Self-Advocacy and The IEP

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Why Is This Cake On Fire: Inviting Students Into the IEP Process

Van Dycke, J., Martin,J., Lovett, D.

Teaching Exceptional Children

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Purpose for Today

I hope to accomplish the following:

- Give you materials you can use
- Make you aware of a HUGE issue we have in special education
- Motivate you to do something
- Help you to get started

Materials

All of the materials and ideas you will see and hear about today are on my website:

www.difabilities.net

Please feel free to use any information on it for your classroom (it is updated frequently with new things) and email me with questions.

We also have a FaceBook page:

Difabilities: Self Advocacy for Students with Disabilities

Advocacy For Youth Class

- Quarter Long REQUIRED class
- ¼ Credit towards Electives
- All 8th grade special education students
  - Few exceptions
- 4 year process
- I wrote the curriculum
- Working currently on establishing a middle school class as well (currently done in study hall once a week or as a unit in English).

What is Self-Advocacy and the IEP?

- Student using self-advocacy skills to learn about, help write, and run their Individualized Education Plan (IEP) meetings as well as take more control over their education by asking for the things they need.

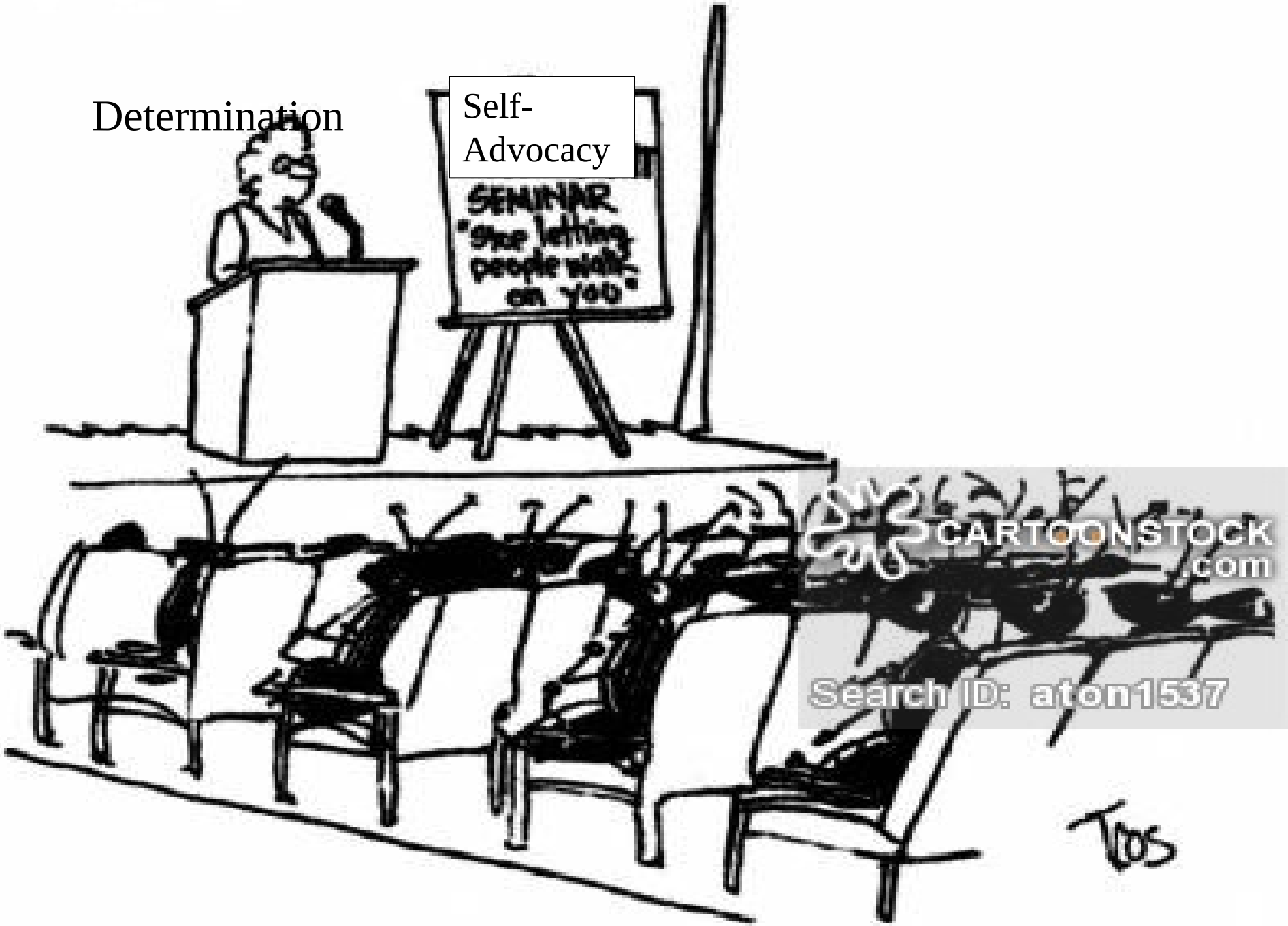
Why It’s Important

- Give students knowledge or understanding of their disabilities.
- To increase student knowledge about their strengths, how to succeed, and how to use self-advocacy skills.
- Set goals to help them have a plan to improve their weaknesses.
- Make the IEP a more enjoyable/positive process.
- If they don’t know what an IEP or goals are how are they supposed to be working on their goals??
- Increase self-esteem, effort, dreams/goals.
- Get them involved more the IEP process = success later on

ISP153-TS

Determination

Self-Advocacy



Why I Teach This

- Transition Conference
- First year teaching experience
- SL=Slow Learner & LD= Legally Dumb
- Feel it is most important
- Success we have had.

IEPs Rock!

Goals of My Program

- To increase the following in every special education student:

  - Increase Self-esteem
  - Self-Advocacy Skills
  - Understanding and acceptance of their disability
  - Give knowledge of the IEP and it’s process
  - Get them involved in their IEP process
  - Create tools and skills to use in the future
  - Working on transition information and get them excited for the future

Overview of the Program

- I use a combination of PowerPoints, notes, worksheets, activities, videos, websites, games, rewards, journaling, and discussion to teach this information.
- Safe and comfortable environment
- Need to talk and share
- Confidentiality and privacy
- Responsibility for the information

Students with Significant Disabilities

- Some are able to participate as much as any other student would.
- Just as important to get them involved, even if it is just going to the meeting.
- Many can use pictures to help run/participate in their meetings and express their wants for the future.
- Get them involved!!!

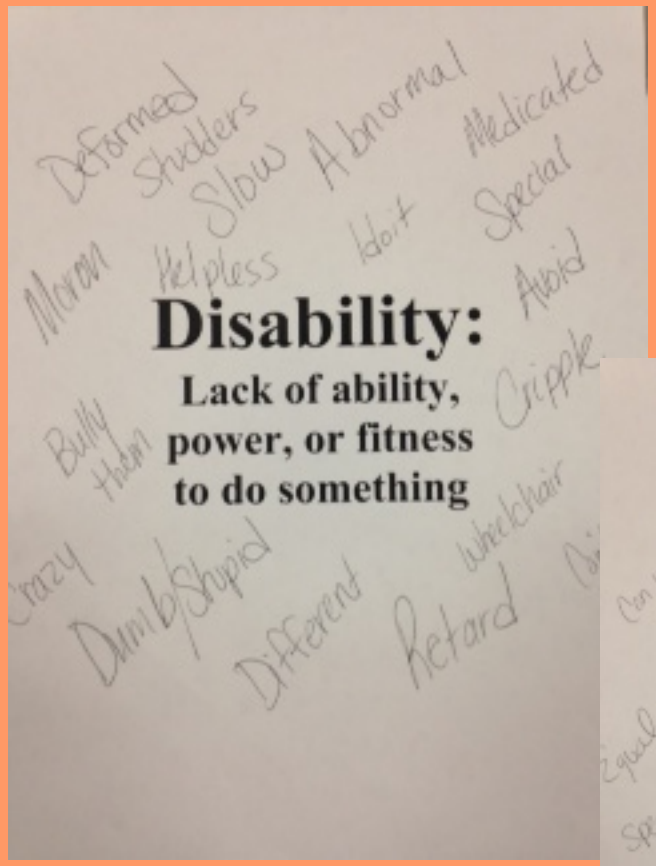
What about the younger kids?

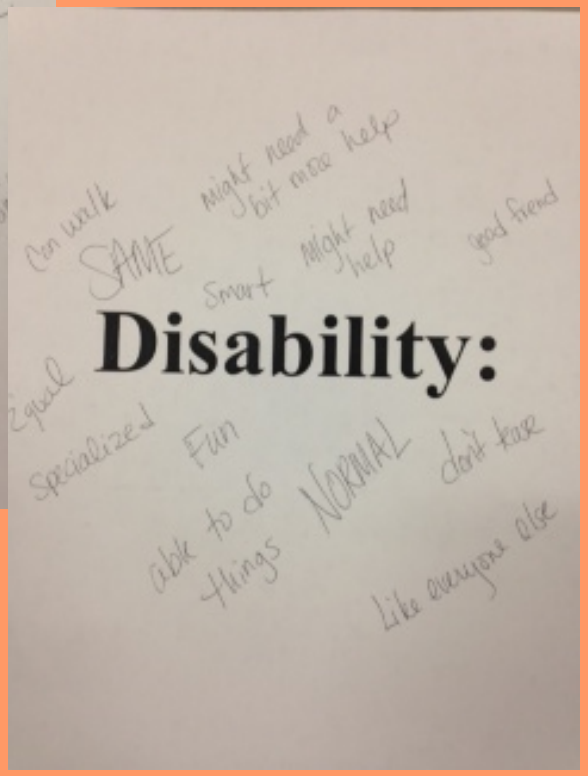
- Start as early as possible! All kids deserve to know and understand their disability no matter what their age.
- To teach about their disabilities, you can actually do whole class learning or individual.
- Understand what a disability is
- Understand their disability
- Work on self-esteem issues
- Attend the meeting
- Talk with teacher about the goals
- Get parents involved with the process

Part One

- Goals:
  - Build an interest about their disability and research it
  - Give the basic information about all disabilities
  - Change the stereotype
- Main Activities:
  - Pre-Survey
  - Confidentiality (Waiver)
  - Community Building Post It Activity
  - Brainstorm and look at disability definition and stereotypes
  - Journal and teach disability information/awareness of self
  - Disability Awareness Activity
  - Videos
  - Research their disabilities, other disabilities, or a celebrity with a disability

Defining Disability





- Its important to look at this and the stereotypes behind disabilities and give the students the power to make a new definition and outward look on the word “disability.”

"How do you know I have a learning disability?
— Maybe you have a *teaching* disability!"

Disability Awareness

- To build knowledge and acceptance of students with disabilities and between each other, I do this activity with my students each year. I have also done this with other teachers, large groups or reg education students, and parents. It is a good experience for anyone.

- Physical Disability/OT
- Autism
- Speech and Lang
- Math
- Reading
- Writing
- ADHD

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/misunderstoodminds/

Book Assignment

- My students are required to read a book/articles on their disability to learn more about it.
- ***Survival Guide for Kids With LD: Learning Differences*** by Gary Fisher and Rhoda Cummings
- ***The Survival Guide for Kids With ADD or ADHD*** by John Taylor
- ***The Behavioral Survival Guide for Kids*** by Thomas McIntyre

Student in EBD Program

1. what is your disability
   I dont know but I think it might be LD
2. What does that mean
   that you have a different way of learning
3. what do you think of having a disability
   not shore. I know that I wish I dipent have one.

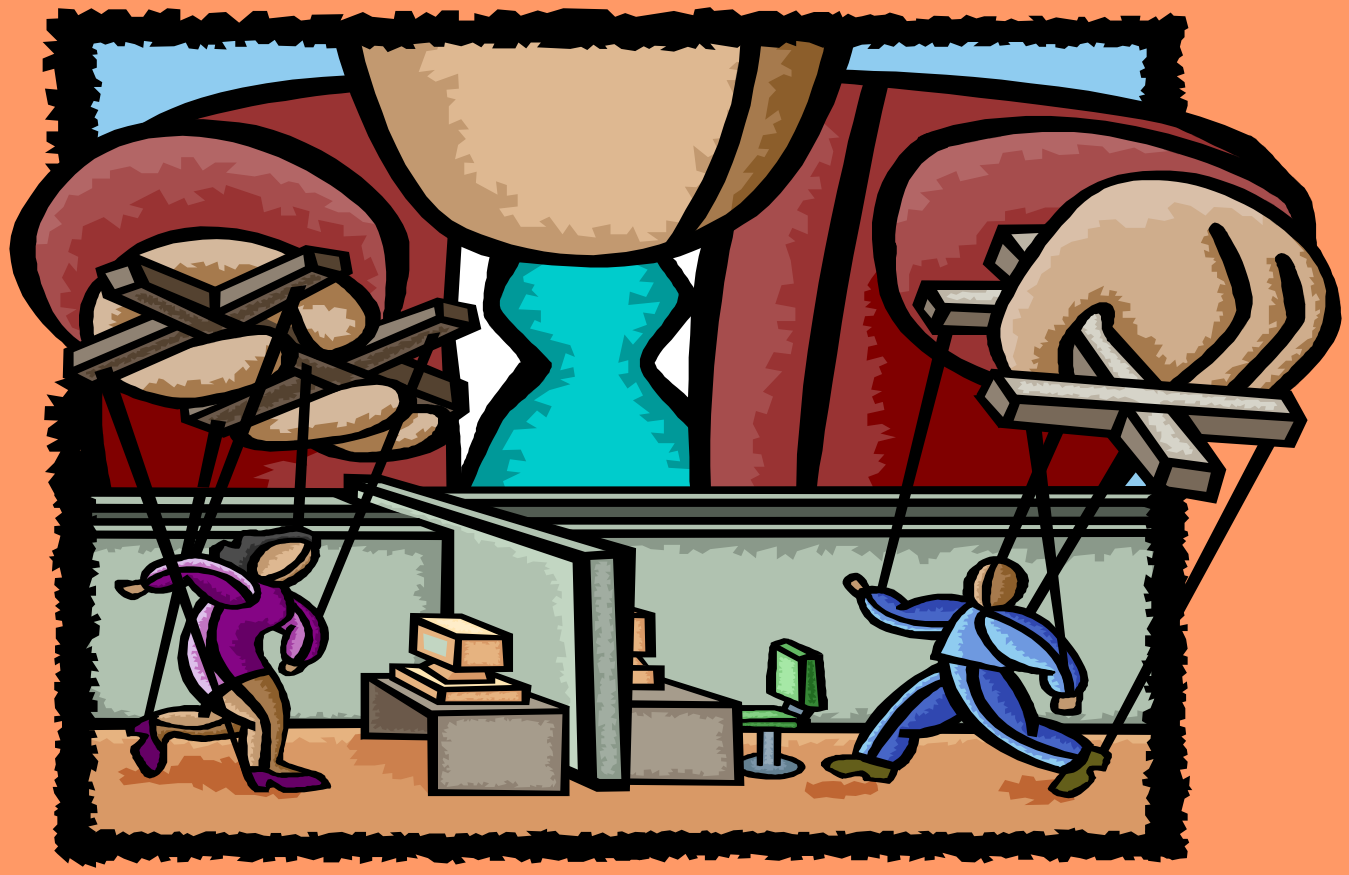
Younger/Cognitively Delayed Students

- Get some information to them – any pieces
- Build little by little
- For middle school students allowing them to explore disabilities – most have never really been told what it is or how it affects them
- Have them participate in some way, even sharing one thing
- Read together: My Name is Brain, Brian - Jeanne Betancourt, Freak the Mighty – Rodman Philbrick, Wonder – R. J. Palacio, Joey Pigza – Jack Gantos (all have students with disabilities that you can talk about)
- Talking about everything in simple terms (create new words/definitions).

Part Two

- Goals:
  - Give the basic information about the IEP
  - Look at and get familiar with the parts and process of the IEP
- IEP Main Activities:
  - Teach the IEP parts and information using a blank IEP (guide from NICHCY)
  - Talk about modifications and accommodations and how the students can access these and use them.
  - Explain what goals are and why they have them.
  - Go through classes and list what they can do for accommodations and modifications.
  - IEP vocabulary: WS and use it often

Do You Want To Be A Puppet?



Use a puppet on strings as an example of the student in the IEP system right now. Ask the students who is in charge of the puppet? The Puppet or Puppeteer? (Answer should be puppeteer). Then ask who they would want to be? Then explain that right now, they are the puppets in the IEP process and teachers/parents are puppeteer. Then ask how they feel about that. Next discuss what they want and how to get there.

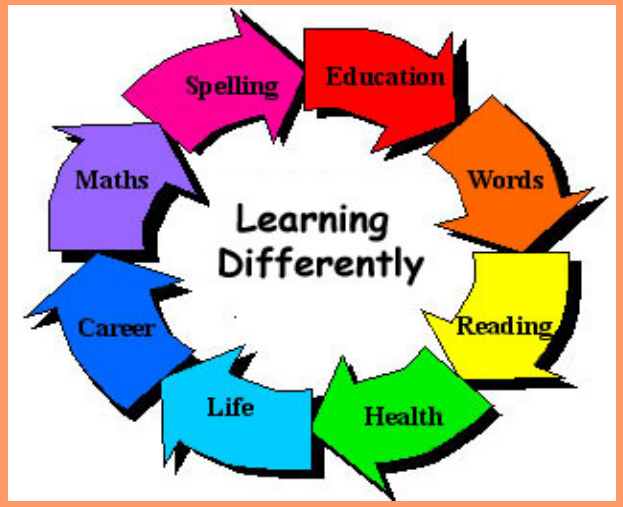
Students with Significant Needs and Younger Students

- It is important for these students to be told what an IEP is and to be shown their IEP. Even if they do not understand it, you should try and explain:
  - Goals
  - Modifications
  - Basic Info (who will be there, what it is)

Part Three

- Goals:
  - Get each child familiar with his or her own IEP

- Main Activities:
  - Pass out each individual IEP and go over it with each child
  - IEP Scavenger Hunt



IEP Scavenger Hunt

1. Tell me three people who attended your last IEP using the cover sheet (I-3).
   a. _____
   b. _____
   c. _____

•Did you attend the meeting? How do you know?

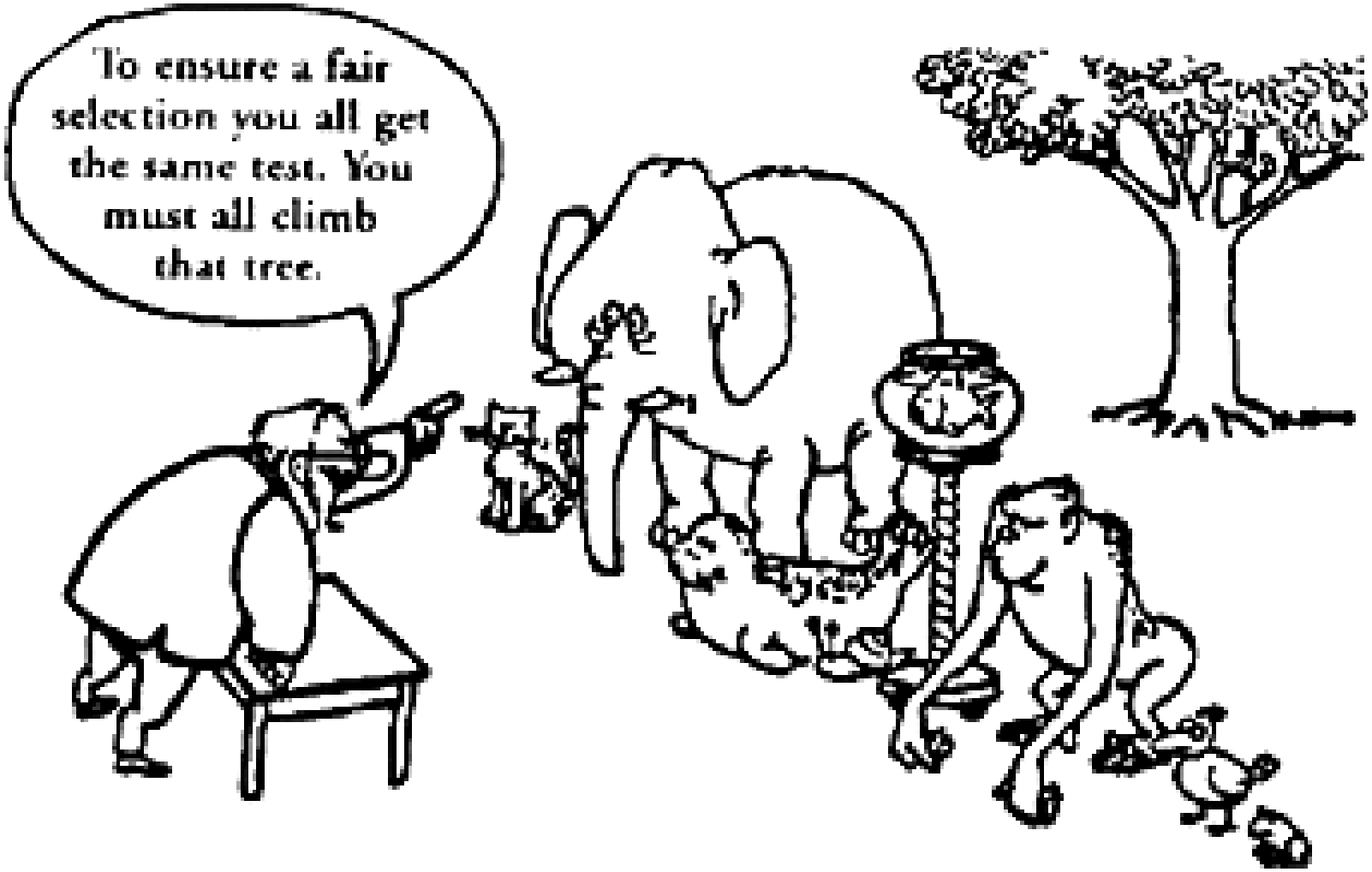
_____ _____

•What date was your last IEP held on?

_____

•The Present Level of Performance (I-4) page tells you what you strengths and what your parents' concerns are. Tell me a strength that is listed for you.

_____


To ensure a fair selection you all get the same test. You must all climb that tree.

Part Four

- Goals:
  - Teach students how to participate in their IEP meetings (write goals, prepare scripts, present)
- Main Activities:
  - Show students the proper way to be involved in the entire IEP process and how to run the meeting.
  - Talk about how being involved in the IEP is a way to advocate for yourself.
    - » Write teacher invitation
    - » Write the IEP together, talk about goals and future plans, write script, and practice.
    - » Talk in-depth about modifications and accommodations available in your school (show assistive tech)

Date

Dear _____,

I would like to invite you to come to my IEP meeting and share your ideas. You coming to my meeting is important to me.

Date:
Time:.
Place:

Signed,

Your name

•P.S. If you cannot attend this meeting, please let me know when we can meet to talk about my IEP. Thank you.

Younger/Significant Disabilities

- Its important for younger students to begin being involved in their meetings and IEPs when they are young so they have some awareness of the process and their needs when they reach transition stage. However, being involved can be scary, so involving them in small bits of the meeting can be helpful. Having them tell/show a powerpoint/handout about themselves and their school year and then leaving is great. Writing a letter for the teacher to read or sharing one piece of the IEP can also work.
- **Use simple language!

Part Five

- Goals:
  - Introduce self-advocacy and the importance of it.
  - Acknowledge and come up with solution to deal with factors that can get in the way of being a good self-advocate
- Main Activities:
  - Teach information on self-advocacy, how to do it and how to avoid problems that may arise.
  - Do questionnaires, talk about all the options for help and how to get it.
    - (lots of resources on the website in ref)
  - Role Play Situations
  - Discuss Difficult Situations
  - Advocate in each class chart

Special Education Abbreviations	Parts of the IEP	Self-Advocacy	Disability Definitions	IEP Words And Vocab	How to Be Involved in Your IEP	Variety
$100	$100	$100	$100	$100	$100	$100
$200	$200	$200	$200	$200	$200	$200
$300	$300	$300	$300	$300	$300	$300
$400	$400	$400	$400	$400	$400	$400
$500	$500	$500	$500	$500	$500	$500

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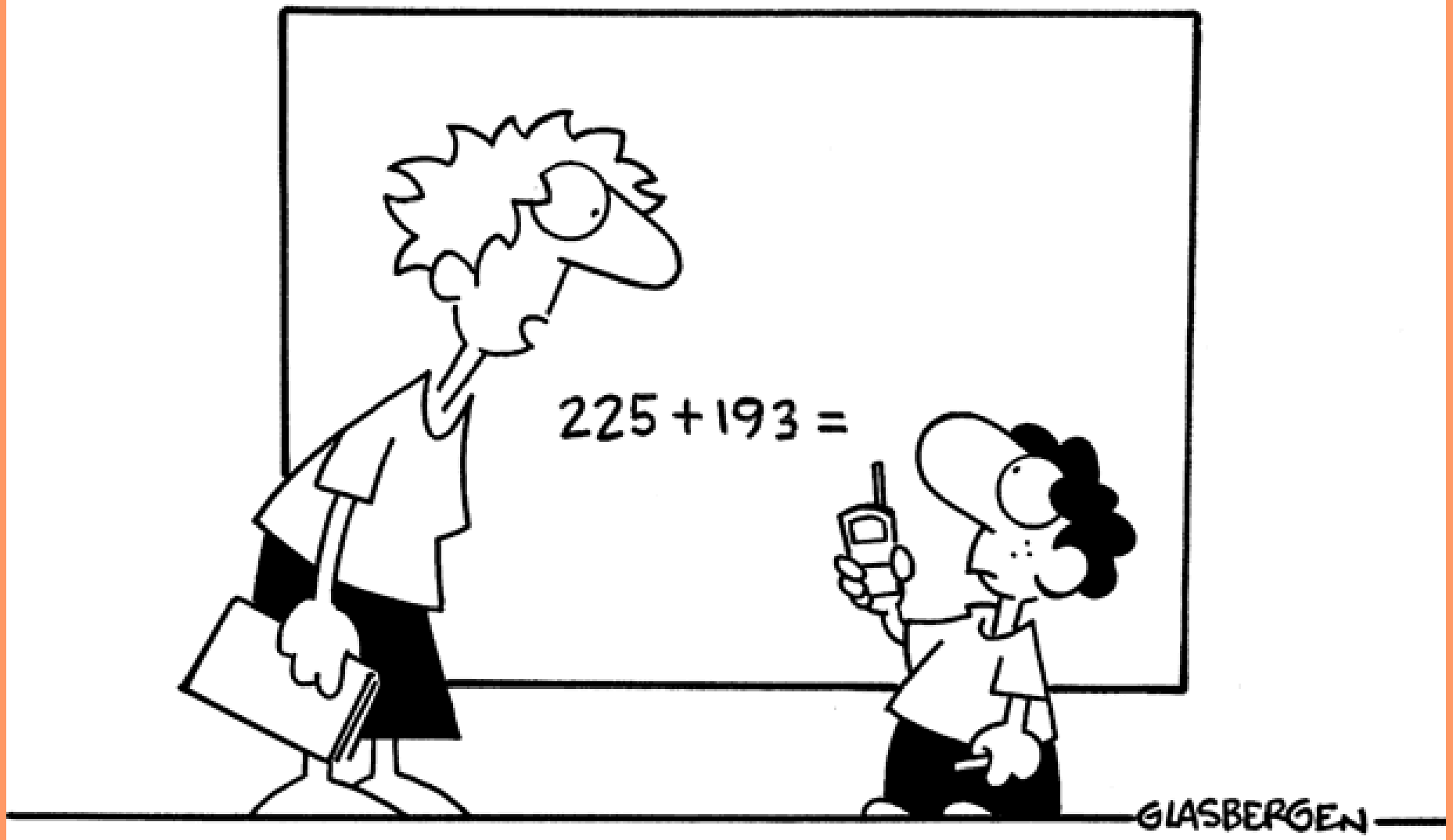
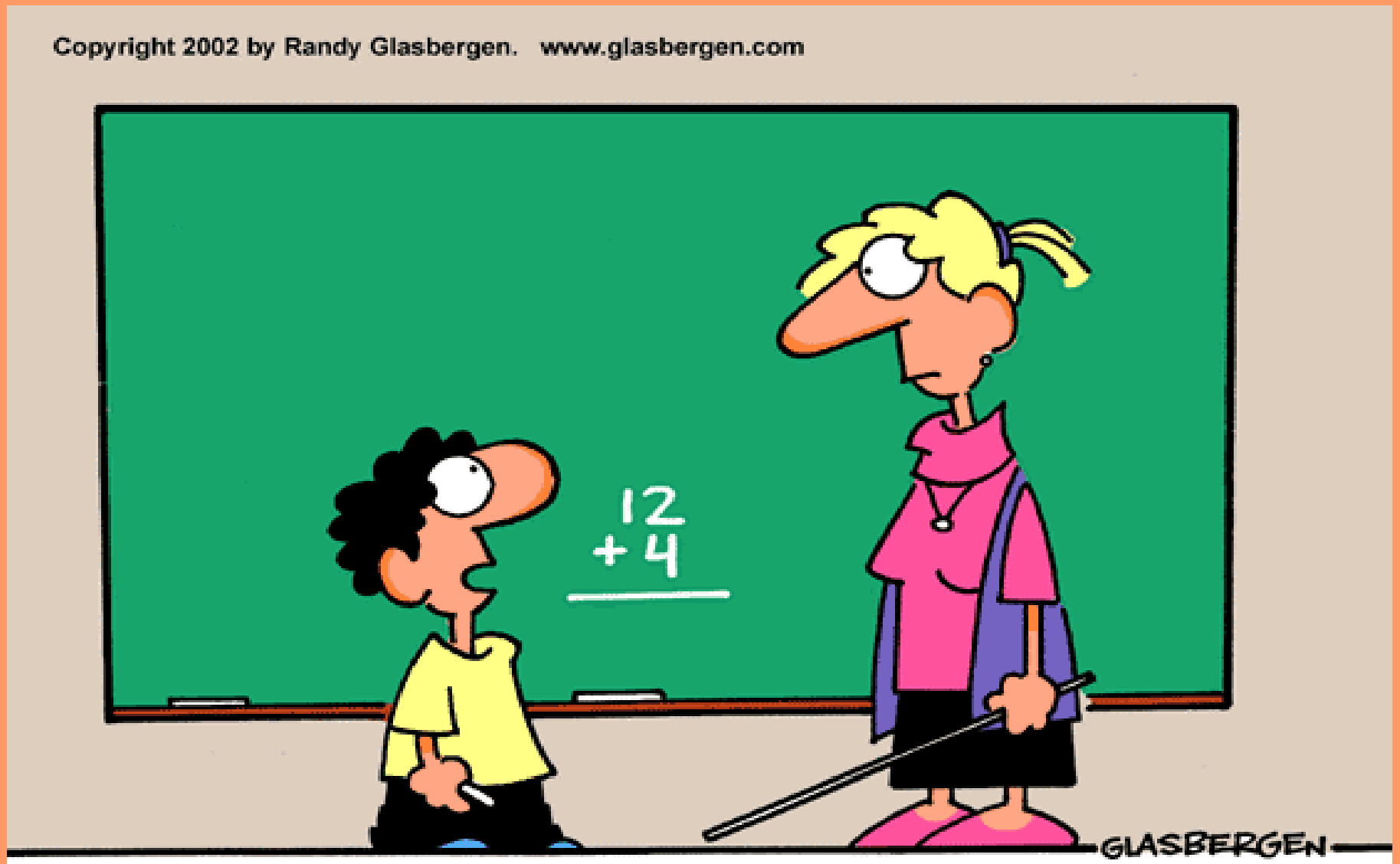


"You have to solve this problem by yourself. You can't call tech support."

Part Six

- Goals:
  - Understand there are many types of learning: Multiple Intelligences and Learning Styles.
- Main Activities:
  - Talk about Multiple Intelligences and decide individual Learning Styles. Use powerpoint and student notes.
  - Do surveys or web quiz
  - Going to College website and packet.
  - Framed letter to two teachers explaining needs and abilities



"Do I get partial credit for simply having the courage to get out of bed and face the world again today?"

Part Seven

Goals:

- Get students accustom to the concept of transition and how it will work for them in our school district.

Main Activities:

- Provide information about what transition is and how it works
- WISCareers website, Teenager Checklist, and Career Clusters
- North Central Technical School Visit – Assistive Tech
- Transition and Coordinated Set of Activities Plan Sheet
- Introduce the Portfolio and show how to use it
- Enderle Severson or My Transition Info Sheet
- Look at course selection options using course handbook
- Career Research and Going to College Packet

Part Seven Cont.

Goals:

- Talk about college and look ahead to requirements and financial aide.

Main Activities:

- Have a truthful, fun, open, and honest talk about college to get excitement going.
- College Look Ahead Sheet
- WI Covenant Talk and Handouts (send home)
- Talk about extra-curriculars, volunteering, resumes.
- Look at the types of education possible and levels.

For Younger Students or Students with Significant Disabilities

- When talking about transition, middle school student are so far from it, they often don’t find it important. Its good to talk about the future and make sure they know early they have access to college/tech school. Have them set goals for the future and talk about all the steps to take to get there.
- For students with a cognitive disability it’s important to include the proper organizations and groups that could help with transition.

Laws (Optional)

- Goals:
  - Give students a brief look at the history and laws of special education
- Main Activities:
  - Talk about the history of special education and the benefits we have today
  - Discuss briefly the responsibilities of being in special education and the laws.
  - Talk about the differences between services now and in college.

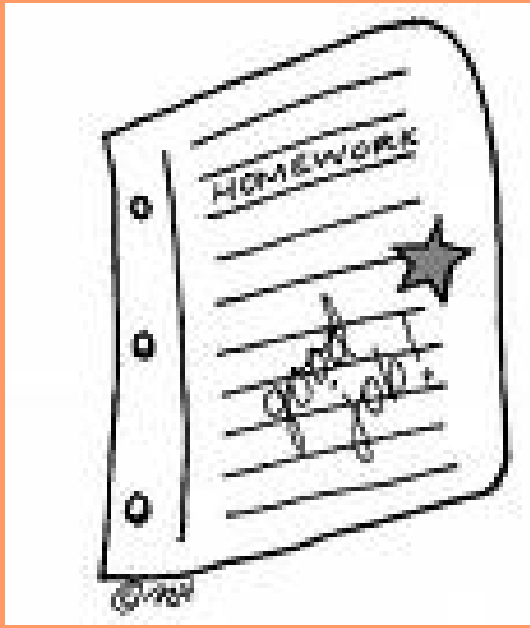
Part Eight

- Goals and Main Activities :
  - Create a handout/PowerPoint to use a tool with future teachers/employers
    - About them, hobbies, family
    - About their disability
    - Areas that they need help in
    - How people can help them
    - Multiple Intelligences/Learning Style
    - Modifications needed

  - Students could use this as a presentation tool in their IEP or present it to a current teacher.

Part Nine

- Goals:
  - Test knowledge learned about IEPs, disabilities, self-advocacy and transition.
- Main Activities:
  - Review Sheet
  - IEP Unit Test
  - End of unit (Post) Survey



Follow Through

- **This is the most important part!**
- Each child MUST meet with me ahead of time and go over/make changes to IEP, attend their IEP meeting, and present one thing at the meeting.
- A lot of the research I have done recommends that teachers continue to ease students into that role. (invite the teachers to meeting, introduce people, talk more, take the lead role)

How to Start

- Start small if need be. Teach it in any time you have, even if it is one-on-one.
- Talk with your administrators about the importance of this information.
- Check out other people’s websites and information.

Projects and Contacts

- **Statewide Self-Advocacy Project**
- Lisa Hebgen, at lmhebgen@wisc.edu or 608-263 -0951

- **Nicole Paulson (Held)**
- I am available to come and do in-services, conferences, and other speaking engagements. Just contact me at my email or phone.
- npaulson@dce.k12.wi.us
- 715-370-0863

Resources

- Teacher and Student Guide to the IEP

http://nichcy.org/wp-content/uploads/docs/st1.pdf

- Self Advocacy Manual For Students

http://www.ldpride.net/selfadvocacy.htm

- Advocacy, Life skills, and Transition Information

http://www.youthhood.org/index.asp

- National Center For Learning Disabilities

http://ncld.org/

- List of Possible Accommodations for Students

http://www.smartkidswithld.org/guide-to-action/educational-planning/examples-of-accommodations-and-modifications

More Resources

- Misunderstood Minds

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/misunderstoodminds/index.html

- Disability Awareness Packet for Teachers

http://www.dvusd.org/cms/lib07/AZ01901092/Centricity/Domain/1318/Disability%20Awareness%20Packet%202.pdf

- Special Education Transition Portfolio

http://www.rockingham.k12.va.us/rcps_sped/SVRP/Transition-Portfolio.htm

- www.ncset.org
- http://www.caseylifeskills.org/
- http://www.parentcenterhub.org/repository/disability-landing/
- http://www.going-to-college.org/
- http://www.wisconsincovenant.wi.gov/

Transition Resources

- http://www.eagleschools.net/Modules/ShowDocument.aspx?documentid=3272 Teenager Checklist
- http://www.careertech.org/sites/default/files/StudentInterestSurvey-English.pdf Career Clusters