

The logo features three green blades of grass on the left side of a blue oval. Inside the oval, the text "It's All About The Plan!" is written in a white, sans-serif font. The word "Plan!" is larger and more prominent than the other words.

It's All About The Plan!

The Student and the Individual Education Program

Guidebook

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About This Guide

This guide was developed to give you extra information for the E-Learning course, "It's All About the Plan! The Student and the IEP". This online course was set up to help students be active members of their Individual Education Program (IEP) team. Whether or not you take the online course, we think that the information in this guide will help you in getting the most out of your IEP meetings.

"It's All About the Plan!" is a course offered through Southeast Community College (SCC). The course was developed by Fritz & O'Hare Associates and SCC through a grant from the Nebraska Planning Council on Developmental Disabilities. To register for the course, contact SCC's Continuing Education Division at 402-437-2700.

Want to know more?



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The Individual Education Program (IEP)



What is it?

IEP stands for Individual Education Program. This is a written form that describes what is supposed to happen at school for a student with a disability.

What's in it?

Among other things, the IEP talks about:

- Your disability
- What skills you need to learn
- What you'll do in school this year
- What services your school will provide

Why do you need it?

The first reason is that it's the law! And, there's a very good reason for this law. It makes sure that everyone – you, your family, and your school – knows what needs to happen to help you learn.

When is it held?

The law says that you have to have at least one IEP meeting each year. You may have more meetings, if you, your parents, or school think there's a need for more.



Who comes to your IEP meeting?

It depends. The law says that certain people must be invited to the meeting. Others might come, depending on your situation. Your team may include:

- You
- Your parents
- Your special education teacher (at least one)
- Your regular education teacher (if you are in general classes)
- Other school staff, such as a speech-language specialist, counselor, psychologist, etc.
- Staff from adult agencies such as Vocational Rehabilitation (VR) or Developmental Disabilities (DD), if you're 16 or older
- Anyone else who knows you well and who can help you plan for the future

Why should YOU be a part of your IEP meeting?

This is the big question and the whole point of this Guide. There are many reasons why you should go to your IEP meeting and why you should speak up and be a part of the meeting. Here are three of those reasons.



Your IEP is all about you! Nobody knows YOU better than YOU!



Decisions made at your IEP meeting affect your education and your life. You need to help make those decisions.



Your IEP meeting gives you a chance to learn to work and communicate with others.



Getting Ready for Your IEP

Whether you've been to a lot of IEP meetings or are planning to go to your first one, there are things you need to do to get ready. Most students need help with this. So, let's start by thinking about who might help you.



- ✓ **Who knows you best?** This is the person who can tell when you're happy or sad without even having to tell them.
- ✓ **Who do you trust?** This is the person who you know will always be there to help you when you need them.
- ✓ **Who will be willing to help you?** It takes time to get ready for your IEP. Who will be willing to take the time to help you?

Once you've figured out who your helper is going to be and they've agreed to help you, it's time to get to work. There are a lot of things to think about and questions to answer.

Questions to Consider

Questions are listed on the following worksheets to help you think about things that are important to you. These questions include:

- What do I do well?***
- What do I like and dislike?***
- What do I want?***
- What help do I need?***

If you're taking the e-learning course, you'll have a chance to answer these questions online. Or, you can download or print the worksheets and start making notes now. You may want to ask your helper to take notes for you. Don't worry about writing a lot or how you write the answers. These are just notes to help you remember. And, if you don't know how to answer a question, it's okay to skip it!

WORKSHEET #1: What Do I Do Well?

1. What do I do well in school?



2. What do I do well at home?



3. What do I do well in my community?



4. What do others say I do well?



WORKSHEET #2: What Do I Like and Dislike?

1. What do I like to do for fun?



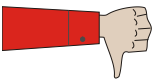
2. Who are my favorite people?



3. What are my favorite things to do at school?



4. What don't I like?



WORKSHEET #3: What Do I Want?

1. What do I want to do this year?



2. What kind of job do I want after high school?

MY COMPANY



3. Where do I want to live after high school?



4. What new things would I like to try?



WORKSHEET #4: What Help Do I Need?

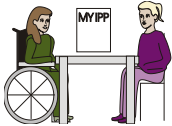
1. How do I learn best?



2. Where do I learn best?



3. How can others help me?



4. What can I do to help myself?

TO DO	
✓ 1	_____
✓ 2	_____
✓ 3	_____
4	_____
5	_____

Using This Information

So now that you've answered these questions, how are you going to share this information with your IEP team? You have lots of choices. Here are some ideas for you. You may want to do all of these things, some of these things, or none of these things. It's up to you. The key is that this is your chance to speak up!



- Maybe you don't want to do anything special at all with the information. Just thinking through these questions might be all you need to help you prepare for your meeting.
- Maybe you want to give your answers to the questions to someone you trust (parents, teachers, friend) and ask them to share the information with your team.
- Maybe you would like to pick a few questions and tell your team about your answers.
- Or...maybe you want to go all out and put together your own report to share with your team. If so, read on!

Creating Your Report

If you've decided you'd like to put together a report for your team, here are some ideas to help you out. You will probably want to work with your helper (the person who helped you answer the questions in the earlier activity) to do this.

Here are a few simple steps for you to follow:



1. Look at the answers you've written down on your worksheets.
2. Decide what is most important to share with your team. There are likely some things that are more important than others, so it may be best if you focus on those. There may not be enough time to talk about everything.
3. Decide how you want to present your report. There are a lot of options and we are just going to give you a few examples.



Types of Reports



Make a poster using pictures and/or words

 All About Me! 	
This is me:	This is my family:
My favorite things are:	My favorite places are:



Write out or type up a list

GOALS

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____





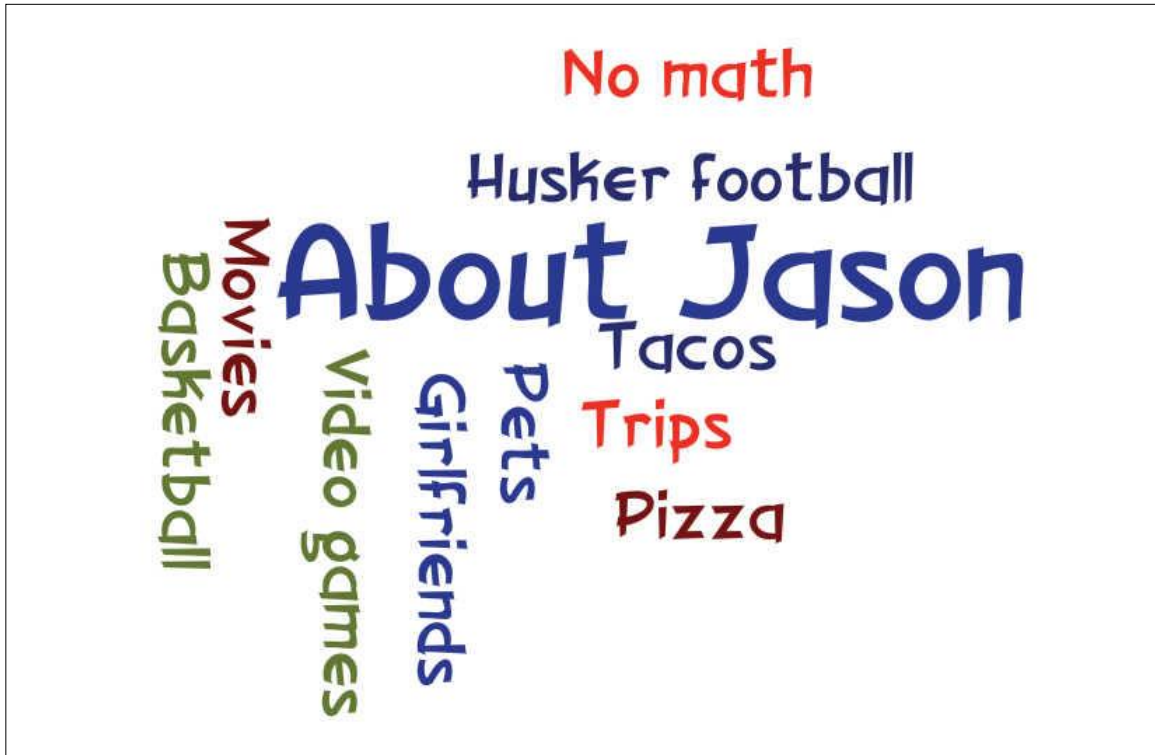
Make a PowerPoint Presentation

<p>Welcome to</p> <p>My IEP</p> <p>Jason</p>	<p>This is what I like to do:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Spend time with friends• Be outside• Play basketball
<p>This is what I don't like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Sitting still• People who don't let me finish talking• Math!!	<p>I am good at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Taking care of pets• Being nice to other people• Singing
<p>I need help with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Math• Listening in class• Managing my money	<p>My plan for the future:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Get a job working with animals• Get my own apartment
<p>This year, I want to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Join a basketball team• Spend time with my friends• Pass my math class	<p>Thank You!</p>



Make a Word Cloud

A Word Cloud is a way of listing words or ideas in an interesting format. You can choose font, layout, design, and colors.



More about Word Clouds

Several websites provide an easy way to do this. Check out:

Wordle

<http://www.wordle.net>

ABCya

http://www.abcya.com/word_clouds.htm

Sharing Your Report

1. **Tell your IEP Manager** –the person who runs your meetings – that you have a report to share. And, the sooner the better. For sure, tell them a few days ahead of time. They will appreciate the heads-up so that they can plan time for this at your meeting. If it's on paper, they may want a copy so that they can make copies for everyone else on the team.
2. **Practice!** If you're going to be presenting your own report, make sure you practice what you're going to say. It's natural to get nervous when talking in front of a group of people, but it helps if you're prepared.
3. **Get help** if you need it. If you don't want to be the one to give your report, ask your helper or someone else you trust to share your report with the team.
4. **Celebrate!** When you're all done, be sure to celebrate. Be proud of what you've done!

