

Shaping IEPs with Student Strengths

Presented by Andrea Beachnau



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Rewriting the Story

From Deficits to Strengths




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Today's Agenda

- Understand Your Role in the Individualized Education Program (IEP) Process
- Use the IEP Prep Worksheet
- Explore Key Skill Areas
- Advocate with Confidence



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Who's At the Table? Why Your Voice Matters



- ✓ You - the parent
- ✓ Student (if appropriate)
- ✓ General Education Teacher
- ✓ Special Education Teacher/Provider
- ✓ Individual who can interpret evaluation results
- ✓ Representative of the Public Agency



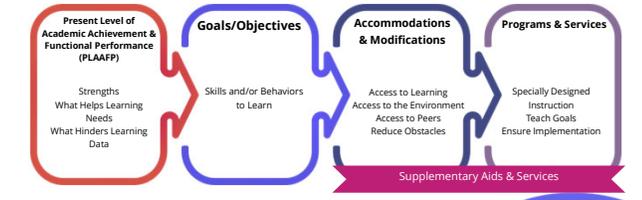
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Introduction to the IEP Prep Worksheet




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Connecting the Worksheet to the IEP



Present Level of Academic Achievement & Functional Performance (PLAAPF)

- Strengths
- What Helps Learning
- Needs
- What Hinders Learning
- Data

Goals/Objectives

- Skills and/or Behaviors to Learn

Accommodations & Modifications

- Access to Learning
- Access to the Environment
- Access to Peers
- Reduce Obstacles

Programs & Services

- Specialty Designed Instruction
- Teach Goals
- Ensure Implementation

Supplementary Aids & Services

Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE) Least Restrictive Environment (LRE)



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IEP Prep Worksheet Page 1

What's Working

- Brings them joy
- Recent success
- Builds confidence
- Helps them focus

What's Being Practiced

- Trying at home
- Practicing at school
- Needs reminders
- Working hard on

What's Hard

- Causes frustration
- Needs extra help
- Triggers stress
- Avoids or resists

What's Next

- Next big step
- More independence
- Social growth
- Everyday life skill

My Child's Strengths and Needs Worksheet - IEP

Use this worksheet to record your thoughts about your child.

What works for my child. These things my child has recently learned or a new ability they bring.

These activities that my child is currently working on.

These things my child is having trouble with.

These things I would like my child to learn within the next year.

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Worksheet Example: Emma & Math

What's Working

- Add & subtract w/o regrouping
- Math games apps on tablet
- Manipulatives & number lines

What's Being Practiced

- Adding w/regrouping using blocks
- Borrowing in subtraction w/help
- Checking work w/calculator

What's Hard

- Knowing when to regroup
- Lining up numbers in columns
- Solving word problems with steps

What's Next

- Use base-ten blocks for regrouping
- Practice regrouping w/money at home
- Build confidence w/small regrouping problems



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IEP Prep Worksheet Pages 2-3

My Child's Strengths and Needs Worksheet - IEP

This worksheet could be used as a tool to help you and your child think about the different ways that you can help your child learn and grow. It is a worksheet to help you and your child think about the different ways that you can help your child learn and grow. It is a worksheet to help you and your child think about the different ways that you can help your child learn and grow.

Skill Area	Strengths	Needs or Concerns	What's Happening From 1 Year Goals
Academic			
Communication			
Behavior			
Physical			
Emotional			
Life Skills			
Other			

My Child's Strengths and Needs Worksheet - IEP

Skill Area	Strengths	Needs or Concerns	What's Happening From 1 Year Goals
Academic			
Communication			
Behavior			
Physical			
Emotional			
Life Skills			
Other			

Deficit-Based

↓

Strength-Based

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Academics: Learning Through Curiosity & Growth

Name: Aaliyah **Age:** 8 years old **Grade:** 2nd **Eligibility:** Specific Learning Disability (Reading)

<p>PLAAFP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Struggles with decoding Avoids reading <p>Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read 2nd-grade passages <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">Deficit-Based</p>	VS	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">Strength-Based</p> <p>PLAAFP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Curious & verbal Loves science, drawing & nature videos Needs support decoding & reading independently <p>Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Read & discuss science texts <p>Accommodations & Modifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Themed books <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Choice Shared reading Science projects
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Activity: Shifting Words, Shifting Mindsets

Problem-Focused (Deficits)	Solution-Focused (Strengths)
Slow	Careful, thoughtful, intentional, steady, detail-oriented, learns at own pace
Disengaged	Motivated by relevance, self-directed, has strong interests, purpose-driven
Defiant	Holds strong beliefs, bold, determined, self-advocate
Chatty	Enthusiastic, expressive, has a lot to share, enjoys communicating

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Communication: Expressing Ideas & Connecting with Others

Name: Jamal **Age:** 13 years old **Grade:** 7th **Eligibility:** Speech & Language Impairment

***Primary Mode of Communication:** Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC) Device

<p>PLAAFP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited verbal speech Struggles with peer interaction <p>Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer verbally <p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">Deficit-Based</p>	VS	<p style="text-align: center; font-weight: bold; font-size: 1.2em;">Strength-Based</p> <p>PLAAFP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Creative & expressive Loves humor, art, & trivia <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Uses AAC device Needs support in social interactions <p>Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Start 1 peer interaction daily <p>Accommodations & Modifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> AAC updates Peer phrases Scheduled group time
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Social-Emotional: Building Relationships & Self-Regulation

Name: Zari Age: 15 years old Grade: 9th Eligibility: Speech & Language Impairment

<p>PLAAFP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoids group activities Withdrawal <p>Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reduce avoidance by 50% <p>Deficit-Based</p>	VS	<p>Strength-Based</p> <p>PLAAFP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Thoughtful & creative Loves, animals, photography, & nature Needs support with groups & transitions <p>Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Join 1 group activity daily. <p>Accommodations & Modifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Visual schedule Countdown timers Calming tools Themed tasks
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Motor: Coordinated Movement & Physical Confidence

Name: Liam Age: 4 years old Grade: Preschool Eligibility: Early Childhood Developmental Delay

<p>PLAAFP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Avoids fine motor tasks Struggles with grasping <p>Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 5 pre-writing strokes <p>Deficit-Based</p>	VS	<p>Strength-Based</p> <p>PLAAFP:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Imaginative & playful Loves building, music & rhythm, & pretend play Needs support with fine motor tasks and grasping <p>Goal:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stack blocks & draw to music <p>Accommodations & Modifications:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Checklists Building toys Easy-grip tools
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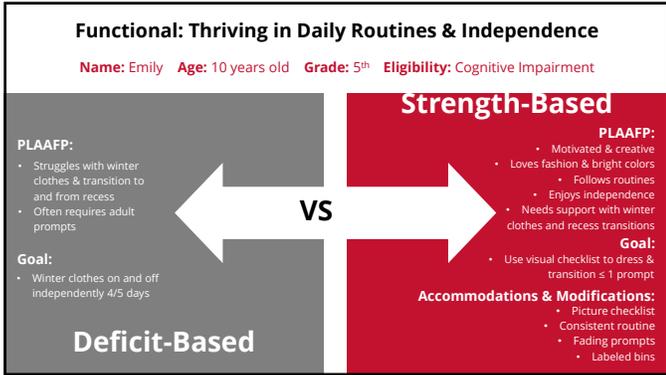
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Activity: Shifting Words, Shifting Mindsets 2

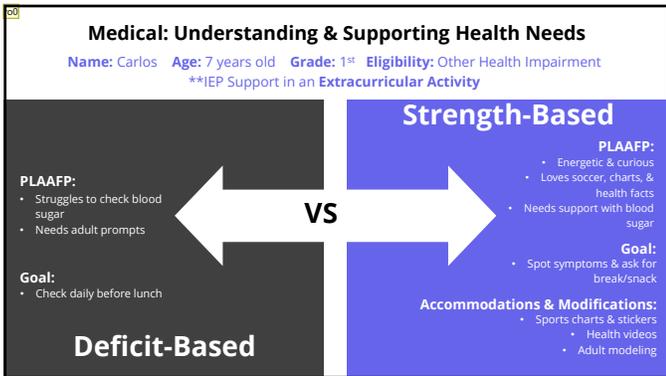
Problem-Focused (Deficits)	Solution-Focused (Strengths)
Clumsy	Adventurous, eager to explore, building balance, active and energetic
Lost	Exploring options, open-minded, flexible, on a journey of self-discovery
Impulsive	Spontaneous, energetic, quick to act, enthusiastic, innovative
Withdrawn	Reflective, thoughtful, self-aware, careful, observant, thinks before speaking

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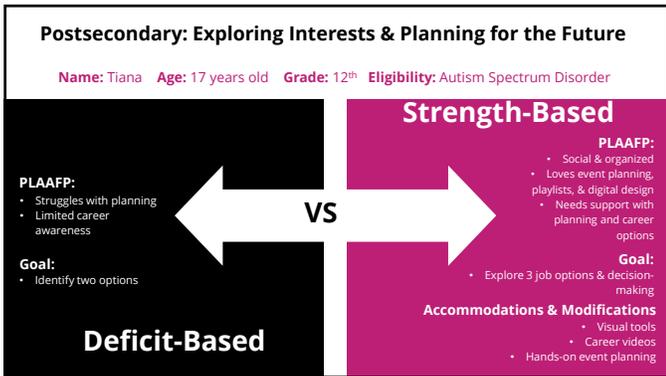
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Activity: Shifting Words, Shifting Mindsets 3

Problem-Focused (Deficits)

- Off-Topic
- Dependent
- Frustrated
- Disorganized

Solution-Focused (Strengths)

- Creative thinker, idea sharer, sees connections, imaginative, interest-driven
- Collaborative, team-oriented, relationship-focused, works with others, values support, seeks guidance
- Persistent, determined, motivated to improve, problem-solver, driven by structure or standards
- Flexible, adaptable, big-picture thinker, creative planner, resourceful

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IEP Prep Worksheet Page 4

My Child's Strengths and Needs Worksheet - IEP

Use this worksheet to record your thoughts about your child.

What works for my child:

Activities my child likes best:

My child learns best when:

How my child's challenging behavior is best reduced:

Three things that motivate my child:

What Works

Reflections...
Learning Moments
Routines/Tools
Responds to Well

Favorite Activities

Reflections...
Free Time Choice
Makes Smile
Talks About a Lot

Helps Learn

Reflections...
Most Successful
Environment
Home Supports

Redirects Behavior

Reflections...
Helps Calm Down
Triggers/Signals
Home Supports

What Motivates

Reflections...
Works Hard For
Rewards
Excited/Engaged

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Example: Supporting the Whole Child

Needs
Improve balance, core strength, & coordination
Gets easily frustrated

Strengths
Follow simple routines
Jump & crawl with help
Focused with music & games

Interests
Superheroes
Music & rhythm
Puzzles & strategy games

Helps Learn
Step-by-step directions
Music during movement
Tasks that feel like games
Working with a peer
Visuals

Motivates
Superhero theme
Puzzle time
Music breaks
Earning helper jobs
Friendly competition

Redirects
Give choices
Use music or movement to calm
Quiet space
Turn into game

Whole Child IEP PLAAFP

Mario - Age 8, 3rd Grade

Whole Child IEP Goal
Mario will finish a superhero-themed obstacle course with 3 steps (like crawling, balancing, jumping) to build body control. He will do this with 90% accuracy in 4 out of 5 trials.

Whole Child IEP Accommodations

- Superhero-themed games & puzzles
- Music for focus/calming
- Clear, step-by-step directions
- Choice of movement/calming tools
- Peer pairing for team tasks
- Praise effort (stickers, helper jobs)
- Breaks with music/puzzles

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Advocating with Confidence

- Prepare with Purpose**
Reflect, Gather, Share
- Ask Questions for Understanding**
Lead with Curiosity & Strength
- Share Your Voice**
Your Perspective Matters
- Collaborate with Confidence**
You Belong at the Table

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