Planning for Educational Success: Practical Strategies for Children with Down Syndrome

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Overview

• Early Development
• School
  ◦ Evaluation and Eligibility determination
  ◦ IEPs
  ◦ Placement
  ◦ Behavior Management
    • FBAs & BIPs
    • Home strategies
Early Development

- Cognitive skills
  - Bright colorful toys and objects
  - Explore environment, textures, sensations
  - Use concept words (big, little, heavy, soft)
  - Literacy Activities
Early Development – Language

- Language Skills
  - Imitate your child’s laughter and facial expressions
  - Encourage imitation of gestures and sounds
  - Create a language rich environment
  - Encourage attempts to communicate
Early Development - Motor Skills

- **Fine Motor**
  - Roll modeling clay
  - Make piles of small items (cereal, coins)
- **Gross Motor**
  - Arrange play area to encourage gross motor activities
  - Use safe toys to encourage pushing, pulling, crawling, sitting, throwing, catching
Early Intervention Services

- Babies Can’t Wait
  - Evaluation
  - Eligibility
    - Established condition
    - Signs of developmental delay
  - Coordinate Services
Transition – Age 3

Diagram showing transitions between Public Preschool, Private Preschool, Private Childcare, Home Daycare, and Home care.
Transition to Preschool

22-33 Months
- Initial IFSP transition planning meeting
- Visit placement options

30-33 Months
- Transition planning meeting
- Referral to school

33-36 Months
- Evaluation
- Meeting to determine eligibility

34-36 Months
- IEP Meeting
- IEP in effect by 3rd birthday
Evaluation

- Variety of assessment tools
- Parent input
- Academic/Academic Readiness
- Functional
- Development
  - Cognitive
  - Speech
  - Motor Skills
  - Adaptive Functioning
  - Social/Emotional
Eligibility

- Review the evaluation results
- Consider other relevant information
  - Medical concerns
  - Dual diagnoses
- Determine presence of a disability
- Determine programming needs and supports
IEP

- Present levels
- Special factors
- Transition service plans
- Annual goals/objectives
- Report of student progress
- Student supports
- Assessment determination
- General education
- Special education instruction/related services
- Transportation
- Extended School Year
- Documentation of notice
- Parent participation in the IEP process
Present Level of Performance

- Addresses strengths, needs related to the child’s disability, parent concerns
- States how does the child’s disability affect progress in the general curriculum?
- Establishes a **baseline** of information about the child?
- Measurable
- Functional
- Identifies any special factors
- Describes both academic and non-academic areas
- Includes results of most recent evaluation or re-evaluation
**Annual Goal**

- What can the child accomplish in **12 months**? Is the goal stated in the following terms: **The child - will do what - to what level/degree?**

- Does the goal apply to a variety of situations and activities?

- Can you **describe** the behavior the child will be doing when the goal is reached?
Short Term Objectives/Benchmarks

- What will the child need to do to achieve each annual goal?

- Do the short-term objectives/benchmarks define the intermediate steps to a goal?

  The child - will do what - to what level/degree-under what conditions?
IEP Example

**PLOP:** When given common objects or pictures, Cara is able to correctly point to *dog, kitty, and truck.*

**Objectives:**
1. When given common objects or pictures, Cara will correctly point to 15 of them.
2. When given common objects or pictures, Cara will correctly point to 30 of them. When given common objects or pictures, Cara will correctly point to 15 of them.
3. When given common objects or pictures, Cara will correctly point to 60 of them.

**Goal:**
When given common objects or pictures, Cara will point to 100 items.
Placement Decisions

Developmental Level

IEP Goals & Curriculum Content

Special Factors

Appropriate Placement
General Education

- No specialized instruction
- Accommodations provided
- Behavior Intervention Plans implemented

The least restrictive placement for students with disabilities is the general education setting with general education curriculum only.

Accommodations and behavior supports can be provided in order to help the child access the general education curriculum.

Examples: Fewer math problems needed to demonstrate mastery
Less text on the page to limit distraction
Use of a scribe/voice-to-text software for a writing assignment
Special Education Services – General Education Setting

- Range from minimal support (consultation) to maximum support (co-teaching)
- IEP specifies the amount of time for special education services
Special Education Services & Settings

- Separate class
  - Modified curriculum
  - Smaller class size
  - Lower student-teacher ratio

Most Restrictive
- Separate school
- Hospital/Homebound
- Residential settings
Behavior Management

- Structured setting
- Clear behavioral expectations
- **Developmentally appropriate** behavior management techniques
- Address in IEP as appropriate
A B C’s
(Antecedents, Behaviors, Consequences)

Antecedents: Surroundings, events, and behaviors that come before a behavior

Behaviors:
- Desirable behaviors
- Undesirable behaviors
- Neutral behaviors

Consequences: Events or actions that follow a behavior
FBA and BIP

Functional Behavior Assessment (FBA)
- All behaviors serve a purpose
- FBA is conducted to determine the cause of undesirable behaviors and conditions under which they occur
- Should be conducted before developing a Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)
- Information gathering multiple sources and methods
  - Parent/teacher checklists
  - Parent/teacher interviews
  - Student observations
FBA

- A definition of the behavior that you want to change
- Measurement of the behavior
- Data collection and assessment
- A summary (hypothesis)
BIP

• A behavior intervention plan includes **positive** interventions, strategies and supports to address the target behavior.
• The BIP is created by a team of school staff and the parents.
• The BIP is used to teach or encourage new behavior.
• A BIP should address the problem behaviors identified in the FBA.
Positive strategies - to avoid or prevent the behavior: These can include changes in routines, change:
New skills: These can include communication skills, social skills, self-management skills, choice-making, etc. in classroom instruction, opportunities for choice, etc. Ways to teach the new behaviors: These can include communication skills, social skills, self-management skills, choice-making, etc.
Consequences: These include what happens if the target behavior is exhibited and also what happens when the desired behavior is exhibited.

Schools may use teachers and other staff to conduct FBA’s. You can ask about the training, educational background and experience of the individual(s) conducting the FBA. And remember, if you disagree with the school’s FBA, conducted for the purpose of evaluation you may request an independent evaluation by a professional outside of the school system.

Make suggestions about how to define the target behavior on the FBA. Remember, the target behavior must be one that can be observed. Good examples of observable behavior are hitting, biting, running away, or putting one’s head down on a desk. Behaviors such as disrespectful, lazy, disruptive are not observable and should not be identified as target behaviors.

If your child’s BIP only focuses on the problem or target behavior, ask the team to include objectives to increase new behaviors. A good BIP will have at least one objective to decrease the target behavior and one objective to increase the new behavior.

Your child’s BIP should include skills that he or she needs to work on and ways that teachers and staff will help. If the BIP only includes skills for your child to work on, ask how the staff will help your child learn those new skills.

Make suggestions about strategies that might work with your child and could be included in the BIP.

Do not agree to include emergency strategies such as calling the School Resource Officer or using physical restraint in the BIP. Your child’s BIP needs to focus on reducing problem behaviors, teaching new behaviors and increasing your child’s learning opportunities at school.
Home Intervention Approaches for Emotion Dysregulation

- Antecedent Control
- Skill-Building
- Consequences
Antecedent Control - Examples

- Increase structure, predictability; reduce chaos (e.g., rushing, too many activities)
- Use warnings, prompts, picture schedules (talk child through the day, let them know in advance about anything out of the ordinary)
- PACE things carefully across the day
- Give “stimulation breaks” and/or use “sensory shelters”
- Reduce “background noise” when possible
Antecedent Control, cont.

- Make sure verbal communication is appropriate to child’s developmental level
- Make commands clear, direct, & simple; use gestures (e.g., Tell-Show-Do)
- Teach child “self-talk” by talking them through difficult situations (“mommy be right back”)
- Use behavior log to examine likely triggers & eliminate those when possible (e.g., limit access, reduce choices)
Skill Building

- Practice trips/prepare child for problematic situations
- Plan-Do-Review
- Teach/model self-talk (e.g., “that toy is making you mad”)
- Skills gained from other interventions (e.g., ST, OT, PT)
Preparing Your Child for Problematic Situations

• Break the task down into smaller parts

• Provide structure and appropriate sequencing guidelines

• Reduce competing interests

• Accept and praise “approximations” of the desired behavior at first and then raise the expectations
Consequences

- Labeled praise
- Special treats/rewards (use less)
- Planned ignoring
- Time-out versus sensory breaks
Plan-Do Review

**Plan**: You and your child plan together how to accomplish a task. The parent should ask questions and encourage solutions.

**Do**: Carry out the plan.

**Review**: Evaluate what worked and what did not work.
Review: How To Positively Modify My Child’s World

• Establish a good working relationship with your child
• Avoid triggers
• Prepare your child for problematic situations
• Practice difficult situations
• Avoid accidental reinforcement
Important to remember…

• The child must be in the appropriate state in order to learn & be effective
• .....& so does the parent (i.e., parent’s emotional state & energy makes a difference)
• Remember to practice self-care!
More information

Parent to Parent of Georgia
770 451-5484 or 800-229-2038
www.p2pga.org

Georgia Department of Education, Division for Special Education Services and Supports
404- 656-3963 or 800-311-3627 and ask to be transferred to Special Education
http://www.gadoe.org/ci_exceptional.aspx
Questions??