



Success Stories

Users' Guide

Success Stories: Users' Guide

The success stories featured on the LD@school website are produced to inspire educators. Each story comes with its own message for educators to take away and inspire innovative ways in making classrooms more equitable and inclusive learning spaces for all students, where students with learning disabilities (LDs) can achieve their full potential.

The goal of this Users' Guide is to support the professional learning of educators, particularly those who work with students with LDs. The activities presented in this guide are designed for educators to reflect on their instructional strategies and explore new teaching approaches for supporting students with LDs.

The guide includes the following sections:

- The *Understanding Student Strengths and Needs* activity is designed for educators to practice writing the "Student's Areas of Strength and Areas of Need" section of the Individual Education Plan (IEP) as well as identify teaching strategies to support these areas.
- The *Discussion and Reflection* section is meant to incite some discussions and/or reflections, individually or in a group, about the success stories.
- The *My Success Story* activity provides all the questions posed to students, educators, and family members in the success stories on the website and encourages new success stories to be created with your students with LDs.
- *Appendix A* provides a list of components found in the Individual Education Plan (IEP), including examples of students' strengths and needs, yearly goals, adaptations and modifications, as well as how to support and develop a student's transition plan.





Understanding Student Strengths and Needs

Every learner has strengths and needs and it is essential to understand a student’s strengths to support their needs as learners and to help them overcome learning challenges. A requirement of the IEP is to include the areas of strength and need that specifically relate to the student’s learning.

After reading one of the success stories on the LD@school website, list the student’s strengths in the column “Areas of Strength” (e.g. visual skills), and the challenges the student may experience based on the learning difficulties expressed in the story in the column “Areas of Need” (e.g. working memory). Afterward, determine which teaching strategies may best support the learning of this student; a list of all the individualized teaching strategies used with the student would be recorded in the Instructional Accommodations section of the IEP.

A resource that may assist with this activity is the York Waterfall Chart: *Understanding Learning Disabilities – How Processing Affects Learning*.

➤ [Click here to access this resource on the LD@school website \(www.LDatSchool.ca/literacy/york-waterfall-chart\).](http://www.LDatSchool.ca/literacy/york-waterfall-chart)

Areas of Strength	Areas of Need

The *Individual Education Plan (IEP): A Resource Guide (2004)* developed by the Ontario Ministry of Education may also assist with this activity.

➤ [Click here to access the resource guide on the Ontario Ministry of Education’s website \(www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/guide/resource/IEPresguid.pdf\).](http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/guide/resource/IEPresguid.pdf)

Teaching Strategies:

- For example, provide a mnemonic device to support the student’s recall of information.
-
-
-
-
-
-

The LD@school website presents a number of different strategies and resources for helping students with LDs succeed.

➤ [Click here to access the Resources section of the website for ideas relating to specific teaching strategies that may benefit specific students with LDs \(www.LDatSchool.ca/resources\).](http://www.LDatSchool.ca/resources)

Discussion and Reflection

After reviewing one of the success stories on the LD@school website, use the questions below for group discussion and/or personal reflection.

1. What teaching strategies would effectively support the learning of this student?
2. What accommodations for learning should be recommended for this student (including instructional accommodations, environmental accommodations and assessment accommodations)?
3. Would assistive technology be appropriate for this learner? If so, what types of assistive technology could be of benefit?
4. Which subjects or courses would be accommodated only? Which subjects or courses would be modified?
5. Would this student benefit from alternative programming?

➤ [Click here to access the LD@school article, "Accommodations, Modifications & Alternative Skill Areas for Students with LDs"](http://www.LDatSchool.ca/learn-about-LDs/accommodations-modifications-alternative-skill-areas-for-students-with-LDs) for an overview of accommodations, modifications and alternative skill areas (www.LDatSchool.ca/learn-about-LDs/accommodations-modifications-alternative-skill-areas-for-students-with-LDs).





My Success Story

Do you and/or your students enjoy reading the LD@school success stories on our website? Why not create your own! We've included the sample questions that we ask students, educators, and parents or guardians to create our success stories. You may use the questions below or develop your own. To create success stories, you may choose to incorporate multiple perspectives or you can choose to focus solely on the perspective of the student. Conferencing with your students in preparation for the success story will assist with their understanding of their strengths as a learner.

You may wish to give students the option of creating their success story in different forms of media to capitalize on their strengths. For example, students may wish to create their success story by using a graphic organizer, creating a video or audio clip, using visuals, or developing a written piece of work.

If you would like to share your students' success stories with LD@school, [▶ click here to send us an email to info@LDatSchool.ca](#) or send us a tweet to [@LDatSchool](#) with the hashtag [#LDsuccess](#). We're always looking to highlight student successes and inspire educators to try new strategies to help their students succeed at school.

Questions for Student(s)

1. First name:
2. Grade:
3. When were you diagnosed with a learning disability and how did you feel during the process?
4. What are some of your greatest strengths? What do you succeed the most in at school?
5. What are your learning needs? What do you have the most difficulty with at school?
6. What strategies have you learned to help you succeed at school? How have educators in your school helped you to use these strategies?
7. What do you think is most important for an educator to know about helping a student with learning disabilities to succeed in the classroom?
8. Is there anything else that you would like to share about your experiences with a learning disability?

Questions for Educators or School Team

1. Your role in the school team:
2. Please describe the learning profile of the student, including both their strengths and needs.
3. How has this student grown and become successful since their diagnosis?
4. What do you believe is most important for an educator to know about helping a student with learning disabilities succeed in their classroom?
5. Is there anything else that you would like to share about your experiences with this student?

Questions for Parents or Guardians

1. Relationship to the Student:
2. When was your family member diagnosed with a learning disability and how did you feel during the process?
3. What are some of your family member's greatest strengths?
4. What are some of the learning needs of your family member?
5. How has having a family member with a learning disability had an impact on your life?
6. What do you believe is most important for an educator to know about helping a student with learning disabilities to succeed in their classroom?
7. Is there anything else that you would like to share about your experiences with having a family member with learning disabilities?

Appendix A: Components of the Individual Education Plan

Areas of Strength and Areas of Need

The areas of strength and areas of need must be consistent with the statement of decision by the Identification, Placement and Review Committee (IPRC). The areas of strength should describe the student’s learning styles, previously acquired learning skills, and particular areas in which the student has strengths. The areas of need recorded in the IEP should describe clearly the reasons why the student requires an IEP. It is appropriate to include skill deficits that relate to the student’s exceptionality and/or interfere with his or her ability to learn.

Examples of possible areas of strength and/ or areas of need
Learning styles: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Visual, auditory, or kinesthetic learning• Whole or analytic learning
Language skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Receptive language skills• Expressive language skills• Listening• Speaking• Writing• Reading
Mathematics skills: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Basic concepts• Problem-solving skills• Use of concrete/hands-on materials at his or her disposal
Other: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Self-direction• Independence• Organizational skills• Self-confidence• Time-management skills• Social skills• Information processing• Attention and concentration



Annual Program Goal

An annual program goal is a statement that describes what a student can reasonably be expected to accomplish by the end of the school year. It represents a reasonable target, not a rigid requirement. Annual program goals should be expressed as observable, measurable outcomes, for example:

- At the end of the school year, this student is expected to achieve half of the expectations for his or her grade level in mathematics.
- At the end of the school year, this student is expected to acquire and apply grammar concepts studied, 8 times out of 10.
- At the end of the school year, the student will apply the strategy taught (such as mind maps) in reading comprehension.

Accommodations (AC)

What the student needs to learn and to demonstrate his or her learning.

Instructional Accommodations	Environmental Accommodations	Assessment Accommodations
<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• More frequent breaks• Simplified format of texts for reading• Use of certain assistive technologies• Allowing the use of manipulatives	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Placement of the student's desk to minimize noise and distractions• Use of headphones	<p>Examples:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Alternative environmental accommodations as required• Additional guidelines for written assessments• Written assessment followed by an oral assessment, with the final mark being a combined total



Modified Expectations (MOD) and Alternative Expectations (ALT)

According to the student's areas of need, it may be necessary to make changes to the expectations for one or more of the subjects. These changes are stated in the annual goals (i.e., what the student should be able to accomplish at the end of the school year) and specify modified or alternative learning expectations, as well as the teaching strategies and assessment methods.

Learning Expectations (List modified/alternative expectations outlining knowledge and/or skills to be assessed, by reporting period.)	Teaching Strategies (List only those that are particular to the student and specific to the learning expectations.)	Assessment Methods (Identify the assessment method to be used for each learning expectation.)
Examples: Identify information expressed explicitly (specific information in a newsletter)	Examples: Listen to the text after reading it, and underline specific information using a particular colour	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Marking grid • Oral assessment
Example: Identify information that is expressed implicitly (an author's feelings or perceptions)	Example: Use a sheet listing various feelings to find which ones relate to the text	Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion with an education professional



Transition Plan

This plan is developed for each student with an IEP for all transitions (for example, the transition from secondary school to college). The plan includes the transition goals, actions required for achieving these goals, persons responsible for these actions, and timelines.

Below is an example of a section of a transition plan for a student admitted to a college.

Goal: To ensure that the student has the required reports to submit to ABC College.

Actions Required	Person(s) Responsible for Actions	Timelines
Meet with the student and his or her parents to explain their responsibilities during the transition to post-secondary activities	The resource teacher will set a date to meet with the student and the parents	Before the end of May in the last year of secondary school
Give a copy of the psycho-educational assessment to the student, and explain the results to everyone in attendance at the meeting	Resource teacher and psychologist	At the meeting planned before the end of May
Provide a list of assistive technologies to be shared with the Centre for Student Services of ABC College	Resource teacher, counselling department head, computer technician	At the meeting planned before the end of May
With the support of the student and the parents, plan a meeting with the Centre for Student Services of ABC College	Resource teacher, counselling department head, student, and parents	End of May or beginning of June



Relevant resources of the Ontario Ministry of Education:

- **Click here** to access *Transition Planning: A Resource Guide (2002)* (www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/transiti/transition.pdf).
- **Click here** to access *The Individual Education Plan (IEP): A Resource Guide (2004)* (www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/general/elemsec/speced/guide/resource/iepresguid.pdf).
- **Click here** to access "Policy/Program Memorandum No.°156" (2013) (www.edu.gov.on.ca/extra/eng/PPM/PPM156.pdf).

Relevant resources on the LD@school website

- **Click here** to access the article "Accommodations, Modifications and Alternative Skill Areas for Students with LDs" (www.LDatSchool.ca/learn-about-LDs/accommodations-modifications-alternative-skill-areas-for-students-with-LDs/).
- **Click here** to access the webinar, "IEP Development and Implementation: Considering the Student, the Environment and the Academic Domain" (www.LDatSchool.ca/IEPs/IEP-development-and-implementation).

Thank you for reading the success stories on the LD@school website as well as for using this users' guide.

If you know of a student who might want to share their journey with learning disabilities on the LD@school website, ➤ **please click here to send us an email at info@LDatSchool.ca**.

Funding for the publication of this production was provided by the Ministry of Education. Please note that the views expressed in the publication are the views of the Recipient and do not necessarily reflect those of the Ministry of Education.