



Building the  
Learning Team

Chapter 3

# Supporting Student Participation

2006

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This resource is primarily intended for:

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Administrators	✓
Health-related Professionals	✓
Counsellors	✓
Students	
Parents	
General Public	



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## Chapter 3

# Supporting Student Participation



There are many benefits to involving students in their own IPP process. Active student participation can:

- give the learning team insight into student needs, strengths, goals, preferences and dreams as they set direction, create and implement a plan, review and revise the IPP, and plan for transitions
- help students to better understand and articulate their individual strengths and areas of need
- increase student understanding of how accommodations can support learning
- lay the groundwork for building self-advocacy skills
- increase student commitment to IPP goals and action plans, and sense of personal accountability for learning
- increase the willingness of parents to be actively involved in their child's IPP process, which results in the sharing of useful information and insights, and more opportunities for parents to support their child's IPP goals and objectives at home and in the community.

Active participation can range from attending part of the planning meeting to preparing agendas, taking full responsibility for chairing meetings and providing major input into identification of strengths, areas of need, accommodations, goals and objectives. The level of a student's involvement will vary depending on his or her age, developmental level, abilities and motivation, but should increase each year.

For more information

This chapter provides sample strategies for supporting student participation in the IPP process. Additional strategies to support student involvement are contained in a number of other chapters in this resource, including:

Chapter 2: *Encouraging Parent Involvement*

Chapter 6: *Selecting Accommodations and Strategies*

Chapter 8: *Planning for Transitions*

Chapter 9: *Infusing Assistive Technology for Learning into the IPP Process*

Chapter 12: *Promising Practices for Junior and Senior High School.*

## Introducing the IPP Process

Introducing students to the IPP process is the first step in promoting their participation. To effectively participate in the IPP process, students need to understand:

- their own special learning needs and what this means
- the purpose of the IPP
- the benefits of having an IPP
- the steps in the process

- who is on their learning team and what their roles are
- the format and types of information recorded on the IPP document.

### Sample strategies

#### Sample strategies for introducing the IPP process

- Begin the discussion by talking about how all people are different, from the way they look, to their talents, likes and dislikes, and even the way they learn.
- Help students identify concrete examples of their learning strengths and describe some of their learning challenges such as reading comprehension, ability to focus or getting ideas down on paper.
- Encourage students to share their thoughts concerning their learning strengths and challenges, and to feel comfortable asking any questions they may have.
- Consider using a graphic organizer such as a K–W–L+ chart to help students organize information and questions about their individual learning needs.

### Appendices

*See Appendix 3-A for a sample K–W–L+ chart.*

- Invite members from advocacy groups or students who have successfully moved on to speak about their own special education needs. Students may feel motivated to ask questions or share concerns with individuals who have similar learning needs.
- Brainstorm types of plans (e.g., house building plans, exercise plans, study plans) and discuss what things plans have in common (e.g., steps for making changes). Discuss how an IPP helps students, parents and teachers plan for a student's success at school.
- Have students draw a picture of themselves and then surround their portraits by drawing or writing the names of people who help them learn. Brainstorm additional people who could be added to their circle. This is their circle of support. Then ask them to underline all of the people who work directly with them in the classroom, plus their parents—this is their learning team.
- Give students a list of essential information that must be included on an IPP. Ask students to check off the types of information that they have contributed, the types of information they would like to contribute to but have not had the opportunity to do so, and the types of information they would like to know more about.

### Appendices

*See Appendix 3-B for a sample list of essential IPP information.*

## Encouraging Participation in the IPP Process

Students can be actively involved in all stages of the IPP process. Some students will be eager and able to participate, while others will need a more gradual introduction. The learning team will need to decide what strategies, supports and types of participation will best suit their students' needs and abilities.

### 1. Identifying strengths and areas of need

A basic foundation of the IPP process is creating opportunities for students to identify and share their perspectives, knowledge and concerns about their strengths and areas of need. Students should also be encouraged to share their interests and goals, and their hopes and dreams for the future. This kind of information can help the learning team develop meaningful future-oriented goals and effective transition planning.

#### Sample strategies

Sample strategies for involving students in identifying strengths and needs

- Discuss how people often take time to get to know others, but seldom spend equal time getting to know themselves. Talk with students about how their involvement in their IPPs will likely teach them a few things about themselves.
- As a class activity, brainstorm strengths that different students in the classroom may demonstrate. Provide a graphic organizer for students to record and organize their reflections on their personal strengths.

#### Appendices

*See Appendix 3-C for a sample graphic organizer for recording personal strengths.*

- Provide an inventory of potential learning challenges and have students reflect on their own behaviour in relation to these skills. Encourage students to highlight skills they would like to work on this school year. This information can become the focus of an IPP goal.

#### Appendices

*See Appendix 3-D for a sample inventory of potential learning challenges.*

- Provide students with feedback that helps them understand how they learn best (e.g., "You seem to remember better when you get a chance to see the information"). Help them summarize this information.

#### Appendices

*See Appendix 3-E for a sample graphic organizer for summarizing learning strengths and challenges.*

- Explain assessment results so students gain an understanding of their abilities and needs, and the implications for their schooling and lives.

## 2. Setting the direction

Students often know best what they need and want to be more successful learners. Depending on their development level and willingness to participate, they can contribute to an understanding of what skills and behaviours need to be part of their annual goals.

### Sample strategy

#### Sample strategy for involving students in setting priorities

- Present students with a number of skills (e.g., reading textbooks, research skills, asking questions in class). Have students decide which ones are most important and which ones they feel most committed to working towards.

## 3. Creating a plan

Creating a plan includes identifying goals, objectives and accommodations for the student. Involving students as much as possible in creating the plan helps to ensure that IPP goals and objectives are relevant, and increases students' commitment to achieving these goals and objectives. Similarly, encouraging students to actively participate in selecting accommodations increases the likelihood that students will use the accommodations effectively and consistently in the classroom. Often students feel self-conscious about doing things differently than peers; involving students in the selection process provides opportunities for them to learn about and become comfortable with these differences.

### Sample strategies

#### Sample strategies for involving students in setting long-term goals

- Introduce the general concept of goal setting by brainstorming successful people and listing examples of goals or accomplishments these individuals have achieved.
- Discuss why goal setting is important. Share research findings that goal setting can increase self-confidence, make people feel happier and decrease stress. Some students may be motivated by learning how successful athletes use goal setting.
- Help students begin to identify their long-term goals by asking them what success would look like or what would make them very proud of themselves in a year's time.
- If appropriate, share assessment data with students to help them link long-term goals to their specific areas of need.
- Help students identify potential roadblocks that they may face as they work towards reaching their goals. Brainstorm potential solutions for each of the roadblocks identified.

## Sample strategies

## Sample strategies for involving students in identifying accommodations

- Give students a list of potential accommodations and have them use one colour to highlight the accommodations that they know work well for themselves, and another colour to identify things that they would be willing to try.
- Challenge students to identify additional accommodations that are not on the sample list.
- Set up a demonstration to help students understand the purpose of accommodations. Post a sign with medium-sized print on one wall of the classroom. Ask 10 students, including several students who wear glasses, to line up against the opposite wall. Explain that on the signal, each student should walk toward the sign until he or she can read it and then stop. Before you give the signal, ask students who are wearing glasses to take them off. Then, give the signal and wait until students reach a place where they can read the sign. Discuss how different people need to stand in different places. Then, ask students to put their glasses back on and move backward to a place where they can read the sign with their glasses. Discuss how being able to choose where to stand and being able to wear glasses are both types of accommodations in this situation. Use this opportunity to discuss the issue of fairness. Does standing closer or wearing glasses give some students an unfair advantage over other students? How does this relate to other accommodations that students may need in the classroom?

## 4. Implementing the plan

Students have to be at the heart of implementing their IPP. They need to understand the goals they are working toward and have a clear picture of what success will look like. As much as possible, they also need to learn how to monitor their progress, and identify what is helping and what is not helping them in their learning.

## Sample strategies

## Sample strategies for involving students in the implementation of their IPP

- Develop checklists and simple tools for students to observe and record their own behaviour. Not only is this efficient, but it creates a deeper understanding of what types of attitudes, behaviours and skills help them be more successful learners.
- Provide direct instruction in specific self-advocacy skills such as asking for what you need, being able to explain your special learning need and suggesting alternate assignments.

## Appendices

*See Appendix 3-F for a sample student checklist of self-advocacy skills.*

- Encourage older students to use their own words and develop their own action plans to set goals and track their progress. These goals could be aligned to their IPP goals or other goals that are especially meaningful to them.

## Appendices

See Appendix 3-G for sample student goal-setting template.

### 5. Reviewing and revising

Contributing to reviewing and revising the IPP, including participating in IPP review meetings, can provide important opportunities for students to reflect on their own learning. Maximizing student involvement in review meetings also provides team members with valuable insight into students' perspectives on the success of their current programming, and ensures that revisions to the IPP are made with this information in mind.

## Sample strategies

Sample strategies for supporting students in reviewing and reporting on their IPP goals

- Schedule a regular time during IPP meetings for students to give a report on their progress towards reaching goals. Help students prepare for the meeting by role-playing what they might say and what kinds of questions they might be asked.
- Encourage students to use agenda books or monthly letter-writing templates to monitor and record their progress. Students can use these writing frames to create a report for their parents about how they are meeting their goals and objectives.

## Appendices

See Appendix 3-H for a sample report-writing template.

### 6. Planning for transition

Students are the most important people in the planning for transition process. They are the ones who have the greatest stake in what is planned and decided, and they need ongoing opportunities to express their opinions, expectations, questions, choices and concerns. As much as possible, students need to be involved in their own transition planning from an early age. As students gain independence and move towards post-secondary settings, this involvement is essential.

## Sample strategies

Sample strategies for involving students in planning for transition

- Provide students with opportunities to gather information so that they are able to make well-informed decisions about future learning environments. Encourage students to visit different school sites, interview individuals and arrange for guest speakers to discuss different options.
- Encourage students to explore and share goals for the future. They may do this by talking about goals, creating a picture or word collage, or writing a journal entry from the perspective of an ideal day in their future lives.
- Help students identify what skills they will require to make their goals a reality. Developing these skills can then become part of the transition plan.

## Self-advocacy

It is essential that students with special education needs understand the importance of speaking up and asking for what they need. For example, many post-secondary institutions report that too few students with special education needs take advantage of the resources and accommodations available because they lack the skills to advocate on their own behalf. Individuals who know how to ask for what they need have a better chance of receiving it. This is true whether a person is ordering food at a restaurant or attending his or her first day at a post-secondary institution.

There are a number of reasons why students with special education needs may not self-advocate effectively. For example, students may:

- be unable to clearly describe their abilities, areas of need and the conditions that best promote their learning, either because of language difficulties, poor social skills, lack of practice or lack of knowledge of themselves as learners
- not know who to contact to get help, what to ask for or how to best use supports
- not have been directly taught appropriate self-advocacy skills and/or not have someone to coach them through situations where they might need to self-advocate
- have limited confidence in their abilities and as a result, they may be reluctant to ask questions in class or request extra assistance
- be passive in their approach to their education, feeling that their future is beyond their control—this includes relying on their parents and teachers to advocate for them
- be discouraged because they have encountered people who do not understand their special education needs, or why accommodations or assistance may be appropriate.

The first step in building self-advocacy skills is ensuring that students are actively and appropriately involved in IPP meetings from as young an age as possible. Students need to learn how to build relationships with other members of the learning team and articulate their choices during IPP meetings in a clear and respectful manner.

### Sample strategies

### Sample strategies for involving students in IPP meetings

- Teach students strategies for preparing for IPP meetings, such as highlighting portions of the agenda or the IPP that they will share with the team. They can also write out what they would like to say on index cards or graphic organizers.

- Teach specific strategies for participating, such as the SHARE strategy below.  
 Sit up straight (feet on the floor, hands rested on the table).  
 Have a pleasant tone of voice (speak up confidently and politely).  
 Activate your thinking (use the strategies you've learned to help you).  
 Relax (calm yourself down by counting, breathing or visualizing).  
 Engage in eye contact (although you may be reading some of your information, do your best to look at the other people at the meeting as much as possible).

## Appendices

See Appendix 3-I for a template of the SHARE strategy.

- Establish a fail-safe mechanism that students can use if they begin to feel overwhelmed in the meeting. This might be in the form of a subtle gesture that the teacher and student arrange before the meeting which signals the teacher to step in and help.
- Discuss how to handle comments during the meeting that students may not agree with. Teach students to use “I” statements as a constructive way to share their point of view. For instance instead of saying “You don’t give me help in your class,” students could say “I think that I would do better if I could get more of your time.” Discuss how “I-messages” focus on actions and feelings, and do not blame others.
- Use role-playing to rehearse the different components of the IPP meeting and coach students on specific skills such as:
  - greeting people
  - making introductions
  - reviewing the agenda
  - explaining the purpose of the meeting
  - asking for questions or feedback
  - sticking to the agenda
  - keeping track of time
  - summarizing discussions
  - thanking participants.
- Take time to debrief with students after the meeting and review what worked and what the next steps are.

## Appendices

See Appendix 3-J for a sample IPP meeting guide for students.

As students get older, self-advocacy becomes increasingly important. Students with well-developed self-advocacy skills:

- have increased confidence, independence and a greater sense of control over their education
- are able to transfer these skills into career and life environments after high school, and therefore become more successful and independent adults.

Building self-advocacy skills requires both time and a deliberate effort from students and their learning teams.

Sample strategies

Sample strategies for building self-advocacy skills

- Ask students to think about what effective self-advocacy looks like, sounds like and feels like. These ideas can be recorded in a table like the following.

Looks like	Sounds like	Feels like
<i>Standing up straight</i>	<i>Calm, polite voice</i>	<i>A little uncomfortable</i>

- Explicitly teach students specific skills needed for self-advocacy, such as asking for what they need.

Appendices

See Appendix 3-K for a student tip sheet on self-advocacy skills.

- Recognize that some students may initially be reluctant or uncomfortable approaching teachers for help. Consider establishing a regular check-in time (e.g., five minutes after class once a week) or providing a communication tool that students can use to initiate contact.

Appendices

See Appendix 3-L for a sample template students can use to ask for help from teachers.

- Teach students strategies to monitor their own learning. This is an important first step in being able to identify and describe the kinds of adaptations, accommodations and strategies that will help them be successful in class as well as the workplace.
- Create opportunities for students to experience new and challenging things. Students learn skills for requesting assistance and using positive strategies when they encounter problems or unfamiliar situations.

Appendices

See Appendix 3-M for a sample tip sheet for students on problem solving.

- Encourage students to think of advocacy as a “work in progress.” Each experience improves their communication and collaboration skills. Provide opportunities for students to reflect on the self-advocacy skills they are developing throughout the school year.
- Discuss the importance of students recognizing their limitations and seeking support as required. Stress that there are others who can help if students ask.
- Encourage students to be patient. Explain that the learning team takes students’ input very seriously, and will try to make changes to help them, but sometimes finding the information or assistance they need takes time.
- Encourage students to listen to and consider the perspectives of others. Discuss why it is important to build understanding and relationships.
- Help students to celebrate their successes. Increasing students’ self-confidence can help them be better self-advocates.

- Ensure that parents understand the importance of self-advocacy and know strategies they can use to support their child's self-advocacy skills outside of school.

Appendices

*See Appendix 3-N for sample strategies that parents can use to help their children become strong self-advocates.*

## Appendices



These tools are available in PDF format at [www.education.gov.ab.ca/k\\_12/special\\_needs/resource.asp](http://www.education.gov.ab.ca/k_12/special_needs/resource.asp) and on the CD-ROM packaged with the print version of this resource.

## Supporting Student Participation

The purpose of these sample tools is to enrich the IPP process. These tools should be used selectively and can be adapted to best meet the needs of individual students. Many of these tools will be used informally as part of the IPP development process and not as products for the student's permanent school record.

- 3-A K-W-L+
- 3-B Essential IPP Information
- 3-C Know Your Own Strengths Inventory
- 3-D Uncover Your Learning Challenges Inventory
- 3-E Knowing My Strengths and Challenges
- 3-F Self-advocacy Checklist for Elementary/Middle School
- 3-G Goal-setting Organizer
- 3-H Sample IPP Report-writing Template
- 3-I SHARE Strategy
- 3-J Sample Student IPP Meeting Guide
- 3-K Be Your Own Self-advocate
- 3-L Asking for Help Ticket
- 3-M Be a Problem-solver
- 3-N Tips for Parents on Helping Their Children Develop Self-advocacy Skills



K-W-L+

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>K</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">What I <u>K</u>now about my special learning needs</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>W</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">What I <u>W</u>ant to know about my special learning needs</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><b>L</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">What I <u>L</u>earned about my special learning needs</p>

+

Why is finding out more about my special learning needs important?  
How will I use this information?



Appendix 3-B

## Essential IPP Information

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

	<i>I contributed information to this part of my IPP</i>	<i>I would like to contribute information to this part of my IPP</i>	<i>I need to learn more about this kind of information</i>
Assessment information about my learning			
My current level of performance and achievement			
My strengths and areas of need			
My goals and objectives			
How we'll evaluate my progress			
Other services I need, including health-related services			
Accommodations			
Medical information			
Review of progress at reporting periods			
Transition plans			
Year-end summary			
How my parents are participating in my IPP process			



# Know Your Own Strengths Inventory

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

A. List four successful experiences you have had in the last 12 months:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

B. List four everyday things you do well:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

C. List two things you could teach someone else:

- \_\_\_\_\_

D. List 10 positive words to describe yourself:

- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

E. List two things that really matter to you:

- \_\_\_\_\_

F. List two things you can do for yourself that will always make you feel good:

- \_\_\_\_\_

G. List two people who you can count on for help and support:

- \_\_\_\_\_

From Alberta Learning, *Make School Work for You: A Resource for Junior and Senior High Students Who Want to be More Successful Learners* (Edmonton, AB: Alberta Learning, 2001), p. 84.



Appendix 3-D

## Uncover Your Learning Challenges Inventory

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Not yet
1. I come to school every day.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2. I come to class on time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
3. I come to class with the materials I need.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
4. I come to class prepared, e.g., textbook read, assignments complete.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. I leave my worries outside the classroom door.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
6. I can follow written directions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
7. I can follow spoken directions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
8. I understand the new ideas the teacher presents.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
9. I can focus my attention in class.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
10. I contribute to class discussions.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
11. I take accurate and detailed notes.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
12. My notebooks are organized and complete.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
13. I am clear and concise when writing.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
14. My written work is accurate, legible and organized.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
15. I finish assignments within time limits.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
16. I know when and who to ask for help.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
17. I can sit still for long periods of time.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
18. I do not distract or chat with others.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
19. I remain calm and focused during tests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
20. I do well on tests.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

From Alberta Learning, *Make School Work for You: A Resource for Junior and Senior High Students Who Want to be More Successful Learners* (Edmonton, AB: Alberta Learning, 2001), pp. 82–83.



## Uncover Your Learning Challenges Inventory (continued) page 2/2

A. To get more feedback about my in-class behaviour, I could talk with:

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B. Do teachers ever mention a specific in-class behaviour to you? For example, “Don’t chat with your neighbours” or “You need to bring a pencil everyday.” Write these comments down even if you don’t like them or agree with them—there may be helpful information in this feedback.

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## Knowing My Strengths and Challenges

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

Learning Strengths	Learning Challenges

List five things you are good at doing outside of school and draw a picture in the box of one of these strengths.

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_



# Self-advocacy Checklist for Elementary/Junior High School

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

- I know what kind of special learning needs I have.
- I can describe my special learning needs to my teacher.
- I attend my IPP meetings.
- I let people know what I am thinking at my IPP meetings.
- I ask for help when I need it.
- I ask questions in class.
- I have started to take on more difficult tasks in school.
- I hand in all my homework on time.
- I am proud of myself and don't let others tease me.
- My calendar, binder and notebooks are organized.
- I have learned new ways to study for tests.
- I make an effort to build good friendships.
- I have a tutor for the subject(s) that I find difficult.
- I have gone to my senior high school and talked to my teachers.
- I am learning new strategies and using accommodations.
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

Adapted with permission from Howard Eaton and Leslie Coull, *Transitions to High School: Self-Advocacy Handbook for Students with Learning Disabilities and/or Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder* (Vancouver, BC: Eaton Coull Learning Group, Ltd., www.eclg.com, 2000), p. 57.



## Goal-setting Organizer

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

<b>Goal</b>	My goal is to ...	<b>Is your goal</b> <input type="checkbox"/> Specific?
		<input type="checkbox"/> Measurable?
		<input type="checkbox"/> Achievable?
<b>Rationale</b>	I chose this goal because ...	<input type="checkbox"/> Realistic?
		<input type="checkbox"/> Time-based?
<b>Action plan</b>	To reach this goal I will ...	
<b>Measurement</b>	How will I know if I am successful?	
<b>Evaluation</b>	What would I do differently in the future?	

From Alberta Learning, *Make School Work for You: A Resource for Junior and Senior High Students Who Want to be More Successful Learners* (Edmonton, AB: Alberta Learning, 2001), p. 87.



# Sample IPP Report-writing Template

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

My progress on my IPP goals for the month of \_\_\_\_\_

### Working on my reading goals

1. The strategy I have used the most this month is \_\_\_\_\_
2. I use it when \_\_\_\_\_
3. My novel study is \_\_\_\_\_
4. The best part of the novel is \_\_\_\_\_
5. I completed \_\_\_\_\_ pages for home reading this month.

### Working on my math goals

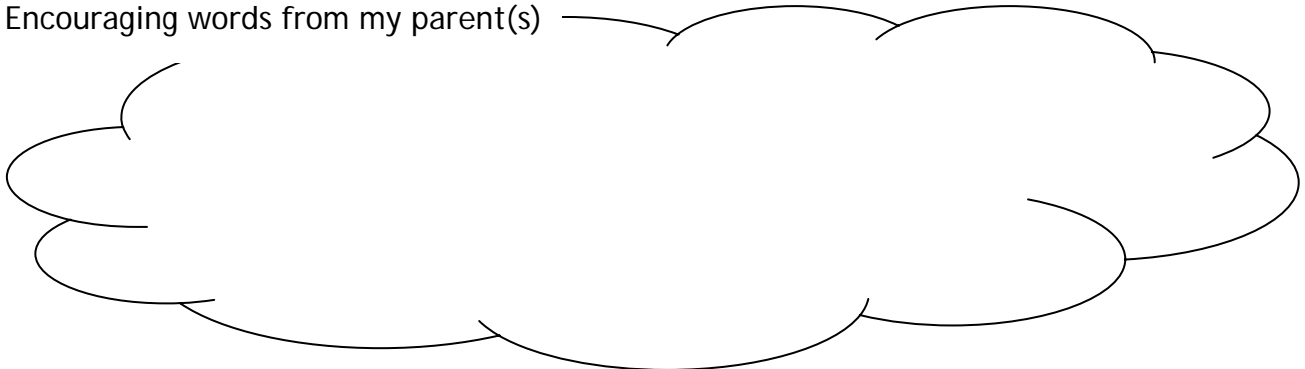
1. This month in math we worked on \_\_\_\_\_
2. I am getting better at \_\_\_\_\_
3. I still need more practice \_\_\_\_\_
4. Unit test mark \_\_\_\_\_

### Working on my getting along with others goals

1. This month's recesses were \_\_\_\_\_  
because \_\_\_\_\_
2. I am most proud that I \_\_\_\_\_
3. Next month I want to get better at \_\_\_\_\_
4. To do this, I will \_\_\_\_\_

Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Encouraging words from my parent(s)





Appendix 3-I

## SHARE Strategy

Use the following strategy to help remind yourself of what you need to do during IPP meetings.

**S**it up straight (feet on the floor, hands rested on the table).

**H**ave a pleasant tone of voice (speak up confidently and politely).

**A**ctivate your thinking (use the strategies you've learned to help you).

**R**elax (calm yourself down by counting, breathing or visualizing).

**E**ngage in eye contact (although you may be reading some of your information, do your best to look at the other people at the meeting as much as possible).



## Sample Student IPP Meeting Guide

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_

### Before the meeting

- Write and distribute letters of invitation to members of your learning team.
- Create name cards for those attending the meeting.

### During the meeting

- Greet everyone and thank them for attending the meeting.
- Explain the purpose of the meeting.
- Explain your special learning needs.
- Tell why it's important that YOU be involved in your own IPP process.
- Share strengths and challenges listed in the IPP.
- Share medical information that affects your learning.
- Explain types of services you may be receiving.
- Review what the assessment data says about your learning.
- Tell how you will evaluate your progress.
- Share what classroom accommodations work for you.
- Share long-term goals and objectives.
- Discuss your transition plans.
- State when the next IPP review will take place.
- Ask if there are any questions and/or comments.
- Thank everyone for attending.

### After the meeting

- Write thank-you letters to members of your learning team.



## Be Your Own Self-advocate

Being a self-advocate means that there are times when you need to ask for things, such as an alternate assignment, an extension on a deadline or notes from a class you missed. No matter what you're asking for, let the person know that you have thought about the situation and are prepared to contribute to the solution.

By approaching people with a solution, you let them know that you are taking responsibility for your situation and that you don't expect them to solve the problem for you. Be flexible. You may need to negotiate a solution that is acceptable to everyone involved.



When you need something changed in the classroom, it's your responsibility to bring it to the attention of your teacher. Plan and practise what you want to say. Always go with a solution and a positive attitude.

1. State the problem and give an example.
2. Let people know you are working on this problem (so they don't think you're trying to avoid work or are not trying hard enough).
3. Briefly explain your solution to the problem.
4. Ask for their cooperation or permission for this accommodation (solution).

"I am working hard to improve my reading skills but I often misread exam questions. My understanding greatly improves when someone else reads the questions to me. One of the peer tutors would be willing to tape the test questions for me. Would you be willing to give this a try?"

"I work really hard to spell correctly but I need to use an electronic spell checker. I always have one with me in class. Is it okay for me to use it on tests?"

"I need extra time to show all that I know on a test. If I could have an extra half hour to finish the social studies test, it would be a better reflection of what I know. I'd be willing to stay through the lunch hour to do this."



From Alberta Learning, *Make School Work for You: A Resource for Junior and Senior High Students Who Want to be More Successful Learners* (Edmonton, AB: Alberta Learning, 2001), pp. 5, 70.



# Asking for Help Ticket



Dear \_\_\_\_\_,  
(teacher's name)

These are the things that I am having difficulty with:

- understanding my textbook
- knowing what my homework is
- getting my homework done
- listening in class
- taking notes
- passing tests
- completing assignments
- other \_\_\_\_\_

Could we please meet to discuss possible strategies?

Two meeting times that work for me \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Student signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Reproduced with permission from Mary Cole and Anne Price, *T'NT: Tips 'n Tricks for Dynamite Learning!!* (Calgary, AB: Calgary Learning Centre, 1999), p. ii (Black Line Masters).



Appendix 3-M

## Be a Problem Solver

Suppose you have a problem with a class or teacher and you don't know quite how to approach the teacher. Take charge one step at a time.

- Know what you want to ask or discuss. Write it on paper if necessary.
- Rehearse your approach and questions or statements in your head and out loud.
- Find a time when the teacher is not busy and is not in a hurry. If necessary, set up an appointment.
- Arrive a minute or two early or be prepared to stay after class.
- Begin with a positive statement. For example, "I'm sincerely interested in learning the information your class offers."
- Then, clearly state what you want or need. For example, "Lately I'm having a hard time understanding and keeping up, and I'm looking for ways to help myself."
- Actively listen to what the teacher suggests. Take notes if necessary.
- Thank the teacher and assure him or her that you will try to put the suggestions into practice.
- Tell the teacher that you will get in touch in two weeks (or an appropriate time) to review your progress.
- Find ways to demonstrate your interest in class. Take part in discussions. Ask thoughtful questions and try to use the teacher's suggestions.
- **MOST OF ALL ...** be positive, courteous, considerate, willing to see the other side and willing to try.

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## Tips for Parents on Helping Their Children Develop Self-advocacy Skills

Sample strategies that parents can use to help their children become strong self-advocates

- Talk with your child about his or her special education needs and what this means for learning.
- Provide specific feedback that helps your child understand how he or she learns best, such as “You seem to remember better when you get a chance to see the information.”
- Explain assessment results so that your child understands his or her abilities and needs, and the implications for schooling and life.
- Stress that your child is not alone with his or her difficulties. Parents, grandparents, siblings and school staff can all help with learning.
- Describe the assistance that is available to your child in a concrete, realistic, positive manner.
- Discuss ideas for handling possible teasing or resolving other social issues with peers.
- Role-play ways to handle difficult situations at school.
- Seek resources for support and information. Assist your child, as he or she matures, to access these resources and become a self-advocate for his or her own education needs.
- Encourage your child to be an active participant in the learning team by participating in IPP conferences and setting realistic goals as he or she progresses in school.
- Introduce your child to books that deal with challenges similar to those he or she faces. Children’s literature can illustrate human relationships, conditions and situations in a rich and affecting way. Books afford children the opportunity to make connections between the events and characters in the stories, and their own lives. This often lessens their sense of loneliness, confusion or isolation. Wisdom gained through reading and being read to can be applied in children’s own lives.

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