Student Involvement in the IEP Process

A Parent’s Guide

**What does this mean?**

* A student directed IEP process means that your son or daughter will be more fully involved in the IEP meeting and what happens after it
* It does not mean that your son or daughter is expected to run the entire meeting. It does mean that your son or daughters level of participation will be adapted to their abilities and comfort level.

**Why are we doing this?**

* We know that student-directed IEPs are a great way for students to increase an important life skill called self-determination.
* Self-determination includes letting people know what you think, advocating for yourself, making decisions for yourself, and setting goals for yourself and working to attain them. It is linked to increases in academic skills, employment, wages, post-secondary education, and an improved quality of life.

**How can I help?**

* You can help your son or daughter make a list of their preferences, interests, strengths, and needs.
* You can help your son or daughter think about the kinds of supports they need.
* Begin talking to your son or daughter about life after high school. This might include post secondary education, employment, recreation, living choices, transportation, health care, community involvement, finances, friendships, and how to advocate for what they need.

**What will my role be?**

* Your participation in the meeting is just as important as before. You may wish to make a list ahead of time of things you’d like to discuss at the meeting.
* Remember that you’ll be wearing two hats: sharing your own thoughts, and also supporting your son or daughter. Both are equally important.
* Look for signs that your son or daughter needs or wants things explained differently or may need a break.
* Listen during the meeting for points you want to discuss with your son or daughter after the meeting.
* After the meeting, help your son or daughter follow up on what was discussed.