It's All About The Plan!

The Student and the Individual Education Program

Facilitator Handbook

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About the Course

It's All About the Plan! is a course designed to provide information to assist individuals with disabilities, their families and guardians in meaningfully participating in the process of planning for the services and supports provided through the school or the adult intellectual/developmental disabilities (I/DD) service system.

The course contains four modules:

➤ The Student and the Individual Education Program (IEP)
➤ The Parent and the Individual Education Program (IEP)
➤ The Individual and the Individual Support Plan (ISP)
➤ The Family/Guardian and the Individual Support Plan (ISP)

It's all About the Plan! was developed by Fritz & O'Hare Associates and Southeast Community College (SCC) in Lincoln, Nebraska. The course is offered online through Southeast Community College's Continuing Education Division.

To register for the course:

Contact SCC's Continuing Education Division

402-437-2700

For information about the course, to obtain course materials, or to participate in a group session, contact:

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Handbook and Student Guide

This Facilitator Handbook is designed to assist a facilitator in leading a group through the e-learning module, *The Student and the Individual Education Program (IEP)*. While the module may be viewed individually, there may be benefit to watching in a group setting where participants can discuss the content and their questions with a facilitator and each other.

This handbook is designed to assist a facilitator in leading a group in viewing the module and discussing the material. Information is organized to match the outline of the module and includes:

VIEW TIME   Viewing time for each part of the module

REVIEW   A summary of topics discussed in the module

DISCUSSION   Suggested questions to facilitate group discussion

GUIDE   References to information found in the *Student's Guide to the Individual Education Program*

ACTIVITY   Recommended activities for group participation

Customizing for Different Audiences

The training should be tailored to students' needs and interests, such as for elementary, high school, or transition students or students in particular school districts. When planning to present the training, think about the audience's priorities, abilities, needs, and schedule. The focus of the presentation may be modified by spending more or less time on certain sections. The module may be presented in one session or broken up for sequential sessions. Facilitators will know their audience best; therefore, final decisions regarding customization are left to their discretion.

Beginning the Session

Supplemental information for the course is provided in the *Student's Guide to the Individual Education Program*, referred to as the Student Guide throughout this document. Each student should be given a Guide to utilize during the session and to keep as a resource for future use.

Before beginning the session, the facilitator should review the module purpose with students. The facilitator may also want to remind students that, while the content may be review for some, it may be new to others.

> **The purpose of the *Student and the IEP* course is to provide information to assist students in meaningfully participating in the IEP process.**

Introductions

Begin the session with an introductory activity. This may be modified depending upon the facilitator's familiarity with the students and the familiarity of the students with each other. In a session where the facilitator and students already know each other, the facilitator may wish to use a different icebreaker activity.

Icebreaker Activity

1. Ask each student to introduce him/herself, answering the following questions:
   - What is your name?
   - What school do you attend?
   - What grade are you in?
   - What do you like best about school?

2. Ask the group if they know what an IEP meeting is and whether they have attended one.

3. Ask for a volunteer to share what they know about IEPs with the group.

Part 1: Introductions
Part 2: Clarissah and Jordan

VIEW TIME

> 2 Minutes

REVIEW

1. Students are introduced to the idea of participating in their IEPs.
2. Meet Jordan: 16 year-old high school student who has attended many IEP meetings. Jordan recognizes the benefit of attending and preparing for his IEPs.
3. Meet Clarissah: middle school student who is new to attending IEP meetings. Clarissah fails to see a reason for participating in her IEPs.

DISCUSSION

The following discussion questions are suggested, followed by possible answers or prompts.

1. How did Jordan feel at first about going to his IEP meetings? What did Jordan get out of his meetings once he started going?
   Answer: *He didn't want to go. He was able to do some things in school he really wanted to do once he started attending and talking with his team.*

2. When did you first start going to your IEPs? Who attends with you?
   Prompts: *Do you always go? Sometimes? Never? Do your mom, dad, or other family member(s) attend?*

3. What do you do when you go to your IEP meeting?
   Prompts: *Do you pay attention? Do you speak up? Or, do you just sit there and wait for it to get over?*

4. What do you like about your IEP meeting?
   Prompts: *Do you like hearing about what you do well? Do you like having the chance to tell your team what you think? Do you like talking about plans for your future?*

5. What don't you like about your IEP meeting?
   Prompts: *Are you okay with having your team talk about you? Do you feel like you don't have a chance to say what you want? Do you feel like the team talks too much about what you can't do (your needs) instead of what you can do (your strengths)?*

Part 3: About the IEP

7 Minutes

1. The **Individual Education Program (IEP)** is introduced as a meeting where parents, teachers, and others get together to talk about the student's strengths, needs, and future. The IEP is a written plan to address the things the student needs to do in high school to prepare for the future.
2. **IEP goals** are described as the things the student wants to do in high school and in the future. The IEP is a plan to help the student reach his/her goals.
3. **IEP meetings** are usually about an hour and held at least one time per year.
4. **IEP team members** include the student, parents, teachers, and others such as psychologists, speech therapists, occupational therapists, interpreters, etc. If extra people are coming, the IEP Manager should be notified before the meeting.
5. **Self-advocacy** means speaking up for oneself. The IEP meeting is an opportunity for the student to speak up for him/herself.

The following discussion questions are suggested, followed by possible answers or prompts.

1. What does IEP stand for?
   Answer: Individual Education Program

2. What is in Jordan's IEP?
   Answer:
   a. *What he does well*
   b. *What he does not do well*
   c. *What he likes to do*
   d. *What he doesn't like to do*

3. Why doesn't Clarissah want to go to her meetings?
   Answer: Mom didn't think Clarissah would "get it"; she doesn't see the point.

4. Jordan's goal is to learn to drive and live in his own house. What are your goals for when you graduate from high school?
   Prompts: Where do you want to live? Work? What new things do you want to explore, learn or try?

5. Who does Clarissah want to invite to her IEP meeting?
   Answer: Her paraprofessional (para) and her grandmother

6. Who would you like to invite to your IEP meeting?
   Prompts: Are there family members (other than your parents) who know you well? Friends who can help you feel more comfortable in the meeting? Someone from an adult agency (such as VR or DD services)?

7. Who is the most important person at Clarissah's IEP meeting?
   Answer: Clarissah

8. Who is the most important person at your IEP meeting?
   Answer: You! You are the "I" in Individual!

9. What does self-advocacy mean?
   Answer: Speaking up for yourself

10. How can you be a self-advocate at your IEP meeting?
    Prompts: What kinds of things will help you speak up at your meetings? Is there something or someone who can help you feel more comfortable in doing this?

> **GUIDE**

Pages 4-6:   *The Individual Education Program*

Part 4: It's About You

3 Minutes

REVIEW

1. **Team members give reports** at the IEP meeting. These reports will be about what the student is doing in school and how they are doing. Students are introduced to the idea that they can also develop and present a report.

2. **The student's role** at the IEP is to let others know how he or she thinks they are doing in school and what they want to do in school and in the future.

DISCUSSION

The following discussion questions are suggested, followed by possible answers or prompts.

1. What does Clarissah want to do that she isn't doing now?
   Answer: Wants to help with school plays.

2. What did Jordan tell his team he wanted to do? Did he get to do it?
   Answer: Jordan wanted to play football. He is on the team, but doesn't play too much. He likes just being on the team.

3. What do you like best about school?
   Prompts: What are your favorite classes? Other school activities you enjoy?

4. What do you think your teachers will say about you at your IEP?
   Prompts: Will they say you are doing well in your classes? Are you a hard worker? Do you get along well with others?

5. What does Jordan want to be after he graduates from high school?
   Answer: He is thinking about being a carpenter.

6. What do you want to do (your goals) after you graduate from high school?
   Prompts: Do you want to get a job? Move out on your own? Get more schooling or training?

7. What will help you meet your goals?
   Prompts: Take certain classes? Join groups or be a part of activities?

Page 7:   *Getting Ready for Your IEP*

Break Time!

A break is offered after this section. When the break is over, check in with the students to see if anyone has questions before you continue.

Part 5: Preparing for the IEP
Part 6: Questions to Consider

VIEW TIME

    5 Minutes

REVIEW

1. Students are introduced to the concept of **developing a report** for their IEP meeting.
2. A set of **four worksheets** is provided in the module and in the Student Guide to be completed by the student as a starting point for developing their report.

DISCUSSION

Depending upon the size of your group, either work through the worksheets with the students during the session or assist them in identifying someone to help them complete the worksheets at another time. Either way, completing the worksheets will likely require several sessions.

Note: If the student is registered for the module through Southeast Community College and completes the worksheets online, their responses will be e-mailed. If students complete the module via DVD or through a group session, the facilitator or person assisting them will need to provide worksheets.

Once the students have completed their worksheets, they will need to make a plan to take this information to their teams. Discuss with them how they might do this.

GUIDE

    Page 8:   *Questions to Consider*

    Pages 9-12: *The Worksheets*

Part 7: Creating Your Report
Part 8: It's All About You

5 Minutes

1. Ways to involve **students who don't use words** to communicate are discussed.
2. **Examples** of ways to develop a report are provided, including:
   a. Poster
   b. Power Point
   c. Video
   d. Word Cloud

ACTIVITY

Assist the students in choosing a method to communicate their report. Students can present the information they compiled on their worksheets either by talking through their answers or by using one of the following techniques. If time permits, you may develop the report and provide time to practice giving the report. Examples of reports can be found in the Student Guide.

Picture Poster

The student may wish to create a poster with pictures and/or words to convey their thoughts. This could be created on a computer, by drawing pictures, or by cutting out photos from magazines. Depending upon communication skills, the student may show the poster and tell about it or someone else may assist in doing this.

Power Point IEP

The student may wish to develop a power point presentation. This may include any of the following slides or other topics the student selects. It is suggested that the student choose those topics that are most important to him/her and not attempt to address all of these items.

- My strengths
- My interests
- My favorite classes
- Activities I enjoy
- Things I am proud of
- Work experiences I have had
- Careers I would like to explore
- Ways to help me learn

- Interesting things about me
- Things that make me happy
- Things that make me worry
- People I admire
- Activities I would like to try
- My goals for school and the future
- Other information I want to share

Video

The student may wish to create a video to show at the meeting, talking about the worksheets or other topics of their choice.

Word Cloud

The student may wish to use a website to create a Word Cloud, listing ideas or words in a design of their choice. The design could then be printed for the student to show and discuss with the team. Two websites for this are:

Wordle: http://www.wordle.net

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

GUIDE

Pages 14-17:   *Creating Your Report*

Page 18:   *Sharing Your Report*