COMPREHENSIVE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN WASHINGTON

Connecting General Education and Individualized Education Programs (IEPs)

Dr. Tania May
Assistant Superintendent of Special Education

Prepared by:
- **Cassie Martin**, PhD, Executive Director of Special Education, OSPI
  cassie.martin@k12.wa.us | 360-725-6075

- **Jaimee Kidder**, PhD, Special Education Program Supervisor, OSPI
  jaimee.kidder@k12.wa.us | 360-725-6075

- **Gail Ghere**, PhD, Research Associate, TIES Center
  ghere002@umn.edu

- **Jennifer Sommerness**, EdS, Research Associate, TIES Center
  jsomm@umn.edu

2024

Washington Office of Superintendent of **PUBLIC INSTRUCTION**

Inclusionary Practices Technical Assistance Network

TIES Center

TABLE OF CONTENTS

COMPREHENSIVE INCLUSIVE EDUCATION IN WASHINGTON

Comprehensive inclusive education, as described in this guide, encompasses both general education and the inclusive *Individualized Education Program (IEP)*. The process outlined in this guide is effective for all students eligible for special education services. In addition, it provides specific content centering *students with extensive support needs* and their families. This guide was written for all members of the IEP team[1] as a resource to support writing inclusive IEPs and implementing effective instruction for students in inclusive settings. Families and administrators will also find this guide helpful as a practical summary of effective inclusive education programs and high-quality inclusive IEPs.

While many students with disabilities are benefiting from greater inclusion across Washington, state data show that two groups of students eligible for special education services are still disproportionately placed by school teams in restrictive settings compared to their peers:
- Students with intellectual and/or developmental disabilities
- Black students eligible for special education services in any disability category

OSPI is committed to disrupting inequities in the system that limit choice and learning opportunities to ensure that all students can participate in general education settings. Because of this, OSPI has prioritized the inclusion of students with extensive support needs and Black students with disabilities in general education settings for 80% or more of their school day.[2]

To get the most out of this guide, the reader should start by considering the following principles for students eligible for special education services and the school teams that serve them.

Principles of Comprehensive Inclusive Education

The IEP is not the student's sole educational program or curriculum.

For each student eligible for special education services, their educational program has **three** parts:
- The general education curriculum
- The school's routines & activities
- The IEP

Every student is a general education student.

Students learn and thrive when they are valued, visible members of their classroom and school communities.

Comprehensive inclusive education must be grounded in the above principles. Without this focus, a student's learning opportunities and post-school outcomes are diminished.

---

[1] WAC 392-172A-03095: IEP team membership.
[2] Inclusionary Practices Technical Assistance Network (OSPI and partner organizations)

The Comprehensive Inclusive Education process requires a team vision and expectation that **each student can actively participate, belong, contribute, and learn in the school and larger community**. The process is based on meaningful collaboration between special education teachers, general education teachers (including multilingual teachers), related service providers, families, and students. These practices benefit each student, including those without disabilities, and the larger community. The result is a diverse, vibrant, and caring learning environment that embraces and celebrates the contributions of each to the whole.

Why Comprehensive Inclusive Education Matters

Federal and state law requires all students with disabilities to be educated in the *least restrictive environment* (LRE) with their peers without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate. Both national and state level data indicate that students with intellectual disabilities continue to be educated primarily in separate special education classes and schools.[3]

On March 22, 2017, the United States Supreme Court issued a decision in the *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District* case.[4] The Court held that: "To meet its substantive obligation under the [Individuals with Disabilities Education Act; IDEA], a school must offer an IEP reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child's circumstances." The decision rejected the notion that an appropriate offer of a *free and appropriate public education* (FAPE) can be "merely more than *de minimis*,"[5] clarifying that services under the IDEA for all students, including students with extensive support needs, must be "appropriately ambitious….The goals may differ, but every child should have the chance to meet challenging objectives." **In other words, schools are legally required to set high expectations and support learning opportunities to achieve these expectations for all students with disabilities, including those with extensive support needs.**

In its 2017 guidance on *Endrew F.*, the United States Department of Education emphasized the responsibilities of districts to improve students' academic outcomes, monitor progress, and train administrators and teachers on writing appropriate IEPs that meet the definition of FAPE. It also emphasized the importance of ambitious goals, regardless of the nature of the student's disability.[6]

There is significant research related to how students with disabilities achieve when comparing high inclusion (80% or more of the school day in general education with their peers without disabilities) to low or mixed inclusion (less than 80% of the day in general education). For example:
- After matching for student variables, students with disabilities educated in inclusive classrooms showed greater gains in reading and math on state standardized assessments than comparable students with disabilities who were educated in less inclusive settings. This was found for both elementary-middle school[7] and high school levels[8]

---

[3] Brock (2018). Trends in educational placement of students with intellectual disability in the U.S. over the past 40 years.
[4] 15-827 Endrew F. v. Douglas County School Dist. Re-1, 3/22/2017 (U. S. Supreme Court)
[5] "'*De minimis*' is a Latin term which means too trivial or minor to consider." (United States Department of Education, Questions and Answers on U. S. Supreme Court Case Decision Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District, 2017, p.4)
[6] U. S. Department of Education (2017). Questions and answers on U. S. Supreme Court case decision Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District Re-1.
[7] Cole et al. (2021). The relationship of special education placement and student academic outcomes.
[8] Cole et al. (2023). The relationship between special education placement and high school outcomes.

- Students with extensive support needs educated in more inclusive settings (80% or more of the school day in general education) made significantly more progress learning than statistically matched students with similar support needs educated in separate special education settings.[9]

Three Questions for Comprehensive Inclusive Education

Across all parts of the Comprehensive Inclusive Education process, IEP teams continually reflect on three key questions:

> 1. Will the student experience belonging as a member in their school and general education classroom(s)?
> 2. Will the student be actively participating at school across the school day?
> 3. Will the student be learning the grade-level general education curriculum?
>
> *The answer to each of these questions needs to be **yes**.*

If the IEP team cannot answer "yes" to the above questions, they should determine what changes they can make to support the student within general education and other inclusive environments and activities. After that, the team can intentionally revisit each question above to reflect on the changes they've envisioned and ensure each question can now be answered with "yes."

Using This Guide

This guide covers four steps to comprehensive inclusive education.

1. **Step 1: Collaborative Conversations** focuses on collaboration with the family and school team to start the school year.
2. **Step 2: Creating an Inclusive IEP** supports the team to develop an IEP that honors student and family voice and intentionally aligns supports to the general education settings, curriculum, routines, activities, and social opportunities that are available for all students in the school.
3. **Step 3: Education Day-at-a-Glance** facilitates efficient and shared IEP implementation by linking key IEP components with the student's daily schedule.
4. **Step 4: Ongoing Education and Support** assists the team as they implement the IEP and continually collaborate to ensure all students are learning.

Step 1: Collaborative Coversations

Step 2: Creating an Inclusive IEP

Step 3: Education Day-at-a-Glance

Step 4: Ongoing Education and Support
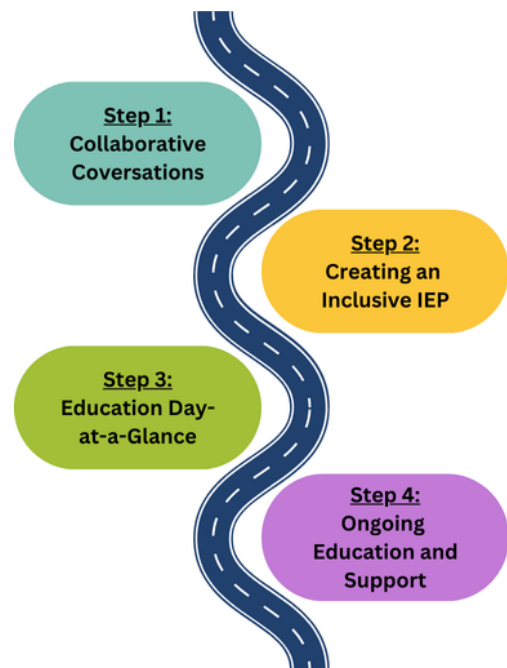
Refer to the companion checklist on page 41 for team support to follow each step.

---

[9] Gee et al. (2020). Outcomes of inclusive versus separate placements: A matched pairs comparison study.

This guide is designed for flexibility. Throughout the document, readers can:
- Follow the step-by-step process to write and implement inclusive IEPs for students with disabilities, particularly those with extensive support needs.
- Learn from the story of "Jacob," a student with extensive support needs, as his instructional team develops his inclusive IEP and implements an inclusive educational program across the school day.[10]
- Understand the rationale for inclusionary practices and high-quality special education services, including state requirements and the *Endrew F*. decision.
- Connect to practical resources and related content for each step on OSPI's website.
- Adapt the information in this guide for local districts to support professional development, policies, procedures, and practices that result in improved inclusive IEPs and implementation high quality inclusive education programs.

Meet Jacob, A Fifth Grader

Jacob attends fifth grade in a busy K-5 elementary school in the heart of Washington state. He spends his day learning with his grade level peers in general education. Every morning, Jacob's parent assists him onto the wheelchair-accessible bus to take him to school, where he is greeted warmly by friends, teachers and the principal - just like his peers. Jacob enjoys going to school. His favorite parts are field trips and being able to share his ideas with his classmates every day.

Jacob has some characteristics that are different than most of his grade-level peers. He drives an electric wheelchair, has medical needs that require training and support, and has an intellectual disability. Jacob communicates using vocalizations, head and facial gestures, and use of his augmentative and alternative communication (AAC) device. Jacob is an equal member of the school and classroom community, and his participation is valued by his classmates and teachers. Likewise, Jacob values the friendships he has developed, and the learning he engages in every day.

Beyond the school day, Jacob is an important member of his family, neighborhood and community. He enjoys spending time with his younger siblings and playing with friends in the neighborhood. He participates in Unified Sports as a member of a baseball team with same-aged friends with and without disabilities.

Throughout this document, the reader will get to know Jacob, his family, and his school team, and learn how the four-step Comprehensive Inclusive Education process is used to support Jacob as an equal participant, learner, and member of his school community.

---

[10] Jacob's story is a fictionalized account based on multiple real students and their real supports in inclusive settings. With parent permission, photos of Jacob (not his real name) are shared throughout this document.

STEP 1: COLLABORATIVE CONVERSATIONS

The first step in the Comprehensive Inclusive Education process involves collaborative conversations, both **with the family** and **with school team members**, to lay the groundwork needed for the student eligible for special education services to access the general education curriculum and for the team to implement the inclusive IEP.

1.1: Collaborative Conversations with Family

Parent participation is critical to the IEP process.[11] The initial *collaborative conversation with the family* allows the family (including the student whenever possible) to share their life-long vision for the student with the IEP team. The family's vision will then help shape the development of a strengths-based, appropriately ambitious, and meaningful IEP as described in Step 2 of this guide.

The initial collaborative conversation with the family is a rich opportunity for the school team to connect with the family and student and learn from them about what is important for the student. This conversation should take place at the start of the school year. If, for some reason, that is not possible, the school team should ensure it takes place before the annual IEP is developed.

Purpose of Collaborative Conversations with Family

Collaborative conversations between educators and the family have three important purposes.

Purpose 1: Valuing families as members of the school and team

When school teams intentionally support the involvement of families, they invite, listen to, and acknowledge family input and priorities for their child. This opens the door to greater collaboration and trust, and empowers families to meaningfully advocate for their child's needs. Schools should take care to build culturally responsive, authentic partnerships between the school team and family. These steps show the school team respects the family's voice and is consciously working to share power and responsibility so the student can benefit.[12]

Purpose 2: Centering family voice in educational planning and IEP development

Collaborative conversations are opportunities to learn from the family about their hopes, dreams, preferences, and priorities for their child, and learn about their child's strengths and needs. For example, the team may learn about how the student communicates at home (including their receptive and expressive communication in English, and their home language if applicable), their favorite activities and skills, the strategies the family uses to support their child, and sibling and peer relationships. Information shared by families can be used to develop inclusive IEP goals that build on the student's strengths, interests, and needs, and generalize across home and school.

Purpose 3: Sharing information about inclusive education

This opportunity helps to ensure that the family understands the *principles of comprehensive inclusive education* described on page 4, and why these are important. The team can also answer

---

[11] WAC 392-172A-05001: Parent participation in meetings.
[12] Family Engagement Framework: 2021 Report to the Legislature

any questions by the family about their child's classroom(s), schedule, supports, and planned coordination of IEP goals across the school day.

Considerations for Collaborative Conversations with Family

IEP team members should be mindful that parents and family members may have never been asked about their hopes and dreams for their child. This may be especially true for the parent of a student with extensive support needs. Thinking about a student's future may be either too distant or too immediate for a parent to imagine without feeling overwhelmed. Similarly, the student with extensive support needs may never have been previously asked about their hopes and dreams, and may benefit from support to participate and share this

Download the resource "Envisioning the Future: Supporting Families to Consider Valued Life Outcomes for Their Child" to facilitate conversations with family members and consider their input when developing the IEP.

information. Asking questions in plain language can support family and student voice in these conversations. For example, the team might ask, "What are your hopes and dreams for your child's working, living, playing, and contributing to your community now and in the future?"

What Are Jacob's Valued Life Outcomes?

The IEP team met with Jacob's family before the start of the school year to understand the family's valued life outcomes for him and explore their vision for his future. Jacob and his family shared that they envision a future where Jacob:

- forges deep and meaningful friendships with peers his age
- communicates his preferences, thoughts, and opinions confidently using his AAC device and vocalizations
- participates meaningfully in activities and gatherings within the family's faith community
- cultivates independence and self-advocacy skills, guiding others on how best to support his needs
- uses advancements in technology that connect him with additional opportunities for post-secondary education and integrated employment
- is a cherished member of both his school and broader community – participating in and contributing to activities, communicating comfortably, and being actively included and welcomed by others

During the conversation, Jacob's family also shared the importance of providing him with a diverse range of experiences and skills to prepare him for full participation in his family, community, and future opportunities. Jacob's whole team agreed that this would support him in the upcoming school year and lay the foundation for his long-term success and fulfillment.

1.2: Collaborative Conversations with School Team Members

When general education teachers, special education teachers, and related service providers meet at the beginning of the school year, they gain a significant advantage for enhancing student learning and working together effectively across the school year. The purpose of *collaborative conversations with school team members* is to build intentional connections across the instructional practices of the special education teacher, general education teacher(s), and other team members. These conversations should be grounded in student strengths, interests, and preferences, rather than focusing on students' perceived limitations.

In addition to general education teachers, special education teachers, and related service providers, other team members might participate as appropriate based on the student's unique interests and needs. For instance, conversations might include a dual or heritage language teacher, a multilingual teacher, the school counselor, specials and/or electives teachers, and/or paraeducator(s).

> **Use the tool "Start Your Collaboration Out Right" to guide discussions and planning between general education teachers, special education teachers, and other team members.**

Collaborative conversations with school team members work best when they include:
- General educators sharing information about grade-level standards, course and unit plans, and classroom routines
- Team members sharing information about the student with extensive support needs, including strengths, interests, present levels of performance across general education content areas, and other essential skills (such as technology proficiency, organizational abilities, social/emotional/behavioral learning needs, and communication)
- Team members sharing effective instructional strategies for the student, such as peer support, use of *Universal Design for Learning (UDL)*, and strategies for *specially designed instruction (SDI)*

Having these collaborative conversations at the start of the school year builds a shared knowledge base for team members to maximize learning, community, and belonging for the student. This also allows team members to plan for further collaboration during the school year. Collaborative conversations are a necessary ingredient for the team to develop and implement an inclusive IEP. Step 2 will describe that process.

How Does Jacob's Team Collaborate at the Start of the School Year & Beyond?

Since Jacob is eligible for special education services, all 5th-grade team members can access and are familiar with his IEP. At the beginning of the year, Jacob's team members collaborate to:

1. Review the information from Jacob and his family about their vision for his future
2. Discuss Jacob's individualized needs
3. Review his annual goals
4. Discuss how and when SDI is integrated throughout the day and make any adjustments based on the current schedule or content
5. Share how related services and supplementary aids and services will be provided across the school day within the general education classroom and/or naturally occurring opportunities
6. Decide how and by whom his AAC device will be programmed to align with the curricular focus
7. Make adjustments to Jacob's Education Day-at-a-Glance

This intentional collaboration starts the team off together with a solid understanding of Jacob's needs, team priorities, and implementation roles.

As part of their weekly grade level meetings, the team expects to adjust Jacob's supports as he makes progress and/or encounters barriers to learning. To streamline this, the team plans for intentional collaboration and communication that will include in-person, virtual as well as asynchronous connection with the use of shared online documents and folders that all team members may access throughout the year to stay updated.

STEP 2: CREATING AN INCLUSIVE IEP

After the team has had *collaborative conversations* as discussed in Step 1, they are prepared to create an inclusive IEP[13] that meets the state requirement to consider the strengths of the student.[14] To do this, the IEP team – including the parent[15] – follows the steps below:

2.1. Consider the *three major learning components* that are part of learning for all students, and ensure they are represented in the IEP

2.2. Develop a strength-based statement of *present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP)*

2.3. Develop *inclusive IEP goals* that fit into the school day and beyond

2.4. Determine *service delivery* in the student's *least restrictive environment (LRE)*

2.5. Identify needs for *specially designed instruction (SDI)*, *related services* (*RS*), and *supplementary aids and services* (*SAS*)

2.6. Engage in a *team self-check* to reflect on the IEP together and ensure it aligns with the *valued life outcomes* shared by the family in Step 1

2.1: Three Major Learning Components in Inclusive IEPs

Learning opportunities are abundant in a typical school day. Teams that develop inclusive IEPs intentionally use these naturally occurring teaching opportunities to prioritize and maximize student learning. For example:

- Steven has a literacy goal in his IEP and attends a social studies class with a reading activity. His IEP team plans to address his literacy goal during this class and the regular reading block.
- River has an IEP goal about improving organization skills. Their IEP team decides to focus on this at the start and end of each class period and the beginning and end of each school day.
- Mayah is a multilingual learner with an IEP. Her team ensures that instructional strategies for teaching English vocabulary and concept development are incorporated across all content areas and as part of school routines.
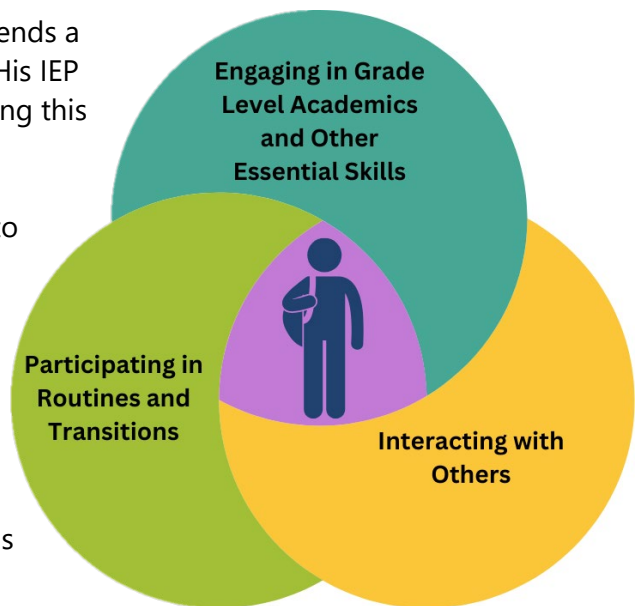
To ensure the IEP is inclusive, IEP teams are advised to consider the *three major learning components* across the IEP development process. Each learning component is important, and all three have a place in the IEP. When a student's program is infused with these three major learning components, the IEP can be designed to support the whole student across the whole day, with goals that are relevant throughout their time in school and lead to positive post-school outcomes.

---

[13] WAC 392-172A-03090: Definition of individualized education program.

[14] WAC 392-172A-03110: Development, review, and revision of IEP.

[15] WAC 392-172A-03100: Parent participation.

Learning Component 1: Engaging in Grade Level Academics and Other Essential Skills

Grade level academic and other essential skills include ways that students access, engage, and make progress in general education grade level standards, as well as other essential skills that support accessing and learning in inclusive environments. Content taught in general education classrooms should be based on the state's grade-level standards for that subject area. Depending on the student and their needs, other skills might address areas like English language development, self-regulation, self-advocacy, use of technology, organization, and/or communication.

Some ways that students engage in grade-level academics and other essential skills include:
- Using planned supports, like graphic organizers, word banks, visuals, audio, or speech-to-text tools, to participate in universally designed academics to the greatest degree possible
- Accessing SDI in general education settings, including support from general education teachers and other instructional team members, peers, and paraeducators
- Integrating technology and using school-wide learning platforms, such as using Microsoft Office or Google Classroom apps, with progressively greater independence
- Using more complex vocabulary and language structures to email teachers and peers with questions or turn in assignments
- Using *augmentative and alternative communication (AAC)* systems to participate during class discussions (preparing beforehand, if necessary)
- Using vocabulary and language to increase self-advocacy skills, moving from realizing a need for assistance, to identifying who to ask for help (teacher, peers, family members), to seeking assistance in different environments with increasing levels of independence
- Using communication (verbal, AAC, or both) in any language to express strong feelings, such as frustration, anger, or anxiety

Learning Component 2: Interacting with Others

Skills related to *interacting with others* include meaningful and active communication where students express their interests, ideas, and needs, ask questions, and make requests. Students learn to interact with adults and peers as they engage in learning and leisure activities. This includes greeting and ending conversations with others, communicating clearly, sustaining conversations (both for native speakers of English and multilingual learners), and sharing opinions.

Communication with others, whether verbally or by using AAC, is a basic human right. School teams should prioritize supporting all students with disabilities to independently communicate, including students with complex communication needs and students who are multilingual.

Some ways that students interact with others include:
- Participating in small and large group learning with peers (e.g., during morning meetings, class discussions, peer partner opportunities, and project work)
- Requesting assistance from adults or peers without needing to be prompted, including support for a student who is multilingual to do so in English
- Using symbols and/or signs to express oneself throughout the school day and at home
- Using age-appropriate ways to stay in touch with peers and create community with one another (e.g., texting, FaceTime, use of social media, and communication in online games

and other recreation/leisure activities)
- Using an AAC device, programmed in a way that is culturally and linguistically appropriate for the student, to communicate in naturally occurring opportunities (e.g., participating in class discussions by offering responses created in the moment or prepared in advance, telling a joke of the day, and checking in on people they care about)

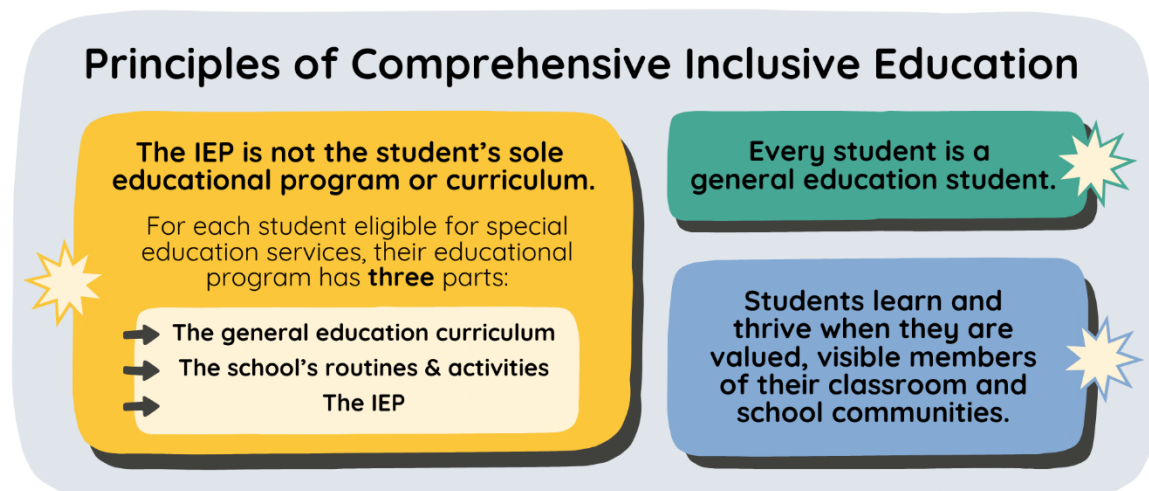## Learning Component 3: Participating in Routines and Transitions

Routines and transitions encompass the typical tasks and activities, both small and large, that are expected of every student as they navigate the school day. Routines and transitions are part of all general education classrooms and environments and provide natural opportunities for learning. To support students to engage and become more independent across the school day, educators should teach expectations for participating in routines and transitions.

Some ways students participate in routines and transitions include:
- Entering school through the same entrance as their peers without disabilities
- Locating their locker, cubby, or other storage space and putting away their belongings
- Finding their workspace, desk, or other assigned spot in their general education classroom
- Collecting appropriate materials before starting a learning activity
- Turning on their computer and other devices
- Following a schedule across the school day
- Beginning, engaging in, and sustaining work (especially for non-preferred activities) for increased amounts of time, needing varied or fewer prompts

Connecting the Three Major Learning Components to the IEP

Considering a student's strengths and needs through the three major learning components lets the team meaningfully link the general education curriculum, the school's routines and activities for all students, and the student's IEP. Teams can also consider the information they gathered in Step 1 about the family's valued life outcomes (pp. 8-9). This helps the team support the student as a whole person as they move through their entire school day, rather than narrowly focusing on isolated skills. This process aligns with the Principles of Comprehensive Inclusive Education shared on page 4 (reprinted below).

Principles of Comprehensive Inclusive Education

The IEP is not the student's sole educational program or curriculum.

For each student eligible for special education services, their educational program has **three** parts:
- The general education curriculum
- The school's routines & activities
- The IEP

Every student is a general education student.

Students learn and thrive when they are valued, visible members of their classroom and school communities.

2.2: Strengths-Based Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)

All IEPs must contain PLAAFP statements. Inclusive IEPs begin with writing strength-based PLAAFPs. A strength-based PLAAFP provides the foundation for identifying appropriate inclusive IEP goals to address identified needs, supports, services, accommodations, and consider placement decisions for the student.

Comprehensive PLAAFPs must:
- Describe the student's current academic and/or functional skills and needs
- Explain how the disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum
- Create a foundation for determining the measurable annual goals (MAG) and special education services and supports to meet those goals

For students who are multilingual learners, PLAAFPs should also describe the English and home language proficiency (expressive and receptive) and areas and strategies for language support.

Setting the Stage for Strengths-Based PLAAFPs

IEP teams begin the process of developing a strengths-based inclusive PLAAFP statement by having a discussion that centers around the following five elements:
1. **Family's valued life outcomes and priorities** as informed by the activities in Step 1.
2. **High expectations:** Presume competence; apply the least dangerous assumption in the absence of other conclusive data, make decisions based on increasing the likelihood that that the student will be able to function independently as an adult.
3. **Person-centered:** Consider the individual student, not just their disability category.
4. **Strengths-based:** Consider the skills, strengths, and preferences of the student first, and then identify what needs remain (rather than focusing solely on the student's needs).
5. **Reflects the whole child across the whole day:** Since school is only one part of the student's life, goals should be developed to increase, generalize and maintain skills across all parts of a student's life.

Beginning with this mindset makes it easier to identify priority needs and ensure the IEP provides meaningful educational benefit to the student.[16] It creates a more cohesive document that multiple team members (including general education teachers) can easily read and interpret, and assists in identifying roles and responsibilities.

Strengths-Based PLAAFPs: Examples and Nonexamples

When writing a strengths-based PLAAFP statement, considering the **language** and **tone** is essential. These examples and non-examples provide ideas for writing PLAAFP statements that are person-centered, strengths-based, and informative about student needs. This information guides the team, including the family, in prioritizing the other parts of the comprehensive inclusive IEP within general education.

---

[16] [Questions and Answers (Q&A) on U. S. Supreme Court Case Decision Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District Re-1](#) (U. S. Department of Education)

Example: Strength-Based Wording ☑	Non-Example: Focus on Student Limitations ⛔
Jane is a motivated & curious lifelong learner. She excels at making connections by learning about people, places, and things, especially animals. Jane benefits from hands-on learning supported by visuals, demonstrations, verbal instructions, & confirmation of understanding.	Jane is a 15-year-old with Down Syndrome. She has difficulties with comprehension, verbal expression, and anything dealing with numbers or math. She has a 2nd grade reading level and is inconsistent with responding to verbal directions.
Jane uses more graphic and less word-intense copy, YouTube videos, BrainPop, and text read aloud on her iPad to access the general curriculum and show understanding. Jane does best with indirect verbal or gestural cues, along with wait time so she can gain independence and show her understanding.	Jane's reading comprehension is much lower than her same-aged peers, and as a result, is unable to reach the grade level standard. Her inability to understand grade-level text makes it difficult for her to keep pace with the class. Jane is dependent on adult support and cueing throughout her day.
Jane benefits from shortened versions of novels read for class, with story elements prepared and pre-taught. She forms ideas for writing assignments and needs support for writing projects. She works with peers or staff to write a 3-5 sentence paragraph with dictation.	Jane requires direct instruction in a quiet setting to have stories read aloud to her with few distractions. She only answers 25% of her reading comprehension when a story is read aloud to her. She is unable to write legibly. She is currently able to spell CVC and CCVC words with 25% accuracy using the Dolch list.
Jane is working on noticing when she is becoming upset during academic activities in the general education classroom. Her preferred strategies include asking for a break, standing when she tires of sitting, and wall push-ups. These options are successful at home. Her behavior plan contains the most current ideas the team and Jane have developed together.	Jane is often disruptive and defiant in class by blurting out responses, refusing to work, and fidgeting with items that are on her neighbor's desk. She will become stubborn and belligerent and cross her arms, raise her voice, or make threatening statements to adults and peers when attempts are made to redirect her. Verbal directions seem to aggravate her further, so visuals are often necessary, but not always effective. She has a BIP attached to this IEP.
Jane can prepare independent reading summaries using a graphic organizer. She finds videos, images, and descriptions online that convey her understanding of the content.	Jane is given multiple-choice questions and fills in the blanks for her assignments. She is inconsistent with showing understanding of what has been read. She answers comprehension questions with 50% accuracy.

Examples and Nonexamples for Andres

Example: Strength-Based Wording ☑	Non-Example: Focus on Student Limitations ⛔
Andres is a 5th grader who enjoys sports, especially baseball. During recess he plays with his friends, shows leadership skills, and encourages others to participate by extending his hand and leading them to the game. He loves math, PE, and science because these subjects allow for hands-on learning where he easily shows his understanding.	Andres is a 5th grader with autism who is learning English as a second language. He often struggles to process what he is learning. He likes athletics and struggles in academics without significant support. His language and disability impact the way he communicates with peers.
Andres has autism and is a multilingual learner. He benefits from mnemonics and wait time to process his thinking. He benefits from a written bank of correct answers to choose from. Talking to a peer in Spanish helps him share what he knows. He prefers to work through the answer before answering aloud in English and excels when he can respond when he is ready instead of being called on.	Andres requires extra wait time across all areas of learning. This is in large part due to his autism and his stage of acquiring English as a second language. He is uncomfortable answering questions in front of others and may need to think out loud with an adult in his first language (Spanish) to respond, even if we believe he knows the answer already.
Andres is learning to write with phonetic writing in English that reflects typical sound-symbol patterns in Spanish. He can write 1-2 sentences to convey his thoughts and may make errors related to his language acquisition. He enjoys making connections to things he knows in his home culture to build background knowledge or show his understanding.	Andres often mixes his use of English and Spanish within his written work. He uses phonetic spelling in his writing, but often it is based on Spanish, not English. Frequently, he will have both languages represented, making his written comprehension level difficult to evaluate. Teacher created writing rubrics show him averaging a total of 12/20 or 60% accuracy. The biggest area of need he has is content/idea generation and spelling.
Andres' family reports that he speaks conversational Spanish at home. He is at level 2 based on the WIDA (Beginning), and is best supported with sensory, graphics, or interactive support when answering questions, orally or in writing. Andres often code-switches, using both Spanish and English when he knows a word in one language but not the other.	Andres is a Level 2 based on the WIDA (Beginning). He is not able to answer "how" or "why" questions consistently at this time. His sentence length when writing is one to two sentences, but often he mixes Spanish and English when he writes or answers questions verbally.

Guiding Questions for Writing Strengths-Based PLAAFPs

To write a strengths-based PLAAFP, teams can consider the following four guiding questions:

1. What are the student's strengths and needs?
2. How does the student's disability affect progress in general education?
3. What are the baseline data for monitoring student progress?
4. Is there a bridge between the PLAAFP and the goals and/or services?

More information on each guiding question is provided below.

What are the student's strengths and needs?

- What are the student's interests and passions?
- What is the student good at? What do they enjoy doing? Who do they enjoy doing it with?
- Are there cultural, linguistic, or community values important to the student and family that the team should understand and build upon?
- What are things to celebrate about the student's progress or learning since the last IEP?
- What are the main areas of need that the student has (academic, communication, interpersonal, social-emotional, health and safety, adaptive)? Are these needs a priority for the student and/or family to prioritize and address at this time? If so, why? If not, why not?
- Are there results from recent evaluations, progress monitoring, or information from the family (e.g., assessments done outside of school) that need to be considered?
- Are there ways the student's strengths can be leveraged to address the identified areas of concern? Are there strategies that are currently working or new ideas to try?

> **Download the resource "Guiding Questions for Writing Strength-Based PLAAFPs" to use this tool in team discussions and planning.**

How does the student's disability affect progress in general education?

- Can you describe how the student's disability affects progress in general education in a positive, person-centered way? Be sure to **consider how the barriers to learning are in the environment and instruction**, not in the students themselves.
- For multilingual learners, how does the student's disability affect progress learning English?
- Are there accommodations to consider regarding access to the general education curriculum?
- Are there positive behavior support, communication, assistive technology, braille, and/or other accessibility considerations?

What are the baseline data for monitoring student progress?

- When determining whether the student is making progress, are the data being reviewed specific, objective, measurable? Are data collected over time, including dates?
- Do these data relate to the identified areas of concern, including family concerns and priorities? The state content standards?
- How might the family support data collection and inform this baseline information?

Is there a bridge between the PLAAFP and the goals and/or services?

- Is there enough information in the PLAAFP to develop ambitious, meaningful, and

measurable annual goals?

- Does the PLAAFP describe and explain the priorities the team (including family and student) identified related to the *three major learning components* described on pages 12-14?
- Is there enough information in the PLAAFP to determine special education services, related services, supplementary aids and services, and support for school personnel?
- Does the PLAAFP explain what specific strategies, accommodations, and modifications are needed and will be used by the student, including English language development supports? Are the levels and types of prompts described? Consider what has worked well historically and what needs to be problem-solved.
- Does the PLAAFP provide enough information about the student's strengths and learning needs that general education teachers can make all necessary adjustments to their instruction and learning environment, so each classroom is ready for the student?

What Does Jacob's PLAAFP Look Like?

Jacob's team, including Jacob and his parents, developed the following PLAAFP:

Jacob has expressed (with the support of his speech-language pathologist) that, while he has some friends, he would like more. This priority is strongly reflected throughout this IEP in the goals, instructional strategies, intentional peer grouping, and consistent emphasis of his AAC use.

Reading is one of Jacob's favorite activities, including independently reading graphic novels, listening to audiobooks, and listening to a peer or adult read to him. He currently reads independently at a second-grade level and can consistently answer who and what questions. This year, the team will focus on "why" questions and asking him to predict what might happen next.

Math continues to be more difficult for Jacob. The team emphasizes use of manipulatives (including digital), choosing the appropriate tool (e.g. ruler, calculator, number line) for the task, and incorporating the use of graphic organizers with functions, vocabulary, and visuals to increase his understanding. He enjoys playing math games on his device.

Jacob benefits from small group pre-teaching, and building background knowledge using videos, games, or interactive websites. He prefers to have answers to anticipated questions or group discussion topics pre-loaded on his AAC device so that he is ready to participate and does not get stressed about answering on the fly. The team enlists peers to help Jacob with this strategy whenever possible. Jacob currently needs adult assistance during routines like coming in/out of the school building, finding his locker, and getting to his desk at the beginning of the day. Peers assist him if needed, pushing his wheelchair to recess, lunch, and in the hallways at school.

2.3: Inclusive IEP Goals

To develop *inclusive IEP goals*, IEP teams can build from the information the team gathered to write the *strengths-based PLAAFPs* (pp. 15-20) in consideration of the *three major learning components* (pp. 12-14). IEP goals should build on a student's strengths and address their needs so they can access and make progress in the general education curriculum. IEP goals should be both *measurable* and *meaningful*. Specific considerations for each are described below. Examples and nonexamples of inclusive IEP goals are provided on pages 20-21.

Inclusive IEP Goals Are Measurable

Measurable IEP goals include the following elements:
- The condition in which the skills are needed
- The skill being taught
- The criterion to determine when the goal has been mastered, including the type and intensity of any prompting

Inclusive IEP Goals Are Meaningful

Meaningful IEP goals are characterized by being broad, rich, and varied. Whenever possible, meaningful IEP goals should also spotlight how they can be implemented in a general education setting. This might include incorporating general education routines/activities and stating the supports needed for the student to reach the goal.

Writing Broad IEP Goals

Broad IEP goals are written with the assumption of implementation in a general education context, with clear alignment to the general education curriculum, routines, and/or activities. Goals should be applicable across the school day and school year in at least one content area.

Element	Example Language ☑	Non-Example Language ⛔
Condition	Given transitions throughout the school day and a visual schedule with a materials checklist,	Given a transition from a preferred to a non-preferred activity,
Skill	Yuki will use the materials checklist to have all materials out and ready for the next activity	Yuki will improve transitions
Criteria	from needing two or fewer verbal prompts in English with accompanying visuals in 3/5 opportunities to needing two or fewer verbal prompts in English in 5/5 transitions.	from needing two or fewer prompts in English with accompanying visuals in 3/5 opportunities to needing two or fewer prompts in English in 5/5 opportunities.

Writing Rich IEP Goals

Rich IEP goals provide students with relevant skills that connect the student to opportunities for more complex learning. This might be done by intentionally providing access to activities or interactions that the student had not been included in before. Rich IEP goals also clearly state the

supports required to engage in these opportunities. As part of ongoing collaboration, educators in general education settings should have a shared understanding of the supports a student needs to learn complex skills and reach their goals.

Element	Example Language ✅	Non-Example Language ⛔
Condition	Given an opportunity for collaborative work (e.g., think pair share, partner/group work) and access to communication supports (e.g., vocabulary visuals),	When interacting with peers,
Skill	Riker will participate with peers (e.g., share an idea, share his work, listen to a peer share) with adult support, improving peer interactions throughout the day	Riker will respond by saying hello to peers that say hi to him
Criteria	from 3/6 times with three or more gestural prompts to 5/6 times with two or fewer gestural prompts as measured by teacher data collection.	100% of the time without prompting.

Writing Varied IEP Goals
Varied IEP goals ensure that all needed content areas and learning components are represented across and within the goals. This is especially important for students with extensive support needs.

Element	Example Language ✅	Non-Example Language ⛔
Condition	Given various tools during a mathematics lesson (manipulatives, multiplication table, number line, graphic organizer),	Given an addition problem of calculating within 50,
Skill	Barry will select an appropriate tool and operation to use to solve the problem (addition, subtraction, multiplication, or division)	Barry will calculate the sum
Criteria	from 50% accuracy to 80% as measured by teacher data collection.	improving calculation from 50% accuracy to 80% accuracy.

To develop a well-rounded IEP that addresses the *three major learning components*, the team might develop a total of 4-7 goals across the whole IEP:
- Grade level academics and other essential skills (2-3 goals)
- Interacting with others (1-2 goals)
- Routines and transitions (1-2 goals)

Supporting Family Partnership in IEP Goals
IEP team members should be mindful of the critical role that parents play in the collaborative development of the IEP. The IEP is a living document that should reflect parent input, and as such it

would not be appropriate to limit an IEP team's discussion of goals to the areas preselected for evaluation or reevaluation. Data used to drive the selection of goals can include information from a variety of sources beyond evaluation measures, including but not limited to the PLAAFP, data and input from the parent, and information shared by the student.

How Did Jacob's Team Develop Measurable and Meaningful IEP Goals?

Jacob's team worked together to consider the priorities and valued life outcomes that Jacob and his family shared during Step 1, the three major learning components, and Jacob's strengths and areas of need as a whole person. Instead of focusing on isolated skills and deficits, the team developed IEP goals to support Jacob's learning, engagement, and skill generalization across the countless teachable moments of the school day.

Below are the areas in which the team developed goals:
- **Goal 1:** Increasing his use of his AAC device
- **Goal 2:** Expressing his ideas, thoughts and viewpoints more often and more consistently across the day, especially with peers
- **Goal 3:** Increased reading comprehension using tools such as graphic organizers, sentence stems and word banks with visuals to show his understanding
- **Goal 4:** Self-advocacy across his day, where he will identify that he has an issue he needs assistance with, identify a peer or other person to ask for help, and follow through asking for assistance/support using vocalizations or his AAC device
- **Goal 5:** Increasing math skills by and choosing the appropriate tool (calculator, number lines, manipulatives) to perform operations and solve problems
- **Goal 6:** Using technology across the day, including his AAC device, laptop, and phone
- **Goal 7:** Maneuvering his wheelchair within the classroom and across the school environments (using a visual schedule to follow his routine, relying on peer partners for assistance to go from recess, lunch and within the hallways)

The team believes these goals will support Jacob's access and engagement within the inclusive general education curriculum, instruction, and environment. Each goal connects to core instruction where Jacob learns alongside his peers in the general education classroom. Finally, all goals support Jacob's future as a contributing and participating member of his community.

Thinking Beyond the School Day for IEP Goals

When IEP goals are written to be meaningful – *broad*, *rich*, and *varied* – they apply beyond the school day naturally and by design. This provides real-world opportunities for acquisition, building fluency, generalization, and maintenance of skills. When goals can be incorporated across people,

places, and settings in and out of school, students have greater learning opportunities and families have enhanced partnership and participation. For students who are multilingual, the goals should also integrate the type and amount of language support needed beyond the school day.

To write an IEP goal that encompasses contexts outside the school day, recall the example goal presented on page 20 and shown in the box to the right. This goal lends itself easily to practice outside of the school day across people and settings. For instance, consider how this goal might work in the following contexts:

- Waking up and getting ready for school
- Participating with peers in leisure and extracurricular activities
- Following a recipe or inter-generational tradition while cooking family dinner
- Engaging in community or vocational activities

> Given transitions throughout the school day and a visual schedule with a materials checklist, Yuki will use the materials checklist to have all materials out and ready for the next activity, from needing two or fewer verbal prompts in English with accompanying visuals in 3/5 opportunities to needing two or fewer verbal prompts in English in 5/5 transitions.

To address student needs in the school day and beyond, the team can consider goals in areas like:

- Self-determination
- Self-direction
- Self-advocacy
- Interpersonal skills
- Leadership skills
- Communication verbally and/or using AAC
- Integrating the use of English language skills
- Work habits and skills
- Use of assistive technology[17]
- Behavioral needs

Strategy 1: Consider the Student's Daily Life Outside of School

IEP team discussions are well-rounded and fruitful when they are informed by what the student chooses and participates in when not in school. These insights can lead to identifying goals that are truly functional, meaningful, and lifelong. It can also be extremely helpful for all team members to have a picture of how a student's goals are addressed across daily life both in and out of school.

For example, the IEP team might develop a *self-determination* goal to support the student to use an AAC device, sign language, or voice to communicate their choices. With this goal in mind, the family could partner in this goal by ensuring the student has the support they need to communicate choices when attending school sporting events with friends, when ordering ice cream at a restaurant with a sibling, and when playing video games with the family on weekends.

Strategy 2: Incorporate Extracurricular Activities

Another way to address IEP goals outside of the school day is to incorporate extracurricular activities.[18] For example, a student may have a goal of choosing an extracurricular activity to participate in, contacting a peer by email or text, and asking that person to attend with them. To support this student, the IEP team might develop goals that complement this, such as goals

---

[17] WAC 392-172A-01030: Assistive technology service.
[18] WAC 392-172A-02065: Nonacademic settings.

involving choice-making, overcoming social anxiety, building self-determination, using calendars and technology, or organizing, planning, and scheduling for themselves.

Strategy 3: Document Decisions and Consider Related Services

The IEP team should document any decisions that are made during this discussion in the IEP where appropriate (e.g. PLAAFP, accommodations and supports, or training/professional development of team members). The team may also need to incorporate *related services*, which can include parent counseling and training,[19] to ensure the student is benefiting from their special education services. Examples of parent training topics include (but are not limited to) the use of AAC devices in native languages outside of the classroom, use of assistive technology, and/or how to provide supports like the ones used in school. For more information about related services, see page 28.

How Did Jacob's Team Develop IEP Goals that Go Beyond the School Day?

Jacob's IEP goals were developed with awareness that he has a life outside of school hours, and that his IEP should support him as a whole child. Writing goals that fit into Jacob's life outside of school supports the family's priorities for Jacob to have robust relationships, communicate his thoughts and needs, participate in his faith community, and prepare for life after school.

Discussing Jacob's goals outside the school day helped the whole team – including his parents – identify better ways to partner with his family as they support and encourage Jacob. For instance, as the IEP team discussed Jacob's communication goals, they identified a need to support his family in learning to use Jacob's AAC device. They also agreed that, as new technologies for communication become available, the family would be included in any training about new technology to support Jacob as he communicates with others across environments.

During the IEP meeting, Jacob's parents shared that his participation in Unified Baseball after school would be a perfect place for them to support him in many of his goals. In particular, his goals about communication, self-advocacy, participation in routines, and driving his wheelchair in different settings could be supported by his family and community while participating on his baseball team. Fortunately, Jacob's occupational therapist, Ms. Jensen, and physical therapist, Mrs. Lee, were both present for the IEP meeting and helped the team brainstorm specific considerations for the family as they support Jacob in baseball.

---

[19] WAC 392-172A-01155. Related services include "parent counseling and training," which is defined as "assisting parents in understanding the special needs of their child; providing parents with information about child development; and helping parents to acquire the necessary skills that will allow them to support the implementation of their child's IEP."

Using Data to Inform Instruction and Measure Learning

There are multiple uses for gathering student data. Data are collected to:

- Understand the extent to which students are learning the grade-level curriculum
- Determine how to adjust instruction and support for continued learning and growth
- Ensure that students are achieving their annual IEP goals

Step 3 of this guide describes how teams can plan when and where to collect data throughout the school day (pp. 33-36).

2.4: Service Delivery and Least Restrictive Environment

Public schools must provide special education services in the student's least restrictive environment (LRE), and, to the maximum extent appropriate, in the general education environment. School teams cannot decide to remove a student from age-appropriate general education settings solely because of needed modifications in the general education curriculum.[20] Removal of students eligible for special education services from the general educational environment is only permitted to occur if the nature or severity of the disability is such that education in general education classes with the use of supplementary aids and services cannot be achieved satisfactorily.[21] When making decisions about placement, IEP teams should remember that (as discussed on pages 5-6) inclusive education benefits all students and often results in far greater educational benefit than placement in a segregated setting.

LRE decisions are made at least annually at IEP meetings by the IEP team, including the parents or guardians. However, LRE decisions can be made at other times by holding another IEP meeting. As teams make LRE decisions, it is important to consider what supplementary aids and services would benefit the student.

Special Education is a Service, Not a Place

In determining services and LRE, teams must ensure they are not perpetuating ableist beliefs and practices that limit educational opportunities for students with disabilities, including students who have extensive support needs. It is important to challenge limiting beliefs about learning for students with disabilities and the traditional ways schools are organized when making LRE decisions.

For IEP teams to make appropriate placement decisions, they must affirm that special education is a service, not a place. **Special education services are designed to be mobile, flexible, and not linked to a specific location, classroom, or building schedule.** This includes services for students with disabilities who are multilingual learners, even though these students may receive English language development services in a separate small group instruction.

---

[20] WAC 392-172A-02060: Placements.
[21] WAC 392-172A-02050: Least restrictive environment.

Avoiding Common Misunderstandings of LRE

- To the greatest extent possible, students should be educated in the school they would attend if they did not have a disability.

- Having a significant amount of special education service minutes on an IEP does not automatically mean a student should be educated in a separate setting, since special education services can be provided in the general education classroom.

- For a student whose IEP specifies receiving a particular service outside the general education classroom (e.g., a student receives individual social work or counseling support in a separate space), the IEP team should schedule that service to ensure the student is not being pulled out during core content instruction in the general education setting.

- Placement decisions should not use a student's disability category as the determining factor. For instance, when a student is found to be eligible for special education services with an intellectual or developmental disability, the student should not be automatically placed in a district's cluster site or "life skills" program. For all students, including those with extensive support needs, IEP teams should prioritize supporting the student in accessing the general education curriculum and settings, including core content classes.

- When a student receives both special education and English language services, the team should meaningfully consider how all instructional supports can work together to provide instruction in the general education classroom, including core content classes.

- Taking the Washington state alternate assessment (WA-AIM) does not mean that a student needs to be educated in a separate special education classroom.

- The LRE also applies to providing instruction and support for students who qualify for extended school year (ESY) services.

Guiding Questions for Inclusive Service Delivery

The following guiding questions can assist teams to think critically and equitably about how to envision (or re-envision) placement in ways that provide access to general education settings and instruction for each student eligible for special education services, including students with extensive support needs.

> **Download the resource "Guiding Questions for Inclusive Service Delivery"** to use this tool in team discussions and planning.

Guiding Question	Considerations
Are any special education services provided outside of the general education class?	If the response is "yes", don't stop there. Ask why the student needs special education services outside of the general education classroom? Is it for a burst of service or long-term? How can the adults change their services to support the student in class during meaningful times of the day?
Does the LRE decision support the student's progress toward the family's *valued life outcomes*, including working, living, playing, and contributing to the community now and in the future?	The IEP team will find it helpful to consider the student and family's long-term vision as they reach the appropriate LRE decision. (Refer to Step 1: Collaborative Conversations with Family, pp. 8-9)
Has the team considered flexible service delivery and how to creatively offer special education and other services within the general education classroom to the greatest extent appropriate?	Team members can discuss how and when general education teachers (including multilingual learner teachers when applicable), special education teachers, Title 1 teachers and other interventionists, paraeducators, and/or and peers will support the student's learning in general education environments.
If special education services need to be provided outside the context of the general education classroom, are *flexible learning spaces* being utilized?	Flexible learning spaces are areas in the school that benefit all students and can be used for various activities, such as work areas outside the classroom, hang-out spots for relaxing or taking a break, small group spaces, or individual instruction areas for all students. If flexible learning spaces are not currently available in the school, consider where and how they might be implemented.
If the student is placed in general education *less than 80% of the school day*, what is the team's plan for increasing time in general education to intentionally build towards 80% or more of the school day?	IEP teams should not assume that the decision to place a student in a more restrictive setting is permanent. When a student is placed in a more restrictive setting, it is important to develop a plan for increasing access and engagement in general education, including in grade-level content classes.

2.5: Inclusive Specially Designed Instruction, Related Services, & Supplementary Aids and Services

All IEPs must include *specially designed instruction (SDI)*. Some students may also have *related services (RS)* and/or *supplementary aids and services (SAS)* included in the IEP. This section describes each of those components and how they support students in the least restrictive environment.

Specially Designed Instruction

Specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction to ensure access to the general curriculum, so that the student can meet Washington state educational standards.[22] SDI should also address the unique needs of the student that results from their disability. The IEP team (special education teachers, general education teachers, related service providers, and families) determines what SDI each student needs.

SDI Adaptation	What Changes?
Content	What the student will learn
Methodology	Teaching methods and strategies
Delivery	Instructional context and conditions

Special education teachers, general education teachers (including multilingual learner teachers), related service providers, paraeducators, and other school staff can all deliver SDI to students, as long as the SDI is designed and supervised by special education certificated staff or other appropriately qualified staff.[23]

Related Services

Related services include transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a student eligible for special education services to benefit from special education services.[24] Related services much be provided by appropriately qualified staff. Other staff, such as general education teachers (including multilingual learner teachers) and paraeducators, can assist with the provision of related services to students as long as the service is designed and supervised by a an appropriately qualified and certificated educational staff associate.[25]

The IEP team carefully considers any barriers to the student's access to special education services and determines what related services are needed to address the barriers. For instance, a student who is not benefiting from their special education services because of anxiety leading to school avoidance may need counseling or social work services as a related service in the IEP.

---

[22] WAC 392-172A-01175: Special education services.
[23] WAC 392-172A-02090: Personnel qualifications.
[24] WAC 392-172A-01155: Related services.
[25] WAC 392-172A-02090: Personnel qualifications.

Supplementary Aids and Services

Supplementary aids and services (SAS) include aids, services, and other supports provided in education-related settings to enable students with disabilities to be educated with their peers without disabilities to the maximum extent appropriate within the least restrictive environment.[26] IEP teams also determine when a student needs SAS and what supports will be needed.

Services in the Least Restrictive Environment

For students to maximize access to the general education curriculum and their peers without disabilities, SDI should only be delivered in a separate setting when necessary. Inclusively providing SDI may feel challenging when a team is accustomed to primarily providing it in separate settings or when the schoolwide schedule is not designed to consider the inclusion of students with disabilities. Scheduling services, including special education, English language, and Title 1 support, and planning for embedded instruction requires coordinating the schoolwide schedule and collaboration across providers.

Students with IEPs who are multilingual learners might receive second language development services. Multilingual learner services should be coordinated with SDI so that the language needed to be successful with SDI is taught to the student.[27]

Considerations for Assistive Technology

As the IEP is developed, the team is required to pause and consider whether the student needs *assistive technology (AT)*.[28] This should be considered early enough in the IEP's collaborative development for the IEP to cohesively and intentionally reflect the student's needs for AT throughout the IEP (in the PLAAFP, goals, services, and so forth). The team should be sure to get input from the family about what has worked, needs they identify, and activities that might be supported using AT across all environments, including at home. The team can consider how AT might support the student across the whole day, as well as how it could support the student into their future. AT can be low tech (e.g., a pencil grip or slant board) or high tech (e.g., devices, apps, screen readers).

The SETT (Student-Environments-Tasks-Tools) Framework is designed for use in inclusive environments in a person-centered way. It helps the team think about what a student's AT needs are, and how to integrate AT so the student can fully engage in their communities. Assistive technology needs will change as a student matures and gains new skills. This discussion should be ongoing, responsive to student needs, and aligned with future priorities.[29]

Balancing Services with Student Independence and Interdependence

SDI, RS, and SAS all support students to access instruction and learn new skills and knowledge. These supports ensure that all students have equitable access to rigorous learning, including tasks

---

[26] WAC 392-172A-01185: Supplementary aids and services.
[27] OSPI (2022). Washington state multilingual English learners: Policies and practices guide (pp. 46-48).
[28] WAC 392-172A-03110: Development, review, and revision of IEP.
[29] Zabala (2020). The SETT framework: A model for selection and use of assistive technology tools and more.

that involve critical thinking, metacognition, problem-solving, and collaborative work.

Learning a new skill follows four predictable learning stages:
1. *Acquisition*: a student acquires a new skill
2. *Fluency*: the student practices the skill and improves in its use
3. *Generalization*: the student uses the skill across different environments
4. *Adaptation*: the student demonstrates the skill wherever and whenever it is needed and long after instruction for the skill has been provided

Students with disabilities, including those with extensive support needs, follow the same skill acquisition process. Some students take more time than others to learn a new skill. Not every student will achieve each stage for every skill they are learning. It is important to consider what activities, personnel, and supports are needed for students to achieve at each stage and adjust instruction so they learn to their fullest potential.

Teams teach students new skills by weaving together different types of support, special education and related services (depending on the skill being taught), information about the student's learning stage, and each student's unique needs. Planning the type and amount of prompting, waiting, and fading supports students to gain greater independence in using new and emerging skills.

- *Prompting:* Assistance given to a student to use a skill or complete a step in a task. Prompts in order from *least to most support* include:
  - *Gestural prompt:* Pointing or motioning to highlight a next step or a natural cue in the environment
  - *Verbal prompt (indirect):* Cueing the student to complete the next step or desired response, using a question, hint, or incomplete phrase
  - *Verbal prompt (direct):* Telling the student what the next step or answer is (Note: verbal prompts are frequently overused which can lead to prompt dependency)
  - *Physical prompt (partial):* Light touch on the shoulder or elbow to support or cue the skill or next step in a task
  - *Physical prompt (full):* Hand-under-hand or hand-over-hand assistance
- *Prompt hierarchy:* Following an intentional progression for prompts to use in teaching and other activities, such as *most-to-least* or *least-to-most*, to ensure students receive the type of prompting that matches their learning needs rather than being over- or under-prompted and so the adults have a consistent plan for how to prompt the student as learning progresses
- *Modeling:* Demonstrating the skill or task for the student
- *Prompt fading:* Gradually and systematically reducing the types and/or frequency of prompts offered as the student learns the skill/task, so the student becomes progressively more independent
- *Time delay / wait time:* Planning ahead for an amount of time to wait before prompting the student; this can prevent prompt dependency by encouraging the student to attempt a skill on their own rather than waiting to be prompted

Teaching students in ways that engage them in their learning requires the team to systematically fade personnel assistance in favor of more natural cues and supports. By expanding the sources of support, the instructional team increases opportunities for the student to meaningfully learn and

demonstrate new knowledge and skills. Examples of this include reducing paraeducator support as a student gains skills in using assistive technology, peer supports, and other naturally occurring redirections within settings, such as bell ringing at the end of class or recess or by watching what other students are doing.

Guiding Questions for SDI, RS, and SAS Determination

When determining decisions for SDI, RS, and SAS in the IEP, teams can ask a series of questions to ensure progress in student learning and skill building:

- What are the least intrusive supports that can be provided to allow the student to experience success in the general education classroom and access and benefit from the special education services in their IEP?

- How can we enhance the physical accessibility of the school, classroom, and other environments, including non-traditional school settings if applicable?

- How can we enhance the instructional accommodations to increase the student's engagement in instruction and learning activities, and gradually fade supports to support learning?

- Where can we use culturally responsive SDI (and RS if applicable) to build connections to learning for the student and integrate the values shared by the family?

> **Download the resource "Guiding Questions for SDI, RS, and SAS Determination" to use this tool in team discussions and planning.**

- How can we integrate, to the greatest extent possible, special education and related services for the student within the general education classroom at natural times of the school day?

- How can we provide needed language instruction or accessibility features that support a multilingual learner with an IEP in general education instruction?

- How can we ensure the student has an effective means to communicate with adults and classmates?

- How can we provide the social/emotional and positive behavior support the student needs in the general education setting?

- How can we facilitate engagement and interaction between the student and their classmates?

- How can we ensure that barriers to the student's access to services (e.g., attendance, mental health needs, transportation concerns) are addressed?

- How can we build a culture of collaboration, belonging, and capacity-building for the student, school staff, families, and peers to support the student's access and progress in the LRE?

2.6: Team Self-Check

By the end of Step 2, the IEP team has:

    2.1. Considered how to apply the *three major learning components* in the inclusive IEP

    2.2. Developed a *strength-based PLAAFP* statement

    2.3. Developed *inclusive IEP goals* that fit into the school day and beyond

    2.4. Determined *service delivery in the student's LRE*, and

    2.5. Identified needs for *SDI*, *RS*, and *SAS*

At this point, the IEP team may reflect on their discussion and decisions so far and ensure that all decisions – including those about the student's LRE, SDI, RS, and SAS – are sufficiently clear and documented. This is also a good time to revisit the family's *valued life outcomes* and consider if those are authentically reflected in the IEP; if they are not, the IEP team can determine what changes need to be made to ensure that they are.

Once the team has addressed and documented these components, the team should ensure that anyone who reads the IEP (including the parent) can understand how the goals align with general education participation and what supports/services will be provided.

Finally, the team should reflect on the student's whole educational program and revisit the *Three Questions for Comprehensive Inclusive Education* first discussed on page 6 of this guide:

> 1. Will the student experience belonging as a member in their school and general education classroom(s)?
> 2. Will the student be actively participating at school across the school day?
> 3. Will the student be learning the grade-level general education curriculum?
>
> *The answer to each of these questions needs to be **yes**.*

If any of the above questions need to be addressed more fully, the team should return to that step of the process to discuss how the student *could* experience belonging and membership in their school and classroom, active participation across the school day with learning and peers in inclusive environments, and learning the grade-level general education curriculum.

STEP 3: EDUCATION DAY-AT-A-GLANCE

With the inclusive IEP completed as described in Step 2, the IEP team plans and communicates when and where IEP goals, specially designed instruction (SDI), related services (RS), and supplementary aids and services (SAS) will be implemented across the day. To do this, the team can develop the *Education Day-at-a-Glance (ED@G)*.

The ED@G is a tool that:
- Supports the entire team in sharing a consistent vision and implementation of the student's inclusive educational program by weaving the inclusive IEP into the actual general education schedule
- Communicates to all team members where and how the components of the IEP fit into the general education schedule
- Provides an overview to general education teachers (and all other team members) of how the whole class and an individual student's plans fit together

> **Download the resource "Education Day-at-a-Glance Template" to use this tool.**

Additionally, the ED@G addresses common implementation challenges with inclusive education. The tool supports:
- Substitute teachers to better serve students with IEPs by quickly summarizing the necessary supports and how they connect to instruction
- All staff to adjust to unexpected changes, such as absences or shifts in the daily schedule
- Productive communication and partnership of all adults involved in the student's education, including the family and school staff who serve the student

Developing the Education Day-at-a-Glance

To complete the ED@G, the IEP team develops four parts:
1. Daily Schedule Grid
2. IEP Goals-at-a-Glance
3. Supports and Accommodations-at-a-Glance
4. Data Collection Plan

Daily Schedule Grid

The *Daily Schedule Grid* is the first part of the ED@G. It outlines the typical class schedule and highlights the student's IEP goals that will be prioritized during each part of the day. The team does this prioritization based on the context of the activity and/or instruction as well as anticipated natural opportunities to address each goal.

The Daily Schedule Grid also identifies the supports/accommodations for each part of the school day to support student access and learning. This includes SDI and SAS but might also include other things a team provides for instruction. For example, during a science unit, the team could plan ahead for a particular instructional strategy or support that might help the student to learn a specific concept and identify this strategy in the Daily Schedule Grid (e.g. using paper links to create a DNA strand, using a coin flipping app on a device to assist with a genetics probability unit, or supplying a larger Newton's Cradle than the rest of the class would be using).

The Daily Schedule Grid helps all adults who serve the student to plan for integrated and seamless support. Team members will be better prepared to embed IEP goals in general education routines and instruction when this information is available in advance. It is important to remember that goals can also be addressed spontaneously when learning opportunities naturally arise. However, the Daily Schedule Grid, when used as part of a team plan, ensures all staff have a shared understanding of where and when goals will be addressed across the average school day.

Example of Jacob's Daily Schedule Grid

Class Daily Schedule	Embedded Goals	Supports/Accommodations
8:45 Student Arrival - Transition into School	Goal 1 - AAC Use Goal 4 - Self-Advocacy Goal 7 - Maneuvering Wheelchair	• AAC device preloaded with requests for assistance • Peer partners for hallway transition • Visual schedule
9:10 Morning Work	Goal 1 - AAC Use Goal 6 - Using Technology Goal 7 - Maneuvering Wheelchair	• AAC device preloaded with lunch choices • Website/video for pre-teaching background information selected and available on laptop
9:30-10:30 English Language Arts	Goal 1 - AAC Use Goal 2 - Expressing Ideas Goal 3 - Reading Comprehension Goal 6 - Using Technology	• AAC device preloaded with related vocabulary words, definitions and visuals • Graphic organizers to match the activity (e.g. compare/contrast, timeline, main topic/characters & supporting details) • Laptop with ReadWrite Google enabled, SeeSaw app for recording group and individual work • Peer partners identified for large and small groups • Slant board

IEP Goals-at-a-Glance

The *IEP Goals-at-a-Glance* is the second part of the Education Day-at-a-Glance and includes each complete goal with a corresponding short title. This allows team members to quickly scan a student's complete IEP goal to review details, like the condition, skill and criteria. If a team member has a question about any of the embedded goals in the Daily Schedule Grid, the IEP Goals-at-a-Glance is a helpful reference.

Example: Jacob's IEP Goals-at-a-Glance

Abbreviated IEP Goal:
IEP Goal 1: AAC Use

Complete IEP Goal:
IEP Goal 1: When given natural opportunities to use his AAC device, Jacob will use 2-3 communicative functions or intents expressively (make requests; comment on an action or object; agree or disagree) in 2-3 word phrases in 3 out of 5 opportunities with no more than 2 indirect verbal cues.

Supports and Accommodations-at-a-Glance

The Supports and Accommodations-at-a-Glance lists any supports and accommodations that will be used during part of the schedule, including those listed in the IEP. It should be concise, presented in list form, and organized into categories for quick scanning. This supports staff in ensuring they can prepare for inclusive instruction and assessment that takes individual student learning strengths and needs into account.

Example: Jacob's Supports & Accommodations-at-a-Glance

Accessories and Equipment:
- Slant board for reading
- SeeSaw app on laptop
- ReadWrite Google
- Graphic organizers
- AAC device
- Visual schedule
- Hands-on manipulatives whenever possible
- Physical Education: Ball/ropes for catching/throwing; floor ramp for hockey unit, three-wheeled bike, ramp for bowling, foam noodle for tag

Environment/Setting:
- Provide background information with video or interactive website at beginning of day
- Intentionally identify peer partners throughout daily activities based on shared interests
- Pre-load AAC and laptop with team identified vocabulary, visuals and definitions for each content area

Presentation/Grading:
- Audio content or peer partner reading aloud
- Tasks broken down and paired with visuals
- Modified assignments based on big ideas
- SeeSaw videos kept in a digital format for record keeping/assessment

Data Collection Plan

The *Data Collection Plan* outlines how the team will monitor student learning and skill attainment. A clear plan supports staff in anticipating and assisting with data collection. The data collection plan should include a brief list of each goal, the data collection schedule, and any relevant tool(s). The IEP team determines how frequently data on each goal will be collected. All data should be collected, analyzed and reviewed on a regular basis. The team uses the data to determine if instruction and supports are effective for the student or if the team needs to make changes.

Example: Jacob's Data Collection Plan

IEP Goal 1: AAC Use
1st and 3rd Tuesday of the month at varying parts of the school day. (Spreadsheet)

IEP Goal 3: Reading
Every Wed. during small groups in general education reading block or small group instruction.

How does Jacob's Education Day-at-a-Glance Support His Learning?

With Jacob's Education Day-at-a-Glance (ED@G), his team (including family members) can easily see how his IEP goals, SDI and SAS will be meaningfully addressed in general education classrooms and environments. Jacob's ED@G includes the daily routines and schedule, abbreviated IEP goals, and any accommodations that he may need to actively participate and access content and activities. When there are any changes (e.g., changes in routine, a new strategy or accommodation to try), the team highlights it. This allows all team members, including paraeducators, to stay up to date and ask clarifying questions in advance.

Below are several ways Jacob's ED@G supports his learning in English Language Arts:

Prior to new content units or themes within every core subject area, Jacob's team collaboratively identifies seven vocabulary words that are the most important for him to learn and use in group discussions. These vocabulary words, their definitions, and accompanying visuals are added to his AAC device. This supports Jacob to access and use key vocabulary words for class discussions and small group work.

The ED@G specifies that Jacob will use graphic organizers chosen to match the activity. Every day, the classroom paraeducator checks in with the teacher to find out which graphic organizer Jacob will need for each lesson, and makes sure he has it pulled up on his laptop. This supports Jacob to jump right into his learning alongside his peers.

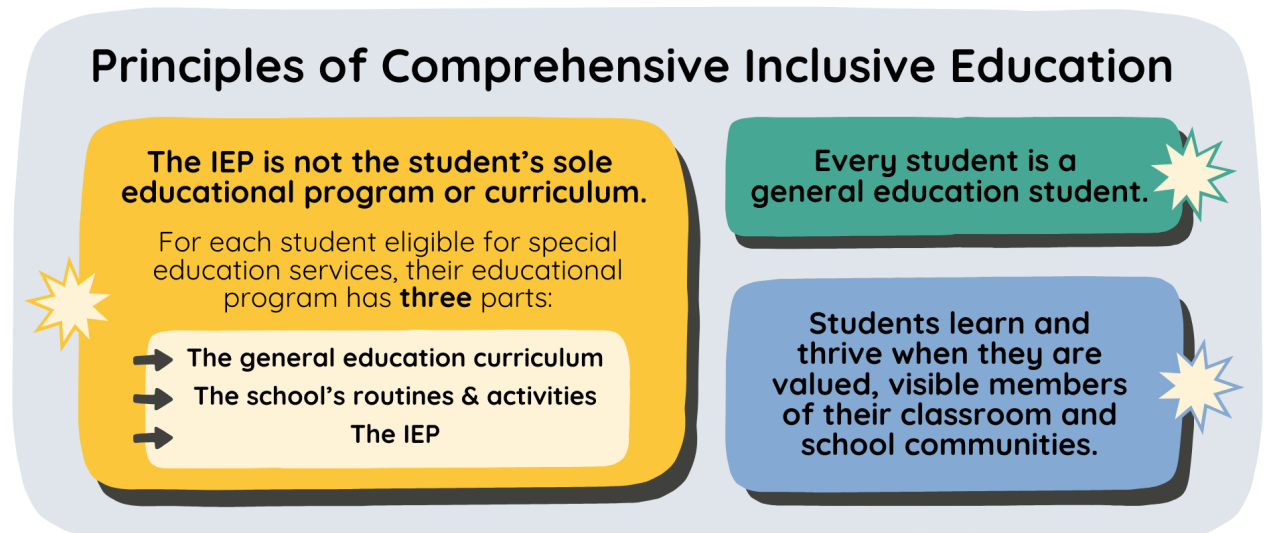# STEP 4: ONGOING EDUCATION AND SUPPORT

Once the team reaches Step 4, they have:

1. Engaged in *collaborative conversations* with the family and school team
2. Developed an *inclusive IEP* that is infused with the student's strengths, preferences, needs, and valued life outcomes
3. Developed the Education Day-at-a-Glance to streamline implementation of general education instruction interwoven with the supports and goals in the inclusive IEP

In Step 4, the team ensures ongoing collaboration to review and revise the plan when necessary to address changes in the student's needs and ensure continued progress.

Schedule Regular Collaboration Times

While updating the IEP is required at least annually, team planning to integrate IEP goals and maximize learning in general education instruction should be ongoing. Each school district must provide access to a student's IEP for every team member who has responsibility for its implementation.[30] As students with disabilities (including those with extensive support needs) gain in their knowledge and skills, educators may need to change instruction, supports, and/or goals to ensure the student still has the opportunity "to meet challenging objectives."[31] If a student is not making progress in a given area, the team should engage in problem solving to determine what changes need to be made. This might include, but is not limited to, changes to general education instruction and learning supports, additional supports for the school's routines and activities, and changes to the IEP. Any changes the team considers should continue to reflect the Principles of Comprehensive Inclusive Education described on page 4 and reprinted below.

Principles of Comprehensive Inclusive Education

The IEP is not the student's sole educational program or curriculum.

For each student eligible for special education services, their educational program has **three** parts:

→ The general education curriculum
→ The school's routines & activities
→ The IEP

Every student is a general education student.

Students learn and thrive when they are valued, visible members of their classroom and school communities.

Team members benefit from ongoing collaboration, a high-leverage practice that is key to students with disabilities achieving their learning outcomes. School teams and leaders are advised to take

---

[30] WAC 392-172A-03105: When IEPs must be in effect.
[31] Questions and Answers (Q&A) on U. S. Supreme Court Case Decision Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District Re-1 (U. S. Department of Education)

particular care to ensure there are collaborative planning meetings so general education and special education teachers are not siloed. Grade-level general education standards are the foundation of all student learning, including the learning of students with disabilities. Special education teachers should be included in grade-level or content-focused planning meetings with the general education and multilingual teachers to support effective practice for all learners.[32]

Benefits of multidisciplinary collaboration include:
- For special education teachers and related service providers:
  - Awareness of upcoming grade-level content, unit expectations, and/or instructional and assessment activities for the whole class
  - Greater insight into a student's strengths and needs in general education settings
- For general education teachers:
  - Increased awareness of a student's IEP goals and how they connect to instruction, routines, and activities in general education classrooms
  - Opportunities to prepare for and feel confident about tailoring instruction for students with disabilities
- For the team:
  - Opportunities to work together to prioritize IEP goals and integrate them with instructional content
  - For students with disabilities who are multilingual learners, opportunities to plan for integration of language development strategies into instruction

Collaborative discussions help teams make any necessary revisions to the Education Day-at-a-Glance, ensuring the student's access and progress in the general education curriculum and IEP goals.

Useful Collaboration Practices

Teams that achieve the best results have a regular block of time to collaborate at least weekly. However, when this is not yet supported by a school, there are other options to that help enhance collaboration to support all student learning. The 5-15-45 Tool supports meaningful team collaboration focused on student instruction whether the team has 5 minutes, 15 minutes, or 45 minutes of planning time. Using this tool can guide teams in developing accessible lessons for all students in a class, including students with extensive support needs.

> **Visit the Step 4 web page for a link to the 5-15-45 Tool.**

Using the 5-15-45 Tool, the general education teacher identifies the essential content in a lesson for all learners to know. Team members then determine the instructional strategies and activities that will be most helpful for teaching the essential content and eliminating barriers to learning. Using online shared documents (such as Google Drive, OneDrive, or Sharepoint documents) for lesson/unit plans facilitates collaboration and communication. Team members can add recommendations for eliminating barriers and increasing student access as well as the roles and responsibilities each person will take for different sections of the plan.

---

[32] OSPI (2022). Washington state multilingual English learners: Policies and practices guide (pp. 46-48).

The curricular design or instructional strategies may lead to unintentional barriers to learning for some students. Teachers might see evidence of these barriers with reduced student interest, low student engagement, or inflexible/limited options for students to show what they know. Teams should always keep in mind that barriers to learning are found in the environment and are not part of the student. As the team discusses the data related to learning the general education content and IEP goal attainment, they also identify barriers to learning and strategies for reducing these barriers. The Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework for lesson planning and instruction focuses on eliminating barriers and increasing access to learning for the whole class, including for class members with extensive support needs.

How Does Jacob's Team Collaborate Throughout the School Year?

As the year progresses, the team becomes more familiar with Jacob. In turn, their processes for collaborating to support him become more comfortable and flexible. Over time, team members find that it comes more naturally to consider instruction with Jacob in mind and engage in regular conversation with colleagues about identifying and overcoming barriers to his learning. The team continues to collaborate, communicate and adjust based on formal and informal assessments and progress monitoring. The general and special educator chat regularly in addition to their weekly scheduled team meetings to ensure that Jacob has what he needs to access and engage in the general education environment.

As the year progresses, the team keeps materials, data records and anecdotal notes explaining strategies that have worked as well as those that have been tried and have been less successful, to share with the middle school team when Jacob transitions to his next school.

Based on the team's planning, Jacob's IEP should be ready for the 6th-grade team to start the year off right, like his 5th-grade team did, with a collaborative conversation with Jacob and his family. That conversation will build on the strong foundation from Jacob's 5th-grade year to continue to align their priorities and vision, discuss content, agree on strategies, clarify roles and responsibilities, and create an Education-Day-at-a-Glance for his new 6th-grade schedule.

CONCLUSION

A comprehensive inclusive education is essential for ensuring that all students with disabilities, including those with extensive support needs, can fully participate in general education settings alongside their peers. By fostering collaboration among educators, families, and other providers, inclusive IEPs help create meaningful access to the curriculum while addressing each student's unique needs. These practices not only empower students to reach their full potential but also promote a culture of equity, active participation, contribution, and belonging for each and every student. The process that has been detailed as a part of this guide and the action planning described are well worth that outcome.

APPENDIX

Comprehensive Inclusive Education in Washington: Step-by-Step Checklist

Step 1: Collaborative Conversations

- [ ] Step 1.1 (Collaborative Conversations with Family): The team collaborated with the family before writing the IEP to identify the vision for their child now and in the future, including their child's strengths and needs, and ways to provide support during school.
- [ ] Step 1.2 (Collaborative Conversations with School Team): The team, including general education teachers, special education teachers, and other team members as appropriate, meet at the beginning of the school year to discuss grade level standards and instruction, information about the student, and effective instructional strategies.

Step 2: Creating an Inclusive IEP

- [ ] Step 2.1 (Three Major Learning Components in Inclusive IEPs): The team understands the three major learning components and how they apply across the day and in the IEP.
- [ ] Step 2.2 (Strength-Based PLAAFP): The team has written the strength-based PLAAFP.
- [ ] Step 2.3 (Inclusive IEP Goals): The team has written IEP goals that are both measurable and meaningful (e.g., broad, rich, and varied), and reflect the three major learning components.
- [ ] Step 2.4 (Service Delivery and LRE): The team has considered the Guiding Questions for Inclusive Service Delivery on page 27 to make LRE decisions.
- [ ] Step 2.5 (Inclusive SDI, RS & SAS): The team has considered the Guiding Questions for SDI, RS, and SAS Determination on page 31 to make decisions about services.
- [ ] Step 2.6 (Team Self-Check): The team reflected on three questions for Comprehensive Inclusive Education:
    - [ ] Will the student experience belonging as a member of their school and general education classroom(s)?
    - [ ] Will the student be actively participating at school across the school day?
    - [ ] Will the student be learning the grade-level general education curriculum?

Step 3: Education Day-at-a-Glance

- [ ] The four parts of the student's Education Day-at-a-Glance are complete.
- [ ] The Education Day-at-a-Glance was shared with all team members.

Step 4: Ongoing Education and Support

- [ ] Regular times and strategies to collaborate are in place.
- [ ] Education Day-at-a-Glance is updated as needed.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS AND LEGAL NOTICE

This guide, as well as its companion website, may contain links to websites operated by third parties. These links are provided for your convenience only and do not constitute or imply any endorsement or monitoring by OSPI.

*The example of **Jacob** in Comprehensive Inclusive Education in Washington is based on a compilation of students. A special thank you of appreciation is extended to the Washington family who generously permitted the photos of their son and his inclusive educational experiences at Ruby Bridges Elementary School in Woodinville, WA to be included in this guide. The photos beautifully illustrate what inclusive education might look like.*

OSPI provides equal access to all programs and services without discrimination based on sex, race, creed, religion, color, national origin, age, honorably discharged veteran or military status, sexual orientation including gender expression or identity, the presence of any sensory, mental, or physical disability, or the use of a trained dog guide or service animal by a person with a disability. Questions and complaints of alleged discrimination should be directed to the Equity and Civil Rights Director at 360-725-6162 or P.O. Box 47200 Olympia, WA 98504-7200.

Download this material in PDF at https://ospi.k12.wa.us/student-success/support-programs/comprehensive-inclusive-education. This material is available in alternative format upon request. Contact the Front Desk at 360-725-6000.