



# **Pre-IEP Prep 201: A Workbook for Students and Families**

**A workbook for students and their families to have a voice  
that is heard in the IEP process**

**High School (Grades 9 - 12)**



**RUTGERS HEALTH**

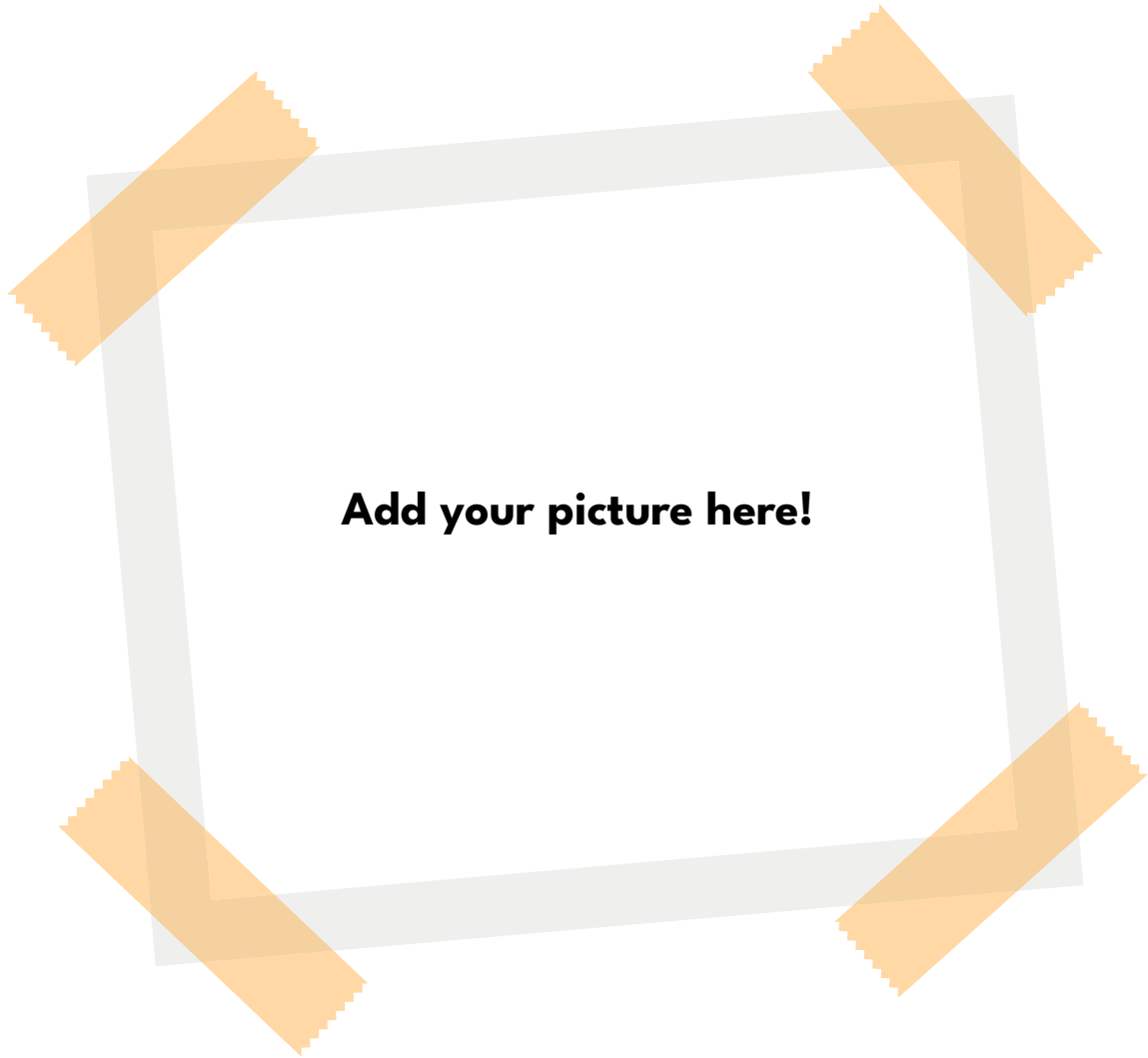
**The Boggs Center  
on Disability and Human Development**

Robert Wood Johnson Medical School



Developed by The Boggs Center on Disability and Human Development with the NJ Department of Education,  
Office of Special Education, funded by IDEA Part B 2024-2025. May 2025.

# This book belongs to:



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**Name**

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**Date**

# Dear students and families,

This workbook was developed to support families in developing self-advocacy and self-determination skills that can support each child's path to a meaningful life.

The planning for a good adult life starts now. Self-advocacy skills are essential for all people and having them helps children express to educators and others what they need to succeed.

No matter the person's age, everyone has strengths and preferences that can be shared. If your child has a disability and is supported by an Individualized Education Program (IEP), they also have an IEP team. Beginning when your child will be turning 14 years old (or younger if appropriate) during the next school year, planning for the transition from school to adult life will be included in the IEP, and your child will be invited to attend their IEP meeting.

We hope this workbook supports your family to be able to fully participate in the IEP meeting.

## Directions:

This tool can be used in part or whole to help bring person-centered information into the IEP. You can share the information in these activities before and during the IEP meeting with your case manager.

For more information please visit the [New Jersey Department of Education Office of Special Education Policy](#) webpage.

## More information about planning for adult life:

The [New Jersey Transition Toolkit](#) is designed to assist school staff and students with disabilities and their families in their efforts to prepare students with disabilities for entry into a successful adult life after high school. The work to prepare students for a successful adult life that is done by school staff, students, family members, agency staff, and others is referred to as "transition planning" and "transition services" since students are transitioning from school to adult life.



# Terms we use and what they mean:

**IEP:** The **Individualized Education Program** is designed to meet each eligible child's unique education needs and when appropriate, includes planning for a successful adult life.

**IEP Team:** Includes the student (since planning for adult life will be discussed at the IEP meeting), a parent, the case manager, teachers and other educators, and others as appropriate.

**DDD:** The **Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)** assures the opportunity for individuals with developmental disabilities to receive quality services and supports, participate meaningfully in their communities, and exercise their right to make choices.

**DVRS:** The **New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS)** works to enable eligible individuals with disabilities to achieve an employment outcome consistent with their strengths, priorities, needs, abilities, and capabilities.

**Person-Centered Planning:** Is a holistic strength-based process that involves supporting people in making well-informed choices and identifying respectful supports.

**Self-Advocacy:** Being able to express to others what you want, what you need, and what you don't want.

**Self-Determination:** A process by which a person controls their own life.

**Modifications:** A modification changes what the student is taught or expected to learn (e.g., the content of instruction).

**Accommodations:** An accommodation changes how the student is taught or expected to learn (e.g., instructional methods used, support strategies, environmental factors, etc.).



# IEP Scavenger Hunt

Before you and your parents are able to contribute to the IEP, it is important to know what's in it. Work together to identify some key areas. *Parents*, for this activity, have a copy of your child's most recent IEP. If you don't have one, request one from your child's case manager. Find the **key areas** in the "What to look for" section, then answer the questions below.

## What to look for:

1. Circle the name of your **case manager** and the **date** of your last IEP. Did you know you have an IEP meeting at least once every year?
2. Circle your **strengths**, **interests**, and **preferences** in your IEP.
3. Circle **modifications** and **accommodations** listed in your IEP.
4. Underline the "Statement of Transition Planning" and the "Statement of Transition Services."
5. Put a star next to your "Measurable Postsecondary Goals." These should capture what you hope to achieve after you finish high school.



## Please answer these questions:

Has anything changed since your last IEP meeting that you want to put into your new IEP?

What are your new strengths, interests, or preferences since your last IEP?

Do any modifications and accommodations listed in your last IEP still help you? Is there anything you would like to add, remove, or modify?

What changes are needed to the information you found in the "Statement of Transition Planning" or "Statement of Transition Services"?

What would you like to add or change in your IEP (e.g., Measurable Postsecondary Goals, Annual Goals and Short-Term Objectives, etc.)?

What do you want to make sure gets discussed at your next IEP meeting?

# My Case Manager

## What does a case manager do?

A **case manager** is someone from your school who helps you, your parents, and your teachers put information together in your IEP. If you are having a difficult time in school or have questions about your education, you can talk to your case manager any time, not just at an IEP meeting.

**My case manager's name is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My case manager's email is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**My case manager's office is:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Use the template below to write an email to say “hello” to your case manager and help them learn more about you!**



New Message



**To:**

**Subject: Hello!**

Dear **(insert case manager's name)**,

I am really excited to have your guidance this school year. Three words that describe me are: **(insert 3 words)**.

Some of the things I really enjoy are: **(list at least 2 things)**.

Some things I may need help with are: **(list at least 2 things)**.

Some of my interests are: **(list at least 2 things)**.

Thank you,  
**(Your name)**

**Send**

**Tip:** The case manager needs to know what is important to your family and the hopes and dreams you have for your child. Remember, decisions now put your child on a path towards their future. What do you see for your child in high school and beyond in adult life?

# My Team

Making big decisions and speaking up for yourself is easier when you have people you trust to help you. We call these people your **allies**!

For each question below, write down a trusted person from your life.

**Who is a classmate you have fun with and would like to hang out with outside of school?**



**Who is your favorite adult to see at school?**

**Who cares about you at home and helps you?**



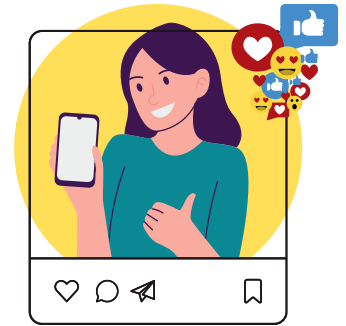
**Who would you talk to if you had a big problem and didn't know what to do?**

**Who would you want to help you at your IEP meeting?**



# Social MEdia

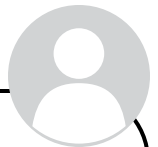
Write or draw up to 6 **great things** about yourself (e.g., talents, gifts, strengths) in the boxes below. Have someone in your family add what they like and admire about you in the **comment box** below.



## Great things about me:

|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

## Comments:





# My Manual

What do others need to know to best support you? Develop an operating manual all about **you**, so others can quickly learn about who you really are!



## Who are you?

What makes you happy?

What do you really care about?

What frustrates or aggravates you?

## How can others help you succeed?

What can teachers do to help you at school?

What **does not** help you at school?



## What makes for a bad day?

Think about a typical day at school and at home on the weekend. What makes it not so good?

How can others help you feel better?



# My Vision for the Future

List the things you want for your future (after graduation) in each of the categories below.



## Employment

## Education (adult learning)

## Home life (Where will you live?)

## Relationships

## Recreation/Community Life

*Where will you go in your community? What will you do for fun?*

## Transportation

List 4 “deal breakers” for your future. “Deal breakers” are things you would not accept for your future.



# Action Steps

What steps have you taken or are you taking toward the future you want?



**Home life**

**Employment**

**Relationships**

**Recreation/Community Life**

**Education**

**Transportation**

**Other**

# For students and families

How do you feel about the upcoming IEP meeting?



What will make you feel most comfortable at the meeting?

What do you hope does not happen at the meeting? If this were to happen, it would make you feel stressed, uncomfortable, or upset.

If you only had 2 minutes to tell educators what they needed to know about your child, what would you share?

How do you feel about having your child attend the IEP meeting?

If this would make you uncomfortable, what would you want to be changed or different from previous IEP meetings to make you feel okay with having your child attend this meeting?

If your child does not attend the IEP meeting, what do you think they would want you to share with the team on their behalf?

**Tip:** Think about some ways that you can support your child and prepare them to attend the IEP meeting. Also consider sharing your responses to these questions with your case managers before the IEP meeting.

## Student Notes & Questions:



## Parent Notes & Questions:



# References & Additional Resources



## **Division of Developmental Disabilities (DDD)**

<https://www.nj.gov/humanservices/ddd/>

## **New Jersey Department of Education Office of Special Education Policy**

<https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/policy/index.shtml>

## **New Jersey Division of Vocational Rehabilitation Services (DVRS)**

<https://www.nj.gov/labor/career-services/special-services/individuals-with-disabilities/>

## **NJ Transition Toolkit**

<https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/programs/njtransition/>

## **PCAST Webpage**

<https://www.nj.gov/education/specialed/programs/pcast.shtml>

## **SPAN Parent Advocacy Network**

<https://spanadvocacy.org>

## **The Boggs Center on Disability and Human Development: *Transition to Adulthood for Young Adults with Developmental Disabilities: A Timeline for Parents***

<https://boggscenter.rwjms.rutgers.edu/resources/publications/transition-to-adulthood-timeline-for-parents>

## **Special Thanks**

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After piloting this tool, please  
provide feedback by scanning  
or clicking this QR code.