



Center for Autism & Related Disabilities
UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA



POSITIVE EDUCATION PLANNING



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POSITIVE EDUCATION PLANNING

**A Guide to Thoughtful Preparation for the
Educational Planning Process"**

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THE "PURPOSE" OF THIS PORTFOLIO

Parents are always a child's first teachers. From the moment a child is born, they look to their family members for instruction, modeling and support in all they do and learn. Because of this, parents know much about how their child learns, including their abilities, strengths and interests, as well as their history, challenges and needs.

Parents also know their children as family members; they are the primary stakeholders in their child's future. Their perspectives are vital for identifying broad educational priorities, as well as targeting the most important new skills and learning experiences to address each school year.

Positive Education Planning is a simple planning portfolio that guides family members to reflect and share what they know of their child as a learner and a family member. The portfolio is sequenced in a way that presents the child as a complete and unique individual first. It then addresses broad aspects of their learning characteristics and concludes with consideration of learning priorities for the future. In it, you will find an example from one child's family as illustration of the portfolio's consideration points. You will also find a blank set of reproducible pages that can be used to create a portfolio for your own child.

With the information gathered in this portfolio, members of a child's educational team can envision a rich future and develop an educational plan to serve as the road that will lead to it.

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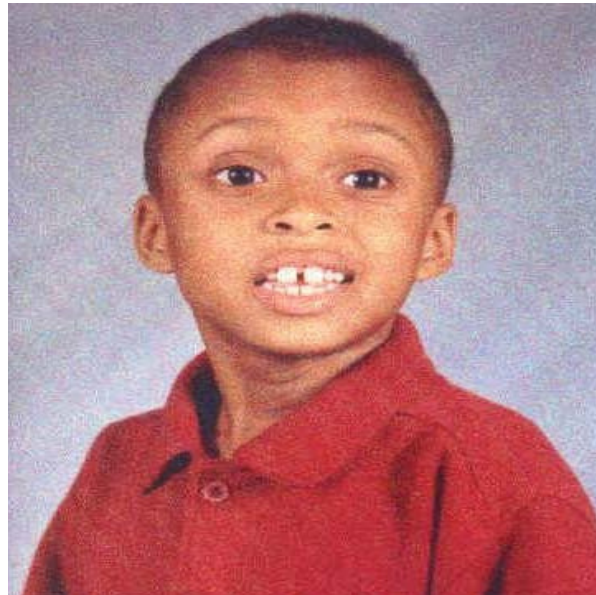
CREATING "A PICTURE" OF "YOUR" CHILD

Often in IEP meetings, participants become so focused on the challenges a child faces that his or her unique gifts, talents and strengths are over-looked. This is unfortunate, because these positive personal qualities are the very ones that will best serve as the foundation of the child's educational plan. During the IEP development process, it will be important to keep these positive qualities in mind from the beginning."

Families have a unique and valuable perspective of their child's desires, strengths and abilities. Family members, better than anyone, know the child's capacities and interests. Because of this, they can often provide a "voice" for expressing these capacities during the development of an IEP."

The following page provides a place for you to create a picture of your child as a unique and complete person. The frame is there for you to include an actual snapshot of your child. Providing a picture will offer a visual image of your child for team members to focus on throughout the IEP development process. This page also offers a place for you to give your child a "voice". Think about the things that are most important for your child, both now and in the future. What would he or she ask for in his or her life? What would he or she want most to learn or to experience?"

MY **NAME** IS Matthew



MY CHILD'S **MESSAGE**

I want to make my own choices. I want to participate in the decisions that are made about my life. I want to have friends in my neighborhood and at my school. I want to ride my bike and run and play ball and order my own food when we go out to eat. I want to tell people what I need and what I want. I want to be able to ask for help and I want to refuse it, also. I want to do things on my own. I want to be independent. I want to be a part of my community.

GETTING 'THE BIG PICTURE

Sharing a photograph of your child will provide a visual image of who he or she is right now. It's also important to create an image of him or her over time, by sharing his or her past experiences and your future expectations. Take a few moments to think carefully about significant events in your child's life. What lessons were learned from them, both for you and your child? Then take a few more moments—what images arise when you think about your child's future?"

You may feel a combination of hopefulness and fear when thinking about this. The first step toward making hopes a reality and reducing or eliminating the things that cause fear is to state exactly what those things are. This provides a way to communicate with others about your feelings, desires and hopes for the future. It also serves as a starting point for identifying and planning the necessary actions that will need to be taken to make that bright future become a reality."

Because of their physiological or cognitive challenges, many children with significant disabilities need sustained interventions or supports across their lives. These often include medical treatments, therapies or devices that maintain their physical health and overall well-being. If your child relies on this sort of quality of life support, you will also want to describe what they might be and the impact they have on your child's life."

THE "BIG" PICTURE

What are my FEARS for Matthew?

That he will not be able to express his needs or desires effectively
That he will not be able to function independently
Being in and educational program that is little more than custodial care
That he will not have meaningful social relationships, especially friends
That he will not have meaningful ways to express his interest, such as a job or hobbies

What are my DREAMS for Matthew?

That he will be able to communicate effectively
That he will be able to participate in making his dreams a reality
That he will have an educational experience that will encourage him to acquire meaningful skills
That he will be treated with respect
That his abilities will be appreciated

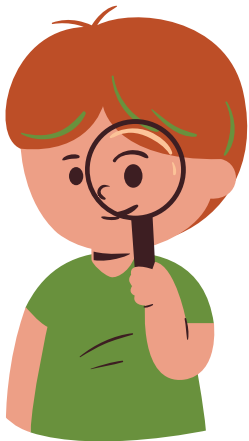
What are Matthew's LIFESTYLE NEEDS?

Specialized diet
Medical supervision for chronic health conditions, Ways of communicating his health and dietary needs

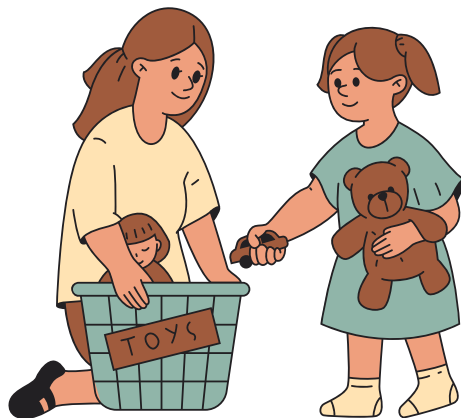
DESCRIBING "YOUR" CHILD

Often, students with disabilities are only described in terms that reflect their deficits or challenges. This creates a mindset of looking at the child and addressing his educational needs from the perspective of what he can't do, rather than what he can. Learning new skills and being involved in enriching experiences defines success at school for all children. It therefore makes better sense to describe children in positive terms that reflect their skills and abilities."

This page is designed to offer some **quick, positive words** for describing your child. In particular, think about the qualities your child displays that may be perceived as "challenging". What other words could be used to describe the child from a positive perspective?"



Is your child
curious?"



Does your child like
things organized?"



Can your child
work/play well
independently?"

GET TO KNOW

Matthew

(Child's Name)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is persistent | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is affectionate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Works well independently | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is sensitive to other's moods |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is cooperative | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is friendly |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is playful | <input type="checkbox"/> Is curious |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Has a high activity level | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Has a special aptitude for
_____ music _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Individualistic | <input type="checkbox"/> Has good motor skills |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Shows expressive body or facial gestures | <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys adult attention |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is adventuresome | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Is inventive |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Has a need for freedom | <input type="checkbox"/> Is a recognized leader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Likes to organize | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Has a sense of humor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is a good guesser | <input type="checkbox"/> Is keen and alert |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is outgoing | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Has good visual learning skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sits quietly | <input type="checkbox"/> Adapts easily to new ideas and situations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strives for perfection | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has original and creative ideas | |

YOUR "CHILD" AS "A" LEARNER

Parents "always" know "a" great "deal" about "how" their "children" learn "and" what "they" already "know." This "information" will "be" very "helpful" for "other" team "members" as "they" work "with" you "to" develop "and" implement "your" child's "educational" plan."



The "following" three "pages" ask "specific" questions "about" how "your" child "learns" and "which" things "are" most "likely" to "promote" successful "learning." They "also" address "your" feelings "and" desires "for" your "child's" school "experiences." You "may" answer "these" questions "in" as "much" detail "as" you "feel" is "necessary."

MY CHILD AS A **LEARNER** PT. 1

What types of things does my child **ENJOY LEARNING** ?

Music, food items, physical activities

What **SEEMS TO HELP** my child learn?

Behavioral supports, consistency, Picture Exchange Communication System, repetition, one-on-one instruction, discrete trials, peer modeling his sister.

When is it **EASIEST** for my child to learn?

The early part of the day,
when distractions are at a minimum,
when direct supervision and peer modeling are available

What things are the **MOST DIFFICULT** for my child to learn?

Bilateral hand movements, cause and effect relationships

MY CHILD AS A LEARNER PT. 2

How does my child **GET ALONG** with other children?

Matthew enjoys socializing in small groups (3-5) of friends that he knows well. Children that have chosen to spend time getting to know Matthew enjoy him as well!

What can my child **DO WITHOUT HELP**?

Self-care (bathing, toileting, etc)
Dressing, including selecting his own clothes
Eating, including using utensils and choosing meals
Operate his nebulizer for asthma medications
Chores such as taking out the trash, making his bed, clearing the table
Ride his bike

What can my child do **WITH SOME HELP**?

Play soccer, roller skate, swim
Shoes with ties
Reading, writing, math (both lessons and homework) Verbal communication (with prompts to use proper sounds)

What types of **REWARDS** work best with my child? (praise, stickers, etc.)

Immediate rewards: praise (verbal, high-fives), stickers, breaks

Delayed rewards: snacks, books, events/outings, movies, bike ride, music

MY CHILD AS A **LEARNER** PT. 3

What makes my child **HAPPY**?

- making choices
- eating
- singing
- music
- Movement
- Praise
- accomplishments
- being with friends
- talking on the phone
- riding his bike
- swimming
- going places
- spending time with family (especially dad!)
- doing something on his own!

What makes my child **FRUSTRATED OR UPSET**?

Being misunderstood

Lack of interesting activities and structure

Being required to do things he doesn't want to do

Being interrupted without an explanation

Being ignored or disregarded

Being spoken to in a loud or angry voice

How do I **HELP MY CHILD** when they become frustrated/upset?

Ask him to use his words

Count to 10, take 3 deep breaths

YOUR CHILD'S STRENGTHS

This page is the place for you to reflect on all you know about your child's areas of strength. You might want to ask yourself questions such as:

- What is my child really good at?
- What qualities does my child possess that best promote his or her learning?
- What about my child is most appealing to other people?



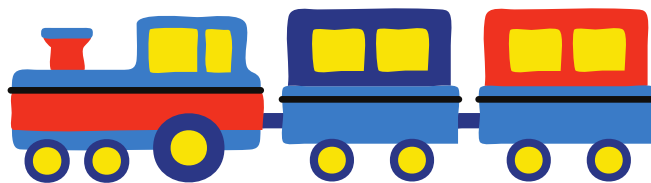
MY CHILD'S STRENGTHS

Some things Matthew is good at:

- Communicating with words and signs
- Showing expressive body gestures and facial expressions
- Seeking attention and responding to praise
- Sharing affection and being playful
- Wanting to please others
- Wanting to be with other kids his own age
- Expressing his sense of humor
- Expressing his aptitude for music
- Following instructions
- Paying attention and competing tasks
- Being persistent

YOUR CHILD'S PERSONAL PREFERENCES

Sharing what you know about the things your child really enjoys, whether it's food, activities, toys or objects, social experiences or sensory input, can be a very important part of planning your child's educational program. This information can provide team members with ideas for instructional activities and **possible reinforcers** that will be motivating for the learner. It can also "shed some light" on the reasons why a problem behavior could be **occurring**. In either case, information about your child's personal preferences can assist the team in determining not only how, but what to teach.



This page provides a place for you to provide anything you know about your child's personal preferences. Questions you might ask yourself might include:

- What does my child **really enjoy doing**?
- Which **items and activities** (such as games, toys, personal possessions or objects around our home) is he/she most interested in doing with other people or alone?
- What are my child's favorite foods and places?
- Who does my child like to spend time with?
- If it were completely up to my child, how would he or she **choose to** spend time?

PERSONAL PREFERENCES

Matthew

likes:

(Child's Name)

GOING PLACES

- church
- movies
- bookstore
- the mall
- YMCA
- School

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

- bike riding
- swimming
- soccer

SOCIALIZING

- hanging out with friends
- doing things with Dad
- talking on the phone

ON THEIR OWN

- listening to music
- reading and being read to
- singing
- dancing
- watching videos

YOUR FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Your child's experiences include not only school, but family and community activities as well. In each of these settings, there will be specific skills and supports your child will need in order to be successful in them. These skills should be addressed in your child's educational plan. In order to do this, it will be important for your child's teacher to understand him or her not only as a student, but also as a member of your family.

This page is a place for you to share the things your family enjoys doing together or would like to do more often. These things can include activities at home, such as watching television together, completing chores, or fixing meals as a family. It can also include activities in the community, such as shopping, going to the beach or eating in a restaurant.



FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Our family likes to do these things:

AT HOME

- reading
- listening to music
- watching videos
- Playing games
- Using the computer

IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD

- riding bikes together
- going to the park
- playing outside

IN THE COMMUNITY

- going to church
- going out to eat
- going to movies
- going to museums, especially MOSI
- going to concerts and the theater
- traveling by car, train or plane
- going shopping

LEARNING PRIORITIES

This page is provided as a place for you to reflect the things that are most important for your child to learn this year. To decide on these priorities, you should consider the following questions:

What does my child need to learn that will increase his or her ability to function with greater independence? What things are other people doing fully or partially for my child right now?



These things might range from basic self-care skills, such as dressing, eating or grooming, to skills such as organizing assignments and materials for school. For each child, these skills will be different. What is most important in all situations is to identify the things that will promote the most independence and self-sufficiency at school, at home and in the community.



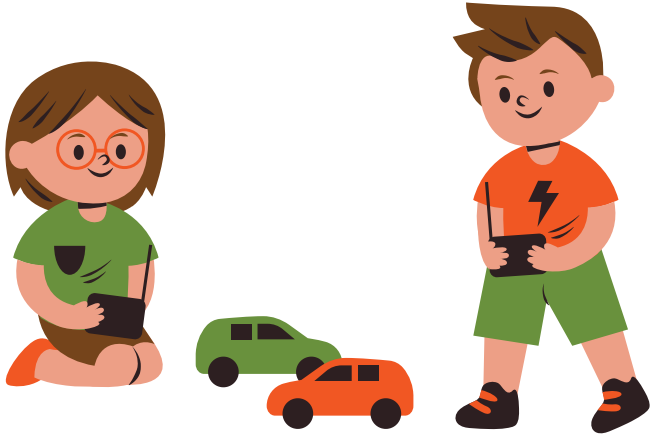
What pivotal skills are necessary for my child to participate successfully in a broader range of activities?

In any activity at home, school or in the community, there are essential foundational areas of skill that are utilized in different ways, depending on the specific situation. Skill areas such as choice-making, problem-solving, managing time and organizing materials or possessions are considered pivotal because the specific skills included in them are central to success in many different situations. In each of these areas, which specific skills are most relevant for your child's needs and learning opportunities? For instance, learning the specific skill of sequencing photos on a daily picture schedule could enhance your child's ability to understand the changes in his daily routine at school as well as home or daycare.

Or perhaps acquiring the skill of "pointing to a desired choice" will allow your child to express preferences at meal time, choose a video or select his own clothing. Think about which of these pivotal skills are necessary in the activities you'd like your child to be involved in. If your child acquires these abilities, will he or she be better able to participate in a broader range of home, school and community activities? If so, they would be of high priority for your child's education this year.



How can my child's interests be expanded?



Expanding your child's range of interests to create new social opportunities may also require learning new skills or broadening existing ones.

Think about activities that currently interest or motivate your child and the behaviors involved, including those that appear to be non-interactive in nature. Are there new skills your child can learn that will serve the same purpose, but demonstrated in ways that are more interactive with others? Your child's educational team can also find ways to incorporate these interests and new skills into school activities with typically developing classmates of the same age. This will promote your child's participation in new activities, and allow him or her additional opportunities to learn other important social, communication and cognitive skills at the same time.

What skills does my child need to learn to participate more fully in activities with family, friends or schoolmates?



For any activity at home, at school or in the community, there will always be specific communication, social and performance skills required in order for your child to be successful in them. Think about which of these skills are necessary for success in the greatest number of activities. For example, consider communication, social and cognitive skills such as asking a friend to play or an adult for help, waiting for a turn in a game or problem-solving what to do if something unexpected happens on the way home. If your child acquires these skills, will he or she be better able to participate in other activities? If so, they would be of high priority for your child's education this year.

What things will be most interesting and meaningful for my child to learn this year?

Skill building is also an important factor in expanding the range of interesting and worthwhile activities your child could enjoy participating in. In particular, think of the learning, play, and recreational activities your child might enjoy more fully with new or enhanced skills and greater independence. You will find it helpful to consider activities that typical children of the same age find interesting. For instance, 10-year-old boys are often very interested in video games and computer programs.

Would your 10-year-old son be interested in these same activities if he was better able to use the equipment and run the software? If so, the fine motor, visual tracking and eye-hand coordination skills necessary to do these things are of high priority. They will promote your child's participation in these fun activities, which will in turn allow him to interact with his friends, learning other important social and communication skills at the same time.



LEARNING PRIORITIES

What does Matthew need to learn this year that will help them be MORE INDEPENDENT and PARTICIPATE MORE FULLY in activities with family, friends, and classmates?

- To further develop his expressive communication skills
- To generalize or adapt academic skills for functional use
- To increase age appropriate social skills and competency

MY CHILD AT A GLANCE

Now that you've gathered all your knowledge, insights and priorities to contribute to the educational planning process, you may find it helpful to summarize these things concisely. The following page can be used to quickly capture the most important things you wish to communicate about your child with other people involved in his or her support. Feel free to share it with teachers, therapists, support personnel and other community members as a quick "snapshot" of your child's abilities, and needs for support.

CRITICAL INFORMATION ABOUT MY CHILD

Name: _____ Nickname: _____ Birth date: _____
Date: _____ Teacher: _____ Phone: _____
Critical health information (e.g., allergies, medications, etc.): _____

Place child's
photo here

How does your child communicate?

Primary System: Verbal communication - talking
Secondary System: limited signs, gestures

How does your child let you know:

Wants/needs: He asks for what he wants
Object/activity: He may raise his hand and ask verbally
Assistance: He verbally requests "i want help"
Need for break/stop: He says "i want break" or "no"
Feelings: He appears and/or verbalizes "i'm sad" or "sick"
When confused/frustrated: becomes anxious
When sick: Appear ill, may verbalize "i am sick"
Need for bathroom: Verbally request to go to bathroom

How can we provide information to your child? (Check all that apply):

- Visual schedule Verbal
- Pictures Objects
- Social stories Gestures
- Demonstrations

Describe: Intensive systematic instruction to mastery (Scholastic reading strategies, Reading mastery plus, Touchpoint Math, etc.)

What are your child's strengths?

What is your vision for your child's life?:

That he will have a quality life filled with opportunities, meaningful relationships, and employment. That he will be treated with respect and his abilities will be appreciated

List the things your child does well:

Self-care (bathing, toileting, etc.), Dressing (selecting clothes), Eating (using utensils, choosing meals), Chores (trash, making bed), Academics: write, basic addition, bike ride

List the things your child needs to stay

calm: Behavior Intervention Plan, Social Stories, Visuals, Review of Clear Rules, Consequences and Reinforcers

List the things that make your child

happy: Success! Accomplishment! praise (hugs, knuckles, high-fives, stickers), eating, bike riding, swimming, puzzles, books, going out (bookstore, movies, restaurants, amusement parks) soccer, park, mall, videos, music!

What are your child's challenges?

List things your child does not like:

Being misunderstood, lack of meaningful activities, peer relationships and structure (schedules, visuals, directions), requested to perform non-preferred tasks.

List things that might upset your child:

Health (asthma, allergies, diet), Behavior, Communication, Social skills competency (personal space)

Describe your child's greatest

challenges: Health (asthma, allergies, diet), Sudden unexpected changes in routine, important people not being where they are supposed to be, limited personal space

List specific assistance your child

needs: Initial navigation of site: crossing streets, getting to class, using his nebulizer, shoes with ties, academics: verbal communication (prompts to use proper sounds), sports (rules)

WRITING EDUCATION GOALS

This page is a place for you to collect your ideas about possible goals for your child's educational plan. Keep in mind, these goals should be written collaboratively with the other members of your child's IEP team. Here are a few things to consider about possible educational goals:

Goals should address activities, not isolated skills.

Think about what you would like your child to be experiencing in a year's time. These experiences can be targeted as educational goals, with the individual skills required to be successful in those activities outlined as objectives toward meeting the goal. Here's an example:

Goal:

David will successfully select and check out a library book with the assistance of his 3rd grade classmates once a week.

Objectives:

- **Selecting one library book from 3 options**
- **Retrieving and showing his library card upon the request during the check out process**
- **Looking at the book with a classmate for 5 minutes**

Goals should be stated in positive terms that reflect an increase in skills and successful behaviors.

Goals should always be stated in terms that reflect an increase in adaptive or successful skills, rather than a decrease in problem areas. For example:

“During new or difficult classroom activities, Susan will ask for assistance from an adult through the use of her picture communication notebook.”

Goals should be written in easily understood terms that are both observable and measurable.

A well-written educational goal should reflect what the student will do, in clearly stated language. This will allow the child's progress toward the goal to be easily and reliably measured, either through direct observation, data collection methods and formal or alternate assessments.

Goals should be determined together among family members and school personnel.

As all team members are responsible for a child's educational progress, these goals should be decided upon collaboratively during the educational planning meeting. Keep in mind, the plans you develop can always be rewritten or amended as progress toward a goal is accomplished or new priorities are identified.

Progress toward these goals should be determined on a regular basis.

Each goal should also include a specific method for measuring progress toward it. This can be done in a number of different ways, depending on the nature of the goal and the specific skills targeted. You will want to talk with your child's teacher about the best way to gather measurement information for each goal. Will it be through the methods mentioned above? How often? How frequently will the information be reviewed to determine if progress is being made?

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

In a year's time, Matthew will be able to:

Independently express his wants and needs as demonstrated by:

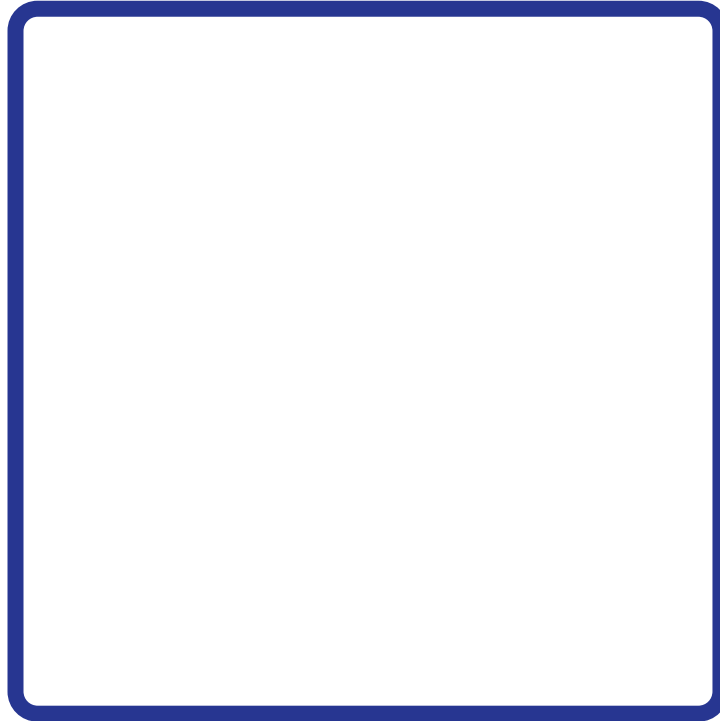
- Using the phrase "I want...please" to request objects, activities, or help
- Use the phrase "I feel sick" to ask for allergy treatments
- Use the phrase "No thank you, I can't eat it" to refuse food items not apart of his dietary regimen

Cooperate during interactive activities with peers and adults as indicated by:

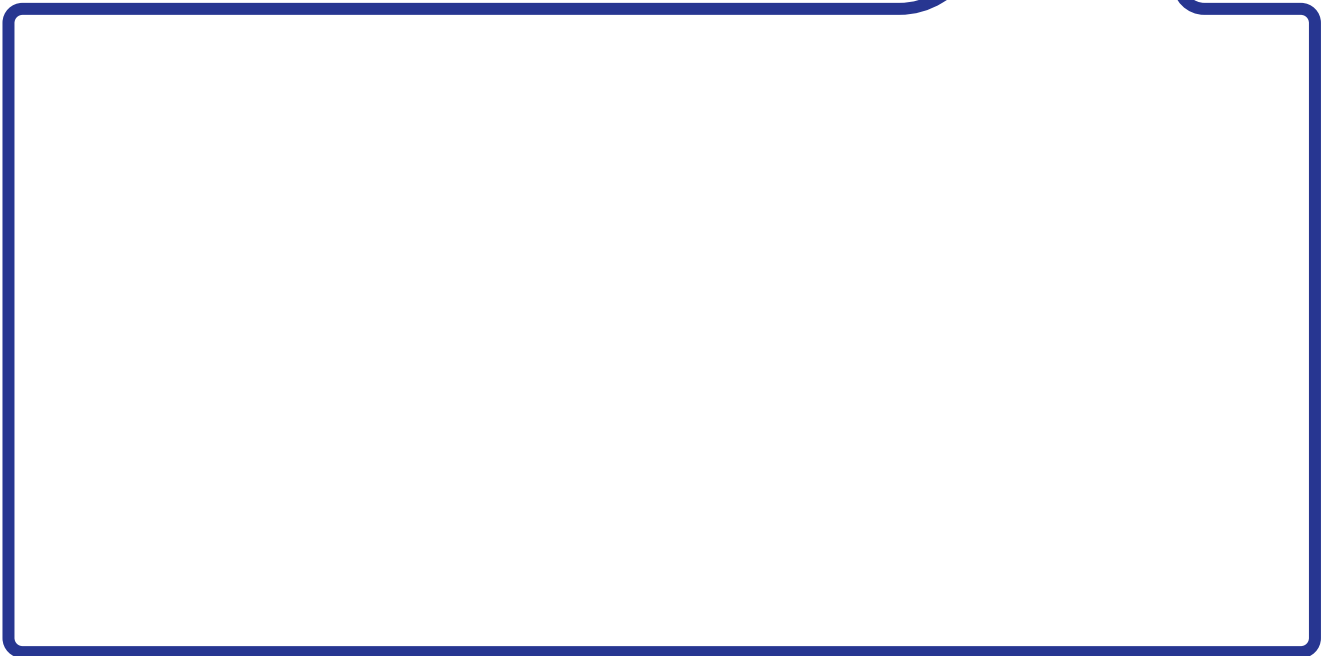
- Sharing materials
- Waiting for and taking his turn
- Completing an individual task or responsibility as a part of a group project

REPRODUCIBLE PAGES

MY **NAME** IS _____



MY CHILD'S **MESSAGE**



THE **BIG** PICTURE

What are my **FEARS** for _____?

What are my **DREAMS** for _____?

What are _____'s **LIFESTYLE NEEDS**?

GET TO KNOW

(Child's Name)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is persistent | <input type="checkbox"/> Is affectionate |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Works well independently | <input type="checkbox"/> Is sensitive to other's moods |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is cooperative | <input type="checkbox"/> Is friendly |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is playful | <input type="checkbox"/> Is curious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has a high activity level | <input type="checkbox"/> Has a special aptitude for |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Individualistic | _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Shows expressive body or facial gestures | <input type="checkbox"/> Has good motor skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is adventuresome | <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoys adult attention |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has a need for freedom | <input type="checkbox"/> Is inventive |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Likes to organize | <input type="checkbox"/> Is a recognized leader |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is a good guesser | <input type="checkbox"/> Has a sense of humor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Is outgoing | <input type="checkbox"/> Is keen and alert |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Sits quietly | <input type="checkbox"/> Has good visual learning skills |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Strives for perfection | <input type="checkbox"/> Adapts easily to new ideas and situations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Has original and creative ideas | |

MY CHILD AS A **LEARNER** PT. 1

What types of things does my child **ENJOY LEARNING** ?

What **SEEMS TO HELP** my child learn?

When is it **EASIEST** for my child to learn?

What things are the **MOST DIFFICULT** for my child to learn?

MY CHILD AS A **LEARNER** PT. 2

How does my child **GET ALONG** with other children?

What can my child **DO WITHOUT HELP**?

What can my child do **WITH SOME HELP**?

What types of **REWARDS** work best with my child? (praise, stickers, etc.)

MY CHILD AS A **LEARNER** PT. 3

What makes my child **HAPPY**?

What makes my child **FRUSTRATED OR UPSET**?

How do I **HELP MY CHILD** when they become frustrated/upset?

MY CHILD'S STRENGTHS

Some things _____ is good at:

PERSONAL PREFERENCES

_____ likes:
(Child's Name)

GOING PLACES

PHYSICAL ACTIVITY

SOCIALIZING

ON THEIR OWN

FAMILY ACTIVITIES

Our family likes to do these things:

AT HOME



IN THE NEIGHBORHOOD



IN THE COMMUNITY



LEARNING

PRIORITIES

What does _____ need to learn this year that will help them be MORE INDEPENDENT and PARTICIPATE MORE FULLY in activities with family, friends, and classmates?

CRITICAL INFORMATION ABOUT MY CHILD

Name: _____ Nickname: _____ Birth date: _____
Date: _____ Teacher: _____ Phone: _____
Critical health information (e.g., allergies, medications, etc.): _____

*Place child's
photo here*

How does your child communicate?

Primary System: _____
Secondary System: _____

How does your child let you know:

Wants/needs: _____
Object/activity: _____
Assistance: _____
Need for break/stop: _____
Feelings: _____
When confused/frustrated: _____
When sick: _____
Need for bathroom: _____

How can we provide information to your child? (Check all that apply):

- Visual schedule
- Verbal
- Pictures
- Objects
- Social stories
- Gestures
- Demonstrations

Describe: _____

What are your child's strengths?

What is your vision for your child's life?:

List the things your child does well:

List the things your child needs to stay calm:

List the things that make your child happy:

What are your child's challenges?

List things your child does not like:

List things that might upset your child:

Describe your child's greatest challenges:

List specific assistance your child needs:

EDUCATIONAL GOALS

In a year's time, _____ will be able to:

CARD

Center for Autism & Related Disabilities

UNIVERSITY OF SOUTH FLORIDA

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