



Student Involvement in the IEP Process

How can students be involved in their IEP process?

Konrad and Test (2004) suggest four ways students can be involved in their IEP process:

- **Planning the IEP** includes laying the foundation for the meeting by identifying strengths and needs, establishing goals, considering options, and preparing materials for the IEP meeting.
- **Drafting the IEP** includes having students write a draft of their IEP that reflects these strengths and needs, as well as their interests and preferences.
- **Meeting to revise the draft** is completed at the IEP meeting in which students have the opportunity to share their interests, preferences, and needs already identified on their IEP draft and participate in dialogue with other members of the IEP team to develop a plan.
- **Implementing the IEP** involves students evaluating how well they are achieving the goals identified in their IEP

What are some evidence-based practices for involving students in their IEP process?

The **Self-Advocacy Strategy** is a motivation strategy designed to prepare students to participate in any education or transition planning meeting. Prerequisites include a willingness to learn the strategy and the ability to communicate (i.e., gestures or through words). The steps of the **IPLAN** strategy are:

1. **I**nventory your strengths, areas to improve or learn, goals, and choices for learning or accommodations
 - In the first step students complete an inventory sheet that they can use at their meetings which identifies strengths, areas to improve or learn, goals, and choices for learning or accommodations.
2. **P**rovide your inventory information
 - In the second step students use their inventory sheet during discussion in the IEP meeting.
3. **L**isten and respond
 - The third step involves students learning the proper times to listen (e.g., when someone is making a statement, when someone is asking a question) and respond (e.g., when someone asks a question, when you have information to add).
4. **A**sk questions
 - The fourth step involves teaching students how to ask questions when they don't understand what people are saying
5. **N**ame your goals
 - The last step teaches students to name the goals they would like included in their IEP.

For more information on the *Self-Advocacy Strategy* see:

Hammer, M. R. (2004). Using the *Self-Advocacy Strategy* to increase student participation in IEP conferences. *Intervention in School and Clinic*, 39, 295-300.

Lancaster, P., Schumaker, J., & Deshler, D. (2002). The development and validation of an interactive hypermedia program for teaching a self-advocacy strategy to students with disabilities. *Learning Disability Quarterly*, 25, 277-302.

Test, D. W., & Neale, M. (2004). Using the *Self-Advocacy Strategy* to increase middle graders' IEP participation. *Journal of Behavioral Education*, 13, 135-145.

Van Reusen, A. K., & Bos, C. S. (1994). Facilitating student participation in the individualized education programs through motivation strategy instruction. *Exceptional Children*, 60, 466-475.

Van Reusen, A. K., Deshler, D. D., & Schumaker, J. B. (1989). Effects of a student participation strategy in facilitating the involvement of adolescents with learning disabilities in individualized education program planning process. *Learning Disabilities, 1*, 23-34.

The *Self-Directed IEP* consists of 11 steps students can follow to lead their own IEP meeting. Steps are organized across 11 lessons taught in six to ten 45-minute sessions. The *Self-Directed IEP* package also includes assessments, videotape, and student workbook. The 11 steps are:

- **Step 1: Begin meeting by stating the purpose**, involves students learning how to explicitly state the purpose of the meeting (e.g., review goals).
- **Step 2: Introduce everyone**, involves students learning who is required to be at an IEP meeting and who else they would like to invite, as well as practicing introducing these individuals.
- **Step 3: Review past goals and performance**, involves students stating their goals and learning which actions can be taken to help meet their goals.
- **Step 4: Ask for others' feedback**, involves students learning what feedback is and the different ways they can receive feedback on their goals.
- **Step 5: State your school and transition goals**, involves students identifying their interests, skills, and needs and the goals they would like to achieve in school.
- **Step 6: Ask questions if you don't understand**, involves students learning how to ask questions for clarification.
- **Step 7: Deal with differences in opinion**, involves students learning the LUCK strategy (Listening to other person's opinion, Using a respectful tone of voice, Compromising or Changing your opinion if necessary, and Knowing and stating the reasons for your opinion).
- **Step 8: State the support you will need to reach your goal**, involves students learning about the supports that will help them in achieving their goals.
- **Step 9: Summarize your current goals**, involves students restating their goals, the actions they will take to meet those goals, and stating how they would receive feedback in meeting those goals.
- **Step 10: Close meeting by thanking everyone**, involves students learning how to bring closure to the meeting by using closing statements and thanking everyone for attending.
- **Step 11: Work on IEP goals all year**, involves students being reminded to work on their goals all year by taking actions, receiving feedback, and support to accomplish these goals.

For more information on the *Self-Directed IEP* see:

Allen, S., Smith, A., Test, D. W., Flowers, C. & Wood, W. M. (2001). The effects of *Self-Directed IEP* on student participation in IEP meetings. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 24*, 107-120.

Arndt, S. A., Konrad, M., & Test, D. W. (2006). Effects of *Self-Directed IEP* on student participation in planning meetings. *Remedial and Special Education, 27*, 194-207.

Martin, J. E., Van Dycke, J. L., Christensen, W. R., Greene, B. A., Gardner, J. E., & Lovett, D. L. (2006). Increasing student participation in their transition IEP meetings: Establishing the *Self-Directed IEP* as an evidenced-based practice. *Exceptional Children, 72*(3), 299-316.

Snyder, E. P. (2002). Teaching students with combined behavioral disorders and mental retardation to lead their own IEP meetings. *Behavioral Disorders, 27*, 340-357.

Snyder, E. P., & Shapiro, E. S. (1997). Teaching students with emotional/behavioral disorders the skills to participate in the development of their own IEPs. *Behavioral Disorders, 22*, 246-259.

Reference

Konrad, M., & Test, D. W. (2004). Teaching middle-school students with disabilities to use an IEP template. *Career Development for Exceptional Individuals, 27*, 101-124.

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