



**inclusion
matters!**

SECTION 5

Making Action Plans (MAPS)

Integrated Education: MAPS to get you there

Terri Vandercook and Jennifer York

MAPS (Making Action Plans) is a positive and affirming process that assists a team of adults and children to creatively dream and plan, producing results that will further the inclusion of individual children with labels into the activities, routines and environments of their same age peers in their school community. The principles underlying and guiding the process include: (1) integration, (2) individualization, (3) teamwork and collaboration, and (4) flexibility.

The MAPS planning typically occurs in one or two sessions. Participants are arranged in a half circle, with the facilitator positioned at the open end of the circle. The information and ideas generated during the process are recorded on large chart paper which serves as a communication check during the session and as a permanent record when the planning is finished. The role of the facilitator is to elicit participation of all team members in the collective design of an integrated school and community life for the individual student. Following are the seven questions which comprise the MAPS process:

1. What is the individual's history?

Aside from the individual for whom the planning is occurring, family members are the most important members of the circle because they typically know the individual better than anyone else. Because of this, family members, and the individual to the greatest extent possible, are asked to spend a few minutes talking about the individual's life history, including some of the milestones.

2. What is your dream for individual?

This question is intended to get people to develop a vision for the individual's future, to consider what they want for that person, and to look beyond the current reality. Those dreams can become reality if there is a common commitment to strive for them. The dream question forces team members to identify the direction they are heading with the individual; only then can specific plans be made for realizing the vision. This is not to say, however, that the vision, plans or expectations are set in concrete; they will be challenged continually as more is learned about how to facilitate inclusion in the school community and as positive outcomes are realized. Depending upon the age of the individual, it may be difficult to dream for them as an adult; if that is a problem, team members can be encouraged to think just a few years ahead

3. What is your nightmare?

This is a very difficult question to ask the parents of any child, yet an extremely important one. The nightmare presents the situation that the members of the individual's team and others who care for him or her must work very hard to keep from happening. Parents frequently relate the nightmare as a vision of their child being alone.

4. Who is the individual?

Everyone in the circle participates in responding to this question. The participants are asked to think of words that describe the individual, i.e. what come to mind when they think of the person? There are no right or wrong words. Participants take turns going around the circle until all thoughts have been expressed. Participants can pass if nothing comes to mind when it is their turn to supply a descriptor. When the list is complete, the facilitator asks certain people, usually family and peers, to identify the three words from the list they feel best describe the individual.

5. What are the individual's strengths, gifts and abilities?

So often when educational teams get together, they dwell upon the things that the individual cannot do as opposed to identifying and building upon the strengths and abilities of the individual. The facilitator asks the participants to review the list which described the individual as a way to identify some of his or her strengths and unique gifts. In addition, they are instructed to think about what the individual can do, what he or she likes to do and what he or she does well.

6. What are the individual's needs?

This question provides an opportunity for all the team members to identify needs from their unique perspectives. When the list of needs is complete, family, friends and educators are asked to prioritize the identified needs. The list of assets and the identified needs are a primary basis for design of the educational program.

7. What would the individual's ideal day at school look like and what must be done to make it happen?

Because MAPS is a process to assist teams to plan for the full integration of students with high needs into regular age-appropriate classes, frequently attention to this question begins by outlining a school day for same age peers who do not have labels. Next, the team begins to strategize ways that the needs identified in the previous question can be met in the context of the regular education day. Finally, initial planning occurs for the supports needed to achieve successful integration. As the learner reaches middle and high school age, the ideal school day will include instruction in both regular education and a variety of community instruction sites, e.g. home, worksites, stores and recreation places.

The MAPS process provides a common vision and road map for all team members, which enables them to be supportive and effective in furthering the integration of learners with disabilities into regular school and community life.

MAPS (Making Action Plans)

MAPS is a process that will help a team support a student in an inclusive setting through positive discussion among family members, teachers and other significant individuals in the student's life.

It provides information to identify goals and objectives for an IEP, plan for a student's transition to an inclusive setting and help determine what educational supports are needed. MAPS is a collaborative process that identifies outcomes, environments and activities that are meaningful for the student and what must be done to make them happen. The information elicited about a student also may be used to develop the present level of performance, goals and objectives, adaptations and other parts of the IEP.

The MAPS session is facilitated by someone who is familiar with the process, but may not necessarily know the identified child. The facilitator asks the MAPS questions and each participant contributes when appropriate. Participants usually sit in a semi-circle to maximize their interaction. Responses are recorded on chart paper so information can be referenced or appended throughout the planning session and a permanent record of the process is maintained.

The MAP CHECKLIST may be helpful in planning for and facilitating a MAPS.

The following is an outline of information to support those who use the MAPS process:

1. Assumptions underlying and guiding the MAPS process

- Inclusion
- Individualization
- Teamwork and collaboration
- Flexibility

2. Essential elements of a MAP

- Parents and/or family members are the key participants
- Large chart paper and colorful markers are used
- Lasts a minimum of 1-2 hours
- All team members input is valued and important
- If an action plan is not developed as part of the MAP, then a date and time should be set when the core team will meet to create one

3. Preferred elements of a MAP as deemed appropriate:

- Typical peers are included in the group
- Session occurs after the child has been in the inclusive setting
- Lasts a maximum of 3 hours
- Setting is personal and informal
- Refreshments are provided
- Friends are invited
- Participants are arranged in a semi-circle
- Two people facilitate the process — one person records while the other is the host/facilitator

- The student is a member of the team
- Participants include those outside of the core team who will or do support the student
- The participants are asked to sum up in one word or phrase their experience with the MAP at the end of the session
- The MAP is transposed to a more useable format

4. Use options of a MAP:

- Department/team/school goal setting
- Prior to the IEP
- Show finished product to people entering the student's life
- Questions can be asked in a different order or some may be omitted
- The facilitator and/or recorder do not have to be familiar with the student, but they should be familiar with the MAPS process
- MAPS should be held when a student is:
 - (a) Transition between schools, and/or
 - (b) Moving to a more inclusive setting

MAPS Invitation Letter

Date: To: From: Re: _____'s MAPS Planning Sessions

A MAPS Planning Session has been scheduled for _____ on _____ at _____ School at _____ a.m./p.m. I will be facilitating this discussion, so I would like to share some information with those of you who will participate that day.

I have enclosed an article on the MAPS process. MAPS stands for Making Action Plans and is a tool often used to plan for a child's inclusive education. The article presents an ideal example of what the planning session could entail and why.

A worksheet titled "MAPS Questions for _____" is also enclosed so you may write down some of your thoughts and responses to the questions. I encourage all participants to complete this worksheet and bring it to the session. The sheet is for your purposes only and will not be collected.

Thank you in advance for your input and participation in the MAPS process. Please call me at _____ if you have any questions or concerns.

Enclosures

MAPS Questions for _____ A brief history about _____ . . . (What is _____'s story?)

What are your nightmares for _____?

_____ is . . . (What are some words that describe _____ best?) (What are some of his/her Strengths, Gifts, and Talents?)

What are some of the things _____ accomplished last year?

What is _____ ready to learn?

What are some of _____'s needs?

What would an ideal day look like for _____?

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An Example: Tommy's MAP

What is Tommy's story?

He was born 7 years ago. Had open-heart surgery soon afterward. At age 3, he entered Special School District Early Childhood program and attended a preschool in his neighborhood. He had friends at the preschool and the opportunity to make a lot of choices. The family went to Disney World last year; Tommy loved it! In kindergarten, he joined a church soccer team. He has two sisters, Sarah and Susan

Our Dreams for Tommy. . .

He will have lots of friends. He won't be lonely. Productive Independent Live in his own place when he gets older with some support. Live with a roommate that he chooses and who chooses Tommy. He wants to be a fireman. He will have fun – now and in the future. He will be in a safe and welcoming school environment.

Our Nightmares. . .

Lonely Alone Abused He will sit and do something meaningless with his hands all day. He will have limited job opportunities. Other students and the teacher won't understand Tommy when he is communicating. Tommy won't have any choices and won't be able to make any decisions for himself. People won't understand his needs.

Tommy is . . . (Tommy's Strengths, Gifts, and Talents. . .)

Loves to laugh with friends Funny Helpful in class Good memory, especially about people, events, songs and rhymes Musical Loves musical songs and videos Nintendo player Computer whiz Physically active and has good physical skills Great energy Organized, e.g. books on shelves

What has Tommy accomplished this year?

He learned how to swim and play Soccer Communication (e.g. headache) Speech is better Match written word with object (emerging) Sharing (art class) "New" vocabulary (typical) Lets people know what he needs

Tommy is ready to learn. . .

Social skills Transitions To tell his family more about what happens at school (past events) To communicate his wants, needs and choices To play more To read at a level he's ready for (1st words) Write his name Phone # and address (safety issues) Where things are in building School routines and School rules

Tommy needs. . .

Infuse ability awareness in the routine Inservice staff He needs support in a variety of ways and from a variety of sources Ability awareness in 1st grade classes for his peers (but don't overkill) Positive support plans

O.T. Speech in classroom; Visit school before he actually starts; Study buddies and Peer support; Support from older classmates more time; More practice; To stay in the classroom as much as possible an efficient school

An ideal day for Tommy. . .

Member of 1st grade class; Won't feel "singled-out"; Accomplishing 1st grade stuff; Recess, lunch with friends In classroom as much as possible; Learning everyday academics; Teachers feel comfortable, right amount of support; Communication throughout the day; Schedule is understood; has a schedule; Riding bus with neighborhood kids

For additional information on MAP's, please visit the Inclusive Education page on the SSD website.

Making Action Plans (MAPS) Meeting To Do List & Notes

Prior to meeting

- Send MAPS questions and invites to case manager
- Tell teacher to secure room large enough to sit everyone in a semi-circle and place to post 10 pieces of chart tablet

Materials to bring

- 10 pieces of chart tablet
- Written questions with pictures to be posted on each piece of paper (do not do this prior to meeting or the pictures will curl in the tube)
- Copy of questionnaire sent to teacher to guide process
- Name tags
- Markers
- tape

To begin meeting

- Introduce all team members
- Define MAPS – time to celebrate his accomplishments at (School) and determine what are his/her needs to help with the transition
- State as we go thru these we can move back and forth as we remember information

Question: What is Nick's story?

- Ask parents - members of family, born, free time at home?
- Question: What are your dreams for Nick?
- Could be lifelong, could be next 3 years

Notes: Wrap up each question before moving on to next, ask clarifying questions

Making Action Plans (MAPS) - Sample

Student name: _____

Date: _____

Name of school: _____

List participants: _____

What is (student name) story?

- Bullet comments
- Bullet comments
- Bullet comments

What are your dreams for (student name)?

- Bullet comments
- Bullet comments
- Bullet comments

What are your nightmares for (student name)?

- Bullet comments
- Bullet comments
- Bullet comments

What are some words that describe (student name) best?

- **Bullet comments**
- Bullet comments
- Bullet comments

What has (student name) accomplished this year?

- Bullet comments
- Bullet comments
- Bullet comments

What is (student name) ready to learn?

- Bullet comments

- Bullet comments
- Bullet comments

What are some of (student name) needs?

- Bullet comments
- Bullet comments
- Bullet comments

What would an ideal day look like for (student name)?

- Bullet comments
- Bullet comments
- Bullet comments The student's IEP is the vehicle that pulls together the work of the team into a permanent record of the student's instructional plan. Procedural guidelines for completion of the IEP are outlined in the Special School District's IEP manual and should be reviewed prior to conducting the IEP meeting.