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# Pre-IEP Prep 301: A Workbook for Students and Families

Strong voices, person-centered IEPs, positive post-school outcomes  
**18-21-Year-Old Students**



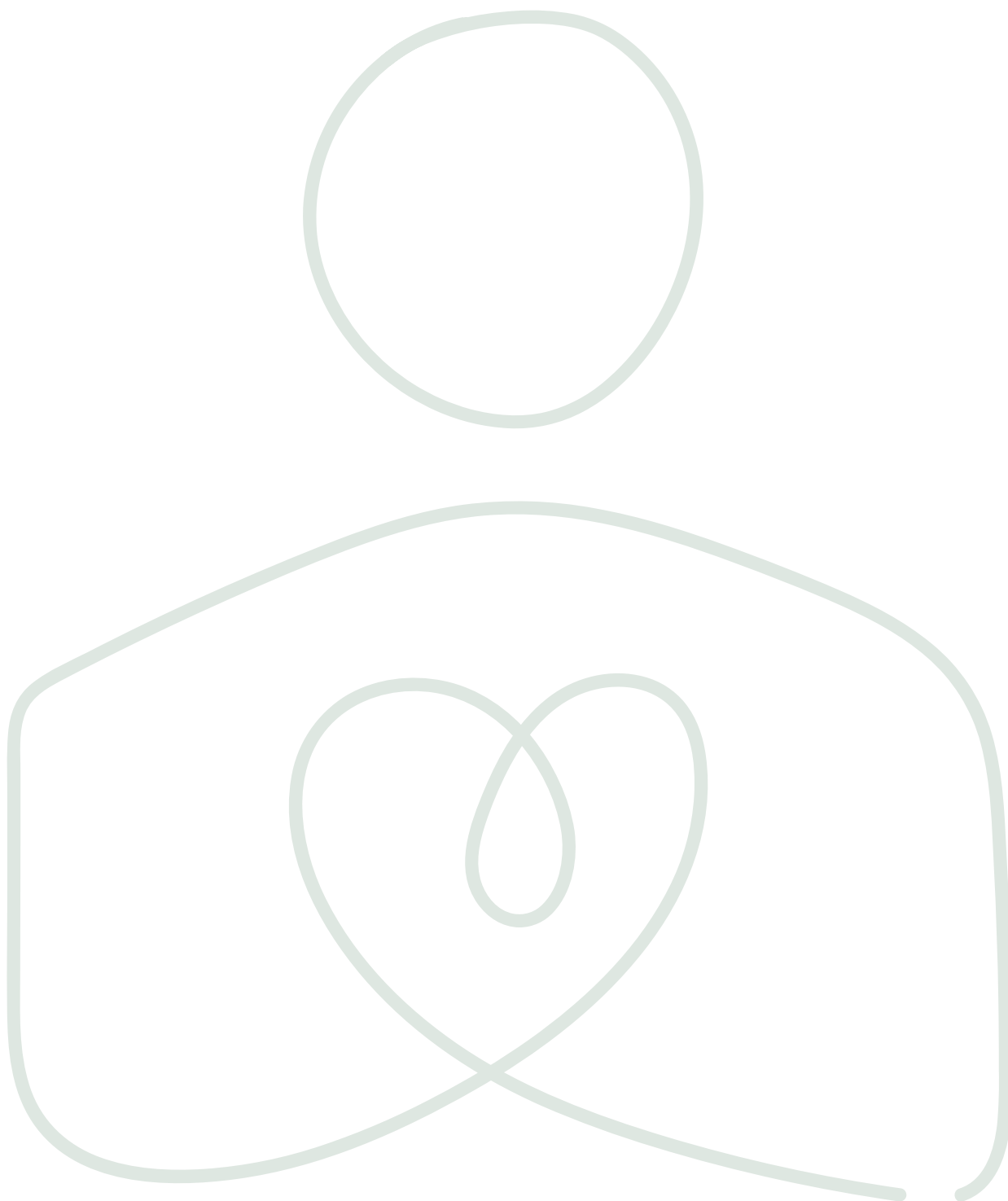
**RUTGERS**

Robert Wood Johnson  
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**THE BOGGS CENTER**  
ON DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES



In partnership with NJDOE Office of Special Education. Funded by IDEA-Part B 2024-2025



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**Name**

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**Date**

# Dear Student and Family,

This workbook was developed to support students and their families in developing self-advocacy and self-determination skills to support each person to have a good life in their community.

Self-advocacy skills are essential for all people and having them helps people express their vision for the future and what they need to succeed.

## **Directions:**

This tool can be used in part or whole to help bring person-centered information into the *transition to adult-life* planning parts of your IEP. You can share this information before and during your IEP meeting.

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

## **Terms we use and what they mean**

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

**IEP Team:** Includes the parent, the student, the case manager, teachers and other educators, and others as appropriate.

**DDD:** [The Division of Developmental Disabilities](#) provides 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](#) 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.).

# Understanding My IEP

## Directions

Before you and your family are able to contribute to the [Individualized Education Program \(IEP\)](#) it is important to know what's in it. Work together to identify some key areas. For this activity have a copy of your most recent IEP. If you don't have one, request one from your case manager.

1. Circle the "Strengths, interests, and preferences" in your IEP.
2. Circle the "Modifications" and "Accommodations" listed in your IEP.
3. Find the "Statement of Transition Planning" and the "Statement of Transition Services" and underline them.
4. Put a star next to your "Measurable Postsecondary Goals."

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

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

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

**Click here to access the New Jersey Transition Toolkit:**



# Building My Team

Speaking up for yourself and making big decisions is easier when you have someone you trust to help you. We call these people your ALLIES! Different “allies” can support you in making different decisions.

## Directions

For each question below, write down who you would want to help you in that situation:

1. Who helps me make money decisions?
2. Who helps me with medical/health decisions?
3. Who helps me understand the support I receive?
4. Who helps me with work?
5. Who helps me make decisions about my education?
6. Who helps me with activities of daily living, such as cooking, cleaning, and washing up?
7. Who can help me navigate relationships and social situations?

**What is supported decision-making?** Supported decision-making is about helping people, regardless of age or ability, make their own decisions by using a variety of integrated supports, including other people they trust, technology, community supports, or paid supports.

Click here to access information about the LifeCourse:

[Supported Decision-Making Tools](#)



# Great Things About Me

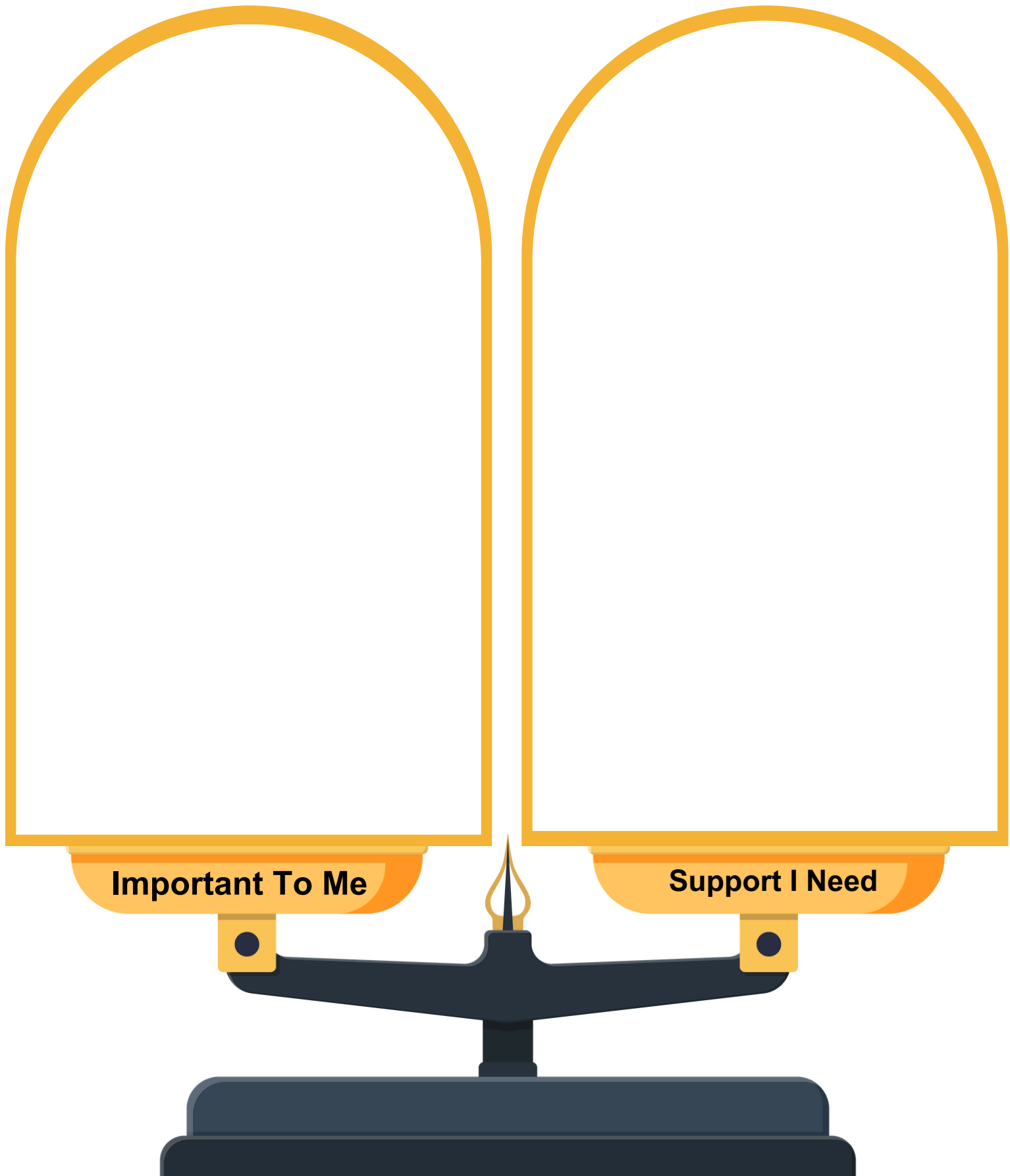
Directions: Add your name to the top box next to a photo or image of yourself in the white circle. In the box below, list all the great things that make you, you! These can include skills, talents, strengths, compliments others give you, knowledge, and any special qualities you have.



# Balancing Supports

Directions: On the “**Important To Me**” side of the scale, list what makes a good “everyday” life for you. Who do you spend time with? What are you doing? Where are you going?

On the “**Supports I Need**” side of the scale, share information that you want others to know about you or ways they can support you best. Think about different environments and situations such as in school, at work, at home, with friends, etc.



# My Vision for the Future

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

**Home Life** (*Where will you live?*)



**Employment**



**Relationships**



**Community & Recreation** (*Where will you go in your community? What will you do for fun?*)



**Education** (*Adult Learning*)



**Transportation**





# Action Plan for My Future

List the steps you have taken or will take in the next year towards the future you want.

**Home Life:**



**Employment:**



**Relationships:**



**Community & Recreation:**



**Education:**



**Transportation:**



# What I Don't Want for the Future

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



**NOT ACCEPTED**

# Community Mapping

This activity will help you and your allies understand your life right now and what you want for the future. Explore your community to learn more about the place you live. Make a list of places in your community that match your interests and vision for your future.

Here are a few questions to get you started:

**Where could you get a gym membership?**

**Where is the closest emergency room/urgent care center for medical emergencies?**

**Where would you go for food shopping?**

**Where is your bank?**



**Want to learn more about your community? Develop a Community Asset Map!**

Use Google, "[My Maps](#)" to develop a community asset map

My Maps: "[How to Do Community Asset Mapping \(ABCD\) Using Google's My Maps](#)"

# For Students and Families

- How do you feel about the upcoming IEP meeting?
- What priority items (if any) would you like to focus on?
- What can the IEP team do to make you feel *most* comfortable at the meeting?
- Is there anything about your IEP, educational program, or anything else that you feel confused or unsure about?
- Is there any information or resources that you need from the school or another adult agency such as DDD, DVRS, or the Center for Independent Living?
- If you only had 2 minutes to tell educators what they needed to know about yourself/your child, what would you share?

## SPECIAL THANKS

The Person-Centered Approaches in Schools and Transition Project (PCAST) would like to thank our partners at the NJ Department of Education, Office of Special Education, all our educators, students, and their families in New Jersey for making this learning possible.

## REFERENCES & ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### PCAST Webpage

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

### SPAN Parent Advocacy Network

<https://spanadvocacy.org>

### NJ Transition Toolkit

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

### Transition to Adulthood for Young Adults with Developmental Disabilities: A Timeline for Parents

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

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

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