Charting the Cs Conference 2025:

To Literacy and Beyond

Cooperation
Communication
Collaboration

Navigating the Journey: Organizing for Special Education Success

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Welcome and Introductions

Overview of the session's goals:

- Review the special education process.

- Build a storage system for educational materials for easy access.

- Learn strategies to help build independence in your child.

- Leave with a checklist you can utilize with your child when you get home.

Understanding the IEP Process

Evaluations & Eligibility	Goals	Interventions	Placement	Progress Monitoring
Parent requests and evaluations	Baselines in present levels	Supports, special education	"Where can we best implement this IEP?"	Help determine efficacy of supports
Teacher referral	Meaningful and measurable	Related services	Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)	Change if necessary
Determine eligibility				
Areas of need (well-defined present levels)				

Understanding Special Education: The Basics

The purpose of special education is to provide individualized support, resources, and teaching strategies that help students with disabilities succeed academically and socially in a way that works best for them.

The main goals of special education are:

- Inclusive Learning
- Individualized Support
- Skill Development
- Equal Opportunity
- Empowerment

Key Terminology

- IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act)
- IEP (Individualized Education Program)
- FAPE (Free Appropriate Public Education)
- LRE (Least Restrictive Environment)

Special Education Evaluations

- An **initial evaluation** is required for a student to receive special education services
- **Re-evaluations** must be conducted every 3 years after initial eligibility
- Once the student qualifies (under any category), their services and supports are based on their individualized needs
- None of the categories have advantages over the others (e.g. extra funding)
- Once the student qualifies for special education, they do not need to meet initial eligibility requirements again to continue to receive special education services
- Parents are part of the team determining eligibility.

Minnesota Special Education Categorical Disability Areas

- Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)
- Other Health Disabilities (OHD)
- Physically Impaired (PI)
- Severely Multiply Impaired (SMI)
- Blind-Visually Impaired (BVI)
- Deaf-Blind (DB)
- Developmental Cognitive Disabilities (DCD)

- Developmental Delay (DD)
- Emotional Behavior Disorder (EBD)
- Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI)
- Specific Learning Disabilities (SLD)
- Speech/Language Impairments (SLI)
- Deaf and Hard of Hearing (DHH)

Developing the IEP/IEP components

1. Present Levels of Academic Achievement & Functional Performance (PLAAFP)
2. Measurable Annual Goals
3. Progress Measurement/Progress Reporting
4. Special Education Services
5. Supplementary Aids and Services
6. Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)
7. Transition Planning (for students 14 and older)
8. Modifications and Accommodations

Must include:

- Explanation of the extent the student will not be educated with nondisabled students in the general education setting.

- Statement of student's participation in state and district-wide assessments.

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Individualized Educational Program (IEP)

The role of the parent in the IEP process:

- **Be an Active Participant:**
  - Attend meetings, ask questions, and share observations.
- **Advocate for Your Child:**
  - Know your child's rights under IDEA and FAPE.
  - Collaborate with the school to ensure the best outcomes.

Progress Reports/Report Cards

Progress Reports

- Progress reports are part of the IEP process and should reflect your child's growth on their individualized goals and objectives

- Parents should receive progress reports as often as general education report cards are generated

Report Cards

- General education teachers should send report cards for all students. Sometimes the report card may indicate that the IEP will reflect student progress

Additional Interventions/Data

If your child is struggling to meet IEP goals and objectives, the IEP team can meet to discuss and plan for possible interventions.

This can include discussions around:

- Changes to accommodations and/or methods utilized to increase progress.
- Functional Behavioral Assessments to determine ways to support students through
  - Prevention techniques when appropriate
  - Instructional changes, such as pre-teaching, use of visual supports, social stories, etc.
  - Reinforcement of desired skills.
- Changes in groupings/small group opportunities, para supports, etc.

Transition Planning

- Transition services help a student move from school to adult life and are based on the student's needs and interests
- They help students with everything from work to school to fun.
- A student can get help to go to college or other school after high school.
- Transition services also help students get jobs, find a place to live, and be a part of the community.
- Transition Evaluation - starts at age 14 with a special type of evaluation that assesses your child's needs
- Based on this evaluation, goals are added to the IEP related to future education, employment, and independent living.

Supporting Students at Home

- **Create a Structured Environment:**
  - Set routines for homework, chores, and leisure.
  - Use visual schedules or checklists to help students stay on track.
- **Communication with the School:**
  - Maintain regular contact with teachers and IEP team members.
  - Understand how to request accommodations or adjustments when necessary.
- **Encourage Self-Reflection:**
  - Teach students to recognize their strengths and areas for growth.
  - Celebrate small successes to build confidence.

Organizing your child's documents

Now that we have talked through the steps to special education services, let's build a folder to help you organize your child's documents. Label each folder, then place folders in order in your binder:

- Evaluations

- IEPs

- Progress Reports/Report Cards

- Additional Interventions/Data

- Transition Planning

- Medical Information

- Documentation of Community Services

30 second stretch and sensory break!

Building Independence for Students with Disabilities

- **Why Independence Matters**
  - Fosters self-confidence, autonomy, and preparedness for life beyond school.

- **Strategies for Fostering Independence:**
  - **Routines/Systems in place**
  - **Time Management:** Helping students develop organizational skills and routines.
  - **Social Skills Development:** Building communication and relationship-building skills.
  - **Assistive Technology:** How technology can support student independence (e.g., apps, devices)

Visuals task lists

- **Visuals task lists with pictures** empower students to become more independent by *providing clear, concrete representations of tasks, routines, and expectations, reducing reliance on adult prompts.*

- **Predictability and Reduced Anxiety:**
(what to expect, reducing anxiety and promoting a sense of control)

- **Clear Instructions and Expectations:**
(break down complex tasks into smaller, manageable steps)

- **Enhanced Communication:**
(can serve as a communication tool within tasks)

- **Increased Independence:**
(become more self-reliant and less dependent on constant adult assistance)

Think about routines that your child does each day

- Getting dressed
- Brushing teeth
- Putting on deodorant
- Packing bag or the day
- Vacuuming/Sweeping/Mopping
- Doing laundry
- Bathing

- Managing Feminine Hygiene
- Doing the dishes/Dishwasher
- Putting things away when returning home
- Completing steps in Bedtime routine
- Washing hands
- Completing homework routines.

Choose a routine to build on for your child.

Develop a list of 5-8 steps required for completing this routine.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Build a visual set of steps, including text and pictures

Using the clipboard, choose a blank list that fits the routine (i.e. 6 or 7 steps, etc.)

- Write out the steps.
- Sketch a simple picture to represent each step.
- Share with the people beside you to see if it makes sense!

Resources

Resources to use at home for developing these independence systems:

- There are many tools available (some free) to develop visual
- Consider using goblin.tools to help you create a task analysis

Conclusion & Final Thoughts

Key Takeaways:

- Stay informed about the special education process.
- Be proactive in building independence in your child.

Encouragement:

- Every child's journey is unique—celebrate progress, no matter how big or small!

Questions?

Thank you!

For more information or questions contact:

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