

## Teacher Tips for Student-led IEP Implementation

Teacher Tip	Rationale	Supporting Quote
<p><b>Start small</b></p>	<p>Identify a key group of stakeholders invested in the project and work with them to select the appropriate set of students.</p> <p>Starting small allows you to reduce resistance, educate stakeholders as you go, document team learning, and focus on creating activities and protocols that can work for your students and school when you're ready to scale up.</p>	<p><i>"The most important thing is no matter how afraid you are, no matter how unclear or uncertain you are, is just to get involved."</i> - Parent</p>
<p><b>Make sure all stakeholders understand the why and the how.</b></p>	<p>Don't assume that people know what you're talking about. It might take you delivering information multiple times and multiple ways to build necessary buy-in from students, families, other teachers and administrators.</p>	<p><i>"It's realizing that the senior administration didn't have a well developed understanding of the purpose or meaning. It took a few conversations to get them to understand how important it was for us to participate."</i> – SpEd Administrator</p>
<p><b>Plan ahead, set realistic goals, and follow through.</b></p>	<p>Planning ahead, setting realistic goals, and staying organized will help you anticipate and overcome potential challenges. It's easy to lose focus with everything else going on during the school day. If you make this a priority, others will follow your lead.</p>	<p><i>"Once you establish those goals for you and your students and make that time sacred, it becomes a non-negotiable."</i> - Teacher</p>

<p><b>Build on your success.</b></p>	<p>Use your successes to leverage buy-in with a larger number of students, parents, staff and administrators. This is powerful work and when stakeholders who are initially reluctant to participate see it in action they become invested.</p>	<p><i>“The principal was very skeptical about having this in his school. He didn’t think that it was a value to the school day, but in the end he could actually see where the students had changed and had really, really become very invested...”</i> - Transition Specialist</p> <p><i>“People still have this mentality that students with disabilities can’t advocate for themselves or they don’t have the capacity and so that was the biggest challenge that I faced.”</i> – Transition Specialist</p>
<p><b>It takes time.</b></p>	<p>That’s it. It takes time. Acknowledge it, embrace it, and plan accordingly. As you and other stakeholders come to a better understanding of how this works, you’ll be able to refine and streamline the process. It’s worth it!</p>	<p><i>“Kids should be able to understand what their goals are.”</i> – SpEd Teacher</p>
<p><b>Don’t reinvent the wheel, but make sure it’s the right size and shape for you and your students.</b></p>	<p>Use the resources available and make them work for you and your students. Identify creative ways to include elements of this work in your practice including instruction, casework and educating parents, staff and administrators in special education and the larger school community.</p>	<p><i>“Think of creative ways where you can embed it into other activities and classes.”</i> – Transition Coordinator</p>

<p><b>Make it your own.</b></p>	<p>The student-led IEP process looks different from school-to-school and from student-to-student. Develop a process that works for you, your students, their families, and the school at large. Resist the urge to compare your program to programs at other schools. As long as you're helping students and their families move along the continuum of student IEP participation, then you're on the right track.</p>	<p><i>"The wrong way of thinking about this is that there's one way to do this."</i> – SpEd Teacher</p> <p><i>"The way that you might be doing it may look different, or the way that your students are participating might look different than the way a colleague is doing it."</i> – SpEd Teacher</p>
<p><b>Talking about disability is difficult.</b></p>	<p>There's no way around it, and it's the first crucial step in helping students come to a fuller understanding about their strengths, limitations, rights, and goals. Take the time to think about how you will approach this conversation in a way that will meet the unique needs of individual students and their families.</p>	<p><i>"It's the parent's anxiety that can roll over to the student."</i> – Transition Coordinator</p>
<p><b>Challenge your practice.</b></p>	<p>This is hard work but it has the capacity to change the lives of your students and their families for the better. Have high expectations for yourself and don't let roadblocks prevent you from making it happen for them.</p>	<p><i>"If you're comfortable, you're probably not pushing yourself."</i> – SpEd Teacher</p>