you don’t know.
- Listening – Using a 1 minute timer, have students practice in pairs “listening” and “talking” about topics of interest. An example prompted by the teacher: For one minute tell your partner what you did yesterday when you left school. The partner is instructed to not interrupt.
- Speaking clearly – Give examples of leaders who, if they didn’t speak clearly, would not be their current positions (principal of the school, pastor, politician, etc.)
- Asking questions – Encourage students to ask if they are not sure.
- Stating disagreements in an appropriate way – Give an example of a disagreement you had and ask students for examples from their own experiences. Questions may be: Did it help when you got angry with your friend about that? How else could you handle the situation if a teacher says something that you don’t like?

INTERACTIVE GAMES:

Create a “spin off” to popular game shows like “Jeopardy”, “Deal or No Deal” and “Who Wants to be a Millionaire”. This method of learning can be especially effective and fun when trying to help students learn IEP terminology.

Create “word searches”, “crossword puzzles”, “bingo”, “matching terms to definitions charts”, etc. These can be done on paper, flip chart, overheads or using the computer.

Students often know the television shows quite well and can be very active in creating a game that can be used for the entire class or by an individual. Students are also eager to use computers, video games and other electronic devices so this approach is very appealing.

- The first step is simply recognizing words they will hear such as: disability, accommodations, evaluation, goals, transition, state tests, as well as acronyms such as: IEP, DVR, PLEP, etc.
- The second step is helping students to understand what the terminology actually means in relation to them and their IEP.

OTHER: Quick but meaningful activities related to sections of the IEP:

Identifying Strengths & Preferences:

- Candy Bar Personality Test
 - <http://www.geocities.com/heartland/8239/candy1.htm>
- Shape & Color Tests – Use and revise as appropriate
 - <http://www.shapetest.com/>
 - <http://www.viewzone.com/luscher.html>

Learning IEP terminology:

- Make IEP Triangle Balls
 - Cut out circles of paper (you can choose the size)
 - Have students fold paper into triangles
 - Each student writes a word or term from the IEP process that they have heard (ex. Self advocacy, Goal, etc.)
 - One student presents by reading all the words

Setting Goals:

- Snowflakes
 - Have each student write down a short-term or long term goal.
 - Ask students to crumple up their paper into balls.
 - Have them toss them in the air or gently at each other like snow falling.
 - Have students pick up someone else’s “snowflake” and read the goal.
 - Each snowflake is individual and different just like each person’s goal.

Learning About Disabilities:

- Learn about Famous People with Disabilities
 - <http://www.reddisability.org.uk/famous-modem/DisFamous.htm>
 - <http://www.iidc.indiana.edu/cedir/kidsweb/fpwdinfo.html>
 - <http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/general/FAMOUS.HTML>
 - http://www.disabled-world.com/artman/publish/article_0060.shtml

- Watch videos about disability
 - Forrest Gump, Benny and Joon, Rain Man, Mask, Miracle in Lane 2, What's Eating Gilbert Grape?