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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)



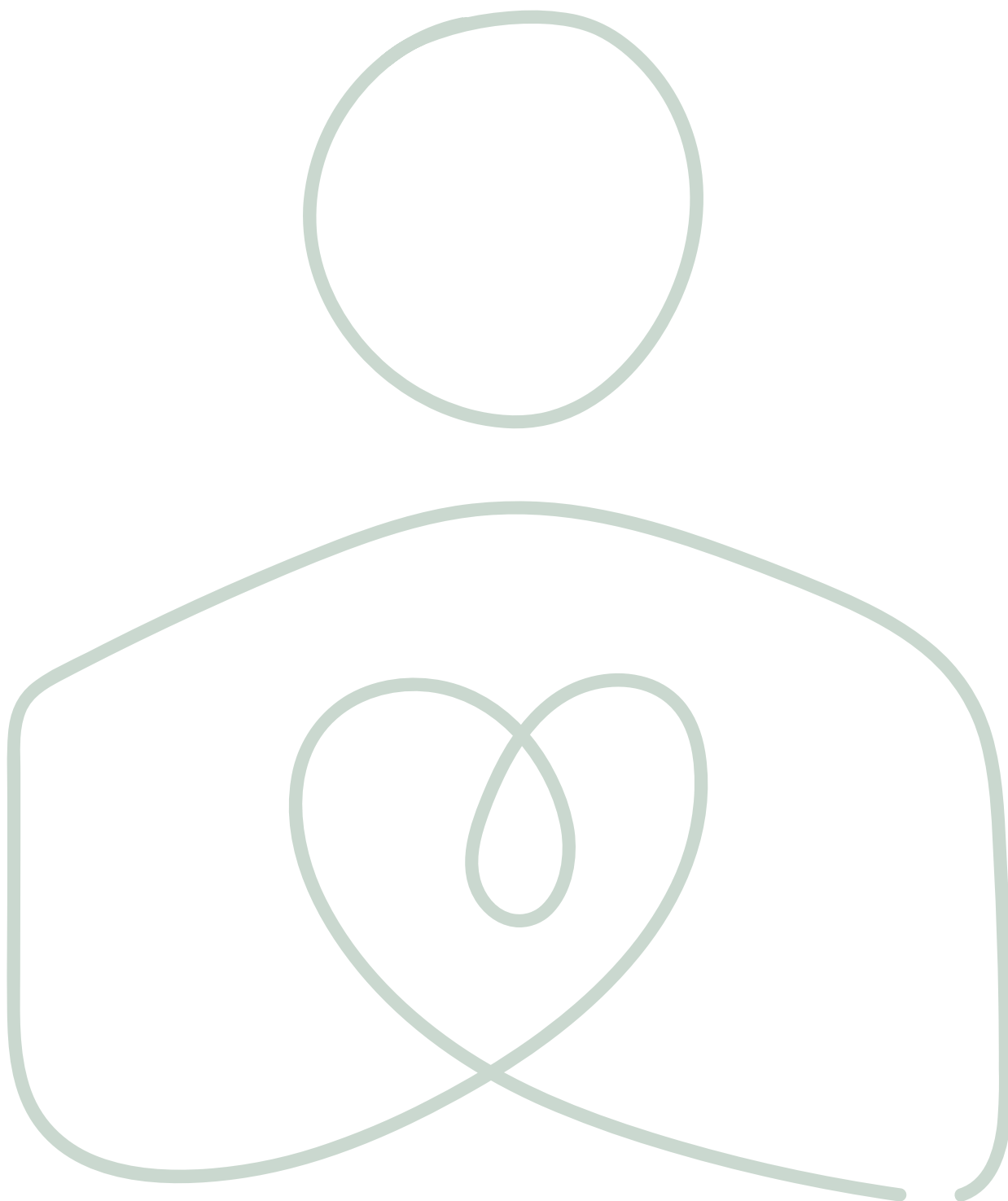
RUTGERS

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



Name

Date

DEAR STUDENTS AND FAMILIES,

This workbook was developed to support families and their children 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 and young adults 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.

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.).

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.

1. Circle the name of your case manager and the date of your last IEP meeting. Did you know you have an IEP meeting at least once every year?
2. Circle your strengths, interests, and preferences in your IEP. What would you add to this section?
3. Circle the modifications and accommodations listed in your IEP. Do you have any questions about these?
4. Find the "Statement of Transition Planning" and the "Statement of Transition Services" and underline them. Do they contain current information that you agree with? Has anything changed? If so, what has changed?
5. Put a star next to your Measurable Postsecondary Goals. The goals here should be what you hope to achieve **after you finish** high school. What goals would you add or change?

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?

Click here to access the New Jersey Transition Toolkit:

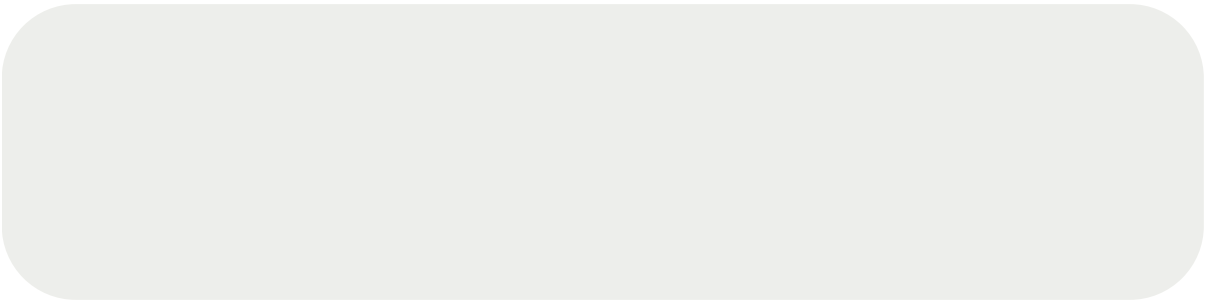


My Case Manager

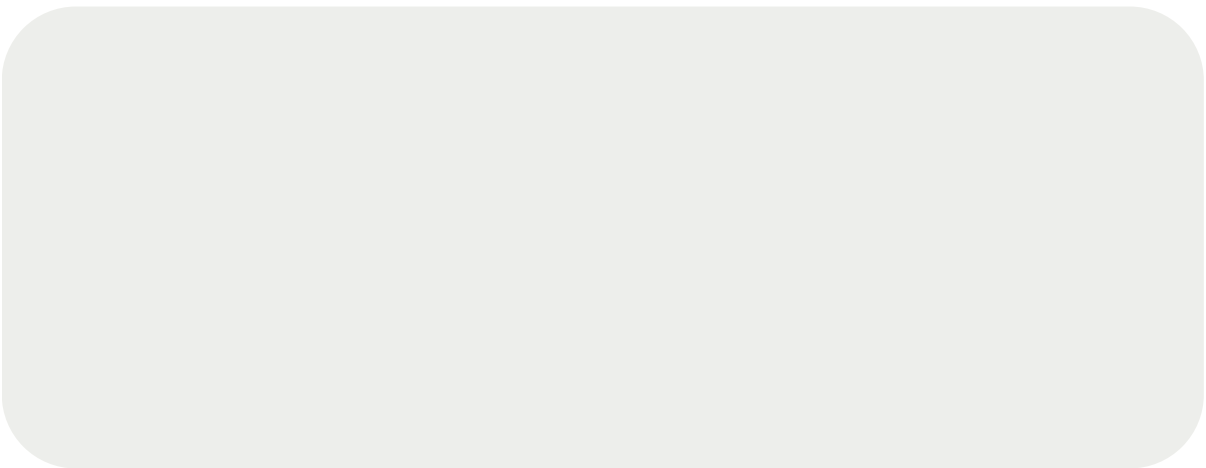
What does a case manager do?

A case manager is someone from your school who helps you, your parents, and your teachers put information together in your IEP. If you have any questions about your education, you can talk to your case manager.

My case manager's name and email is:



My case manager's office is:



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?

Write an email to your case manager to say, “Hello!”

Dear (INSERT CASE MANAGER NAME),

I am really excited to have your guidance this school year.

Three words that describe me are (INSERT 3 WORDS)

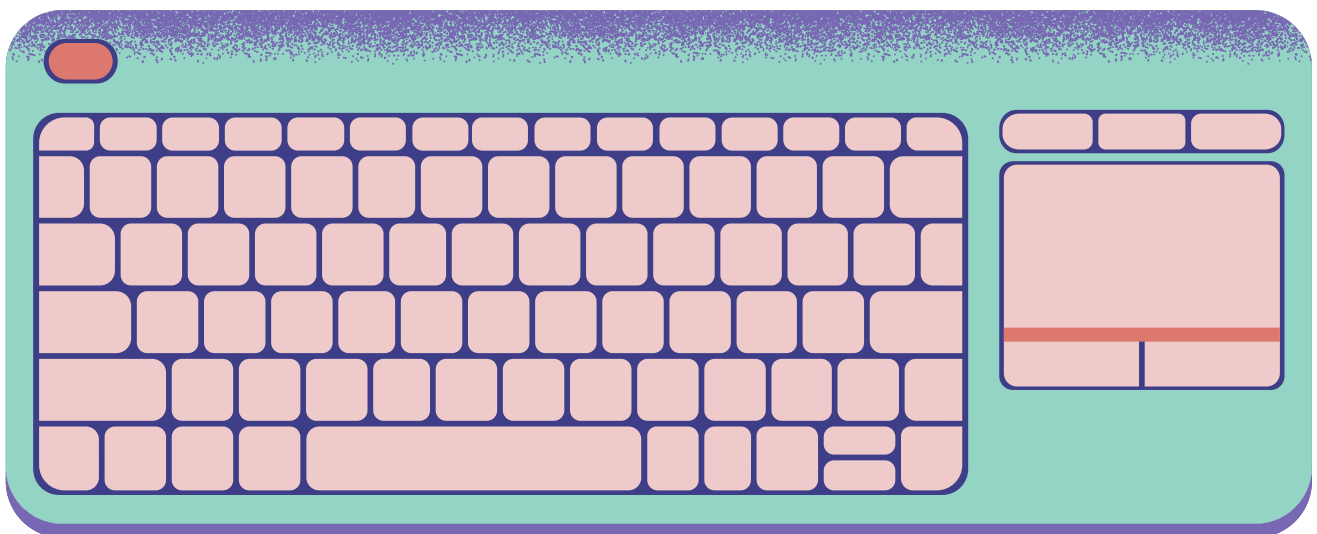
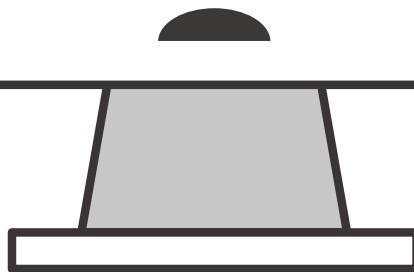
Some of the things I really enjoy are: (LIST AT LEAST 2 THINGS)

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)



My Team

Speaking up for yourself is easier when you have someone you trust to help you, give you advice, and make hard decisions. We call these people your ALLIES!

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

1. Who is a classmate you have fun with and would like to hang out with outside of school?
2. Who is your favorite adult to see at school?
3. Who cares about you at home and helps you?
4. Who would you talk to if you had a big problem and didn't know what to do?
5. Who would you want to help you at your IEP meeting?

1

2

3

4

5



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.

ME



Comment:

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!

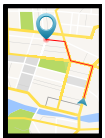


Who are you?

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.

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 four “deal breakers” for your future.

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

NOT ACCEPTED



ACTION STEPS

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



Home Life:

Employment:

Relationships:

Community & Recreation:

Education:

Transportation:

Other:



For Students and Families

- How do you feel about the upcoming IEP meeting?
- What will make you *most* comfortable at the meeting? Example?
- 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 OK 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?

SPECIAL THANKS

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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 your child and prepare them 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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