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## Increasing Student Participation in the IEP Process

Kelly Ott, M.Ed, MHS, CCC-SLP

Moderated by:  
Amy Hansen, MA, CCC-SLP, Managing Editor, [SpeechPathology.com](http://SpeechPathology.com)



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- Call 800-242-5183
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- Use the Q&A pod



## How to earn CEUs

- Must be logged in for full time requirement
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- Must pass 10-question multiple-choice exam with a score of **80%** or higher
  - Within **7 days** for live webinar; within **30 days** of registration for recorded/text/podcast formats
- Two opportunities to pass the exam

## Increasing Student Participation in the IEP Process

Kelly Ott, MEd, MHS, CCC-SLP

*“Individuals play the game, but teams win the championships.”*

## Disclosures

- Financial disclosures:
  - Owner of SMARTER Steps, a consulting business for special educators, therapists, administrators & parents
  - Speaker/Presenter with CE royalty payments for presentations
  - Author-SMARTER Steps Guide to Creating Smarter IEP Goals with royalty payments
- Non-financial disclosures: No relevant non-financial disclosures exist

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## Learner Objectives

Participant will learn:

- Identify the benefits & barriers of student-driven IEPs.
- Explain the relevancy of increasing student participation in the IEP process.
- Describe how to promote student participation at the elementary, middle and high school levels.

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## About Kelly

- Practitioner for 25+ years
- Settings include schools, hospitals, nursing homes, home health, private clinics, outpatient clinics, group homes and pediatric clinics.
- Served a variety of roles in the schools including elementary principal, junior high principal, special education director, speech language pathologist, 504 case manager, district FERPA trainer, and regular education teacher.

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## Student Driven IEPs

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continued

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“Transition is an outcome oriented process that is individually driven by the student’s vision of an adult life. Those post school goals should drive the transition planning process and the annual IEP provides the mechanism to take action and outline the specific steps to get there.” ~Paul Wehman

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continued

Self-Determination- acting with intent to improve one’s quality of life. These actions are identified by four essential characteristics

1. autonomous actions
2. self-regulated behaviors
3. empowered initiation and responses
4. self-realizing actions

(Wehmeyer 2003)

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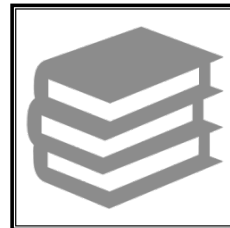
## Self-Determination

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## Current Research

### Student Led IEPs Increase

- Student self-actualization, self-determination and self-confidence skills
- Active involvement in education planning and transition planning
- Post secondary outcomes
- Quality of life



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## Interventions

- The ChoiceMaker Curriculum (with The Self-Directed IEP materials)
  - Martin, Marshall, Maxson, & Jerman, 1993
- NEXT S.T.E.P. Curriculum
  - Halpern, Herr, Doren, & Wolf, 2000
- Self-Advocacy Strategy
  - Van Reusen, Bos, Schumaker, & Deshler, 2002
- Steps to Self-Determination (2nd Ed.)
  - Hoffman & Field, 2005
- Self-Determined Learning Model of Instruction
  - Wehmeyer, Palmer, Agran, Mithaug, & Martin, 2000
- Whose Future is it Anyway? (2nd Ed.)
  - Wehmeyer, Lawrence, Kelchner, Palmer, Garner, & Soukup, 2004

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### TAXONOMY FOR TRANSITION PROGRAMMING 2.0



<http://www.transitionta.org>

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CONTINUED



~Shel Silverstein

If we had hinges on our heads  
There wouldn't be no sin  
'Cause we could take the bad  
stuff out  
And leave the good stuff in.

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### Traditional Programs

Can Limit the Development of:

- Choice/Decision making skills
- Problem-solving skills
- Goal-setting and attainment skills
- Self-management skills
- Self-advocacy skills
- Self-awareness



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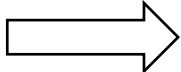
### Increasing student input:

- Increases “buy in”
- Increases compliance
- Increases effort
- Increases accountability
- Increases self-determination

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### Student Involvement in Education

Passive Role  Active

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <p><b>Role</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-defeated</li> <li>• Disabled</li> <li>• Unaware</li> <li>• Dependent</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Self-determined</li> <li>• Empowered</li> <li>• Knowledgeable</li> <li>• Independent</li> </ul> |
|--|--|

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## Benefits for Parents

- Increased parent participation
- Less intimidating meetings
- Increases communication between child and parent
- Increases consistent expectations on student between home and school

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## IDEA Transition Definition (20 USC 140 (34)):

Activities for disabled student that:

- Is designed within an outcome-oriented process, which promotes movement from school to post-school activities.
- Is based on students needs\*(including preferences/interests)
- Includes instruction, related services, community experiences, employment/post-school living objectives and when appropriate, acquisition of dialing living skills & functional vocation skills.

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“Almost 30 years of research ...has demonstrated that the education of students with disabilities can be made more effective by... ensuring their access to the general education curriculum.” (20 U.S.C. § 1400(c)(5)(A))

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Federal regulations define “specially designed instruction” whose purpose is “to ensure access of the child to the general curriculum, so that he or she can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children (34 C.F.R. § 300.26(b)(3) (emphasis added)).

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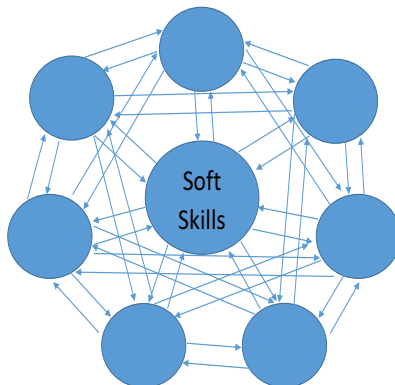
**Support  
Sustainable  
Employment  
for  
Individuals  
with  
Disabilities**

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## Soft skills

- Communication
- Leadership
- Influence
- Interpersonal Skills
- Personal Skills
- Creativity
- Professional Skills

CONTINUED<sup>®</sup>

Soft skills = Self-determination

Thinking  $\rightleftharpoons$  Doing  $\rightleftharpoons$  Adjusting

- Communication
- Leadership
- Influence
- Interpersonal Skills
- Personal Skills
- Creativity
- Professional Skills

The process by  
which a person  
controls their  
own lives

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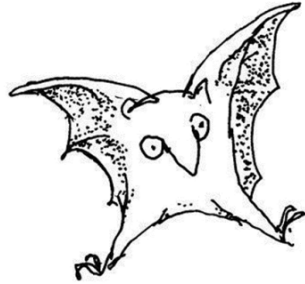
## Current Research

Youth/adults with disabilities are less self-determined than nondisabled peers

Capacity – Opportunity – Supports

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*The baby bat  
Screamed out in fright,  
“Turn on the dark,  
I’m afraid of the light.”*

~Shel Silverstein

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CONTINUED

### Barriers to self-determination

- Beliefs about students abilities and whether the individual will benefit
- Changing roles
- Insufficient time
- Insufficient training and knowledge about promoting self-determination
- Lack of educator support
- Student motivation
- Concerns about students being present for adversarial meetings

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continued

## Student Disabilities and Abilities



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continued

## Changing Roles



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continued

continued<sup>®</sup>



## Student Motivation

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## I AM THE "I" IN IEP



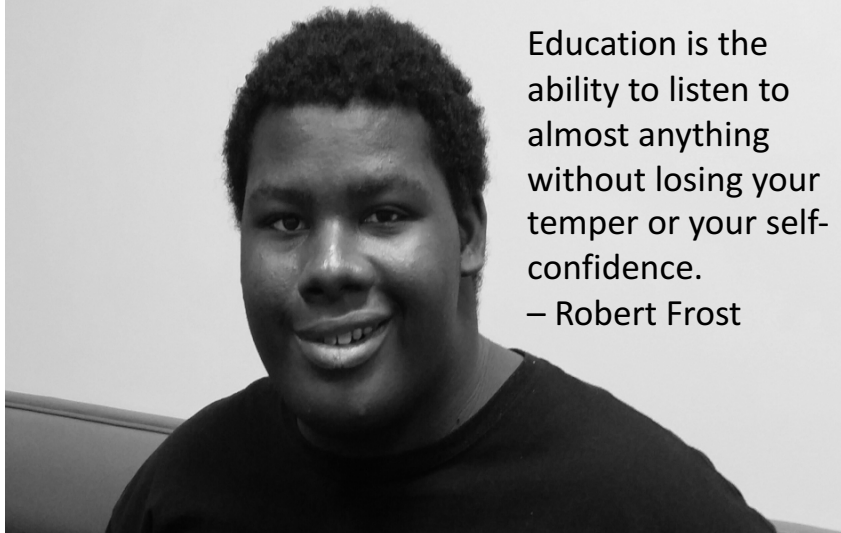
I am the "I" in IEP,  
Please don't forget about me.  
I need to show you what I need,  
It's important that I succeed.  
And I need you to understand,  
I must be part of what is planned.  
I know my parents and school  
sometimes disagree,  
About what they think is right for me,  
But if you really thought hard and long,  
I need everyone to get along!  
Because in the end it's down to me,  
I am the "I" in IEP

-Lara Wakefield, Smarter Steps®, 2017

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continued<sup>®</sup>

continued



Education is the  
ability to listen to  
almost anything  
without losing your  
temper or your self-  
confidence.  
– Robert Frost

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continued



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continued



## Case Study: Indirectly Discouraged

- Schedule Meetings during the day when he had class
- Did not want to excuse him from class

### **Progression over the years:**

- “Invited” but not really expecting him to attend
- When he did attend, they did not actively encourage “participation”
- When he participated, they did not prepare him
- When he was prepared, they did not allow him time to process

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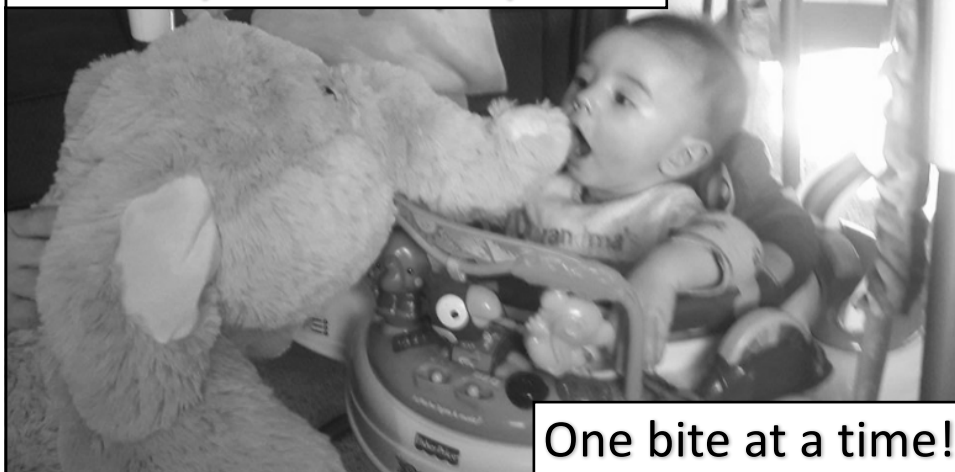
## Email of Gratitude from Student

"Mrs. Lara, I appreciate all of the work you've done and Mrs. Ott and my dad for me. When I went back to high school the bell rang and students were wandering the halls. And I felt like an actual senior in high school when I was walking with the normal peers. I felt taller and older and normal and not disabled. And I saw people that know from school they've all grew beards and gotten taller and I spoke to them for a couple minutes. Thanks

Sincerely,"

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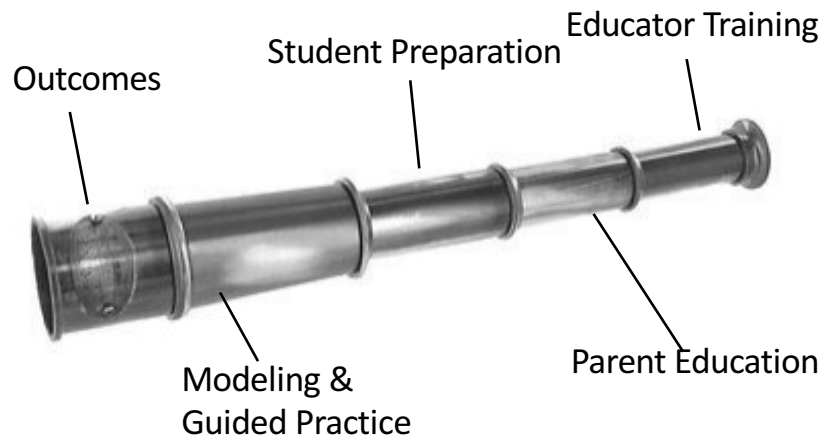
## How do you eat an elephant?



One bite at a time!

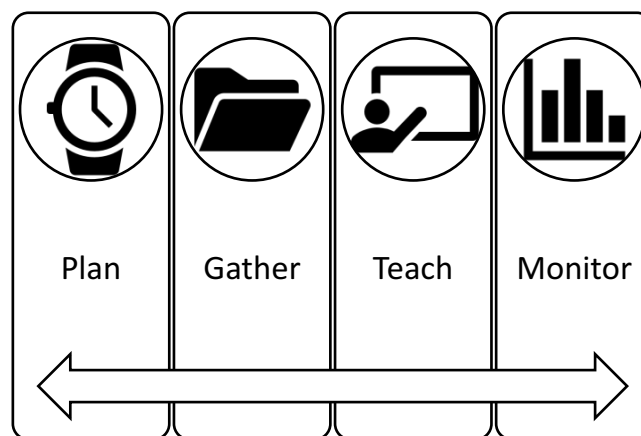
44

CONTINUED



45

CONTINUED



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CONTINUED

## **Educator Training**

Countryman & Schroeder, 1996 When Students  
Lead Parent Teacher Conferences

Barrie & McDonald, 2002 Administrative Support  
for Student-Led Individualized Education Programs

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## **Parent Training**

- Surveys (I'm determined.org & Moving students forward websites, AIRE Self-Determination Scale, student strength inventories, interest inventories)
- Parent training meetings
- Ongoing education & communication with families

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CONTINUED<sup>®</sup>

PREPARING STUDENTS

- Teaching
- Provide Opportunities
- Modeling
- Offer Supports & Accommodations

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CONTINUED<sup>®</sup>

## Student Training

- Strengths, Interests, Preferences
- Learning Styles/Study Skills
- Current Living Skills & Needs
- Disability Awareness
- IEP Laws & Process
- Setting Goals
- Accommodations & Modifications
- Self-Advocacy Skills

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## Strength Inventories

<b>5</b>	I do this very easily.
<b>4</b>	It takes some effort, but I do this without any problems.
<b>3</b>	I have some difficulty, but I can do this most of the time.
<b>2</b>	Often I have difficulty doing this.
<b>1</b>	I can't do this at all

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## Exploring Multiple Intelligences

- \*Naturalist strength
- \*Musical strength
- \*Logical strength
- \*Existential strength
- \*Interpersonal strength
- \*Kinesthetic strength
- \*Visual strength
- \*Intrapersonal strength
- \*Verbal strength

<http://surfaquarium.com/MI/inventory.pdf>

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## Learning Styles

- Visual
- Auditory
- Kinesthetic
- Proprioceptive
- Multi-modalities

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## Visual Learner Strategies

- Sit near the front of the classroom.
- Use flashcards to learn new words.
- Try to visualize things that you hear or things that are read to you.
- Write down key words, ideas, or instructions.
- Draw pictures to help explain new concepts and then explain the pictures.
- Color code things.
- Avoid distractions during study times.

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**Auditory Learner Strategies**

- Sit where you can hear.
- Use flashcards to learn new words; read them out loud.
- Read stories, assignments, or directions out loud.
- Record yourself spelling words and then listen to the recording.
- Have test questions read to you out loud.
- Study new material by reading it out loud.

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**Tactile Learner Strategies**

- Participate in activities that involve touching, building, moving, or drawing,
- Do lots of hands-on activities like completing art projects, taking walks, or acting out stories.
- Chew gum, swing or rock in a chair while reading or studying.
- Use flashcards and arrange them in groups to show relationships between ideas.

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CONTINUED

### Tactile Learner Strategies

- Trace words with your finger to learn spelling (finger spelling).
- Take frequent breaks during reading or studying periods (frequent, but not long).
- It's OK to tap a pencil, shake your foot, or hold on to something while learning.
- Use a computer to reinforce learning through the sense of touch.

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### What's the Scoop on My Disability?



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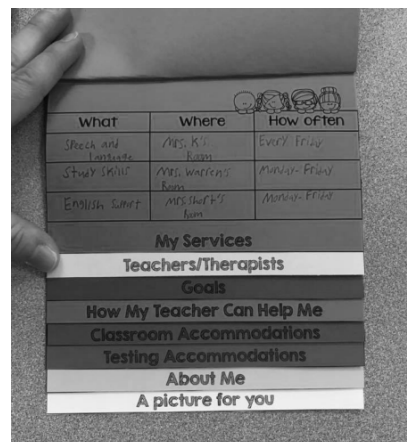
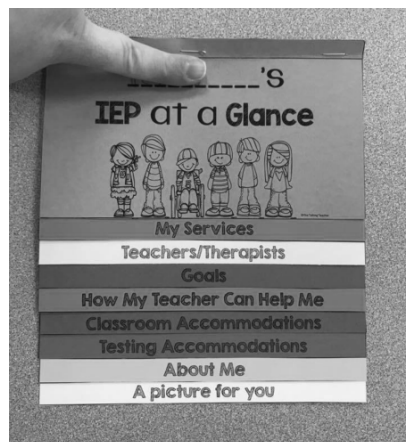
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## Teach Your Students About IEP Law & Process

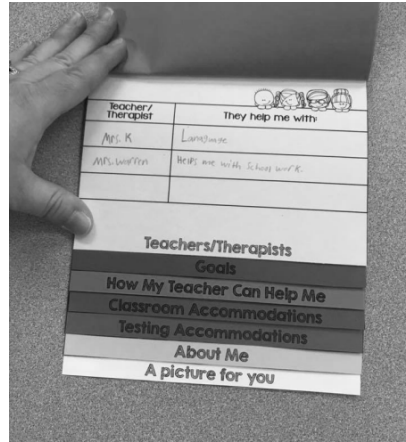
59

continued<sup>®</sup>



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continued<sup>®</sup>



Teacher/Therapist	They help me with
Mrs. K	Language
Mrs. Weston	Helps me with School work

**Teachers/Therapists**

**Goals**

**How My Teacher Can Help Me**

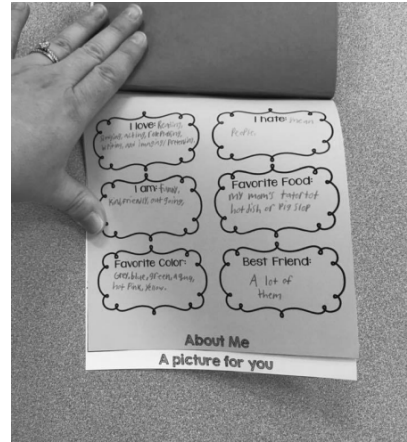
**Classroom Accommodations**

**Testing Accommodations**

**About Me**

**A picture for you**

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**I love** (writing, reading, drawing, and making things)

**I hate** (reading)

**I am** (happy, sad, angry, and tired)

**Favorite Food** (my mom's food but not too much of it)

**Favorite Color** (purple, green, and blue)

**Best Friend** (A lot of them)

**About Me**

**A picture for you**

## Setting Goals



### Overview of the SMARTER acronym

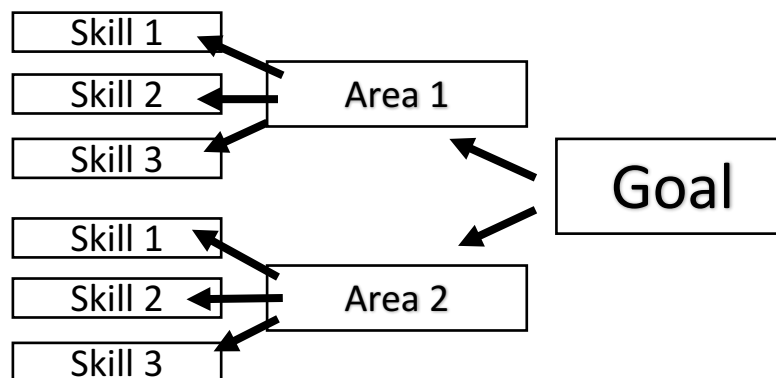
- **S**pecific Skill sets and observable behaviors; Use specific actions words and contexts
- **M**easurable with meaningful and manageable data collection, including baselines
- **A**ttainable with an annual IEP cycle
- **R**esearch/evidence-based methods are documented in the goal
- **T**eachable with cues and strategies that are explained in the goal
- **E**valuate the data and communicate it regularly to parents
- **R**elevant to the general education curriculum (Common Core or State Standards), alternative curriculum, Transition, Post-Secondary, or Independent living.

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K-W-L  
Know-What-Learned

S-N-D  
Skill-Need-Do

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continued



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continued

## Self Advocacy Skills



*Asking for what you need,  
what you want and what  
you're worth requires  
practice. So practice  
self-love and start asking.*

~Anne Marie Houghtailing

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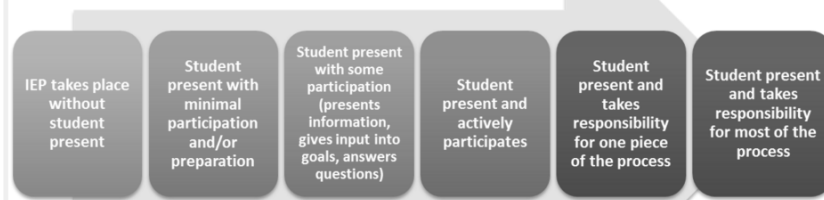
continued

## Sample Student Templates

- Student IEP templates
- Self-determination portfolios
- Student-Led Agendas

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## Modeling & Guided Practice



Adapted from Thoma & Wehman. (2010).  
Baltimore, MD: Paul H. Brooks Publishing Co.

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## Guided Practice

- Video/Mock Meetings
- Reflection/Video Self-Monitor
- Debriefing
- Practice some more!

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- Choosing mediums to communicate progress (graphing, writing, pictures/video, drawing, homework, notes)
- Paraphrasing technical/jargony language
- Reading and writing in context
- Using technology such as presentation software and word processing
- Introducing people
- Explaining the purpose of an IEP meeting (stating the main idea)
- Thinking and planning for the future (vision)
- Goal setting
- Taking turns and inviting others to speak
- Listening and responding with a relevant and appropriate answer
- Asking relevant, proactive questions
- Advocating - Stating opinions, backing with data
- Using presentation skills (e.g. eye contact, volume, tone, posture, body language)
- Compromising/Reaching consensus/Proposing compromise solutions
- Closing, summarizing decisions made, expressing thanks to IEP team

Skills used when leading an IEP

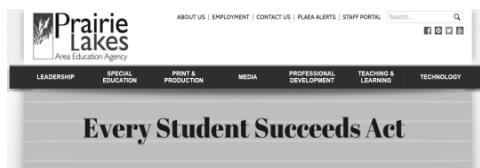
70

Self-Efficacy and Positive Outcome Expectations are “not a measure of the skills one has but a belief about what one can do under different sets of conditions with whatever skill one possesses”.

~Albert Bandura

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## RESOURCES



### Moving Students Forward

Transition Tools and Tidbits



Don't Overlook Transition Services

Home About Teachers Students Parents Resources Events Contact

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# Questions



Contact Kelly Ott at [team@smartersteps.com](mailto:team@smartersteps.com)  
for a full list of references and resources