



TeacherActivity



FamilyInvolvement

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## Child-First Profile

Basic information, while important, can never adequately capture the unique character of a student. Creating a **Child-First Profile** captures a bigger picture of the student's and family's strengths and preferences, hopes and dreams, perceived obstacles to achieving those dreams, and goals for the coming years (adapted from Jack Pearpoint, *Inclusion Press International*). This is an opportunity to focus the team members on the positive and to be proactive and creative.

To create a **Child-First Profile**, meet with the student, the family, previous teacher(s), support staff, and specialists who know the student well, as well as those who will be working with the student but do *not* know him/her. Together, generate a picture of the student and a plan for progress toward achieving life-long goals.



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Select a time when all parties can be present and can participate for the entire session (approximately 2 hours). Encourage families to bring anyone who can help paint a comprehensive picture of the child from diverse perspectives. Provide name tags for all.

Select a facilitator. The facilitator does not need to know the child, but should be able to present the activity in a warm, friendly, and non-threatening manner, keep the process moving, and explain and support ground rules which ensure that everyone's ideas and concerns are respected and considered.

Use a comfortable room with adequate seating, good lighting, and enough wall space to place large pieces of paper to record the session. Provide simple refreshments and an area for children to play if needed. Begin with a welcome, an overview of the process, an introduction of all participants, and a clear time limit.

Post large pieces of colored paper on the wall with headings beginning with **Strengths and Preferences** followed by **Hopes and Dreams, Obstacles to Achieving Dreams** and finally **Things to Do**. The **Things to Do** list will serve



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as an immediate action plan with built-in accountability. Some of the items on this list will already be on your planning list. Others will be new and will add to your planning in a very important way because they are the highest priorities of the child and family. Don't leave until the **Things to Do** list has been completed, and individuals have accepted responsibility and completion dates for each item.

Allow a few minutes for questions and necessary clarification. Be certain the family has a primary contact name and number for additional questions. If necessary, set a date for a follow-up meeting. Finally, designate someone to type the notes and distribute them to all of the participants, including the child if she/he is able to read.



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