



Creating a “What Works” Portfolio

Families can be instrumental in developing a record of successful strategies to share with new members to their child’s team. One way to create successful transitions is to develop a “What Works” portfolio. Actually, this is like creating a kind of resume for the student to carry well into the future.

This “What Works” or transition portfolio can be a document people use to learn about important strengths-based information, as well as supports that work for an individual child. It can also be a training tool.

Sometimes these portfolios are created like scrapbooks with photos of your child and friends doing activities and things they enjoy. One student designed his portfolio as an assignment for a class in which he was to create a self-portrait. Each portfolio is different because it should reflect the personality of the student. The portfolio can also be designed in an online or video format.

Things to consider for your child’s “What Works” portfolio include:

- Positive descriptions of your child
- A student profile describing your child’s strengths, interests, favorite activities, and IEP goals or learning priorities for the year, as well as other unique information that classroom teachers need to know
- A list of tasks, responsibilities and role definitions for a teacher’s assistant or para-educator
- Pointers about physical assistance if your child needs it



- Tips on communicating with your child (particularly if your child has difficulty in expressing him or herself or if the people around your child have difficulty in understanding)
- Behavioral supports that work and a description of situations to avoid or ways to structure situations to eliminate behavior challenges for your child
- Ways to involve your child in different classroom activities in all subject areas (i.e., math, English, science), and in various kinds of instructional activities (i.e., small group work, lectures, individual work, etc.)

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- Unique environmental arrangements that help support your child and other supports or dimensions of your child’s support plan, (i.e., seating and positioning needs, personal care details, noise-level tolerance, and climate comfort levels)
- Descriptions of how accommodations are made or projects are modified so that your child can be successful (include a few examples)
- A portfolio of your child’s work, including the original class assignment and a description of any accommodations or modifications
- Tips on connecting your child to her or his peers
- Names of friends or particular individuals with whom your child has a relationship to schedule classes with for the next year
- A photograph or brief videotape of your child interacting and participating with other students and being supported successfully
- A description of any equipment, communication devices, software programs, or other assistive technology that your child uses successfully and how they are used, stored, transferred, as well as the names of people who can be a resource.

Creating this portfolio can be a fun activity to do as a family! These portfolios can be used for students of all ages. Older students often like to create theirs with friends.

Remember to have fun, keep the focus on what has worked well and this portfolio can help create positive and successful transitions for you and your child!

What Works Portfolio Checklist:



- Student Profile*
- Strengths and Strategies Profile*
- Strategies gathered from current and previous teachers
- Sample of child’s work, tests, projects, art, etc.
- Descriptions of how accommodations are made or projects are modified
- Sample modifications
- Pointers on physical assistance
- Tips for para-educators
- Draft of IEP Goals
- Names of friends and tips on connecting your child to peers
- Ideas for supporting your child’s communication

* For more information on the Student Profile and the Strengths and Strategies Profile check out PEAK’s [IEP Toolkit: A Tool For Realizing Possibilities](#), or contact a PEAK Parent Advisor by phone at 800.284.0251 or by email at parentadvisor@peakparent.org.

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