

A YEAR OF SUCCESS

Parent & Teacher Considerations for Success

September

-Laying the foundation for a student on the spectrum is critical to success throughout the school year.

- Has a student interest inventory or profile been done as a way to better understand the child?
- Have you read and do you truly understand what is written in the child's IEP?
- How are support services (ex. Speech, OT, etc.) being incorporated into his day?
- Are the SLP and OT actively providing support within the classroom setting?
- Do you need to have an IEP meeting for any reason?
- How often are goals updated, and how often is progress on goals communicated to the team?
- How are assignments given? Throughout the day or at the end of the day?
- How often during the week is homework given? What is the expectation for turning in homework? Does a specific plan for your child need to be created?
- Do students use an assignment notebook? How does your child stay organized?

October

-Physical arrangements of the environment can help or hinder a student significantly

- How are his/her goals being addressed in the classroom?
- What are the accommodations and/or modifications that your child should receive? How and when are those supports to be given?
- What are the seating arrangements? Is your child set up for success, failure, or alienation?
- Is there a classroom behavior plan?
- How are expectations for appropriate behavior and consequences for inappropriate behavior communicated?
- Are you familiar with functional behavior assessments (FBA) or behavior intervention plan (BIP)?
- Does your child require and FBA or a BIP?
- Are strategies used proactive versus reactive?
- Is there an emphasis on prevention versus intervention?

NOTES:

November/December

-The winter season brings about chaos and changes in routines. You must prepare your students.

- Are visuals used to communicate expectations
- Is there a consistent schedule and how is it communicated (pictures, written, verbal, etc.)
- How are changes in the schedule communicated to the student?
- Are social stories being used to teach appropriate behavior and/or social skills?
- Are there opportunities for breaks or calming time? How are sensory issues managed?
- Are there any distraction free work areas?
- Is there a buddy system in place?
- Are areas of the classroom clear? (computer area, book area, calm area, play area)

NOTES:

January

-Now is the time to review what has been working and more importantly what has NOT been working with your students.

- Are the child's interests being considered for projects/assignments?
- How are group activities structured? What type of instruction do you use the most (lecture, cooperative learning groups, hands on experiences, etc.)
- Do you differentiate your instruction to meet the needs of all the students?
- Are you familiar with multiple intelligences?
- Do you use multiple modalities to increase student learning?
- Are structured teaching methods (i.e. TEACCH) incorporated into the classroom environment?

NOTES:

February

-Continue the focus on Annual IEP Goals

- Are social stories being used to teach appropriate behavior and/or social skills?
- Are choices given whenever possible?
- Are strategies used proactive versus reactive?
- Is there an emphasis on prevention versus intervention?
- Is there a need for an IEP meeting to address goals which have been achieved?

NOTES:

March/April

-IEP Season has started. You must continue your focus on teaching. These last months are critical before the end of the year disruptions begin.

- Have you read and do you truly understand what is written in the child's IEP?
- How are support services (ex. Speech, OT, etc.) being incorporated into his day? What are the services minutes and are they being met?
- Are the child's communication, sensory, and behavior needs incorporated into the development of IEP goals, accommodations/modifications, behavior plan, etc.)
- How are his goals being addressed in the classroom?
- What are the accommodations and/or modifications that your child should receive? How and when are those supports to be given?
- Are you familiar with functional behavior assessments (FBA) or behavior intervention plan (BIP)?
- Does your child require and FBA or a BIP?
- Has a student interest inventory or profile been done as a way to better understand the child?

NOTES:

May/June

-End of the year chaos is evident within the classroom. Focus on the students and their need for transition into the next school year.

- Are social stories being used to teach appropriate behavior and/or social skills?
- Are choices given whenever possible?
- Are strategies used proactive versus reactive?
- Is there an emphasis on prevention versus intervention?
- Are there opportunities for breaks or calming time? How are sensory issues managed?
- Are there any distraction free work areas?
- Is there a buddy system in place?

NOTES:

Home to School Communication

Communication between home and school are vital to a child's success in school. If an educational team wants to prepare a child for further education, employment and independent living, the family members must be invested 100% involvement as a team participant.

Below is an effective home to school communication plan.

1. A letter from the family that will provide a personal portrait of their child and will provide the teachers with rich and detailed information.
2. The family must complete informational questionnaire provided within this packet this is of great value to tailor an academic program to meet your child's needs.
3. Provide a duplicate copy of your child's IEP.
 - (Individualized Education Plan)
4. Check in with the family's weekly bi-weekly or once a month via email, or by telephone to ensure the child is staying on task.
5. Create a substitute cheat sheet
 - Can be as simple as accommodation/ modification page in IEP, adding important details of the child are helpful so a crisis situation is avoided.
6. Gather end of the year letters to reflect the student assist with transition.
 - Should be from each service provider on team
 - Information should NOT mirror IEP reports

Hint: Look at Parent Questionnaire from teacher perspective

Parent Letter

Below is an example of a beginning of the year letter to the parents.

Dear Family,

In order to help your child succeed within our classroom and school, I am requesting specific information in regards to your child and their needs.

You can help me get to know your child better through your eyes.

Completing the forms that are provided in this packet will be of great value to me so I can then tailor an academic program that will suit their needs even further than the IEP document by itself.

I thank you for taking the time to complete this informational packet and I look forward to getting to know your child this school year.

Please contact me if you have further questions. The best methods and times to reach me are:

In Person: Hours: Location:
Phone: Hours:
Email:

I feel strongly about building a home to school collaborative partnership and look forward to working with you!

Sincerely,

Questionnaire



This is a communication tool to assist in bridging the gap, between the parents at home and the teachers within the classroom.

We believe in working together as a team. The following information will tell you everything you need to know to encourage the love of learning.

Please complete the questionnaire provided below to ensure a successful school year

1. Does your child have any sensitivity to materials, smells, sounds, temperatures, lights touch or foods that I need to be aware of?

2. Does your child become anxious, overwhelmed, over-react or become physically sick in certain situations?

3. What signs or triggers might set him/her off?

Example: (struggling with difficult work)

4. Does your child require a calming item for sensory input?

Example: putty, chewing gum, water bottle.

5. Does your child have a defense he/she uses to protect himself in times of stress?

Example: pinching, biting, hitting

6. Does your child need structure and if something should go wrong would he need reassurance?

7. Does your child need time to process information?

8. Does your child ask for clarification when a subject isn't understood?

9. Does your child need directions repeated, written down, modeled, would it be best to have the child repeat directions back to the teacher to make sure it's not misunderstood?

10. Is your child a fooler will he/she tell the teacher he understands and really doesn't.

11. Does your child have difficulty starting maintaining, and ending conversations?

12. Does your child make eye contact?
If not would the child be aware of what is taking place in class even though he/she appears to not listening.

13. Does your child need assistance with transitioning?
Example: a buddy to walk with in low traffic times.

14. Does your child prefer to work alone or with others?

15. Does your child form friendships easily?

16. How are your child's organizational skills?

17. Is there anything the teacher should be aware of when planning assemblies, field trips, or any outdoor activities?

18. Is your child good in sports? Would he/she be interested in participating in a complete sport during gym class or recess?
19. Would your child require special equipment in gym class such as earplugs or modeling of a game before, during or after class?
20. Does your child have any fine/gross motor issues
Example: can he/she draw in art class or kick a ball?
21. How would you rate his/her sense of self on a scale of 1-10?
22. Does he/she recognize his strengths and limitations?
23. Does he/she have a strong sense of justice?
24. What do your child's sleeping patterns look like?
25. Does your child require routine home and in the classroom does he/she require advanced notice of change
26. Will he come to me if he/she should encounter teasing or bullying?
27. Is there any significant family matters I might need to be aware of? Example: (death or divorce)
28. Is your child involved in any outside activities or is participating in any clubs? Is there something the teacher can encourage him/her here at school?
29. What do you hope for your child for the year? in the next 5 years? In the next 10 years 25. Are there any significant family matters I might need to be aware of?
Example: death or divorce

Example: End of the Year Letter from Resource Teacher 8th Grade

For the past school year the Titan team of teachers has had the pleasure of working with Jordan Brunett and his parents. This time was a period of growth and maturity for Jordan. He has continued to make strides both socially and academically. Jordan continues to struggle with some areas of learning, but he is more aware of his struggles and shows the willingness to work on those areas of difficulty.

In the academic part of his education Jordan continues to make strides. His greatest success was in his co taught math class. The beginning of the year was review and Jordan felt confident that he could do the work. . Concrete examples are so helpful for Jordan when working with new concepts. This was especially true in the geometry unit. Jordan struggles with the abstract concepts presented in that unit but with help and repetition, he was able to be successful. Due to his confidence in the area of math Jordan participated more and also asked for help independently. To help with the abstract concepts that are presented in reading Jordan was in a resource class for his 8th grade year. Jordan is an excellent reader in that he can read the stories fluently. Inferential questions continue to be difficult for him. His resource teacher worked very hard with the skill of inferring by asking the same questions and requiring the same answer. For example, the question would always be, what do you infer about ____? and be sure to provide evidence from the reading. Jordan's answer would have to be, I infer _____ because in the text it says _____. When working with the poetry unit and figurative language Jordan made good progress. He was able to identify similes, metaphors, and personification in pieces of writing and also decipher that they were not literal meanings. He did struggle with coming up with what the pieces of figurative language were really trying to say. Science was an area that Jordan worked diligently in this past year. The curriculum was very abstract and Jordan did utilize the aide that was in the classroom. This class also required a lot of group work and his teacher noted that Jordan was at times reluctant to participate. The team attributes this to Jordan not feeling comfortable with what was required of him academically. An area that continues to be Jordan's strength is memorization of facts. He was able to utilize this strength in social studies throughout the year. Homework completion has and is an area where Jordan's is consistently consistent. Patience and explanation are two strategies that always help Jordan succeed.

Socially Jordan continues to make strides as well. He had friends in his classes and would interact with them appropriately. He did need to be reminded, at times, to stay on task but that was all part of the normal classroom behavior for all the kids. At times he doesn't know when to stop joking around with another student but will take the direction from an adult. The team feels that Jordan will transition to high school with some apprehension about going to a new place and meeting new people, but as time goes on he will find his niche within xxxxxxxxxxxx and be successful.

On a personal note, it has been my pleasure to work with Jordan and his family for the past two years. Jordan is an amazing young man and the support that he receives from his parents has made him the person he is today. As a teacher, he has enriched my life by teaching me about autism and shown me how to be a better teacher. I will truly miss him as he moves on to high school. I know that he will accomplish many things in the coming years and knowing that I was a part of his education makes those accomplishments special. I wish him and his family nothing but success in the coming years. Respectfully submitted, xxxxxxxxxxxxxxx Resource Consultant

Jordan's IEP notes this may assist you in learning more about the needs of higher functioning children in the classroom.

Challenging areas for Jordan:

- Higher level language tasks including how and why questions, explaining reasons why and inferring.
- Rote memory is a skill Jordan excels at, he greatly struggled with recalling sentences that are presented to him verbally.
- One of Jordan's biggest struggles during testing is he attempts to memorize each word as it comes, so he misses the entire message. It's hard for him to see and recall the entire picture, or the whole sentence.
- Summarizing information is a challenge along with hearing information, than to explaining it in his own words.
- Jordan often may miss some key components of the message and it is a challenge for him to recall the information on his own.
- During Speech sessions when I have read a statement or a message and he has to recall it, his performance has been from 0% to 50% independently. With a cue, Jordan does show improvements, but even with the message repeated he

continues to struggle. I have broken this task down for Jordan where he is able to see the message, I say the message and he writes down the paraphrase first. Jordan has improved independently with this, scoring above 60% accuracy. We are going to continue at this level to aid in Jordan's understanding of what it means to paraphrase information on your own. Inferring continues to be a struggle for Jordan. He greatly benefits from cues provided to ensure that even though he cannot find the exact answer in the text, he knows that he can use cues to help him. This is a continued focus for Jordan.

- Abstract concepts such as solving extended response questions where Jordan has to choose important information and then select a process to solve the problem are difficult for Jordan.
- Struggles with key information
- Reading comprehension, Jordan does better with literal concepts, answers that can be found within the text. (Concrete) are much easier than inferring or reasoning to find the answer
- Written Language has also been a struggle with organizing thoughts into specific paragraphs that maintain focus throughout.
- Paraphrasing, recalling information, and putting it into his own words summarizing, higher level language questions, and vocabulary.
- He receives modifications in Spanish, preferential seating, accommodated tests and quizzes, and tests are read to him. He works well with a partner that is emphatic.
- Science, He does not participate well in class, participation is spontaneous and inconsistent. He is able to complete the classroom objectives with the help of an aide. He requires cueing and leading questions to make his inferences. He has become frustrated in class but has been able to work though episodes with assistance. We accept late work, extended time for tests and Quizzes. His work is sufficient given his disability
- Jordan struggles with fine motor skills

IEP Content Examples:

Objective: Jordan will ask appropriate questions to obtain needed information, obtain clarification of directions, and aid in decision making.

Objective: Jordan will compose verbal sentences to summarize information to a listener regarding an event, story, or other information.

Objective: Jordan will paraphrase a direction, message, statement, etc. after it is provided auditory.

Objective: Jordan will show understanding of Vocabulary word meaning by verbalizing the meaning in his own words.

Objective: Jordan will identify, understand, and use cues from sentences, short information, stories or events, to help his correctly respond to higher level questions regarding information.

Objective: Jordan will improve in use of strategies to help find cues to retrieve answers for inferring questions or scenarios, and improve in responses to inferring and interpretations questions.

Objective: Jordan will improve his responses to why questions though verbalizing more than one reason why when presented with various questions.

Modifications and Supports:

1. Extended Time. (all areas)
2. Modified Exam format (all areas)
3. Tests administered individually or in small groups (all areas)

Instruction Curriculum

1. Adjusting pace of material (all areas)
2. Note taking Assignments (all areas)
3. Reduced complexity of material (all areas)
4. Shortened assignments. (all areas)
5. Simplification or repetition of instructions (all areas)
6. Visual Aids, graphic organizers, pictures, copy of a project home for example, (all areas)

Environment

1. Seated in area free from distraction.

Study Skills/ Organization

1. Assignment notebook (all areas)
2. Posted Assignments (all areas)
- 3 Written assignments given to student. (all areas)
4. An extra set of books for home, checking correct information in his assignment notebook.
5. Frequent updates emails to parents

Autism Tips and Examples for Teachers

Are you aware that Bill Gates, Thomas Jefferson, Albert Einstein, Henry Ford, Charles Shultz's, Thomas Edison just to name a few are and were under the autistic spectrum as you can see where dealing with very capable high functioning autistic individuals. Even though each is different always assume intellect.

1. Paraphrasing of summarizing information. This is key to ensure that the student is grasping the direction or message. Have the students retell you the direction, message, statement, etc. in their own words to ensure understanding.
2. Teachers check in at the end of the period with the student. To ensure that the student understands what happened in class and the exact details of the homework, have a check in at the end of the period. The student can come up to the teacher and show their assignment notebook or agenda to the teacher.

The student should have the assignment written down and the teacher can have the student explain in his own words what the assignment is. If there is no homework or as an addition, the teacher can ask a few basic questions to the student to see if they grasped the material for the day.

This check in can just be a quick routine for the student because the teachers are busy and the student has another class to get to. However, if the student gets used to this check in and makes it apart of his or her day, it will greatly limit the number of difficulties that can occur throughout the year.

3. Checks for comprehension throughout the period. This would involve asking questions throughout the lesson- literal and abstract to see what the student is getting and what they are missing. The teacher can possibly use this information to create an additional assignment for the student to work on at home with the parents if extra assistance is needed to help grasp material.

4. Quick recall checks thought out the period. As the teacher is giving directions thought out the lesson, you can periodically call on different students to say, "What was my direction, or what did I just say?" This way all students know that you are periodically checking to see if they are on task and it helps focus.

5. For the student with autism, sometimes simply walking around the room and tapping on the page that the teacher is speaking on ensures the student stays with the lesson.

6. Vocabulary work. For vocabulary work, if the teacher has the students find definitions from the dictionary; have the students written the definition in their own words.

Students with autism are often good with rote memory skills or copying information they simply copy the word for word of the definition in the book. They have known idea what it means. Try to get the students used to putting things in their own words

7. Visuals, visuals, visuals.. As often as the teacher is able to! Pointing and gesturing, pictures, or modeling when giving directions.

8. Write homework on the board everyday. Have all students write in there agenda.

9. Finding the main idea can be a challenge. Try to find ways to incorporate this thought out the lesson.

For example at the end of the period, ask the students what the main idea of today's lesson was?

Another example, ask students to summarize what they did over the weekend in one sentence. Get the students used to summarizing and finding the main idea.

10. Any changes that are being made tell at least one week in advance if at all possible.

11. Modeling of specific things that need to be done in class. (Heading of papers, specific math problems.)

12. Graphic organizers break tasks into smaller chunks. In this way, you take what is largely an invisible abstract concept and make it visible and concrete.

13. Inferential questions

Example: When reading Anne Frank, a student would be asked a question such as: □Why do you infer that Anne would dress in Peter's cloths?□

Prompt them by saying, □Think about what boys and girls do when they like each other.□ To which the student would respond □I infer Anne dressed in Peter's cloths because she might like him.

14. Figurative language (idioms specifically)

Autistic children take what you are literally saying (Im in a pickle they will picture someone standing inside a pickle.)

You can find pictures as an example to help them better understand such as someone getting yelled at by an adult.

When they are assessed you can put the picture on the assessment so they can remember what each idiom really meant.