

Thriving Together: Back-to-School Checklist for Students with Disabilities

Why Your Voice Matters

- I know it's important to be part of my IEP meetings.
- I understand how sharing my goals and needs helps create a better plan.
- I'm practicing speaking up to build confidence and independence.

Preparation & Planning

- Get school supplies ready before the first day.
- Test technology (laptop, tablet, apps, or devices).
- Set up support system (tutors, helpers, peer buddies).
- Ask for IEP or 504 meetings before school starts.
- Meet teachers and share your strengths, goals, and needs.
- Create a checklist that includes accessibility needs.

Accessibility & Accommodations

- Speak up for accommodations in class, sports, clubs, and transportation.
- Attend IEP meetings and share your voice and dreams.
- Make sure transition planning begins at age 14.
- Use assistive technology (screen readers, AAC devices, note-taking apps).
- Keep communication open with teachers and support staff.

Mental Health & Self-Advocacy

- Use strategies like breaks, mindfulness, or counseling to reduce stress.
- Balance school, health, therapy, and rest.

- Know your rights and speak up when something doesn't work.
- Find allies—teachers, friends, and mentors who support you.

Social & Community Connections

- Join a club, sport, or group that interests you.
- Make friends with peers who share your hobbies.
- Find mentors, including those with disabilities.
- Share your story to help break stigma and build inclusion.

Families & Caregivers

- Work together on school goals and plans.
- Practice independence at home (chores, routines, responsibilities).
- Make a backup plan in case staff or supports aren't available.

Looking Ahead

- Remember: I am capable, resilient, and I belong.
- Keep preparation, advocacy, and community as my focus this year.