

MEET JOHN

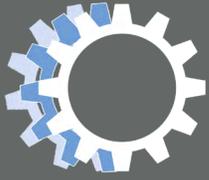
Pre-Reading Question

- *How can you build in leadership opportunities for students with communication barriers?*
- *What are some ways students can lead their own IEP meetings?*

John is a 14-year-old with cerebral palsy. He receives the majority of his instruction in the special education classroom and is working towards a special education diploma. He has some communication deficits and currently reads at a third-grade level and is on track to earn a special education diploma. John has been diligently working on improving his communication skills and proficiency in using his new AAC device. Right now, he has some pre-programmed phrases and can spell out some names of family, teachers, paraeducators, and friends. His annual IEP meeting is in two weeks and he has been invited to join. His teacher has been working with John to teach him leadership skills that he can use both inside and outside of school. She wants John to lead his IEP meeting by greeting everyone who comes into the IEP meeting and going around to distribute copies of documents to each person. Other than this, John's teacher plans on leading the rest of the meeting, including going through the PowerPoint that her and John created. She feels with John's communication deficits, it will take too long for him to lead this part of the IEP meeting.

What's the Problem?

Though John's teacher is on the right track in wanting him to demonstrate leadership skills through participation in his IEP meeting, she did not give him the opportunity to utilize these skills to his fullest potential. John could have used his communication device to navigate through the PowerPoint, and he could have introduced each section of the IEP as they went through the document. John's teacher could have used his IEP meeting as an opportunity for him to practice leadership skills, regardless of the fact that he uses a communication device.



Transition

T E N N E S S E E

What's the Solution?

Two weeks before the IEP meeting, John and his teacher have been programming names of the people who will be at the meeting into his AAC device and practicing using them. However, John's teacher realizes that he could be doing even more to be involved and engaged in his leadership abilities throughout the meeting. She teaches him about all the sections in an IEP document. John and his teacher decide he will use his AAC device to introduce each section as the team goes through the IEP. They program key words for each section into his AAC device, and practice multiple times before the IEP meeting. John happily shared this news with his parents who were thrilled that there was still a chance to pursue his dream of attending an inclusive higher education program.

Post-Reading Questions

- *How could John's teacher help him practice using his communication device in other ways beyond the IEP meeting?*
- *How could John's teacher encourage other IEP team members (such as a gen ed teacher or his parents) to build in opportunities for him to use his communication device?*