

1. What types of skills fall under the category of community life skills?

A crucial aspect of preparing students for life after high school includes giving them the keys to live and navigate their world as independently as possible. Success in navigating community life will play a huge role in whether students are successful in postsecondary education or employment. Independence looks different for each one of us. Each student will have different needs and preferences. Too often, where someone will live is the only factor we associate with independent living. However, true independence encompasses much more than residential life. Independence means living, working, and enjoying life just like everyone else. Think about relationships with families and friends, work, interests and hobbies, health, money, and transportation. All these facets of community life are essential to a good life for students. There are numerous skills that can fall under independent living and community involvement. Some of the most important ones highlighted in this course include residential living and daily living skills, financial literacy, social skills, and transportation skills.

2. How can I use visual supports to teach community life skills?

Visual supports can help to convey abstract concepts in a concrete manner. Visuals are helpful for everyone. Consider your own everyday life. What tools do you use to help keep yourself organized? You might use a calendar, notes, and lists, all of which are visual supports. For students with disabilities, visual supports can be incorporated into task analyses, visual schedules, communication about classroom expectations, or to indicate prompts for behaviors. Visual supports are a good way to reduce teacher directions and to improve student independence as instructions can be transferred from the teacher to the visual. Pictures and images can be used to help a student navigate their environment and to facilitate their understanding of verbal language.

Videos are a powerful visual tool. Video modeling is a strategy in which a student watches a video of someone performing a chained skill and then performs the chain after the video has ended. Video modeling can help promote student independence as the instruction comes from the device rather than a teacher, job coach, or paraeducator. Video prompting (where the video is stopped after each step of the task and the student has the chance to perform each step) might be helpful for students who may not remember all of the steps that they saw being performed in a whole video model. Video prompting can also break up long tasks.

3. How can data be used to measure attainment of community life skills?

Quality instruction is data-driven. All instruction, whether in the classroom, home, or community, introduces opportunities for data collection and opportunities for assessing your student's success on individual items or activities. Comprehensive data collection will become a necessary tool to measure your student's progress in developing skills and knowledge necessary to achieve their post-school goals.

Data can be collected in all types of settings, including the classroom, home, other areas of the school such as the cafeteria, or the community. Data can be collected outside formal instruction time, such as lunchtime or on the



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bus. The entire IEP team can be involved in data collection, including the special education teacher, the general education teacher, the paraprofessional, a parent, or a related service provider like a vocational rehabilitation counselor. The types of data that can be used to measure community life skills include frequency counts, duration, latency, and the percentage of correct trials against the total number of trials.

Frequency counts measure the number of times a behavior occurs (e.g. the number of times a student greets peers, asks for help at a grocery store, or puts a dish away after washing it).

Duration measures how long a behavior occurs from start to finish (e.g. how long it takes a student to put a sandwich together, find items at a grocery store, or to count change).

Latency measures how long it takes for a behavior to occur after a prompt (e.g. how long it takes a student to turn off the dial on a stove, to start getting ready for work, or to start a job task after a prompt).

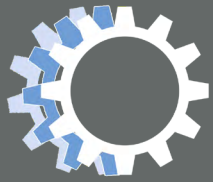
Percentage of correct trials against the total number of trials is a measure of the number of times a student does a behavior correctly out of the number of opportunities that the student has to do the behavior. For example, the number of times a student logged into an online banking account correctly out of ten opportunities could be measured. The number of times a student correctly enters their pin number into an ATM machine could also be measured.

4. How do I promote maintenance and generalization of skills?

Maintenance refers to the ability of a student to perform a skill after they have mastered it. Generalization refers to the ability of a student to perform a skill across various environments, with different materials, in different settings, and/or in the presence of different people. Maintenance and generalization do not occur automatically. In order to promote maintenance and generalization, teachers must plan many instructional variations. Teachers can vary the person providing instruction, the places in which instruction occurs, the ways in which instruction is provided, and the materials used by the student.

5. What is the difference between a field trip and community-based instruction (CBI)?

CBI is a teaching strategy in which instruction takes place in the settings where the behaviors and transition skills you are teaching would naturally occur. During CBI, students work on skills to achieve their IEP goals and to fulfill transition activities. Data collection is used during CBI to evaluate the effectiveness of the instruction as well as student progress towards goals. Many field trips are intended to be educational (e.g. going to museums), but there are also field trips that are intended to be fun outings. What distinguishes CBI from field trips is the focus of CBI on providing targeted instruction to help students achieve specific goals. CBI involves programmed



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opportunities for students to practice skills and data collection on the performance of these skills, while field trips may not.

For example, a common outing for students is bowling. Bowling would be a field trip when students go to bowl for fun and there is not an emphasis on instruction of specific skills. Bowling would be considered CBI when students go to the bowling alley specifically to work on skills related to their goals. For example, students who are working on financial literacy skills could plan how much money they need to bring to the bowling alley, practice paying for rounds of bowling and shoe rental, and practice buying food from the snack counter at the bowling alley while the teacher monitors their performance.

6. CBI can be costly. What are some actions that I can take to finance CBI?

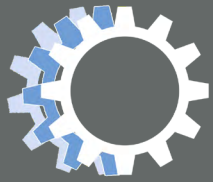
The first place you should seek funding is your school. CBI is an important part of special education and the school may have some funds dedicated to it. If there are no funds dedicated to CBI, you may have to advocate for them. Outside of the school's budget, there are some other ways to fund CBI. For example, you can apply for grants from the state, businesses, and community organizations such as nonprofits. You can also seek donations from the community. Students can even build skills while earning money to use for CBI. For example, students could work at a school-based enterprise (businesses run by students within their school such as coffee shops and school stores) in order to generate revenue which could be used to fund CBI. By working at the school-based enterprise, students can learn employment and social skills. Another way in which students can gain skills while earning money for CBI is by having students organize a fundraiser. This would be a good way to foster leadership, which is an important component of self-determination. (See our course on self-determination!). By planning a fundraiser, students can also learn financial literacy and organizational skills.

7. How can I make CBI individualized when I have a whole group of students going to one CBI site?

Individualizing CBI takes a lot of planning. It can be helpful to create a list of the potential CBI sites in the community and documenting all of the potential skills that occur at the site. Another list could be made of what students can do in preparation for CBI and while travelling to the site. These may be daunting tasks, but they can save time in the long run. Next, consider the annual goals and transition activities of your students and select the site that addresses the most goals and transition activities. You can also have students practice mastered goals to promote generalization and maintenance. If possible, send students whose goals and transition activities align in small groups. It can be challenging to find activities relevant to large groups of students in one site.

8. I live in a rural community where there are not many options for CBI, what can I do to teach community life skills to students?

The first step would be to analyze the community resources that you have available to you. Shops, gas stations, farmer's markets or produce stands, and religious institutions could all be potential community locations where students could



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practice skills. If there are no community options within a reasonable distance, role-playing will be an important instructional strategy to use in the classroom. Students can practice the interactions that they will use in the community in the classroom. Another option can be bringing in objects used in the community (e.g. cash registers, restaurant menus, silverware, etc.) that are as similar to the objects in the natural environment as possible and giving students the opportunity to practice with them. A school-based enterprise (a business run by students within a school) could be another way for students to practice skills needed in the community. Students could run a coffee shop, grow and sell items from a garden on the school grounds, or sell items in a school store.

9. What are examples of residential and daily living skills?

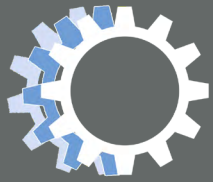
Residential living skills include such skills as choosing a place to live, signing a rental agreement, furnishing, and taking care of your home. Specific skills include doing laundry, vacuuming, sweeping, dusting, cleaning toilets, cleaning bathtubs, being able to contact emergency services or maintenance workers, and problem solving when something in the home is not functioning.

When considering daily living skills to teach to students, there are three very important skill domains to keep in mind: eating, health, and personal care. Eating skills may include purchasing food at the grocery store, planning meals, following recipes, operating kitchen appliances (e.g. a stove, oven, microwave, or dishwasher), cleaning food preparation areas, storing food properly, reading food labels, and developing healthy eating habits. Health skills may include awareness of common illnesses, how and when to seek medical help, which medications to use for certain ailments, the difference between over-the-counter medications and prescription medications, what health insurance is, and how to describe symptoms to health care providers. Personal care skills may include bathing, grooming, dressing, toileting, hand washing, brushing teeth, flossing teeth, and feminine care.

When planning to teach residential and daily living skills, keep in mind that skills should be chosen based on a student's preferences, interests, needs, and strengths.

10. What are examples of financial literacy skills?

Financial literacy refers to a broad variety of money management skills, from understanding the value of money to more sophisticated skills like credit card comparison. Specific financial literacy skills include identifying the value of different bills, estimating cost, making change, making purchases with cash, writing checks, making purchases with a debit or credit card, signing into an online bank account, depositing money, managing a budget, risk management, understanding how to build credit, using banking apps, managing government income, and more. Within the skill of making purchases with a debit or credit card, students will need skills such as inserting the chip and entering their pin number.



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11. What transportation options exist for students with disabilities?

Paratransit options are special transportation services for people with disabilities. Paratransit typically does not run on a set route, so those who want to access paratransit must schedule rides. Paratransit options in Tennessee include Davidson County's AccessRide, MidCumberland in Middle Tennessee, LIFT in Knoxville, and MATAplus in Memphis.

Volunteer Driver Programs are programs in which volunteers provide transportation for those who cannot drive themselves. Knoxville's Volunteer Assisted Transportation Program is an example of a Volunteer Driver Program.

Medical Transportation Programs refer to rides to medical appointments provided by health insurance companies or Medicare.

Fixed-route transit is public transportation that runs on a set route. An example of fixed-route transportation would be a city bus or a subway.

In addition to specialized transportation services, traditional transportation options may be appropriate for students. These options may include driving, walking, riding a bike, carpool or vanpool programs, public buses, shuttles, trolleys, taxis, and ride-shares (e.g. Uber and Lyft).

12. How can I teach transportation skills during the school day?

In the classroom, students can be taught to follow directions, read maps, use Google maps, plan trips, schedule a paratransit ride, read a bus schedule, and identify transportation signs. Role-play can be used in the classroom to teach skills related to transportation before students encounter them in real life. Students can role-play when to pull the cord to indicate that they want to get off a public bus, hiring a taxi cab, scheduling a paratransit ride, and more. Role-play can be especially important when teaching safety skills as it gives students the opportunity to practice these skills in a safe environment. For example, students can role-play interactions with strangers on a bus to practice appropriate interactions with strangers (e.g. refusing to give unnecessary personal information, moving to a different seat, sitting at the front of the bus near the driver, etc.). Students can also practice safety skills related to crossing the street in the classroom before practicing in the community.

Outside of the classroom, community-based instruction (CBI) presents an excellent opportunity to teach transportation skills. Before CBI trips, students can plan the route for the trip. To get to CBI sites, different transportation options can be used so that students can experience them and learn how to use them. Students can also practice crossing the street, using phone apps linked to public transit, identifying visual landmarks, identifying traffic signs, and other transportation skills during CBI.