

Individualized Education Program Complexities for Students with Autism



THESIS DEFENSE
BY: JORDAN ROHRAFF

Introduction



What is Autism?

- Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD)
- 3 key areas of development (social skills, language/communication and repetitive behaviors)
- Rising numbers of children with ASD

IEP

- Educational roadmap
- Essential part of education
- Goals and objectives based in individual student's needs and interests.

Difficulties with IEP's



- What kinds of goals and objectives should be included? Which are most significant?
- Writing and implementing goals and objectives
- Possible curricula
- Preparing students with ASD for their future
- Adaptations
- Active parent and student participation

Goals and Objectives



- Writing goals and objectives
 - Should be clear, specific and concise with familiar terminology.
 - Measurable, which show progress by the conclusion of the year.
 - Collaborate with all team members for highest success rate.
- Created exclusively for each unique student
- Must provide all students with access to general education curriculum while also focusing on student's goals and objectives.
 - Present levels
- Related to student's academic needs and also those that address their language and social skills deficits.
 - Daily life/functional skills working together with academics and globalization skills
- All, and more, are necessary in order for students to develop skills to be independent adults in their future.

Adaptations



Accommodations

- Changes in instruction or assessment that do not change the actual content or lower any standards.

Modifications

- Changes in instruction or assessment and expectations which do change the actual content or lower standards.

Accommodations and modifications must be documented and explained in the IEP in order for the student to legally receive their educational services needed in the classroom and on assessments. We always want our students to be successful in all environments therefore the correct descriptions of adaptations is essential.

Implementation of Goals and Objectives



- Ongoing process which needs support and guidance.
 - With collaboration of all members, the struggles with implementation and accomplishment of goals can be diminished.
- Execute consistently into student's daily routine and curriculum.
 - With a variety of different student's and their distinctive IEP's along with typical demands educators face day to day, it is hard to fit everything in!
- **COMMUNICATION & TEAMWORK is key!!!**

IEP Team



- Parent/guardian
- Student
- Special educator
- General educator
- Speech Language Pathologist
- Physical Therapist/Occupational Therapist
- School Psychologist
- Counselor
- Any other professionals who work with the student.

Parent and Student Involvement



Active or full participation does not mean simply showing up to the annual meeting but instead being actively involved in discussions and providing input.

Parents

- Contribution in the development of objectives, interventions, methods of instruction and evaluations, etc.
- Promotes consistency in routine and strategies for the student from school to home life.

Student

- **Benefits:**
 - Practice with self-advocacy skills, goal setting, decision making, and problem solving.
 - More likely to successfully complete their goals and objectives, graduate high school, gain better employment and live independent lives.

Self-Determination

Classroom Ideas



- **Rethink Autism Curriculum**

- Curriculum based off students individual needs (directly from their IEP goals and objectives).
- Also align with Common Core Standards.
- Foundation from students present levels (must prove mastery before moving onto higher levels and activities).
- Uses the effective educational interventions of applied behavior analysis (ABA) (without such a hefty cost!).

- **Potential Solutions**

- Students can see success at a quick individualized rate as they move from level to level.
- Educators are able to generalize skills used/mastered in rethink sessions into the daily routine of classroom activities.

Training for Rethink



- Educators and paraprofessionals watch online video lessons (these can be found online at www.rethinkfirst.com in the video library).
 - Teach about the curriculum.
 - Show examples through modeling how to provide instruction (tutorials to teach hundreds of different skills).
- Video lessons were developed by caring clinicians who have years of experience with the ABA-based teaching interventions.

Sounds great right? The problem is many schools do not provide this curriculum option and it is not available to teachers and paraprofessionals.

In the Future



- Parents and educators should work hard to get everyone involved.
- **COLLABORATION!**
- Provide needed supports inside and outside of the special education room.
- Rethink Autism becomes a more viable and frequently used curriculum.
- Full and active participation!