

Working with Students with Disabilities/IEPs

SUP-wide SC training

XXX.

Training Agenda

01

What is an IEP?

Learn how to read and interact with an Individualized Education Plan

02

Family Meetings

What questions to ask when meeting with the family of a child with an IEP

03

Classroom Best Practices

How to handle unexpected behaviors and your support system



01

What is an Individualized Education Plan?

Turn to a partner and discuss!

What is an IEP?

- An IEP is a “map that lays out the program of special education instruction, supports, and services kids need to make progress and thrive in school”
- The process for getting an IEP involves conferences with the student themselves, the student’s family, and an evaluation by a team of professionals
- Any public school student from age 3 and up is eligible for an IEP if needed
- Some children with IEPs learn best in a separate special education classroom, but most are in general education classes with lots of other types of learners
- Children with a range of learning disabilities, developmental delays, and other medical conditions may qualify for an IEP

Information and quotes from www.understood.org/en/articles/what-is-an-iep

Parts of an IEP



Present level of performance



Annual goals



Special education and related services



Supplementary aids and services

Present Level of Performance

- Often shortened as PLOP or PLP
- This section “describes a student’s current abilities, skills, challenges, and strengths at the time the IEP is written” – including academic performance, social skills, communication, and overall behavior
- This will give you information about how the student’s disability may affect (or not affect) their presentation in your classroom and prepare you for some of the behaviors you may witness

Annual Goals

- Developed by the IEP team, annual goals describe what the student is expected to accomplish within a calendar year
 - For example, a goal could be to read an entire novel independently or solve a sheet of grade-level math problems with 85% accuracy
- These goals will help orient you to the main areas of focus for the student during the academic year
- While you do not necessarily have to make a concerted effort to specifically target those goals with that student, it may be helpful to understand what the student's family and teachers are working on
 - While it is not a requirement, they would definitely not complain if you continued reinforcing those skills at SUP!

Special Education and Related Services

- This is where you will get information about the services the student receives in school, such as being pulled out by a support educator several times a week or receiving speech or occupational therapy
- This section will help establish a baseline of what the student may be accustomed to during the year and the unexpected changes that SUP may bring for that student
- While we may not have the capacity to adapt all of a child's special education services in a SUP classroom, this may help you begin to understand how your general curriculum could be differentiated in order to best support that child

Information and quotes taken from www.understood.org/en/articles/how-to-read-an-iep-5-things-teachers-should-look-for

Supplementary Aids & Services

- These may include assistive devices like hearing aids, academic accommodations like extra time on exams, and other modifications
- Some of these services won't apply as much to SUP, since we don't have timed tests or graded assignments, but some will be important for you to know, like if the student has a visual impairment and needs text in large print

Let's Read a Sample IEP!

In a group of 3, take 15 minutes to read through this sample IEP and get yourself familiar with the structure:

www.ovec.org/docs/building/2/ecs%20resources/arc%20chair%20resources/arc%20chair%20module%201-8/module%205/robert%20iep%202-26-13.pdf



**Anything I can clarify
about IEPs?**

02

How else can we get information to support our students aside from reading their IEP?

Turn to a partner and discuss!





Families are the **most** useful tool in understanding how to work with a child with a disability!

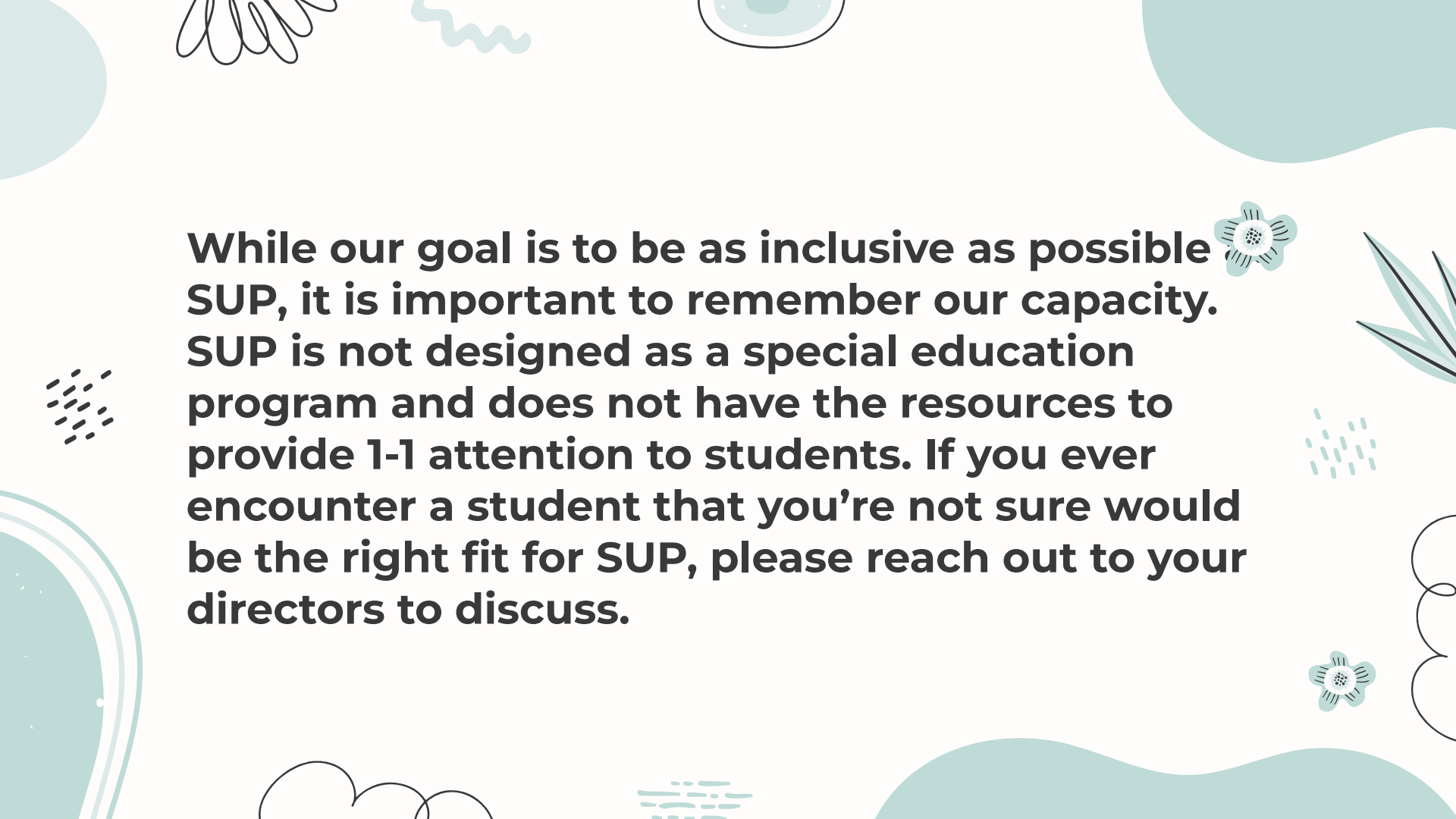
Family Meeting Sample Questions

- What are your child's typical behaviors like at home?
- Does your child have any particular triggers? If so, what are the strategies you usually use to calm him/her down?
- What is your child's learning style, as you've observed through the years?
- Are there any specific areas for growth, academic or otherwise, that your child is specifically working on?
- How can I best support or provide accommodations in order to best support your child's learning goals?
- Is there anything else that would be helpful for me to know?

Time to roleplay! Turn to your partner and take a few minutes to each play the part of the parent and the Senior Counselor during a family meeting

Teacher Meetings

- If a child has a particularly complex IEP or if their family suggests it, meeting with a student's teacher at school may be beneficial
- Teachers may be less available/responsive during summer break, so make sure to reach out early if you intend to have a teacher meeting!
- Sample questions for a teacher meeting:
 - What is this student's learning style, as you've observed in school? Are there particular subjects that are most challenging for them?
 - How have you interacted with this student's IEP and/or provided accommodations in order to best support their learning goals?
 - Have there been any behavioral or social challenges in the classroom? How have you dealt with them?
 - Is there anything else that would be helpful for me to know?



While our goal is to be as inclusive as possible SUP, it is important to remember our capacity. SUP is not designed as a special education program and does not have the resources to provide 1-1 attention to students. If you ever encounter a student that you're not sure would be the right fit for SUP, please reach out to your directors to discuss.



➤ **03**

Classroom Best Practices

How to handle unexpected behaviors and your SUP support system

General Tips for Working with Kids with Disabilities

- Treat the child with kindness and respect, like you would any other child!
- They know themselves the best, listen to them and any needs they voice
- Clearly outline your expectations using a variety of media, including visual and auditory explanations
 - For example, you can write your Classroom Norms on a big piece of chart paper with pictures at the front of the classroom, and also repeat them verbally at the beginning of each day
- Consistency in schedule is often helpful. While this is not always possible at SUP, try your best to have some sort of consistency each day and announce in advance whenever there will be changes
- Radiate positivity and try to keep a smile on your face!



What if my Strategies Aren't Working?

- Safety is of course always the top priority!
- Remember that every behavior is communication
 - Consider (and ask the child): could they be hungry, tired, in physical pain, emotional pain, or overstimulated?
- In the case of overstimulation (very common!) or if you're not sure what's wrong, consider giving the child a 5-10 minute break from the activity
 - If possible, bring them to a safe & quiet place, offer them fidget toys, a piece of paper to color on, or calming music to listen to
- Timers can be a great tool to use and build trust!
 - For example, if a child doesn't want to participate in an activity, tell them they only need to participate for ten minutes and set a timer that they can see



xxx.



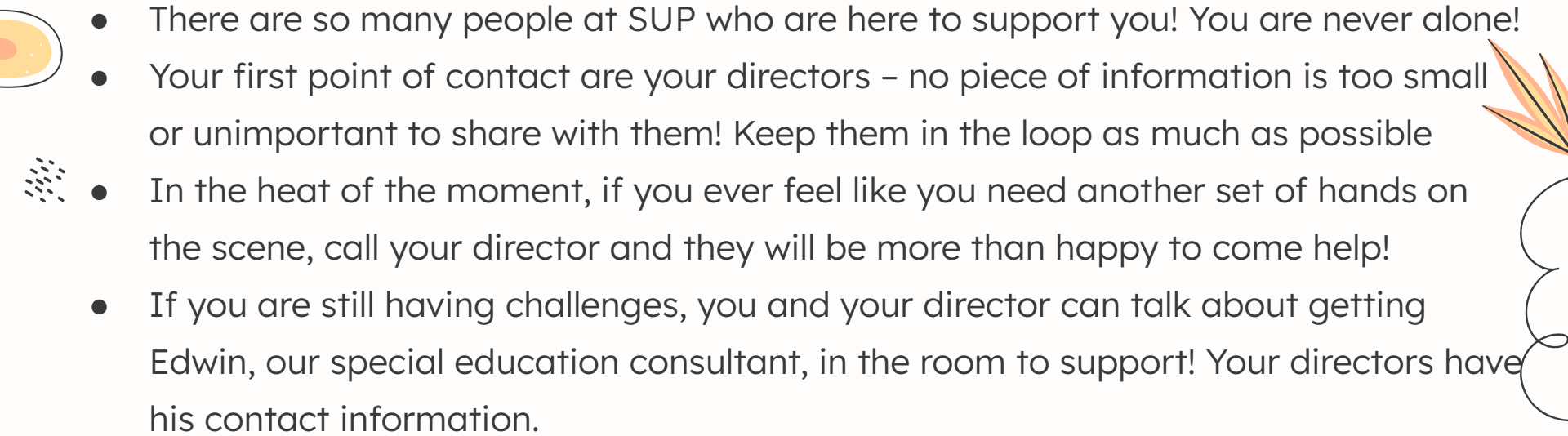

What if my Strategies Aren't Working?

- If the child won't cooperate or participate in an activity, consider offering them a choice to give them agency:
 - "We're working on reading now. You can either read this story or this one - which would you like to read?"
- When they're ready, consider using a restorative circle if harm was done and turn it into a teachable moment
- Don't engage in a power struggle - pick your battles, avoid yelling or getting into a dynamic where tensions escalate on both sides
 - Sometimes the child just needs to hear the words from a new person. Remember that this is not a reflection on you as an SC or as a person :)





Who Can I Turn to for Support?

- 
- There are so many people at SUP who are here to support you! You are never alone!
 - Your first point of contact are your directors – no piece of information is too small or unimportant to share with them! Keep them in the loop as much as possible
 - In the heat of the moment, if you ever feel like you need another set of hands on the scene, call your director and they will be more than happy to come help!
 - If you are still having challenges, you and your director can talk about getting Edwin, our special education consultant, in the room to support! Your directors have his contact information.
- 



This work is tough! Remember that supporting a neurodiverse classroom does not have to come at the cost of your well-being :)

Take ten minutes to journal to yourself the ways in which you will practice self-care and avoid burnout as a Senior Counselors and be prepared to share a few ideas with the group.



Thanks!

Is there anything I can clarify?

CREDITS: This presentation template was created by [Slidesgo](#), and includes icons by [Flaticon](#), and infographics & images by [Freepik](#)