


# LEARNING MODULE #2

Part 1 of 2

## DEVELOPING IEPs

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### Introduction to the Module

This module will focus on the development of an Individual Education Plan for your student. IEPs have a number of important elements that will be clarified. Developing the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) is an important process for planning education supports and monitoring the progress of students who have special needs. It is a useful tool for communicating with colleagues and parents. It can help teachers apply their knowledge and skills and aid them in their decisions about teaching students who are on modified versus adapted programs. It should clearly define what the student is to learn at school, and include a component of measurement.

### Specific Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this module, teachers should be able to:

- Demonstrate awareness of Ministry of Education policy and recommendations for an IEP, including:
  - when an IEP is needed
  - what information should be included
  - what processes should be considered
  - who should be involved
  - how to write clear student focused IEP objectives
- Create an Individualized Education Plan (IEP) that reflects the needs of the student as well as the team and family's vision of the future for the student
- Include the student's family in the development of the IEP
- Consult with the student's multi-disciplinary team to clarify broad goal areas and then specific skills or objectives that will be the foundation of the IEP
- Create an IEP that reflects a clear understanding of the difference between what the student will learn to do (student goals and skills/objectives) and what supports and services the student needs (team goals or strategies)

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- Create an IEP that will meet Ministry of Education criteria including measurement components

*This module will be posted in 2 sections to assist with downloading:*

**Part 1** will include the following topics:

1. What Is An IEP?
2. Development Of The IEP
  - 2.1 Involving Parents In The Development Of The IEP
3. Long Range Planning: Envisioning A Desirable Future
4. Developing Long Term Goals
  - 4.1 Is It Meaningful?
5. Identifying Specific Skills To Be Developed Into IEP Objectives

**Part 2** will include the remaining topics:

6. What Are IEP Objectives?
7. Coordinating The IEP Development And Implementation
8. Writing The IEP
9. Monitoring The Student's Program And Progress

### Recommended Readings

- Text: Including Students with Severe and Multiple Disabilities in Typical Classrooms, June E. Downing, Paul H. Brooks Pub. Co. 2008
- Chapter 3 - Determining Individual Abilities and How Best to Support Students (entire chapter)
- Chapter 4 - The Preschool Student, page 95-96
- Chapter 10 - Are They Making Progress? pgs. 264 - 266

### References:

- **Individual Education Planning for Students with Special Needs - A Resource Guide for Teachers**, November 2009, Ministry of Education (pdf)  
(Each school should also have a copy of this document).
- IEP For Severe Functioning Student (Qualicum Sample)
- Objectives For Functional Academics
- Cognitive Objectives
- Objectives For Communication (Verbal & Non-Verbal)
- Objectives For Visually Impaired
- Objectives For Functional Hand Use
- Objectives For Gross Motor
- Needs To Goals
- Objectives For Severe/Profound Functioning Student
- Sample 1 IEP
- Sample 2 IEP

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- Sample 3 IEP
- Stepping Stones To Communication
- Sample Goal Areas & Skills For Non-Verbal Students
- IEPs Include Progress

**Internet Readings**

- **Special Education Branch - Ministry of Education**  
**Individual Education Planning for Students with Special Needs**  
<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/iepssn.htm>

**Parent's Guide to Individual Planning** (2002) British Columbia School

- Superintendent's Association  
<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/iep/cover.htm>

• **Guidelines for Pathways** (developed by Provincial Integration Support Program (P.I.S.P.) and based on the MAPS process).

<http://www.pisp.ca/strategies/strategies72.pdf>

- **Sample Pathways** (developed by P.I.S.P.)

<http://www.pisp.ca/strategies/strategies72.pdf>

**Optional/Additional Readings**

- Individual Education Planning for Students with Special Needs: A Resource Guide to Support Teachers (1996) Ministry of Education

This guidebook should be available at every school in British Columbia.

## Developing Meaningful IEPs

### Introduction

The IEP is meant to be much more than a legal document. It represents the student's needs, their educational plan and the supports and services that the student is going to be receiving during the school year. Good IEP objectives should clearly define exactly what we expect the student to do and what that will look like for someone who does not know the student.

Unfortunately, the IEP is often a source of frustration for many school staffs and families. Teachers have voiced concerns about the complexity of writing IEPs as well as the tremendous amount of time involved. As well, some teachers have indicated that the lack of consistent IEP requirements and forms amongst schools and districts is an issue. It seems that many schools and districts follow different IEP processes and often use different forms.

Another concern is that while staff put a significant amount of energy into the development and writing of an IEP many educators and assistants indicate that they feel they are still unclear about what to do with the student on Monday morning. Also some parents report feeling excluded from the IEP process or express confusion about their role.

If you have not done so already, [view the video: Integration - Meeting The Challenge](#), found in the video section at [www.pisp.ca](http://www.pisp.ca) or go directly to this link and click on the video to download:  
<http://www.pisp.ca/video/index.html>



### 1. What is an IEP?

An IEP is a written plan developed for a student which describes the program modifications and/or adaptations for the student and the services that are to be provided. It serves as a tool for collaborative planning among the school, the parents, the student (where appropriate) as well as school district personnel, other ministries and/or community agencies. Most importantly it should clearly

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outline the learning outcomes we expect our students to engage in within a specified time frame.

In British Columbia, a Ministerial Order (1995) requires school boards to design, review and implement individual education plans for students with special needs who receive Supplemental Funding from the Ministry of Education. Some of these categories include the following:

**Level 1 Funding**

A: Physically Dependent

B: Deaf/Blind

**Level 2 Funding**

C: Moderate To Profound Intellectually Disabled

D: Physically Disabled, Chronic Health Impairment

E: Visually Impaired

F: Deaf/Hearing Impaired

G: Autistic

**Level 3 Funding**

H: Intensive Behaviour Intervention/Serious Mental Illness

**Reading:** (Familiarize yourself with the different resources within this site for support and Ministry criteria in creating a meaningful IEP.)

• **Special Education Branch - Ministry of Education**

**Individual Education Planning for Students with Special Needs**

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/iepssn.htm>

An IEP is developed for students on a **modified program**. The Ministry of Education indicates that an IEP must include one or more of the following:

- The individualized goals for the student which are different from the prescribed curriculum outcomes for the course or subject.
- A list of the support services required by the student, which might include a description of the time and setting for the special program, the names and roles of individuals who will be involved, and the strategies and/or teaching methods to be used.
- A list of the modifications and strategies planned to help the student meet the outcomes established for him or her. These are individualized outcomes modified to meet the student's special needs and do not include adapted outcomes.

View the **video clip** for sample **PE Modifications** on the video section at [www.pisp.ca](http://www.pisp.ca)

or click on the following link and click on PE Video to download:  
<http://www.pisp.ca/video/index.html>



- A transition plan that helps students successfully move from one setting to another and from one grade to another.
- A means to measure progress for the student's objectives.

Most importantly, it is important that IEP objectives use language that indicates specifically what the student should be doing. It is important to clarify "modified" versus "adapted" programs and learning outcomes for students:

**Modified:** IEP's are usually developed for students on modified programs with learning outcomes that are completely different than regular classmates (e.g., selecting pictures or objects of things that might be cold, while the rest of the grade 5 class is studying about habitats in polar/artic regions).

**Adapted:** IRP's are often developed for students on adapted programs, who have learning outcomes that are the same or similar to classmates, but the activity is changed slightly in order for the student to reach the goal (e.g., the student may work on ½ of the questions in an assignment, as it takes him/her longer to use a pencil).

## 2. Development of the IEP

Preparation of the IEP should provide opportunities for parents, teachers, school administrators, assistants and other members of the student's team to address the student's **needs** and to design a program which best addresses those needs. The process outlined below is not a legal requirement from the Ministry but would be recognized as **best practice**.

### 2.1 Involving Parents in the Development of the IEP

The student's education occurs in the school, the home and the community. The student certainly benefits when professionals and family work together during assessments, program planning, teaching and evaluation.

We need to recognize the primary importance of family choice in the development of the student's program. Families will always want what is best for them, for their family and their child. It is up to educators to work towards not just parent participation but collaboration with families. In the previous module you were asked to look for evidence of parental involvement and to meet with parents to gather needed information if necessary.

#### Parents Provide Information to the School Team in the Following Ways...

- Student's history, medical history and health needs
- Understanding of their child's strengths and needs
- Dreams, hopes and fears for their child's future
- Successful strategies that work with their child

#### Parents Participate in IEP Meetings in the Following Ways...

- Having a list of topics they would like to see included in the meeting
- Asking questions about services and service delivery
- Expressing what they would like to see their child accomplish and what they believe their child wants
- Asking questions about any concerns they have, or just sharing their concerns
- Signing off the IEP to indicate their agreement in the proposed objectives

**Reading** (Familiarize yourself with this guide for parents.)

**Parent's Guide to Individual Planning** (2002) British Columbia School

- Superintendent's Association

<http://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/iep/cover.htm>

#### **Points to Ponder**

- Some educators have concerns about increasing parent participation in the development of school programs. What are some of your concerns or anxieties?
- What practices might you consider to more successfully include families in the development of your student's program?
- What is the difference between a modified program and an adapted program? Give examples.

### 3. Long Range Planning: Envisioning a Desirable Future

Long Range Planning, as described in the previous module, helps the family and the team clarify a positive and possible future for the student. The team may elect to use one of several long range planning processes including MAPs, PATH or PATHWAYS (the Long Range Planning format revised by the Provincial Integration Support Program or P.I.S.P.). Regardless of which format is used, it should result in providing information on the...

- Family's fears or concerns
- Family's dream for a positive and possible future for their child
- Student's strengths and needs (from which the objectives are created)
- Student's motivators

From the long range planning process, the priorities become clearer and a team can identify the broad goals that a student should be working on. The long range planning information can be reviewed once a year by the team but the planning process itself does not need to be re-created yearly.

#### Readings

- **Guidelines for Pathways** (developed by Provincial Integration Support Program [P.I.S.P.] and based on the MAPS process).  
<http://www.pisp.ca/strategies/strategies72.pdf>

- **Sample Pathways** (developed by P.I.S.P.)  
<http://www.pisp.ca/strategies/strategies72.pdf>

#### References

- Refer to the "Sample Pathways" and "Facilitator Guidelines for Pathways", adapted from MAPS by P.I.S.P. in the previous learning Module #1 reference section.
- Refer to the "Needs to Goals" sample in this reference section which will illustrate how we take the student's needs to create long term goal statements and skills.

### 4. Developing Long Term Goals

These goal areas represent the student's broad curriculum and are in many ways the equivalent to typical curricular areas such as Language Arts, Mathematics, Social Studies or Science. For many students the *goal area* itself will remain constant for many years. The goal statement indicates globally what the student is working on in that area and for what purpose (e.g., the student will develop effective communication with others).

Goals come from two or three sources. Teams should look first to the Student Needs as identified on the Long Range Planning. These needs will typically reflect the core of the student's important goals. As well, teams will ensure that therapists (Speech and Language Pathologists, Physiotherapists and Occupational Therapists), itinerants (Teacher of Hearing Impaired, Teacher of Visually Impaired) and the special education teacher have input into the development of these goals.

### References

- Refer to June Downing, Chapter 3, pg. 62 Table: Questions for the educational team to ask to accommodate inclusive learning.
- Refer to reference: Needs to Goals  
[http://www.pisp.ca/learningmodules/mod2\\_needs\\_to\\_goals.pdf](http://www.pisp.ca/learningmodules/mod2_needs_to_goals.pdf)

Some teams find it beneficial to establish criteria for selecting the highest priorities from the long range planning and specialist's input. The family and team may have generated several needs and now they must determine which needs will be focused on.

#### 4.1 Is it Meaningful?

The team could review each of the student's needs and consider:

- Is it meaningful to the student and his or her family?
- Does it reflect an actual skill or behaviour that the student will need in the current or future learning and living environments?
- Will it help the student become more independent?
- Will it enhance participation in current and future environments?
- Is it specifically related to the student's needs?
- Will it increase social interactions with peers?
- Would it be used frequently and in multiple environments and activities?

Each of the student's needs could be considered using the above questions. Those needs that meet more than one of these criteria would be high priorities for translation into goals and objectives.

Often teams struggle with writing goals and objectives that clearly identify the student as a learner. Also we need to be conscious of the difference between the student's long-term goals and short-term strategies. Student goals represent what the student will achieve. Team goals or strategies are what the adults will do.

### How Should The Student's Long Term Goal Statements Be Written?

It is recommended that Annual Goals begin with this sentence stem:  
**(Name of Student) will** \_\_\_\_\_

### How Many Annual Goals Should the Student Have?

While there is no fixed number for goals, typically teams generate between 4 and 5 long-term goals for students.

Annual Goals usually focus on:

- Communication & Social Interactions
- Active Participation in Meaningful Daily Activities (Fine Motor)
- Mobility or Partial Participation in Gross Motor areas
- Modified (Functional) Academics (for those with this cognitive ability)

The following are some examples of long-term goal statements...

- **Communication**

The student will develop interactive communication with those in his/her family, at school and in the community.

- **Social skills** (*Sometimes objectives are merged for communication and social, as they are interdependent.*)

The student will continue to experience new activities and relationships at school and in the community as a life long learner.

- **Fine motor**

The student will partially participate in functional activities of daily living.

- **Gross motor**

The student will actively participate in activities throughout the day to promote flexibility and comfort.

Or (if the student is mobile)

The student will increase his/her mobility to participate in activities at home, school and in the community.

Areas such as vision or hearing may stand-alone or be incorporated into one of the above goal statements as a supportive objective. Next, the resource teacher generally looks to the student's therapists for input on appropriate headings and wording for the objectives that will fall under each of these global goal areas. **It is important that the language and focus in these goal statements is student related.** We should clearly state what it is that we expect the student to demonstrate. What is the active participation of the student for that objective? When writing IEP goals we need to ask ourselves:

- What will this look like for the student?
- Would someone who does not know the student, know exactly what the activity would look like?
- Is this a student objective or a team goal/strategy?

Some goals reflect team-related work. Be careful of statements that really indicate the team's strategy to support the student's goal. We need to continue to ask ourselves when writing IEP statements:

- What is it that we are going to measure for signs of improvement?
- What is the student's active participation?

This will help to keep us focussed on real outcomes for the student.

### Reference Sheets in Book Material

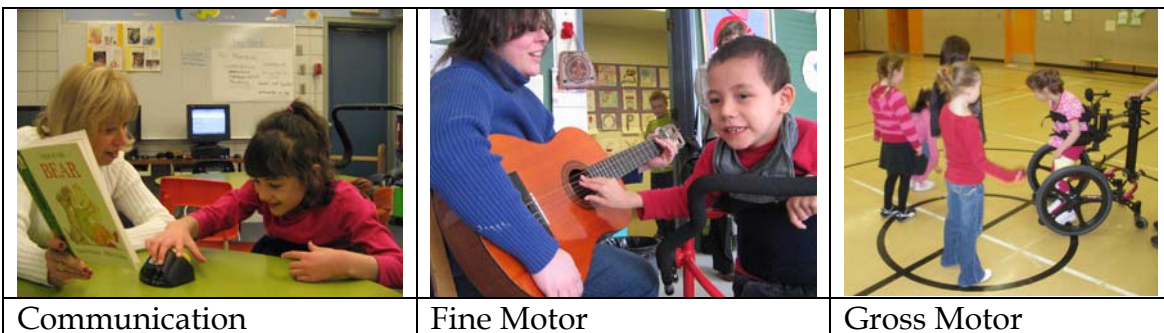
- Refer to sample "IEPs for Moderate Functioning Student" in the Reference Section
- Refer to sample "Skills for Functional Academics, Communication, Visual Impairments, Functional Hand Use & Gross Motor" areas

### Points to Ponder

- As you translate student needs into long term educational goals, what challenges have you faced?
- Have you contacted your student's therapists and itinerants for updates and input on the student's specific skills? Have there been stumbling blocks?
- Are your student's needs reflected in the long range goals you've identified?

## 5. Identifying Specific Skills to Be Developed Into IEP Objectives

Commonly, for students with significant disabilities, it is the student's therapists and specialist teachers that identify the specific skills that the student should work on in order to meet the established long-term goals.



Because formal tests and assessments are not always available or applicable for students with severe disabilities, other methods are required for determining the student's abilities and skills. One particularly effective way of identifying important skills (objectives) for the student is through a process called Collaborative Assessment which has been addressed in the previous module. Team members conduct an assessment and observation of the student during a typical day or series of partial days and determine how the student responds under natural conditions in age-appropriate settings. They try to determine what skills the student already has and what the student needs to do to **STRETCH** that skill to the next level. The team members can also observe typical students engaged in the regular program to have a benchmark for comparison.

### Reading

- Review Chapter 3 in June Downing's book: *First Steps - Determining Individual Abilities And How Best To Support Students*; pages 35 -60.

### Points to Ponder

- Has your team conducted this type of collaborative assessment? If so, what were the challenges and what were the benefits?
- Were you able to identify your student's skills/objectives in each area?
- What ideas did the readings give you for best practices using collaborative assessment techniques?
- Select one of your student's objectives and consider the "stretch" in it for your student.