

Putting the I in my IEP

Understanding your strengths and talents

What is a strength? A strength is something you are naturally good at, also called an ability. For those of us with disabilities, our strengths are often overlooked because people can focus on our disability, rather than our abilities. Sometimes we will have different strengths than most people, but these abilities are just as important.

Everyone has strengths and weaknesses, and everyone has something positive to contribute to their community. People can have all different types of strengths. Some people may have physical strengths (like being good at sports), or mental strengths (like problem-solving or being good at math.) Other people have moral strengths, which makes them good at determining right and wrong. Below is a list that might help you to figure out what your strengths are.

Understanding your weaknesses: learning about the supports that can help

Okay, so now that we know what a strength is, let's ask ourselves another question: what is a weakness? Perhaps there are certain things you aren't as good at. These things would be described as your weaknesses. However, there is something really cool about weaknesses: sometimes they can help you grow in ways you never would have guessed. For example, a person who uses a wheelchair because they have trouble walking may have improved upper body strength from pushing the wheelchair. This changes this person's disability in one area to an ability in another area. It is important to see the positive parts of every situation.

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Understanding Your Supports

Answering these questions should help get a better understanding of yourself and the role your disability plays in your life and future.

1. What is your disability?
2. Describe what barriers your disability presents to you.
3. Describe your strengths
4. How do you learn best? (Do you learn by seeing, hearing, or actually doing something?)
5. What kind of help do you get at school so that you can do your best?
6. What kind of things do you think you still need to improve on? (examples: time management and organization)

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Understanding Your Accommodations

You may be asking yourself what accommodations are. Hopefully this will help you understand what they are and how they help you.

The definition of accommodations is: Supports that help you succeed at a given task. Schools and colleges are required to give you the accommodations you need while in school. It is important to know what accommodations you are getting now so that you can ask for them and succeed in the future. As an adult you are expected to know what you need and what your accommodations are; people are not going to be able to read your mind

Some examples of accommodations are:

- ✓ Extended time to finish tests
- ✓ Wheelchair Ramps
- ✓ Braille Menu at a restaurant
- ✓ Assistance in reading a book or a test
- ✓ Books on tape

What are some of the accommodations you get to help you succeed in school? How do they help you?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3
- 4.

Note: If you do not know what accommodations you receive, ask your teacher or ask to read your IEP or 504 plan that way you know what accommodations you're eligible to use.

Knowing Your Interests:

The next step to thinking about our future is what we like or what we are interested in. This information can help you explore jobs and careers, as well as training after your complete high school.

Knowing your interests

Check the areas that most interest you. After you're finished circle your top ten.

- Providing a practical service for people
- Self-expression in music, art, literature, or nature
- Organizing and record keeping
- Meeting people and supervising others
- Helping others in need, either mentally, spiritually, or physically
- Solving practical problems
- Working in forestry, farming, or fishing
- Working with machines and tools
- Taking care of animals
- Physical work outdoors
- Protecting the public via law enforcement or fire fighting
- Selling, advertising or promoting
- What gives you satisfaction?

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What is Transition?

Many youth hear about their IEP's and their transition plans, but few students actually know what their school is talking about. With this sheet the PYLN hopes to help you understand what the transition process is and what it means to you.

What are some of your goals for after high school?

- 1)
- 2)
- 3)
- 4)
- 5)

What are you doing now that is helping you achieve your goals?