

A quarterly publication from Families Together, Inc., the Parent Training and Information and Health Information Center for the State of Kansas

Our Resources



Check out our resources on Understanding Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) and Positive Childhood Experiences (PCEs).

You can find these and more at www.familiestogetherinc.org.

Supporting Child & Student Social, Emotional, Behavioral & Mental Health Needs

Like physical health, positive mental health promotes success in life. As defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), “[mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices. Mental health is important at every stage of life, from childhood and adolescence through adulthood.]” In schools, we prioritize three critical and inter-related components of mental health: social (how we relate to others), emotional (how we feel), and behavioral (how we act) supports to promote overall well-being (Chafouleas, 2020).

Many children and students struggle with mental health challenges that impact their full access to and participation in learning, and these challenges are often misunderstood and can lead to behaviors that are inconsistent with school or program expectations. The COVID-19 global pandemic intensified these challenges, accelerating the need to provide school-based mental health support and leverage our accumulated knowledge about how to provide nurturing educational environments to meet the needs of our nation’s youth. The US Department of Education has created a resource that addresses seven key challenges of providing mental health supports, as well as seven key recommendations.

To increase the capacity of states, districts, schools, programs, and institutions of higher education to provide social, emotional, and behavioral health support and to improve outcomes for children and students, the US Department of Education recommends the following:

1. Prioritize wellness for each and every child, student, educator, and provider.
2. Enhance mental health literacy and reduce stigma and other barriers to access.
3. Implement a continuum of evidence-based prevention practices.
4. Establish an integrated framework of educational, social, emotional, and behavioral health support for all.
5. Leverage policy and funding.
6. Enhance workforce capacity.
7. Use data for decision making to promote equitable implementation and outcomes.

To learn more about this new resource and how the recommendations could be applied to your child and their IEP, visit <https://www2.ed.gov/documents/students/supporting-child-student-social-emotional-behavioral-mental-health.pdf>.

From the U.S. Department of Education Supporting Child and Student Social, Emotional, Behavioral, and Mental Health Needs

Annual Goals in the IEP

In a manner of speaking, annual goals are like a road map. Where's the child heading this year? What will he or she work on, both academically and in terms of functional development? What does the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team feel the child can achieve by the end of the year—again, academically and functionally? A well-written goal should be (a) positive, and (b) describe a skill that can be seen and measured. It answers the questions:

- **Who?** . . . will achieve?
- **What?** . . . skill or behavior?
- **How?** . . . in what manner or at what level?
- **Where?** . . . in what setting or under what conditions?
- **When?** . . . by what time? an ending date?

IDEA says measurable annual goals are designed to:

(A) Meet the child's needs that result from the child's disability to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum; and

(B) Meet each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability... [§300.320 (a)(2)(i)(A) and (B)]

IDEA uses the terms "academic and functional" to describe the kind of goals that need to be written. These terms indicate that the writing of measurable annual goals flows from the content of the "present levels" statement, where the IEP team described the child's present levels of academic and functional performance.

As you can also tell by IDEA's verbatim words above, a child's annual goals must be crafted with careful attention to enabling the child to be involved in, and make progress in, the general education curriculum. Again, we see in IDEA's language the close tie between the "present levels" statement and the annual goals that are then developed. The "present levels" statement must include a description of how the child's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum. This information will be useful to the IEP team in developing annual goals that are mindful of the child's participation in general education (Rebhorn & Küpper, 2016).

But that's not all. As IDEA also indicates, the child may have other educational needs that result from his or her disability. Those needs must be addressed through measurable annual goals in the IEP as well.

From the Center for Parent Information and Resources (CPIR)



IEP Q & A

Q: Do special education and related services missed due to events beyond the control of the school (e.g., school closure due to weather, mandatory emergency drills, or absence of the child) have to be made up at a later date?

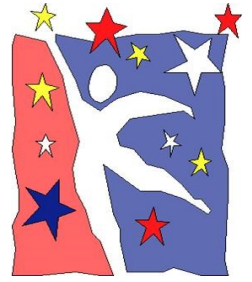
A: The IEP team must consider the services needed for the child to address IEP goals, access the general curriculum, and participate in extracurricular and nonacademic activities with children without disabilities. In this context, the team should also discuss what is to be done when services are missed. For example, if a

child with learning disabilities needs help taking tests, that service isn't needed if the school is closed. However, if regular, ongoing physical therapy is needed to maintain mobility, the team must find a way for the service to be provided if school is closed. Another consideration for the IEP team is whether a number of missed services would constitute a denial of Free Appropriate Public Education (FAPE). Again, the team would create a plan for those circumstances.

From the Kansas Special Education Process Handbook

Education Advocate Update

The annual survey is on its way to your inbox soon! It is very important you complete your survey. It is your way to let us know your willingness to continue to serve, keep us updated with your current contact information, and tell us how the students you serve are doing. When you submit your survey, you also let us know you are engaged and fulfilling your responsibilities as an education advocate. The survey should only take a few minutes of your time and we so appreciate hearing from you!



As always, the team at Families Together is here to assist you with any questions or concerns you may have as you advocate for Kansas kids. Please don't hesitate to contact us if you have a problematic situation, need to strategize possible solutions or just want to talk through something. We are here to help!

Winter break is just around the corner and that means grades and progress notes. You need those records to check to see how your student is progressing so you can make informed decisions. Enjoy your holiday season!

Find us on Facebook! www.facebook.com/FamiliesTogetherInc

Las Metas Anuales en el IEP

Una vez que se identifican las necesidades de su hijo, el Equipo del IEP trabaja para desarrollar las metas anuales con el fin de cumplir con esas necesidades. Una meta anual describe lo que se puede esperar que haga su hijo en un período de 12 meses. La sección del IEP de las metas anuales se construye sobre los niveles actuales del logro escolar y rendimiento funcional. Los niveles actuales identifican lo que su hijo necesita. Las metas deben ser escritas para satisfacer esas necesidades.

Nota: Para niños con discapacidades que toman exámenes alternativos alineados con estándares de logros alternativos, el IEP también debe incluir una descripción de los puntos de referencia u objetivos a corto plazo—los pasos individuales que el estudiante necesitará tomar para llegar a una meta anual. Si es así para su hijo, entonces Ud. y los otros miembros del Equipo también se enfocarán en escribir objetivos a corto plazo o puntos de referencia para cada meta anual. (Se discute cómo el Equipo del IEP decide si su hijo tomará tales exámenes alternativos bajo #6, Modificaciones a los Exámenes Estatales o del Distrito.)

Escribir las metas puede ser una de las partes más duras del IEP. Una razón de esto es porque las metas pueden abarcar muchas áreas diferentes. Dependiendo de las necesidades de su hijo, algunas metas pueden tener como blanco el currículo educativo general. Otras metas pueden ir orientadas hacia el aprendizaje que viene de la educación especial o del currículo individualizado. Ejemplos de esto podrían incluir enseñar a su hijo cómo comer independientemente, utilizar el transporte público o leer Braille. Otra área para las metas puede ser las necesidades emocionales o sociales de su hijo. Estas no vienen bajo un típico currículo "académico." Pero si su hijo tiene necesidades sociales o emocionales, entonces las metas para satisfacer estas necesidades estarían escritas en el IEP.

Una meta bien escrita debe (a) ser positiva, y (b) describir una destreza que puede ser observada y medida. Responde a las preguntas:

¿Quién?... ¿conseguirá?

¿Qué?...¿destreza o conducta?

¿Cómo?...¿en qué manera o a qué nivel?

¿Dónde?...¿en qué escenario o bajo qué condiciones?

¿Cuándo?...¿para cuándo? ¿cuál es la fecha límite?

[From the Center for Parent Information and Resources \(CPIR\)](#)

Workshops

Our workshops, trainings and conferences are offered to parents, education advocates, general educators, special educators, para-professionals, administrators, service providers, and other individuals who care for and about children/youth who have disabilities.

For more information and to register, visit famiestogetherinc.org/events/.

Transition to Adulthood

Family Employment Awareness Training

A two day training designed for families, their young adults who have significant support needs, and the professionals who support them.

The goals of FEAT are to increase expectations for competitive employment of the young adult with a disability and increase knowledge of state and federal resources to support the employment of the young adult.

- **FEAT en español**
March 12 & 18, 2022 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.
Garden City
- **Shawnee Mission FEAT**
April 2 & 8, 2022 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Military

Let's Talk IEPs: Empowering Military Connected Families

An overview of the IEP process and strategies for using person-centered planning to create an Individualized Education Program (IEP) that reflects your vision for a good life for your child.

- **Virtual**
January 13, 2022 6:00 p.m.

"I attended the conference thinking I had a fairly good grasp on services available, but I left with the knowledge of so much more that I did not know. I also think it was wonderful that my son got the opportunity to hear about these services. I especially think it was beneficial for him to hear about advocacy and having a voice for himself."

-Parent Attendee

Education Advocate

Families Together will offer eight in-person trainings this coming school year, beginning in August. Interested persons are welcome to notify Becky at becky@famiestogetherinc.org to be put on our notification list.

- **Virtual**
January 20, 2022 9:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.

1,000 X \$10

We are hoping for 1,000 people to give just \$10 to help us reach our current fundraising goal! Your donation helps us continue our work, helping families across the state as they navigate special education and health care. Will you be one of our 1,000?



SCAN ME

Contact Us

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620-276-6364
1-888-820-6364

Spanish Speaking
1-800-499-9443

FamiliesTogetherInc.org

Parent-to-Parent: Share Your Experience!

Navigating the world of special education and complex medical needs can be hard. As parents, it's often easy to feel overwhelmed and alone. It's also easy to downplay what we've overcome, and how much knowledge we have when it comes to our child and our family's experience. Our Parent-to-Parent program works to match parents who need someone to talk to with experienced volunteers, or Supporting Parents, who are able to listen, support, and share their insights and expertise. We can make matches based on a medical diagnosis, a life stage, or a specific life situation. If you are looking for support, call us and let us know you'd like a Parent-to-Parent match. We will connect you with a fellow parent who understands.

We also believe that everyone is an expert when it comes to their child! If you'd like to share your experience, please consider becoming one of our Supporting Parents. Our Supporting Parents receive online training and continued support from our team as they learn to be active, engaged listeners. We are always looking for caring volunteers!



*For more resources,
visit www.familiestogetherinc.org*

Staff Spotlight

How long have you been with Families Together?

I have been here 18 years.

What programs do you work on?

Being that I am the bookkeeper for Families Together, Inc., I have my hand in a little bit of every program.

Tell us about your journey!

In 2003, I graduated from WATC (Wichita Area Technical College) with a diploma in accounting and was a young single mother with a 4-year-old and a 10 year old child. I was looking for a job in the accounting field. I applied everywhere and finally got a call for a job interview with Families Together, Inc. I didn't know anything about Families Together at that time. When I was called for an interview and I found out the location of the organization, right in the area of where I lived, I knew it was heaven sent.

When you're not serving families, what do you like to do?

I don't work directly with families, but I work in the background, helping to keep Families Together up and running, so that we can help families in need of help with their children with special needs. In my spare time I enjoy going to the movies, watching weekly TV shows, playing video games, and spending time with family and friends.

What do you like most about working at Families Together?

I like the flexibility of our schedule which allowed me, as a single mother, to be able to raise my two daughters with less stress of worrying about finances.



Shannon Garrett

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Welcome to the Families Together, Inc. Newsletter

Families Together, Inc. provides assistance and guidance to help parents and youth become partners in decision-making. Our non-profit is the Parent Training Information Center as well as the Family-to-Family Health Information Center for Kansas.

What's Inside?

In this edition of our newsletter, we look at a new resource to help families understand social, emotional, and mental health needs. We share information on IEP components and how Families Together, Inc. can help you and your children. You'll also find information about our upcoming workshops and trainings.



Want to stay up-to-date? Consider subscribing to our newsletter electronically! Not only will you receive the newsletter, you will also receive our biweekly Monday Memo which is full of relevant articles and resources. You'll also help us save trees and reduce printing costs! Let us know you're interested by emailing topeka@famiestogetherinc.org.

