

IEP Prep Worksheet Reflection Toolkit: A guide to help you find your voice and share your child's story

This reflection toolkit helps you think through how to complete the IEP Prep Worksheet by identifying your child's strengths, interests, and needs across skill areas. It supports you in prioritizing your "Top 3s" in each section so you can confidently advocate for your child and work as a strong partner with the IEP team to build a strength-based IEP.

What Works, What's Hard, What's Next

Three things your child has recently learned or a new activity they enjoy.

Reflection Prompts

- What made your child smile or laugh recently?
- What activity or hobby do they ask to do again and again?
- What's something your child is proud of doing on their own?
- What surprised you about their recent growth or interests?
- What do you want the IEP team to celebrate with you?

Three activities or skills your child is practicing right now.

Reflection Prompts

- What is your child trying to do more independently?
- What are teachers or therapists focusing on during sessions?
- What skill is slowly improving with effort and support?
- What routines, tools, or strategies are helping your child stay engaged?

Three things your child is having trouble with.

Reflection Prompts

- What tasks or situations cause frustration or shutdowns?
- What remains difficult even with help or strategies?
- What environments seem overwhelming or stressful?
- What does your child avoid or resist doing?
- What do you wish the IEP team better understood about your child's challenges?

Three things you would like your child to learn within the next year.

Reflection Prompts

- What skill would help your child feel more confident and independent?
- What would make daily routines smoother and more successful?
- What goal would open up new opportunities for learning or connection?
- What progress would feel most meaningful to your child and family?

Skill Areas

Academic strengths, needs, and goals.

Reflection Prompts

- What subjects or topics does your child enjoy or show interest in?
- How does your child learn best (e.g. hands-on, visual, listening)?
- What helps your child stay focused or engaged during learning?
- What academic tasks are challenging for your child?
- How does your child show what they know (e.g. talking, drawing, building)?
- What supports have helped your child succeed in school?
- What are some of your child's interests that could be incorporated into learning?

Communication strengths, needs, and goals.

Reflection Prompts

- How does your child express ideas, wants and needs?
- What helps your child communicate more clearly?
- What words, signs, gestures, or devices does your child use to communicate?
- How does your child respond to others in conversation?
- What situations make communication harder for your child?
- What strengths does your child show in understanding language?
- How does your child show frustration when communication is difficult?

Socio-emotional/behavioral strengths, needs, and goals.

Reflection Prompts

- What makes your child feel safe, calm, or happy?
- How does your child handle changes or unexpected events?
- What helps your child manage strong emotions?
- How does your child interact with peers and adults?
- What behaviors are challenging, and when do they happen most?
- What strategies help your child cope or self-regulate?
- What strengths does your child show in social situations?

Motor/perception/motility strengths, needs, and goals.

Reflection Prompts

- What physical activities does your child enjoy or do well?
- How does your child move around their environment?
- What fine motor tasks (e.g. writing, cutting) are easy or hard?
- What gross motor tasks (e.g. walking, jumping) are easy or hard?
- How does your child respond to sensory input (e.g. noise, touch)?
- What supports help your child with movement and coordination?
- What strengths does your child show in physical or sensory tasks?

Functional performance strengths, needs, and goals.

Reflection Prompts

- What daily tasks can your child do independently (e.g. eating, dressing)?
- What routines help your child stay organized and on track?
- What tasks are difficult for your child in daily life?
- How does your child manage time, transitions, or responsibilities?
- What tools or supports help your child complete tasks?
- What strengths does your child show in problem-solving or independence?
- What functional skills would help your child at home or school?
- How does your child ask for help when they need it during daily routines?
- What routines or strategies help your child stay calm and focused during transitions?

Medical/health strengths, needs, and goals.

Reflection Prompts

- What health needs does your child have that affect school?
- What helps your child stay healthy and safe during the day?
- How does your child respond to medical routines or treatments?
- What signs show that your child is feeling unwell or in pain?
- What supports are needed for your child's medical care at school?
- What strengths does your child show in managing their health?
- How does your child's health impact their energy or focus?
- What does your child understand about their own health needs?

Secondary transition strengths, needs, and goals.

Reflection Prompts

- What are your child's interests or dreams for the future?
- What strengths does your child have that will help in adult life?
- What skills does your child need to live, work, or learn after high school?
- What supports will help your child reach their post-school goals?
- How does your child make decisions or express preferences?
- What experiences (e.g. jobs, volunteering) would help your child prepare?
- What concerns or hope do you have about your child's future?
- What life skills (e.g. money, transportation, cooking) does your child want to learn?
- What community or adult services might support your child's goals after high school?

Helping Your Whole Child Shine

What works for my child.

Reflection Prompts

- What helped your child when they learned something new?
- What routines or tools make your child's day go smoother?
- What people or relationships help my child feel safe and supported?
- What environments help my child do their best (e.g. quiet, structured)?

Activities my child likes best.

Reflection Prompts

- What activities does my child choose during free time?
- What hobbies or interests does my child talk about or enjoy?
- What types of play or learning keeps my child engaged the longest?
- What school subjects or classroom tasks does my child look forward to?
- What group or solo activities does your child enjoy most?

My child learns best when...

Reflection Prompts

- When does your child seem most ready to learn?
- What helps your child stay focused during learning?
- What types of activities or teaching styles help your child understand new things?
- What kind of environment helps your child learn best?
- What signs show that your child is learning or making progress?

How my child's challenging behavior is best redirected.

Reflection Prompts

- What helps calm your child when they are upset (e.g. breathing, quiet space)?
- What doesn't work and why?
- How does your child respond to choices or clear instructions?
- What helps your child shift focus from a problem to a solution?
- What early signs show that your child is starting to feel overwhelmed or upset?

Things that motivate my child.

Reflection Prompts

- What rewards or encouragement help your child try their best?
- What activities or interests make your child excited to participate?
- What people or relationships motivate your child to do well?
- What helps your child feel proud or successful?
- What does your child work hard for or look forward to?