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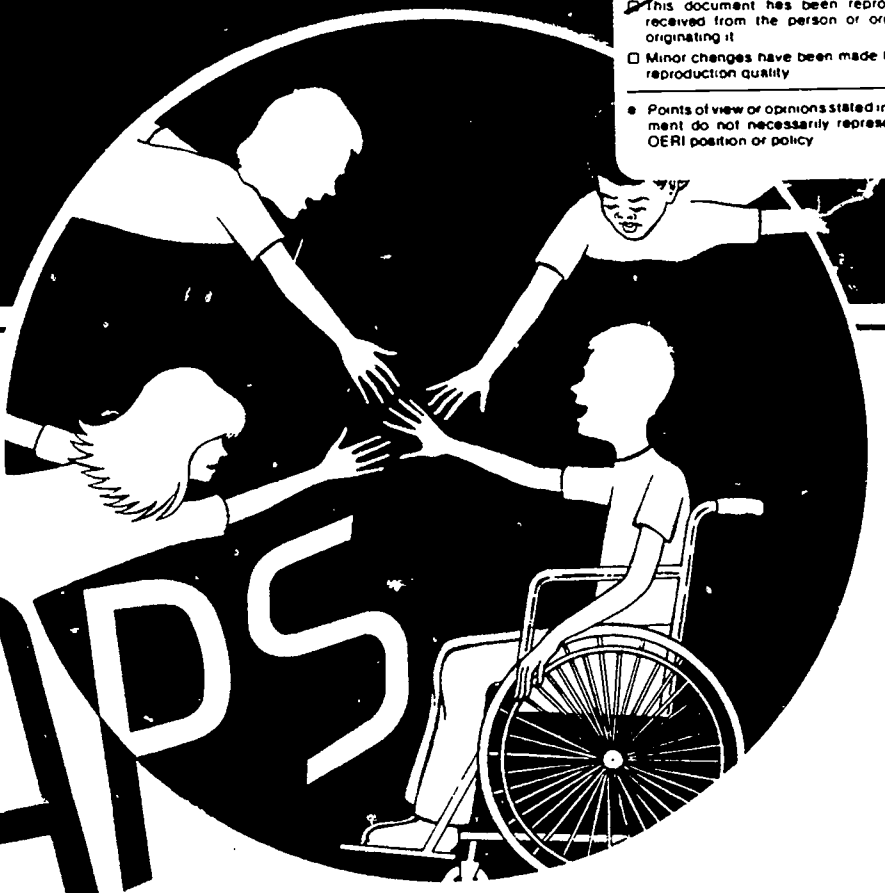
ABSTRACT

This manual describes a Kansas program which is working toward full inclusion of students with deaf blindness through the MAPS approach (which stands for Making Action Plans or the McGill Action Planning System). An introduction stresses the value of integration and the focus of MAPS on the student's abilities and not his/her weaknesses. The MAPS process involves gathering key people in the student's life who cooperatively answer such questions as: "What is the student's history?" "What is your dream for the child?" "What is your nightmare?" "What are the student's gifts?" and "What would an ideal day at school be like for the student?" Use of the MAPS approach to help develop the student's Individualized Education Program is described with examples. Plans for structured friendship or peer programs are suggested as part of the MAPS meeting. Specific suggestions for parents wishing to encourage their schools to implement a MAPS approach and to develop a more inclusive climate are offered. (Contains 10 references.) (DB)

# MAPS: A Plan for Including All Children in Schools





# MAPS

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# Strategic Directions for Kansas Education

The Kansas State Board of Education is charged with the general supervision of public education and other educational interests in the state. While clearly acknowledging the role and importance of local control, the State Board of Education has the responsibility to provide direction and leadership for the structuring of all state educational institutions under its jurisdiction.

The beginning place for determining the mission for the Kansas State Board of Education is the assumption that all Kansas citizens must be involved in their own learning and the learning of others. It is the combined effort of family, school, and community that makes possible the development of a high quality of life. It is the parent who is the first "teacher" of children. As we grow older, we learn that the school, the workplace, and the community support our lifelong learning and our training and retraining. The Board recognizes the responsibility it holds for Kansas educational systems and promoting quality education programs. The mission for Kansas education is:

**To prepare each person with the living, learning, and working skills and values necessary for caring, productive, and fulfilling participation in our evolving, global society.**

We believe that the strategic directions for the structuring of Kansas education must be organized to:

- involve parents and support their efforts in the education of their children
- expand learner-focused approaches to curricula and instruction that can amplify the quality and scope of learning
- expand career, lifelong learning, and applied technical preparation which is relevant to the changed nature of work in an information society
- strengthen involvement of business and industry, public and private agencies, and community groups to increase the quality of education and the development of Kansas human resources
- strengthen educational quality and accountability through performance-based curricula and evaluation systems
- develop state and local information systems which may be used for systematic feedback for program improvement, evaluation, and sharing
- strengthen positive environments and develop environments which empower learners and staff
- extend a. d update the professional and leadership excellence of Kansas educators essential for quality education
- extend and expand the effective utilization of information technology which can increase information access for all learners of the state and productive learning for all Kansas educational institutions
- develop learning communities which involve educational institutions, public and private agencies, and community groups in more effective methods of meeting human resource development needs.

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## Board Members

# MAPS: A Plan for Including All Children in Schools

Developed through the Services for Children and Youth with Deaf-Blindness Project, Kansas State Board of Education.

November, 1992 (second reprint)
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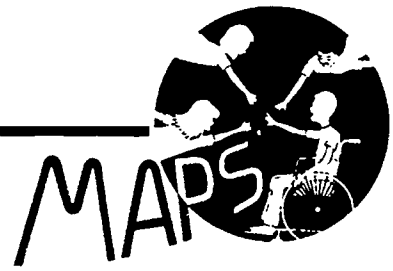


As schools in Kansas begin to include students with disabilities in general education classroom settings, staff from the Services for Children and Youth with Deaf-Blindness Project have been looking at methods which families and educators can use to enhance this process. One method which has been found to be effective is MAPS (which stands for Making Action Plans or the McGill Action Planning System).

MAPS is exciting because it brings family members, friends of the family, regular and special educators, the student and the student's friends together to begin planning for the full inclusion of a student with disabilities. In this planning process, people are encouraged to look at what the student with disabilities *can* do, instead of working from the perspective of what he/she cannot do. MAPS can help lay the foundation for the spirit of cooperation that is necessary for true inclusion, by giving members of the MAPS team a "stake" in the student's integration.

Because MAPS has been effective in Canada and in other states, most notably Minnesota, staff decided to pull together information on MAPS from a variety of sources so that Kansas parents and educators would have the information available in a readable format. This manual and a videotape on MAPS is available so that parents and educators will have some guidelines for doing their own MAPS planning. Additional resources are listed in the back of the manual.

# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS


The staff of the Services for Children and Youth with Deaf-Blindness Project of the Kansas State Board of Education would like to acknowledge those who assisted in the development of this manual. We would like to express our appreciation to Dr. Terri Vandercook of the University of Minnesota, who shared the MAPS process with us and with other educators and parents.

We would also like to thank the staff at the Beach Center for Families and Disabilities at the University of Kansas, who worked as consultants on this manual. Staff from Families Together, Inc., also provided helpful input. Special thanks go to parents Teri Goodrich and Susan Arnold who provided valuable insight on MAPS and inclusion. Additionally, we would like to acknowledge the work of Jill Casey Giele who put together research and other information from various sources to write this manual, and Sally Van Meter for her editing contributions.

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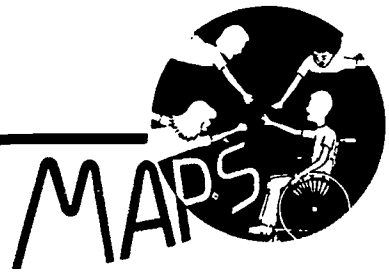
# INTRODUCTION




"It appears that at least six characteristics experienced by typical people in their efforts to meet others and develop relationships may not be as available for people with disabilities. These qualities of our relationships include opportunity, diversity, continuity, relationships that are freely chosen and given, and intimacy."
Zana Marie Lutfiya, in "Reflections on Relationships between People with Disabilities and Typical People," Syracuse University, 1988.

"Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal. This inherent inequality stems from the stigma created by purposeful segregation which generates a feeling of inferiority that may affect their hearts and minds in a way unlikely ever to be undone."
Earl Warren, Chief Justice U.S. Supreme Court, Brown v. Topeka Board of Education, 1954

*Judy Hanson, an eight-year-old with developmental and sensory disabilities, moved with her family to a new town over the summer. Much to her parents' surprise, Judy was to be enrolled in a regular third-grade classroom, with children her own age, most of whom were typical kids and others who, like Judy, had disabilities. In that classroom, Judy would participate as much as possible, and she would receive help from a special education teacher, Mrs. Martinez. Judy would also spend some time in a resource room.*

*This arrangement would be quite a change for Judy. In her old school, students with disabilities were all in one classroom and they only participated in limited activities with the regular education students.*

*Martha and Dan Hanson, Judy's parents, were worried about the new arrangement. They wondered if Judy would be teased by the other students, who might not understand her disabilities. But, these concerns were allayed, somewhat, when Mrs. Martinez explained that the students at this school were accepting of the differences of their special classmates, because all of them had been together for several years.*

There are many reasons for wanting to integrate all children and youth, regardless of disability, into regular classroom settings. Perhaps the most compelling rationale, though, is that our country is founded on equality. Separateness in education was struck down in 1954 by the U.S. Supreme Court in Brown v. Topeka Board of Education. Segregated classrooms can cause people to harbor misgivings about people who are different from themselves. On the other hand, integration can foster understanding. When students who do not have disabilities are in the same school and classrooms as their peers who have disabilities, they can learn a great deal about respect and sensitivity. Both the students who have disabilities and the students without disabilities can learn to become comfortable with each other, and that feeling will remain as they become adults.

There is considerable support in the law for integration. Public Law 101-476, the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (formerly known as Public Law 94-142, the Education for All Handicapped Children Act), guarantees children with disabilities the right to a "free and appropriate education in the least restrictive environment."

"The time has come when we can no longer tolerate the invisibility of the handicapped in America . . . These people have the right to live, to work and to the best of their ability - to know the dignity to which every human being is entitled." Humphrey, 1972

Since Public Law 94-142 was passed in 1975, families and educators have tried to define what is "appropriate" for children who have disabilities and, of course, what environment is the "least restrictive."

Many families and educators are concluding that the concept of "least restrictive environment" means that students with disabilities should go to school in integrated classrooms and receive special services within that framework. If this happens, students who have disabilities will be able to interact with students their own age. This could also lead to placing students with disabilities in regular public schools in their communities. At those schools, the students should be placed within regular classrooms with students of their own age.

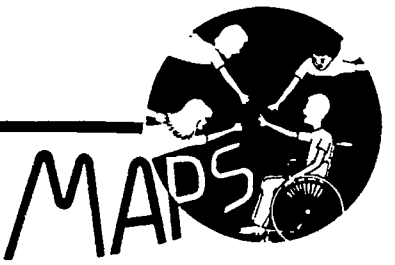
As families, schools and communities have taken more steps to fully integrate students who have disabilities into the schools, families and educators have worked to find ways to ease this process. One tool that has emerged as particularly effective is the McGill Action Planning System (MAPS).

The MAPS process can help families, professionals, and a special student's peers find ways to fully include the student in school, in a classroom with classmates who are the same age. The MAPS process can help ensure the student and his or her peers will have positive learning experiences in that classroom.

MAPS is a strategy that was developed by Marsha Forest, Jack Pearpoint, Judith Snow, Evelyn Lusthaus and the staff at the Centre for Integrated Education in Canada. In recent years, researchers at the University of Minnesota have been encouraging various school districts around the country to try MAPS.

MAPS is different from some other planning tools because, in it, participants focus on what the student *can* do, instead of on his/her weaknesses.

# THE MAPS PROCESS: SEVEN QUESTIONS




"MAPS provides a setting where you can learn from a lot of different viewpoints. It was really an information - sharing time. We created a reference point - where he is at now - so we could be thinking about where to go from here."
Susan Arnold, a Topeka parent who went through the MAPS process with her son, Matt. Matt has severe multiple disabilities.

"The role of the family is not an educational extension of the intervention program. Rather, the opposite is true, the intervention program should be an extension of the family."
Granger and Sameroff, 1984

"Our first-grader kept saying 'why can't Joel go to my school?' and we just didn't have a strong argument against it. That question really gave us the extra push."
Teri Goodrich, a Topeka parent whose son, Joel, has severe multiple disabilities and began going to school in an integrated classroom during the 1990-91 school year.

To use the MAPS process, key people in the student's life gather and talk in one, two or three sessions. In total, the sessions may take about three hours, and it is preferable to split that time up if the planning is for a very young child. Among the people participating are the student, the student's parents, the classroom teachers (both regular and special education), and other school professionals such as counselors, therapists or the school principal. Another person acts as the group's leader, or facilitator, and keeps the group on task. The group is completed with a couple of the student's peers, who are, perhaps, the most important component in the student's full participation at school, and other members of the student's family, such as siblings or grandparents.

*A few weeks after Judy started at her new school, she had adjusted fairly well. She seemed to be getting along with the other students and was doing her best. Mrs. Martinez explained the MAPS process to Martha and Dan, and asked them to help her put together a team to begin planning for Judy. Dan and Martha liked the idea of so many people coming together to brainstorm and have a "stake" in Judy's education.*

*Mrs. Martinez put the most thought into which of Judy's classmates should take part. She watched her in class, to see who she interacted with most, and decided to ask Lisa, the girl who sat close to Judy and seemed to enjoy helping her and playing with her. Dan and Martha also asked Jay, a little boy who lived near them and was in Judy's class. On the first day of school, he had helped the teacher by introducing Judy as "the new kid my age in my neighborhood."*

*The other members of Judy's MAPS team were her parents, her brother, Joey, a sixth-grader; Mrs. Martinez, and the speech therapist, Mr. Johnson; the occupational therapist, Mrs. Nathison; and Judy's classroom teacher, Ms. Gregory.*

"What is the student's history?"

In their talk, each of the people present at a MAPS session will focus on the seven questions that are included in the MAPS process.

First, the family members present answer the question "What is the individual's history?"

In this part of MAPS, the family explains the student's history, talking especially about some key points in a student's life.

*Judy's mom started the discussion by telling the group that complications at birth had caused Judy to have developmental disabilities. Two years ago, Judy was diagnosed as having both a vision and a hearing disability . Doctors told the Hansons that Judy might not ever speak, or walk, but Judy's parents worked extensively with her so that she can now walk short distances and is beginning to speak to people, though she is difficult to understand.*

*Dan told the group that in her first years of school, Judy had been in a special education classroom all day at a different school from the one her brother attended. This was hard for both of the children, he said. Jay liked to look out for Judy, and Judy really seemed to miss him during the day.*

*Dan and Martha told the others in the group that each member of their family brought something special to the family. Judy, they said, had taught them about compassion because she had helped them all become more aware of the strengths and needs of people with disabilities. Martha also laughed when she commented that Judy had taught her a lot about patience as well.*

"What is your dream for the child?"

Next, all members of the MAPS team talk about their vision for the student as they answer "What is your dream for the individual?"

As they answer this question, the people are encouraged to think about what they want for the student and what they think the student wants. This is a question of "vision," and, therefore, the people answering it shouldn't be bogged down with present-day realities. The team members should dream some here, and verbalize those dreams. If enough people share their dreams, they can work toward those dreams becoming a reality.

*Mr. and Mrs. Hanson said they dreamed of the day when Judy could have a job she really liked and perhaps her own home. Joey, Judy's brother, said he dreamed of the day when Judy could read a story. Lisa, Judy's friend, said she wanted Judy to be able to walk to school with the other kids. Jay, her classmate, said he dreamed of Judy doing math on the chalkboard.*

*Ms. Gregory, the classroom teacher, said she dreamed of Judy growing up and having many friends. Mrs. Martinez, the special education teacher, said she envisioned Judy someday having her own place and supporting herself with a regular job. Mr. Johnson, the speech therapist, said he dreamed of the day when Judy wouldn't have to repeat herself to be understood. Mrs. Nathison, the occupational therapist, said she dreamed of Judy finding not only a job that she liked, but hobbies that she could enjoy in her spare time.*

"My parents always had a dream for my brothers and sisters for when they grew up, but nobody had a dream for me, so I never had a dream for myself. You can never have a good life if nobody ever has a dream for you, unless you learn to have a dream for yourself."
Connie Martinez

"Peace of mind for the family is an integral part of the dream - peace that results from knowing that Mindie's future is secure, that there are several interested, caring individuals that are invested in Mindie and her future, and that there is a family - a friendly, flexible, responsive system that will support the efforts of Mindie, the family, and her friends."
Diane Crutcher, sharing visions for her daughter at the National Advisory Board Meeting for the Beach Center on Families and Disability, KU, Families and Disability, Vol. 2, No. 1, Spring 1990.

*Of course, the age of the student might help determine how the MAPS group will answer the dreams question. If the student is very young, it might be hard for the group to think about their vision for the student when he or she reaches adulthood. When team members are confronted with this obstacle, they should probably think about their dream or vision for five years from now, or for when the student reaches high school.*

"What is your nightmare?"

After the group has thought about their dreams for the student, they are asked "What is your nightmare?"

Parents sometimes find this particularly hard to answer, for no parent likes to think of their child facing difficulties. But if the members of the group can verbalize their nightmares and fears, they will have taken an important step in becoming committed to making sure this nightmare never occurs.

*Judy's MAPS team approached the "nightmare" question with some trepidation. Her parents, though, started the group off by telling the others about their worst fears.*

*"We are really afraid that once Judy has grown up, unless she can become established in a job and a home, when we are gone, she will be completely alone," Martha said.*

*The other members of the group expressed similar fears. The children put a new twist on these thoughts, though. "I'm afraid that once we get to junior high, Judy might not have as many friends as she does here," said Jay. "They may not understand her."*

*"I think sometimes that, you know how hard it is to understand her sometimes . . . well, what if she really needed help, like she was feeling really sick or something, and she couldn't tell us and we wouldn't know," said Lisa.*

"Who is the student?"

Next, the people in the circle answer "Who is the individual?" Everyone talks about what comes to their mind when they think of the student, and they express this in a few words. Everyone takes a turn at the description, and then the people continue taking this idea around the circle until no one has anything else to add. People in the group can pass on their turn if they can't think of anything, but they are encouraged to try when it is their turn again. Then, when the list is completed, particular people in the group, such as family members, are asked to identify what they believe are three especially important descriptors.

*When her team thought about "Who is Judy?" some of the descriptors that came up included good student, mostly happy, good friend, big eater, likes cookies, likes music, likes riding the bus, likes books and cats, hates snakes, eager, wants to learn, is good at coloring, loving, likes people around, etc.*

"As a nation dedicated to freedom, independence, and the dignity of all human beings, it is the responsibility of all of us to look at disabled people and see what they can do, not what they can't."
Sen. Tom Harkin (D-Iowa), Families and Disability Newsletter, Vol. 1, No. 2, Fall 1989.

"I would just like to say that it has been a great life with my son. He has made this a better family to be in. He is a joy most of the time, just like the rest of us. He has his little flare-ups at times. but we love him and he is very special to me and my family."
A participant in a KU research project on the viewpoints of families who have a child with a disability, BCNL, Vol.1, No. 1, Spring 1989.

*Judy's family looked at the list and decided the key descriptors were "mostly happy, eager and wants to learn."*

"What are the student's gifts?"

Next, the group moves on to answering "What are the individual's strengths, gifts, and abilities?

To do this, the people in the circle might look back on the ways they have described the student in answering the previous question. The MAPS group members are asked to focus on what they believe the student can do, instead, as happens so often, what the student cannot do.

*Judy's planning team talked about the following strengths, abilities and gifts: She can walk, is able to talk, is good with people, likes animals, wants to try hard, looks at things around her, is a good friend, is a good daughter, is a good sister.*

*Judy's classroom teacher noted that Judy is pleasant, easy going and a nice addition to the atmosphere of the classroom.*

*Lisa talked about how the school counselor had told the kids about looking for the differences between people who acted like friends and "true friends."*

*"I think Judy is a true friend, because she is always happy to see us and you can tell she really likes us, even if you're not the prettiest or the smartest one in school," she said.*

*Judy's special services teachers noted that Judy sometimes would become tired at the end of a day, but that on the next day her mood was up and she was ready to try something again.*

"What are the student's needs?"

After they have talked about the student's strengths, the group members will move on to answering "What are the individual's needs?"

The parents' answers to this question might vary considerably from those of the student's peers or teachers. When the list has been completed, the group then decides which of the needs are "top priority," or demand immediate attention.

*The members of Judy's team brainstormed about her needs and then went back and prioritized her needs in three categories - family, friends and educators.*

*Judy's family thought it was important for her to be near other people her own age, to be loved and for others to accept her and know Judy is not helpless. They also hoped that Judy could learn to dress and feed herself.*

*Judy's friends thought she needed lots of time to practice walking and talking, she needed more friends and she needed to be accepted by people outside of her classmates. One friend also said that Judy needed to learn to dress more like the other third-graders.*

*The educators in the group thought Judy should have lots of time to practice walking, she needed to learn a communication system that everyone could understand, receive a hearing evaluation, interact with more friends and receive lots of affection.*

"What would an ideal day at school be like for the student?"

The final question in the seven is "What would the individual's ideal day at school look like and what must be done to make it happen?"

Some MAPS groups find it helpful to answer this question by outlining a typical school day for other children the student's age, who do not have disabilities. For example, each morning, the class might work on reading for an hour, then math, then recess and then music. After lunch, the class might have art, alternated with physical education on some days, then science, then recess and finally language arts. The team might think about how the needs outlined before could be met at school. After that, the team would think about the kinds of help a student would need to truly achieve inclusion at school.

*The members of Judy's team decided that an ideal day for Judy would be about the same as a typical day for the members of her class. They decided that Judy would need extra help, but that she could probably participate in many more class activities.*

*The educators in the group noted that if occupational and speech therapy could be interspersed with Judy's daily activities, her language and motor skills would improve and she would be able to participate directly in many class activities.*

*The other children suggested that, for now, when Judy can't do something (like multiplication) with the rest of the class, she could be working on another useful activity and still be in the classroom with them. Mrs. Martinez agreed and suggested that perhaps Judy could use that time to do her classroom job of watering the plants.*

# MAPS AND THE IEP


"The exciting part is the relationships Emily is building within her community. Children of all ages participating in the planning activities are learning to understand differences that exist in all of us. Emily's are just more apparent."
Duane and Lorri Uftin, Sherburn, MN, in letter to Beach Center

"This past weekend, Joel went to his first birthday party. His father went along with him, but the other children pretty much took over when they got there. They have a great buddy system going, they will meet him at the car at school in the morning and take him out to the car after school. He has buddies at lunch and at recess. He's doing great and he is being provided with much more stimulation in his day."
Teri Goodrich, Topeka parent

Many parents are concerned initially about how they can use MAPS to plan for their child, because they aren't sure how to fit MAPS into their child's Individualized Education Plan.

Advocates of MAPS believe that the MAPS process and the IEP are interrelated. IEP teams can and should use the information gained from MAPS along with other assessment information to develop IEP goals and objectives, and to plan students' daily schedules.

*Judy's team decides to use the MAPS information and other supporting evaluation data to develop IEP objectives under each of the life skill areas of: work, self-help, and recreation/leisure. Using these skill areas will help them to address a balanced curriculum for Judy - a curriculum which stresses increasing her independence within functional activities and which also stresses developing friendships.*

*Judy's team decides her IEP goal of work could be addressed even now. They decided that if Judy could continually participate more with the typical classmates, she would be more prepared for the "real world" of work in integrated community settings. During the classroom activities which are difficult to adapt for Judy, she will participate in an in-school job. These jobs will be useful and will be identified by her interests and abilities.*

*Judy could work on self-help skills in the classroom, the group decides, by learning about dressing, such as taking her coat off and putting it on before and after recess and changing her shoes for physical education class. Too, Judy could work on feeding herself in the cafeteria, by opening her own lunch box and milk.*

*In the area of recreation, the group concluded, Judy could benefit from participating in the physical education class that her classmates have each day for 20 minutes. In addition, she will go to recess with her classmates more often, so that her physical coordination might improve with some informal play activities. Also, Judy could go to the school library with a friend and check out books and she could listen to music with friends after lunch.*

*The team will also request help from a vision specialist and a hearing specialist. These two related services professionals will assist the team in adapting regular education activities to allow Judy to more fully participate. Communication and mobility will be included within each of the IEP goals.*

# MAPS AND FRIENDSHIPS


"My life is a chronicle of friendships. My friends - all those about me - created my world anew each day. Without their loving, all the courage I could summon would not suffice to keep my heart strong enough for life."
Helen Keller

An important component of every student's school participation is friendships. Some schools have peer tutor programs. These programs help friendships develop between typical and special education students. Other schools might develop what is called a Circle of Friends. This Circle is made up of four to six non-disabled students, an adult facilitator, and the student. The Circle plans ways to more fully include the student in classroom and extracurricular activities. Structured friendship or peer programs are important in developing and supporting friendships in an inclusive program.

*Judy's MAPS team decides that, based on her identified need for friends, a Circle of Friends should be developed for Judy. Ms. Gregory and Mrs. Martinez, Judy's teachers, volunteer to facilitate the Circle of Friends. Both Lisa and Jay say that they want to be included and suggest three other third-graders who might also want to be in the Circle. A date is set for the first Circle meeting to be held during a lunch period the following week.*

*The MAPS meeting adjourns after a date for the IEP has been set. Judy's teachers thank everyone for their participation and for their support of Judy.*

# TIPS FOR PARENTS


"When I approached people to sit in on this session, I explained that it was a brainstorming process. . . I told them we would sit down as a group and go through questions relating to his educational plan, and that it would be informal. I didn't seek out people just because I knew they were especially creative or expressive. I asked people who have a sincere interest in Matt."
Susan Arnold, Topeka parent

"There are only so many things you can get done in a school career and you want to make sure the things you are targeting for instruction and for inclusion are in a child's individual program . . It is totally within the rights and realm of the parents to ask that people spend some time thinking about that."
Dr. Terri Vandercook, University of Minnesota

How can you get a MAPS group in motion for your child? Or, how can you assist your school in pursuing an inclusive climate? Here are some tips for encouraging educators and others to try out MAPS and other innovative strategies for integration.

1. Talk with your school district's special education director about your sincere belief that MAPS could facilitate better learning not only for your child, but also for other students in the integrated setting.
2. Request that your child's teacher and team review information about MAPS. Share this manual and/or other resources listed at the end of this manual with the team.
3. Encourage the team to try MAPS as part of planning for the IEP.
4. Find out if there are schools in your area using MAPS, and visit them, along with some professionals from your school district, so that people can see for themselves the effects of MAPS.
5. Join organizations like the Association for Retarded Citizens, the Association for Persons with Severe Handicaps, or other advocacy groups in your area, and encourage those groups to help you and other parents make sure that educators have the opportunity to learn about MAPS.
6. Become aware of the federally supported parent training and information center for your state or locality. They can provide assistance in understanding least restrictive environment and strategies for teamwork between parents and professionals.
7. Parents, like everyone in society in general, need to work at making sure their view of their child with disabilities is positive. Parents need to focus on the child's strengths, gifts, talents and needs and they should work, through MAPS and through less formal techniques, to share this view with the child's classmates and teachers.
8. It is important for parents to try to make sure all of their children (regardless of disability) are involved in some way in the community. Some ways to do this include:

   a. planning family outings to concerts, movies, etc.

b. helping children become involved in scouts or church groups.

c. encouraging children to volunteer in community organizations.

d. helping recreation planning committees become more aware of the need for integrated recreational opportunities.

Once you have established a MAPS group, how can you help make sure the outcomes will be positive? First, make sure you give a lot of thought to the people who will be at the sessions. Of course, include educators who work with your child on a daily basis, and peers. It also might be a good idea to "think broad" when deciding what other adults to ask. You might want to ask some of your close friends, other parents of children with disabilities or associates from your church. Perhaps you could ask a co-worker or your child's daycare provider or a former teacher.

Along those same lines, it is also important to make sure the MAPS team facilitator is chosen with care. The facilitator plays an important part in ensuring that the sessions go smoothly. Parents and educators should make sure they give special consideration in naming a facilitator. Ideally, the facilitator should be someone who is familiar with the student but whose input is not absolutely needed in the session. For example, a school social worker or counselor would probably know the student, but the teachers and specialists would provide the educators' input.

Also, make time to go through the questions before the sessions and formulate your answers, because other people in the MAPS group will look to you, as the parent, to guide them through the process, even though there will be a facilitator there. Make sure you also are encouraging other members of the team to be honest in their answers. Team members might hesitate to be negative in their responses. Although the focus in MAPS is on the positive, be sure and let the group know that in their descriptions of your child, for example, it is okay to point out behavior that isn't necessarily typical. They might say "drools," for example, or "mumbles." Also, at the same time, encourage the team members to cast aside their perceptions of your child's limitations. Encourage them to assume your child is capable of something until that has been proven otherwise.

"We must accept finite disappointment, but we must never lose infinite hope."
Martin Luther King

The facilitator will probably find it helpful to have name tags for everyone in the group. The name tags should have each person's first name printed in large letters. In addition, the facilitator or someone else should be the appointed note-taker in the sessions. This way, good ideas will be written down before they are forgotten.

After your MAPS team has been through the process, the facilitator or the teacher should encourage feedback from them and also be sure to thank them verbally and perhaps with a note.

MAPS is one tool for parents to work toward true integration for their children. Most parents dream of their child leading a "typical" life once they have reached adulthood. MAPS might be one way parents can start thinking ahead. As your child progresses through school, here are some things you can do to make sure your child is prepared for work when he or she has finished school:

1. As early as pre-school, help your child think about careers by pointing out different kinds of work and the people who do that work, and discuss what those jobs entail.
2. Try to help your child become independent by learning to do things on his/her own.
3. Give your child duties around the house, and follow up to make sure chores are done, and on time.
4. Make sure you know what kind of vocational training your schools will provide, at the junior high and high school level, and explore other agencies so you know what is available in your community.
5. Make sure your child gains some type of work experience, through the schools or other agencies, while he/she is in high school.
6. Start planning for transition at age 13 or 14, and have a transition plan in place by age 16 so the move from school to work goes smoothly.
7. People with disabilities, like anyone else, often find jobs through people they or their families know. So don't hesitate to talk about your dream of employment for your child with lots of people. One of them might have an "in" to a job.

# CONCLUSION


"We are moving to a new way of thinking, a new way of serving children with disabilities in the school community."
Dr. Terri Vandercook,
University of Minnesota

In recent years, we have heard a lot about the "Class of 2000" and what is in store for these youngsters as we approach the 21st Century. These students, we are told, will need many skills, some of which are not in our realm now, to cope with the challenges they will face. Is this not also true for students with disabilities? What will they need to meet the challenges of the 21st Century? We believe that students with disabilities will need to have a Circle of Friends and be used to typical, daily interaction with all kinds of people. So, just as we need to plan more carefully for the futures of typical students, we need to plan carefully for those with disabilities.

The MAPS process could become an important planning tool for students with disabilities. The process can help their families, peers and teachers look down the road and anticipate problems and goals and it will lead to helping students with disabilities be better-prepared to meet the challenges of life.

An undoubtedly important effect of the team approach inherent in MAPS is the fact that it will help more people have a better understanding of disabilities. This understanding will reach far beyond the MAPS planning sessions, because all of the people who participate - educators, family members and peers - will come away from the sessions with more understanding of the strengths and needs of people who have disabilities.

At the core of MAPS is a philosophy of acceptance and inclusion of persons with disabilities. In our society, persons with disabilities are too often viewed in terms of what they cannot do, instead of focusing on what they CAN do. In MAPS, the focus on strengths, and the acknowledgment of "needs," not weaknesses, will help to build on the student's abilities rather than focusing on their disabilities. MAPS also provides a basis for planning for inclusion. Students with disabilities who are included in integrated school settings will be better prepared to function in integrated community settings as well.

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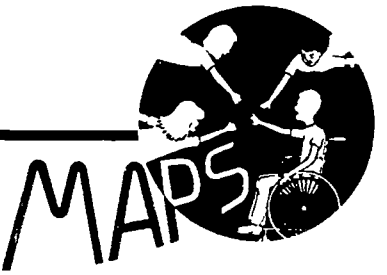


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**Additional Resources**

"Families and Disability Newsletter," Beach Center on Families and Disability, University of Kansas, Volumes 1- 5.

"MAPS: A Plan for Including All Children in Schools," (1990) videotape, Kansas State Board of Education.

"With A Little Help from My Friends," (1988) videotape, Expectations Unlimited.

"Kids Belong Together," (1990), videotape, Expectations Unlimited.

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# NOTES