

My Child at School

A Champions Together Course for Parents

My Child's Champion

Session **3**



The content of this course was developed by the Illinois Service Resource Center
© 2000- , Academic Development Institute. All Rights Reserved

My Child at School

A Champions Together Course for Parents

My Child's Champion

Session **3**



NAME _____

Welcome back to

My Child at School

A Champions Together Course for Parents

Session 3
School

Getting Started

Welcome back!

Did everyone sign the sign-in form?

Name tags on?

Everyone smiling?

Great! Let's begin.

Activities from Last Session

At the last session, you agreed to complete activities with your families. As I read the activities, check the ones you completed.

Check if completed:

- _____ 1. I monitored my child's progress in the three behaviors I chose. I kept track of that progress by using a chart.
- _____ 2. I began keeping a chart to record special services my child receives.

At the end of the last session, you made a commitment to complete the activities listed above. Tell the group how you did with your activities. If you had a great success, share your excitement with the group. If you had problems, maybe the group can give you suggestions. Your work between sessions is the most important part of this course, so let's take time to discuss our progress and be helpful to one another.



TELL THE
GROUP

Group Leader: Allow about 15 minutes to report and discuss progress with activities from last session.

Promoting Our Child's Success

No one knows a child as well as the child's parents. You are the expert concerning your child, and your child's best champion. You are responsible for providing your child's educational team with the information they need to provide the best possible educational experience for your child.

In this session we will discuss how to develop and share information about your children, how to enhance your relationship with your child's school and steps you can take to plan for your children's future.

Some parents worry that they may not have the skills necessary to promote their child's best interests. Ask yourself if you have ever performed the following activities:

- × Used the yellow pages to locate a business
- × Returned an item to a store
- × Used the telephone to make a reservation
- × Created a scrapbook
- × Made a "to do" list
- × Confirmed an appointment
- × Written a thank-you note
- × Planned a party

If you have the skills to perform these everyday activities, then you have the skills and experience necessary to promote your child's best interests.

Lesson 1: Developing and Sharing Information

It is important for your child's teacher and educational team each year to have as much information as possible about your child. This will help the team plan appropriately for your child.

Some things your child's teacher should know are:

- × Likes and dislikes
- × Favorite activities
- × Food preferences
- × Preferred movies and television programs
- × Things that will motivate your child to work
- × Things that will not motivate your child to work
- × Family members and pets
- × Information on your child's routine at home

One way to share this information is to create a "My Child" notebook. This can be created in several ways, including:

- × Spiral bound notebook
- × Three ring binder
- × Scrapbook

Include room in the notebook for pictures, information on your child's diagnosis and notes from previous teachers.

EXERCISE



FILL IN THIS LIST OF YOUR CHILD'S FAVORITES

Activity	Game
Sport	Song
Food	Musical performer
Restaurant	Video game
Cereal	Computer game
Ice cream flavor	Color
Movie	Toy
Television program	Animal

You may not have an answer for every category. You also may want to add categories. Remember this information may change each year.

TELL THE
GROUP



Pick one of your child's favorites to share with the group.

TAKING IT
HOME



Create a "My Child" notebook for your child. Share this with your child's educational team each year. Located at the end of this manual are sample pages to include in your notebook.

Lesson 2: Your Relationship with Your Child's School

Session 3
School

Your relationship with school personnel can have an impact on the quality of services your child receives. This includes, but is not limited to, your child's teacher. It is also important to develop a good relationship with your child's:

- × Director of special education
- × Principal
- × School secretaries
- × Aides
- × Custodians
- × Bus driver

What are some steps we can take to develop or improve these relationships?

1. Be sure to introduce yourself to these individuals.
2. Let them know you appreciate what they do for your child.
3. Say thank-you with a card or letter at the holidays and at the end of the year.
4. Tell their supervisor you are happy with the service they provide.

You may wish to set up a special time before the school year starts, or in the first few weeks of school, to meet personally with individuals who will work with your child. You can introduce yourself to key people at times that are not typically busy for educators. The beginning and end of the school day are usually busy times.

Many parents have also found it helpful to use a communication book that is sent back and forth each day between the parent and teacher in the child's backpack. This helps keep the lines of communication open and ensures that the parents and teachers are working together. The parent can find out about the child's day in school, and the teacher will know each morning how the child's evening and morning were before arriving at school. Information can be included regarding:

- × Behavior
- × Bedtime
- × Breakfast
- × Activities
- × Medication
- × Other environmental factors that may impact your child's day

Parent Involvement

Parents can find a way to become active participants in their child's school and/or classroom. This can include serving as a room parent, chaperoning field trips, teaching a special topic, volunteering for a project, joining the parent-teacher organization or serving on a committee. It helps if educators see parents as team players.

One parent said:

"I found by offering my assistance to the teacher that my relationship with her was much more significant. I told her I would volunteer to help with anything. This can work for working parents as well. Bringing an extra treat or cutting out pictures certainly goes a long way.

In addition, I also asked for her help. I told her we wanted to carry over any of the habits from school and reinforce them at home. This was well-received, and helped my son be more successful at school and at home."

TELL THE
GROUP



Share a story about a relationship with someone at your child's school or a tip on developing or improving relationships with school personnel.

TAKING IT
HOME



It is important for you to know the people who work at your child's school and how to contact them. In the back of this manual is a form to fill out with that information. During the coming week find out who is working at your child's school and fill out the form found on the Activities for the Week page.

Lesson 3: Future Planning

Session 3
School

It is never too early to start planning for your child's future. Many children in special education need assistance from their parents after they complete their education. Your child may be able to live independently or may continue to require additional services as an adult.

When your child is in the school system, there are many services that the schools are required to provide. Many parents are surprised at the lack of services that are available when their children complete their education. This is because there is no longer an entity like the school that is required by law to provide those services.

When your child is 14 years old, the school is required to begin the process of transition planning. This is when planning begins for your child's future after high school. The objectives your child will accomplish, while still in school, to help the transition after school, will be included in your child's IEP. Your child's school may provide or arrange for vocational training either through the school or through the Office of Rehabilitation Services.

Additional items to consider include:

1. Living arrangements — If parents plan to apply to a residential adult facility, they should allow at least two years, as there are long waiting lists for adult placements.
2. Guardianship — Many parents choose to obtain legal guardianship when their child is an adult.
3. Wills — Parents may wish to consult with an attorney to be certain their intentions for their child are made clear. Thoughtful family members may want to leave their child some money. It is important for legal documents to be written in a way that will not impact the child's eligibility for funds and services as an adult.
4. Financial planning — Parents need to think about how their child will be supported financially as an adult. Their child may be eligible to receive Social Security. Their child may be able to obtain a job and be self-sufficient. They may be in a position to provide for some financial security. Whatever the situation, long-term planning is the key to success.

EXERCISE



MY DREAMS FOR MY CHILD

Describe the life you envision for your child at age 21. Include information on residence, work and social life.

TELL THE
GROUP



Share with the group what you think needs to happen between now and the time your child turns 21 to make your vision a reality.

TAKING IT
HOME



Think about the short-term goals that are necessary to help your child accomplish the long-term goal of achieving those dreams. Make a list and bring it to every IEP conference you attend. Whenever you think of a new goal, add it to the list.

Let's review the key points from this session:

- × Parents are the experts on their child and are their child's best champion.
- × Parents have the skills they need to promote their child's best interests.
- × Parents need to educate their child's teacher about their child.
- × A "My Child" notebook can be used each year to share information about your child.
- × A strong relationship between parents and their child's school will be beneficial for their child's education.
- × Parents should let the personnel at their child's school know how much they value the services they provide for their child.
- × A daily communication book can provide valuable information for parents and educators.
- × Parents should start planning for their child's future as early as possible.

Taking it Home

You have learned the importance of developing and sharing information about your special education child. You have learned about the importance of establishing and maintaining a good relationship with your child's school. You've learned the importance of planning early for your child's future.

Listed below are the activities for the week. As I read each activity, write your initials as a commitment to your family and to the parent group to complete the activities.

ACTIVITIES FOR THE WEEK

Parent's Initials:

- _____ 1. I will create a "My Child" notebook for my child using the sample pages at the end of this manual. I will share this book with my child's educational team each year.
- _____ 2. I will find out who is working at my child's school and fill out the information on the "Activities for the Week" page. I will keep this tear-out page as a handy reference.

Closing the Session

Session 3
School

Take home this manual to remind yourself of My Child at School.

The next page in this manual is a tear-out page for the activities for the week. You can place the tear-out page in a prominent place in your home (like on the refrigerator). You can check each activity as you complete it.

The “MY CHILD” NOTEBOOK SAMPLE PAGES are located in the back of this manual.

It is now graduation time.

CONGRATULATIONS!

APPLAUD FOR A GREAT SESSION!



APPLAUD

Activities for the Week

ACTIVITIES FOR WEEK #3

Check (✓) when completed

- _____ 1. I will create a “My Child” notebook for my child using the sample pages at the end of this manual. I will share this book with my child’s educational team each year.
- _____ 2. I will find out who is working at my child’s school and fill out the information below. I will keep this tear-out page as a handy reference.

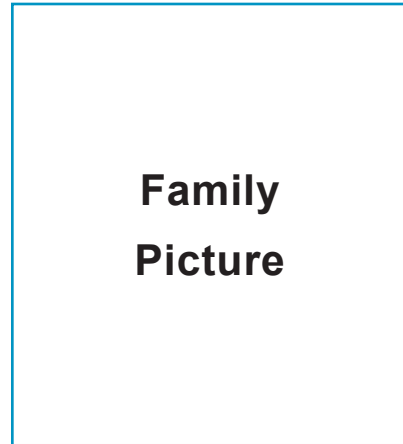
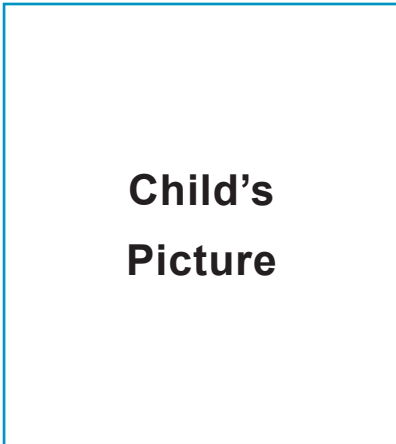
Find out who is working at your child’s school:

	Name	Address	Phone Number
Director of special education	_____	_____	_____
Supervisor of disability area	_____	_____	_____
Principal	_____	_____	_____
School secretaries	_____	_____	_____
Teacher	_____	_____	_____
Aides	_____	_____	_____
Custodians	_____	_____	_____
Nurse (or person administering meds)	_____	_____	_____

“My Child” Notebook Sample Pages

Name: _____

Birthday: _____



This is who lives in our house:

_____	age _____	_____	age _____
_____	age _____	_____	age _____
_____	age _____	_____	age _____

We own a pet: Yes No

Information:

Information on my child's diagnosis:

Doctor's Name: _____ Phone: _____

Other Service Providers: _____

These are my child's favorite activities:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

These are the foods my child

likes

dislikes

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

My child likes the following movies and television shows:

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

I have found that my child is motivated by:

These things do not work as motivators for my child:

After school my child _____

My child's bedtime is _____

Here is a list of some of my child's favorites:

Activity _____	Game _____
Sport _____	Song _____
Food _____	Musical performer _____
Restaurant _____	Video game _____
Cereal _____	Computer game _____
Ice cream flavor _____	Color _____
Movie _____	Toy _____
Television program _____	Animal _____

Here is some additional information about my child:

Academic Development Institute

Founded in 1984

The Academic Development Institute (ADI) works with families, schools, and communities so that all children may become self-directed learners, avid readers, and responsible citizens, respecting themselves and those around them. ADI's vision is of an American landscape filled with distinct school communities reflecting the hopes and dreams of the people intimately attached to them. To this image of the school as a community, ADI is devoted. When the school functions as a community, its constituents (students, parents, teachers, staff) associate with one another and share common values about the education of children. At the root, members of the school community assume responsibility for one another. Those children become our children, and parents are not external agents, but full partners in the education of their children and of each other's children. Teachers are not isolated practitioners of pedagogy, but professionals integrated into the web of community and buoyed by common purpose.



Academic Development Institute

121 N. Kickapoo Street

Lincoln, IL 62656

(217) 732-6462

(217) 732-3696 (fax)

www.adi.org

