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Financial Disclosures and Housekeeping

<u>Financial and Non-Financial</u>	<u>Housekeeping</u>
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Learning Objectives

As a result of this presentation, participants will:

- ❖ Prepare an evaluation report that thoroughly documents and uniquely describes the strengths and challenges of each student
- ❖ Describe content that should be included in a student's IEP
- ❖ Identify three new strategies that you will use in your evaluation reports to tell the story of your student


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Strategies for Success

**Making Your Reports Individualized
and Meaningful for All Stakeholders**

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Before the Assessment Plan is Signed...

Consider these factors:

- ❖ Developmental, cultural and academic differences
- ❖ Intervention attempts through the General Education program
- ❖ Educational history, including exposure to pre-K learning opportunities
- ❖ Student's activity, skills and behavior in multiple settings

And be sure to make note of the details and include in your written report!

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Research and Document *Everything!*

- ❖ Educational history
- ❖ Family background and influences
- ❖ Instructional strategies utilized and/or attempted
- ❖ Relevant challenges related to your discipline
- ❖ Environmental influences
- ❖ Impressions from classroom and other school observations
- ❖ Input from family, other team members and prior teachers

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Selecting the Right Assessment Measures

For each student, ask yourself...

- ❖ What unique characteristics have you learned about this child that guide you to a specific area of need or measure?
- ❖ Is there a mismatch between the student's background, experience or skills and expectations?

How do the answers to these questions guide your decisions about the best measures (standardized and qualitative assessments) to identify strengths, needs and goals for this child?

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Standardized and Qualitative Measures

Assess in all areas of suspected disability

- ❖ Use multiple measures, especially in areas of significant need
- ❖ "Qualitative" measures include all the "informal" data we collect that contributes to knowledge of the child
- ❖ Standardized test scores may not be valid for students with disabilities and must be non-discriminatory based on students' cultural background
 - Standardized tests MAY be modified to gather information about a student's abilities and learning potential

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Examples of Qualitative Measures

- ❖ Portfolio of student's work
- ❖ Parent interview or checklist
- ❖ Teacher interview and review of academic portfolio
- ❖ Data and input from other educational professionals
- ❖ Observations in multiple settings
- ❖ Dynamic assessment (test-teach-retest)
- ❖ Real life play experience, language samples, in-context performance of skills/activities, and social interactions

Qualitative assessment measures often provide the best information and more accurately represent the student's skills and challenges

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As you assess, keep in mind how qualitative measures will be documented in your report

Keep notes as you go

- ❖ Document everything that was attempted and completed in the areas of concern
- ❖ Describe why you selected each particular measure – both standardized and qualitative
- ❖ Clarify why certain modifications were made and/or why a test was abandoned
- ❖ Include a brief explanation to address how you confirmed that some skills were not areas of concern

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Comprehensive, Compliant and Valid Reports

A triangulation of data to determine recommendations

- ❖ Standardized tests (with or without modifications, as appropriate for each student)
- ❖ Qualitative measures and assessment procedures
- ❖ A description of functional skills and educational impact

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Make a Case for Your Ultimate Conclusion

- ❖ Add **well-chosen** examples of what the child was and was not able to do
- ❖ Include quotes and/or examples of what the child did and said during testing and observations
- ❖ Don't include areas of "weakness" that are age or developmentally appropriate
- ❖ Ask yourself, "Do my standardized assessment results align with the qualitative information gathered?"
 - If not, how does your written narrative explain the differences and assure the right recommendations

Your reader should come to the same conclusion that you do!

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Most Important!

Your report should tell the story and create an image of the child for the reader

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Important (but sometimes overlooked) Suggestions

- ❖ Know your timelines and plan accordingly
- ❖ Include pre-referral interventions
- ❖ Be able to explain your evaluation, services and recommendations to those without knowledge of your discipline
- ❖ Clear documentation (i.e.: no jargon, meaningful, comprehensive)
- ❖ Communicate clearly how services will look
- ❖ ***Build rapport with educational teams and families***

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Always Check Each Report Carefully

- ❖ Are you giving the right test(s)
 - Know what the test is actually assessing
 - Select the test that is right for the student, based on reported challenges, parent concerns, educational history and other background information
- ❖ Have you scored accurately? Are your SS and percentile ranks reported correctly?
- ❖ Or will you use descriptions of skills and challenges rather than scores?
- ❖ Is the child's name and gender accurate throughout the report?
- ❖ Are there spelling and/or grammatical errors?
 - Run a final spell check and Grammarly before submitting

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Finally...Always Keep in Mind

- ❖ Open and ongoing communication with all stakeholders
- ❖ Clear and complete documentation
- ❖ Emphasis on the student and their unique needs

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Tips for IEP Content

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Present Levels of Performance (PLEP/PLOP)

Objective summary containing current information about a student and linked to demands of the curriculum and school environment

- Provide a clear picture of student performance with baselines including strengths, interests, learning preference(s), etc.
- State progress towards current IEP goals, if the goal(s) have been met/not met (and why)
 - Describe student's response to your services, participation, and progress
 - Explain strategies that have been trialled or the student is currently benefitting from

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Present Levels of Performance (PLEP/PLOP)

- ❖ Describe the student's area(s) of need related to participation/performance in the school environment, access to curriculum, and impact on the student's academic success?
- ❖ Label by student performance areas (i.e. written work/written language; attention to task, communication, social participation)
 - ❖ Be sure to follow your district's policy if they require a different labeling system
- ❖ Link to evaluation findings (if applicable).
- ❖ Include objective data and qualitative details that support statements about baseline and progress

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Goal Writing

Always adhere to your district's policy or guidelines. Review IEPs for goal formatting (e.g., LTG, STG, benchmarks)

- Goals should be collaborative, student-centered, academic and/or functional related to student performance and NOT discipline-specific
- SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant & time-limited) goals are linked to the current present level areas of need.
- Ensure that goals/skills are generalized across the student's environment where they need to be performed.
- Goals can be revised as needed through the IEP process to meet the student's changing needs

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Progress Monitoring

Review student's previous IEPs to see how the district documents this.

- How is the student's progress measured and documented?
- How will you gather data to monitor student progress?
 - Google or Microsoft Forms, hard copies
- What are the timelines for documentation?
- Explain what the data means
 - Is the student progressing toward goals
 - Should interventions be revised
 - If goals are achieved, what's next?

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Special Factors and Supplementary Aids and Services (SAS):

- Describe accommodations, modifications, adaptations, supports, strategies, and/or specially designed interventions you will discuss/recommend to the educational team
- Explain how the absence of supports could adversely affect the student's educational performance so that learning will be negatively impacted.
- Identify team members' responsibilities in access and implementation of each SAS (e.g., obtained by the OT who will train the gen ed and SPED teachers and classrooms aides on implementation)

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Service Delivery (Recommendations to the IEP team)

Consider the team's educationally relevant concerns and priorities

- Explain why the student requires your unique expertise (i.e. OT, PT, Speech)
 - How will this service differ from other IEP team members? (Do Not over-service)
 - How will your service provide access to the classroom curriculum and participation in the school environment?
 - How are goals already being supported within the student's educational program and what is the amount of additional service required for the student to make progress?

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Service Delivery (Recommendations to the IEP team)

- Consider the least restrictive environment (LRE):
 - How will interventions be delivered (context, frequency, strategies & opportunities for generalization)?
 - Should service frequency be changed (e.g., increased, decreased, changed, discontinued)
- Do accommodations or instructional activities by another educational provider sufficiently address the student's needs?

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Final Reminders about Documentation

- Ethically and legally mandated
- Dialogue with other disciplines and family/caregivers re: student baseline/progress
- Explains the impact of disability on student performance
 - Supports your clinical reasoning for each student's eligibility, placement and services
- Guides informed decisions
- Determines the impact of RtI initiatives, interventions & progress monitoring
- Articulates our distinct value, guides advocacy for student's needs, provides practice-based evidence

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Putting it All Together

- ❖ Report Writing is your MOST important **documentation** tool to
 - Learn about the student's academic and personal strengths
 - Recognize their interaction style and response to instruction
 - Identify areas of need to inform meaningful goals
- ❖ And your report is the MOST comprehensive form of documentation for school-based providers
- ❖ Whether writing your PLOP/PLEP, goals or an evaluation report, remember the adage:

"If it isn't documented, it didn't happen!"

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