

College Bound: How ASU Preparatory Academy
Addresses Transition Goals in an Inclusive
Setting

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Why is this important?

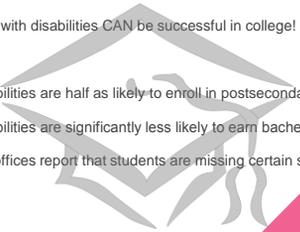
We know students with disabilities CAN be successful in college!

But...

Students with disabilities are half as likely to enroll in postsecondary education

Students with disabilities are significantly less likely to earn bachelor's degrees

College Disability offices report that students are missing certain skills to be most successful



Nine Strategies to Improve College Transition Planning

1. Educate IEP Team Members and Special Education Faculty
2. Reach Out to Families
3. Encourage Students' Future Independence
4. Teach Students to Use Assistive Technology
5. Give Students the Documentation They Need
6. Educate Students About Their Disabilities and Strengths
7. Explicitly Teach Learning and Organizational Strategies



What are Soft Skills?

Soft skills are the personal character traits or qualities each of us has. They make up who we are, generally encompassing our attitudes, habits and how we interact with other people. Some examples include:

- Verbal Communication
- Interpersonal Skills
- Problem-solving Skills
- Critical Thinking Skills
- Active Listening Skills
- Team Player
- Flexibility and Adaptability
- Behavioral Regulation
- Professionalism
- Self-Determination
- Self-Advocacy
- Self-Awareness

Rationale/Overview

Targeting organizational skills was selected as a skill to focus on because it lends to being proactive as well as supports executive functioning deficits. Many students, whether they qualify as SLD, Autism, or ADHD, have issues with Executive functioning problems which impacts organization. Organization deficits are also present in "typical" middle school students as this is a time in their lives when their brains are undergoing another major growth. By identifying a skill set that is imperative for all students but particularly essential for our special education students, it makes addressing this skill in an inclusive setting seamless. At ASU Prep we've discovered that explicitly teaching organizational skills to our students helps their self advocacy skills as well as being proactive in planning for those meltdowns that arise from students being unprepared and feeling singled out.

Organizational Skills

Executive Functioning Skills include these abilities:

1. Determine the task
2. Make a plan
3. Get organized
4. Create steps to complete the task
5. Develop a time plan
6. Plan for contingencies

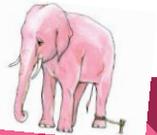
Using Agendas and file folders to teach Executive Functioning skills.

1. Fill out the Agenda/Organize Homework
2. Fill out at the end of each class. Get materials
3. Organize worksheets in color coded folder
4. Fill in due dates, record materials needed if extra is required.
5. Plan and write in how much time will be spent on each subject
6. Create a backup plan (there might be soccer practice or music lesson that take away time)
7. Complete homework and put in organizational system.

Complete the task

Self-Advocacy Skills

- What is self-advocacy?
 - Self-Advocacy is learning how to **speak up for yourself**, making **your own decisions** about your own life, **learning how to get information** so that you can understand things that are of interest to you, finding out **who will support you** in your journey, knowing your **rights and responsibilities**, **problem solving**, **listening and learning**, **reaching out** to others when you need help and friendship, and learning about **self-determination**. (Wrightslaw, 2012)



- Why is self-advocacy important?
 - So that students have the knowledge needed to **succeed** and are given the **chance to participate** in decisions that are being made about **their life**

Self-advocacy defeats the beast that is learned helplessness!

Self-Regulation

Setting Goals

- Participation in IEP
- Making Appointments
- Learning Lab Plan

Self-Monitoring

- Powerschool app
- Learning Lab Plan

RETRAIN YOUR MIND

Self-Instruction

- Organizers
- Know Accommodations/Needs
- Problem-solving Strategies

Self-Reinforcement

- Meetings
- Develop a plan/contract with self
- Steps toward goals met

Aide Training

45 Minute Weekly Training for paraprofessionals working in the classroom.

Meeting goals are to learn prompting and support techniques to help the child develop independence in their academic setting. This prompting/questioning techniques starts early in our Elementary school to set students up for success.

We focus on Questioning (indirect verbal cues) and embedded feedback as a prompting strategy.

We don't give the answers or tell them what to do. We lead them to get it themselves.

Questioning (indirect)

- What materials do you need?
- Who can you ask?
- Can you say the first sound?
- What should you do first, the ones or tens column?

Embedded Feedback w/Questioning

- You've made it through the first 2 steps correctly, now how do you think you should start the next step?
- You read the "ch" sound correctly what does the vowel say?
- You did a good job including mountains on your map! What other land feature can you include?

Transition Conference

Quarter 1: We fill out an agenda in each class and allow the students to copy the agenda. We take notes and use highlighters as indirect prompting.

Quarter 2: We continue to fill out the agenda but students don't get to copy it. We begin questioning prompting: "What did you have in Science today the space is empty" "Do you have all of your homework in your folder" We still allow copying if student is struggling or they are on their way and just need a boost.

Quarter 3: Student must have something in their agenda, if blank we guide them back to the classroom and prompt them through asking their classroom teacher for help. We suggest that they look at a friend's agenda, but mostly we are redirecting instead of giving the info. We allow some consequences from classroom teachers at this time.

Quarter 4: We mark their agendas checked so parents know. If they've made a good attempt we help organize, but if not we allow natural consequences.

Strategies



Self-Advocacy Strategies

-Disability Education

- Self Assessments, informational articles, "success stories"
- The more you know about yourself, the more you can find what you need

- Accommodations

- Student delivered or verified with teachers
- Allow students to **make choices**

-Finding a Voice

- Students schedule own appointments, establish goals
- Student involvement in IEP development

-Student Empowerment

- Learning resources
- Allow for failure, don't be a superhero
- Questions for learning (not about learning)

Soft-Skills Tracking, K-12

We have developed a monitoring tool that is kept on Google Drive. Each student has a designated document that is shared with the next teacher when the student moves on. This helps all of us to know where the student is in terms of their soft-skills development and serves as a reminder that our goal is to keep moving them forward toward college-readiness.

Group Activity

1. Think of a student who you believe is college-bound. If you can't think of one, we'll give you a case study.
2. Identify the soft skills that this student will need to be taught in order to function in the post-secondary setting.
3. For each skill, determine ways that it will be taught, tracked across grade levels, and when the teaching will begin.
4. Be ready to report out your ideas to the rest of the group.

One more thought...

Life is more manageable
when thought of as a
scavenger hunt as opposed
to a surprise party.