

Fact Sheet:

"What's Your Vision?"

All students when they enter into High School and sometimes before, begin to think about their future and what will it look like. Where they will live, where they will work, who will be part of their support network, what kind of community membership will they participate in? They also are beginning to identify their passions from past interests, preference and life experiences. It is no different for student with disabilities. All are on a journey of self discovery.

The law supports great vision for individuals with disabilities.

Individuals with Disability Education Act or **IDEA**

Part A 1400

states **Congressional Findings and Purpose**

(A)...to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them, a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment, and independent living...

An example of how the school may support the vision could be through transportation.

IDEA continues stating:

Transportation and such developmental, corrective, and other supportive services as are required to assist a child with a disability to benefit from special education..."

All students are on a path of self discovery whether or not they have disabilities. Think back to when you were 16, 17, what did you want to do? Was it realistic for you? Are you doing that? Most would answer "no".

The important piece about vision is that it is just that, a vision of what is desired in the future. Is it realistic? Is it really possible? Students will discover their passion and what they are good at during this time of self discovery on their own. It is harmful when others do not assist during this time of self discovery and are telling the student that this is unrealistic and they can't do.

Vision on the IEP is found on IEP page 1. The federal law indicates: *...beginning at the age of 14, the vision statement should be based on the individual student's needs taking into account the student's preferences and interests and include desired outcomes in adult living, post-secondary and working environments.* 34 CFR 300.29, 34 CFR 300.346

Vision can be woven through the entire IEP.

- **IEP 1 Student Strengths and Key Evaluation Results Summary.** This is a great opportunity to share your child's interest, preferences and personal accomplishments.
- **IEP 1 Vision Statement** is designed by parents and or students of what the future can hold. It is written with high expectation with the hope of fruition.
- **IEP 2 Present Levels of Education Performance A: General Curriculum.** Think of how accessing the general education curriculum can support the designed vision. Share accommodations that can be used in a variety of settings.
- **IEP 3 Present Levels of Education Performance B: Other Educational Needs.** Check all the could support the vision. Looking at extra curriculum activities, nonacademic activities, behavior needs or other related services.

- **IEP 4 Current Performance Levels/Measurable Annual Goals**. Think about the **skills** required to access the vision and how they could be supported through the measurable goals in the least restrictive environment.
- **IEP 6 Schedule Modification**: does the vision require a shorter day, longer day, shorter year, longer year? **Transportation Services**: Can be part of the vision.
- **IEP 7 State or District-Wide Assessment**: How will students take standardize test including MCAS. You can take MCAS 3 ways; without accommodations, with accommodations or through a portfolio of the student's best work access the general education curriculum.
- **IEP 8 Additional Information**: Any part of the vision that was not supported in the IEP document can be added here.

Vision can be supported through out the IEP in particular in can be embraced in **related services** . For example: related services found on IEP 3 can support "**friendships**" which could translate into social pragmatic groups, social skills support and extended day services.

Listed below are other related services that are supported by the law and could be incorporated into a vision and supported by the school:

Parent Training	In home training
Speech Language pathology	Occupational therapy
Physical therapy	Music therapy
Counseling services	Medical services
Audiological services	Vision therapy
Psychological services	Recreation (therapeutic)
Adapted Physical Ed	Rehab Counseling Service
School Health Services	Art therapy
Social work services in school	Transportation Services
Early Identification	Orientation and Mobility

Vision Planning Work Sheet

Considerations to think about when planning you're child's vision:

What does s/he love to do? (Describe behaviorally)

Skill/Target Behavior:

Does s/he have any sensory needs? (If so list here and include strategies)

Skill/Target Behavior:

What is his/her communication style (Phrases, sign language, icons, gaze, etc...) **Skill/Target Behavior:**

Describe his/her responses to changes in routine (Describe behaviorally)

Skill/Target Behavior:

How does s/he transition between activities? (What makes transition easier?)

Skill/Target Behavior:

How does s/he interact with peers? (Initiates play? Plays near others?)

Skill/Target Behavior:

Does s/he understand social situations? (Appropriate behavior in many settings) **Skill/Target Behavior:**

What other factors might influence your child's life? (Changes in the family, new sibling, friends, new home)

What is your child's learning style? (Visual, auditory, tactile, mixed-styles)

What does your child communicate about his/her vision for the future?

Stay Positive!

(List your child's strengths, interests, preferences and accomplishments)

VISION STATEMENT DEVELOPMENT

Vision Statement Considerations

- ❖ Parents should enter the Team meeting prepared to talk about their child's hopes and dreams for the future.
- ❖ When preparing to develop their child's vision statement parents may struggle to rectify the goals they set for the child they expected with the realities that face their child who has a disability. Even though it may be difficult and it will likely be a different set of goals, parents must embrace a new vision and create new dreams for the child they now love and support.
- ❖ A vision statement should be founded upon the expectation that the child will be treated with dignity and will have equal access to participate in the life of their school with both disabled and non-disabled peers. Parents should assume their child will have opportunities and will face challenges, and like their able-bodied peers, they will be able to strive and succeed or fail, just as others do.
- ❖ The development of the vision statement should be driven by the parent's high expectations and the child's hopes, dreams and interests, no matter what their age.
- ❖ Parents are cautioned not to limit their vision for their child based on what they feel is realistic or what skills and abilities the child now possesses.
- ❖ The law intends for the Vision Statement to guide the Team in the IEP development in order to create a program that will bring the child closer to their described vision in a meaningful way.
- ❖ As the child grows and matures their vision statement will be updated and revised many times. Each time this happens it is an opportunity for the child and parents to acknowledge and reflect on how education has helped the child reach his/her goals.

What do parents bring to the vision?

- ❖ A rich history of the child's life and the unique perspective gained from parenting
- ❖ A life time of experience in supporting their child
- ❖ An understanding of how the disability impacts their child
- ❖ The passions of their child's heart and how those might translate into future outcomes

What might result if parents do not participate in the vision development?

- ❖ A vision written without parent participation may not reflect an accurate understanding of the child's disability characteristics.
- ❖ A vision written without parent participation may not represent the hopes and dreams of the child and parents, and it may not match their goals and expectations.
- ❖ A vision written without parent participation may not reflect the child's interests and skills.
- ❖ A vision written without parent participation may misguide the Team's IEP development in a direction where the child does not want to go.

Developing a Vision Statement for a young child transitioning from Early Intervention to the Public School System

- ❖ The parents of a 3 or 4 year old child can be very confused and befuddled when asked; "What is your vision for your child?" Parents of very young children are often just learning about their child's disability and how it will impact the child's growth and learning. They are also often new to the experience of being in the parent role and having to work in

partnership with their public school and special education systems. For these parents it is recommended to look 1 year ahead and describe their child's future skills as they create their child's vision statement.

Developing a Vision Statement for a child entering elementary school

- ❖ Vision statements for a child in elementary school should address the development and needs of the whole child. Academic, social, physical, artistic and character growth can all be incorporated into the vision.
- ❖ Consider if the child has particular areas of strength or weakness that could be addressed by special education?
- ❖ Parents should take into consideration what experiences and opportunities for growth and development are provided to their school district's non-disabled peers. Children who have a disability are guaranteed equal access under federal civil rights laws.
- ❖ In the vision development parents can draw a connection between their values and goals for their child and the child's classroom and school environment. For example, a parent's vision for a socially well adjusted and peer connected child could be undermined by a placement in a substantially separate classroom with few opportunities for interactions with non-disabled peers.

Developing a Vision Statement for a child entering middle school

- ❖ Middle school is often a time of unsettling transition and adjustment. Parents would be wise to incorporate these realities into their child's vision development. A vision statement can prompt the Team to think about strategies and supports that would help the child with their transition to middle school. The Team can support the child's transition and adjustment to the new environment by providing organizational support, tutoring or peer mentoring; or the Team may designate weekly peer group meetings with the school adjustment counselor to assist and promote "friend development". A well crafted vision could prompt the Team to direct a hand-selection of the child's class schedule to assure a "circle of friends" will be in the child's classes and/or at lunch.
- ❖ The vision statement can reflect on past programs and supports in order to inform current and future programs and supports. If a past program included a well developed network of support that enabled the child to make meaningful progress in their education program then it would be appropriate to highlight the effectiveness of those supports in the current vision statement.

Developing a Vision Statement for a child entering high school

- ❖ By the time a student enters high school they have already begun to think about their future and what will it look like. Where will they live? Where will they work? Who will be part of their community and support network? In what kinds of activities will they participate? When a student reaches high school their vision statement should clearly identify and include their passions, interests and preferences.
- ❖ As students mature they reign-in impulsivity and make more deliberate decisions which are reflective of and influenced by their life experiences and goals. To the maximum extent possible, students at this age should be the primary authors of their vision development. This is the same for students with and without disabilities; all young adults are engaged in a journey of self discovery!
- ❖ The internet contains a number of downloadable vision development tools that can be utilized to help students develop a comprehensive and meaningful vision statement to inform and guide the Team in the IEP development.

Is a vision statement required to be “realistic”?

- ❖ The vision statement identifies the student’s hopes and dreams for their future. There is no requirement for the student’s hopes and dreams to be based on pragmatics or logic. However, pragmatism and logic are acceptable components of the vision statement if the student so chooses.
- ❖ The vision is intended to inform and guide the Team through the IEP development so that the education program brings the student closer to realizing those hopes and dreams.
- ❖ Children, teens and young adults will discover, develop and redefine their passions, interests and preferences several times as they grow and mature. Parents, teachers and other adults should support students’ development and self discovery. Discouragement, doubt and resistance from trusted adults can cause lasting harmful effects on a young person’s self esteem. “Successes and failures are just different types of learning experiences”.

What law supports vision for individuals with disabilities?

Individuals with Disability Education Act or IDEA

Part 1400 (c) (1) states:

Improving educational results for children with disabilities is an essential element of our national policy of ensuring quality of opportunity, full participation, independent living and economic self sufficiency for individuals with disabilities.

IDEA 1400 part A continues by stating:

...to ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them, a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special education and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for employment, and independent living ...

Where can I get a copy of a blank IEP?

www.doe.mass.edu

How can “Vision” be woven through my child’s entire IEP?

- **IEP page 1** Student Strengths and Key Evaluation Results Summary. This is where a parent indicates their child’s interest, strengths, skills, and preferences, and their personal accomplishments.
- **IEP page 1** Vision Statement is developed by parents and/or the student, aged 14-22. It is written with high expectations of fruition and indicates the desired outcomes for approximately the next 5 years of the child’s future.
- **IEP page 2** Present Levels of Education Performance A: General Curriculum. How does accessing the general education curriculum support the student’s vision outcome goals. Share accommodations that can be used in a variety of settings.
- **IEP page 3** Present Levels of Education Performance B: Other Educational Needs. Check all that could support the vision outcome. Looking at extra curriculum activities, nonacademic activities, behavior needs, travel training or other related services.
- **IEP page 4** Current Performance Levels/Measurable Annual Goals. Think about the **skills** required to accomplish the vision outcome goals and how they could be supported through the measurable goals in the least restrictive environment.
- **IEP page 5** Service Delivery: check that the service delivery page reflects the support services and personnel expertise that is imperative for a positive vision outcome.
- **IEP page 6** Schedule Modification: does the vision outcome require a shorter day, longer day, shorter year, longer year?

- **IEP page 7 State or District-Wide Assessment:** How will students take standardize test including MCAS. You can take MCAS 3 ways; without accommodations, with accommodations or through a portfolio of the student's best work access the general education curriculum.
- **IEP page 8 Additional Information:** Any part of the vision outcome that was not supported in another part of the IEP document can be added here. i.e.: Assistive Technology, Common planning time, Communication log ...

How can related services support vision?

- ❖ **Vision** can be supported throughout the IEP and it can be embraced in **related services** (IEP page 3). For example: related services can support "friendships" which could translate into social pragmatic groups, social skills support and extended day services (IEP page 6).
- ❖ Listed below are other related services that are supported by the law and could be incorporated into a vision and supported by the school:

Parent Training	In home training
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Can a vision be changed?

- ❖ Visions are living, breathing statements that can take on many forms throughout the years. The important thing is to write one!

How can I get more information on vision?

- ❖ www.fcsn.org/parentguide/pguide1.html
- ❖ www.doe.mass.edu
- ❖ www.regiononline.com/rol/template4.asp?SectionID=speced&ArticleID
- ❖ www.necdabp.org/newsletters/intouch_summer02.pdf
- ❖ www.nfb.org/fr/fr1/fr98conv.htm
- ❖ www.concordspedpac.org/IEPvision.htm
- ❖ www.mass.gov/mrc/agency/2004/ar2003.htm
- ❖ www.wrightslaw.com/advoc/ltrs/masterplan.htm
- ❖ www.viguide.com/mapvi/newsletter.htm
- ❖ www.cast.org/ncac/index.cfm?i=4640&option=Massachusetts
- ❖ www.mass.gov/resources/ecbs_plan.pdf

Visions Can Come True

What do you love about your child?

What are your child's strengths?

What are your child's needs?

What are your fears for your child?

What skill will make the biggest difference?

What does your child dream about for his/her future?

What are your dreams for your child?