



Education Planning Tool following Brain Injury

This tool is designed to help schools plan for a student's re-entry following a brain injury. The district should assemble a team that includes a person with an understanding of brain injury. The school nurse, athletic trainer, speech-language pathologist, occupational therapist, and physical therapist have training in brain injury. The team should review existing and current data including the student's medical records to determine a plan to support the student and if there is a need for a comprehensive evaluation. Frequent progress monitoring is important during the recovery process. Collaboration is key!

Student Name: _____ Date of Injury: _____ Date: _____ Grade: _____ School Year: _____

Was the student receiving support prior to injury? IEP 504 Plan RTI The team will meet to review plan again on: _____
 Education Planning Team

Name	Role	Name	Role	Name	Role	Name	Role

Physician Name: _____ Phone: _____ Medical Release on file: _____

Overview of injury **Mild** **Moderate** **Severe** Cause: _____



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Medical information

Medication	Reason for Use	Possible side effects

Does the student need a healthcare plan? Yes

Seizures and/or shunt	
Dietary/feeding restrictions	
Skull/orthopedic restrictions	Helmet: _____ Frequency of use: _____
Physical activity restrictions	Recess: _____ PE: _____ Plan for those periods: Fall risk:
Toileting Assistance	Grab bars needed:
Other	

Committee decision on attendance: Remote Face to Face X Blended (describe) _____

No school until _____

Homebound instruction until _____

Partial day (hours/days) _____

Plan established for return to full days _____

Allow excused absences for medical/therapy appointments

Full day attendance



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Students with brain injury can have difficulty thinking, moving, talking, eating, maintaining focus and endurance for learning. School re-entry is overwhelming for most students following a brain injury and can exacerbate symptoms. The goal while the brain heals is to create a tolerable learning environment (with physical symptoms) so the student is available to learn. Here are some important considerations for programming:

- Progress monitor the student's physical symptoms. The school should assign a team member to check-in with the student regarding his/her symptoms, especially in the first few weeks. Review medical symptom data. Here are sample forms to assist the team in data gathering:
 - [ChEERS Symptom Tracker](#) (picture based for younger children or students with language impairment)
 - [REAP Appendix](#) (numeric scale) or [Symptom Tracker](#) (numeric scale)This data should be used to determine accommodations and/or modifications, including removing supports when the student no longer needs them. (HLP 1,3,6)
- Progress monitor academic/functional status. Is the student struggling to complete schoolwork, learn content, access previously learned content, etc.? Look at grades, attendance, behavior referrals, test scores, etc. Adjust programming as necessary. Cognitive monitoring tools can be used to progress monitor such as the BRIEF 2 or [Neurocognitive Form](#). Teacher feedback form [REAP appendix](#). (HLP 4,5,6)
- Compare pre/post brain injury information. [Pre/Post Injury](#) (HLP 4)
- Establish a communication log with the family/guardian. The education team needs most recent information on medical status, sleep, homework, etc. to adjust programming. Family/guardians need information from school to assist student with schoolwork, remembering school events, etc. Here is an example: [Communication Log](#) (HLP 3)
- Most students with a mild TBI need only temporary support. Students with more severe brain injury or prolonged healing may need a comprehensive evaluation for special education or a 504 Plan. Does the student need a comprehensive evaluation for special education? ³



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If the team determines a comprehensive evaluation or if assessment data is needed, a helpful resource to review

- [AR DESE TBI Rules and Regulations](#)
- Assessment Suggestions
 - [Brain Injury Matrix](#) (scroll down)
 - Click area to explore →
 - Resources appear
- [Educator's Guide to Brain Injury](#)
 - Accommodation suggestions
- Free evaluation loan
 - [Easterseals OPTS](#)
- Comparing pre injury and post injury performance is an important component of the evaluation [Pre and Post Function](#)

BUILDING BLOCKS ▾ Down Up ▲

- ATTENTION
- INHIBITION
- PROCESSING SPEED
- MEMORY
- SENSORY AND MOTOR (OVER-STIMULATION)
- SENSORY AND MOTOR (UNDER-STIMULATION)
- MOTOR – FINE
- MOTOR – GROSS
- NEW LEARNING
- LANGUAGE – RECEPTIVE
- LANGUAGE – EXPRESSIVE
- LANGUAGE – SOCIAL PRAGMATIC
- VISUAL-SPATIAL
- EXECUTIVE FUNCTION: PLANNING
- EXECUTIVE FUNCTION: ORGANIZATION
- EXECUTIVE FUNCTION: MENTAL FLEXIBILITY
- EXECUTIVE FUNCTION: REASONING
- SOCIAL/EMOTIONAL COMPETENCY

BEHAVIORAL IMPACTS

- Difficulty starting tasks independently
- Can state what they are supposed to do but does not get started
- Slow to shift at same time as peers
- Requires constant cueing
- Does not make plans academically or socially
- Appears aloof or disinterested in peers
- Follower
- Lagging in independent living skills
- May appear lazy, unmotivated or spacey
- Often gets overlooked because they are not trouble in the classroom
- Seeks out adults for social interaction

COGNITIVE ACADEMIC IMPACTS

- Appears passive/resistant
- Difficulty knowing how to get started
- Difficulty managing long-range projects
- Does not complete homework or seatwork
- Turns in poor quality work
- Wasteful/ incomplete work

ASSESSMENT SUGGESTIONS

- Behavior Rating Inventory of Executive Function, 2nd (BRIEF2)
- Comprehensive Executive Function Inventory (CEFI)
- Delis Rating of Executive Function (D-REF)
- Neurocognitive Evaluation Form in Appendix, Colorado Department of Education [Brain Injury in Children and Youth: A Manual for Educators](#)
- Observations in the environment
- Behavior observations during testing
- Parent, Teacher and Student Interviews

ENVIRONMENTAL SUPPORTS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

- [Brain Injury in Children and Youth: A Manual for Educators](#) (Chapter 3) (CDE)
- Provide a written routine to assist/help student begin work
- Provide assistance with getting started with school work
- Provide more frequent check-ins to ensure student is completing work
- Teach students how to observe others to identify what to do next
- Use visual imagery to practice the activity steps prior to initiation

The following pages offer suggestions for accommodations and/or modifications by problem area.



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Physical Symptoms	Implications for School	Potential Accommodations/Adjustments
Headaches (most commonly reported symptom)	Interferes with concentration Can be triggered by lights, noises, dehydration, focusing on tasks Increases irritability	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Frequent breaks in low stim area -Reduce aggravating factors (reduce screen time, allow sunglasses or a visor, etc.) -Allow water bottle, water breaks -Eye breaks during screen time: (20/20/20/20) rule, every 20 minutes, look 20 feet in distance, while blinking 20 times, for 20 seconds
Dizziness/balance/nausea	Interferes with walking especially in crowded hallways, stairs. Carrying books/supplies may impede balance Often provoked by visual stimulus (rapid movements, screens, videos)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Allow student to put head down on desk -Early dismissal from class -Extra time to get to class -Use of elevator -Buddy to carry supplies/books or allow to leave in class
Light/noise sensitivity	Trouble seeing board, computers, books, etc. Difficulty reading and copying Difficulty attending to visual tasks Sensitivity to bright light and loud noise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reduce brightness of screens -Allow sunglasses, blue light blocking glasses, hat/visor, headphones, earplugs -Use audio books and text to speech software -Preferential seating -Turn off fluorescent lights (when appropriate) -Early dismissal from class -Temporary excusal from band, shop classes, choir, PE, etc. if headphones do not work -Eat lunch in quiet space
Fatigue	Lack of energy for active participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Adjust schedule to accommodate for fatigue (schedule core content classes when fatigue is least bothersome) -Allow rest breaks -Pace the work (reduce number of problems, only test essential concepts, etc.) -Allow passive participation -Allow multiple means of expression (student can demonstrate knowledge orally, presentation, drawing, etc.)



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Cognitive	Implications for School	Potential Accommodations/Adjustments
Attention and concentration	Short focus on classwork, homework	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Shorten assignments -Reduce or eliminate additional work (focus on core content) -Chunk tasks and test in segments (one concept during one test, another concept on another test with breaks in between) -Written schedule -Timer -Copies of notes
Memory	Interferes with learning new material Difficulty recalling and applying information Difficulty retaining information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Chunk information when teaching, break down tasks into smaller steps -Test in segments, limit number of tests per day, untimed tests -Use visual strategies (cue cards, written lists, word banks, screencasts of directions, agenda/planner, etc.) -Use multiple choice strategies rather than open ended questions -Provide copies of notes and other materials -Extended time with care (often students with memory impairment will not remember to complete it and work will build up)
Processing speed	Unable to sustain pace of the work Slower reading, calculating, writing speed Difficulty understanding instructions/information	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Provide copies of notes/materials -Chunk information when teaching, break down tasks into smaller steps -Comprehension checks -Test in segments, limit number of tests per day, untimed tests -Use visual strategies (cue cards, written lists, word banks, screencasts of directions, color code information, etc.) -Use multiple choice strategies rather than open ended questions -Extended time
Cognitive fatigue/mental foginess	Decreased arousal and mental energy Difficulty forming thoughts or thinking clearly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Rest breaks -Homework and tests in quiet location -Visual supports -Copies of notes



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Emotional	Implications for School	Potential Accommodations/Adjustments
Irritability	Affects relationships with others (peers, staff, family)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Rest breaks -Reduce triggers and prevent overstimulation -Teach self-advocacy and self-management, GUIDE for Life (develop a plan for student to signal to staff when irritable, develop toolkit for managing irritability, teach student to use). Consider a program: Zones of Regulation, Incredible 5 Point Scale, CASEL resources,etc.) -Use positive behavior supports
Depression	Withdrawal from school or friends due to new sense of self and activity restrictions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Build in socialization activities (peer buddy) -Lunch in quiet room with friends -Provide alternatives to extracurricular activities (team manager, videographer, etc.) -Reassurance from teachers and school staff -Teach self-advocacy and self-management, GUIDE for Life (develop a plan for student to signal to staff when irritable, develop toolkit for managing irritability, teach student to use). Consider a program: Zones of Regulation, Incredible 5 Point Scale, CASEL resources,etc.)
Anxiety/nervousness	Worried about falling behind	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Reassurance from teachers and school staff -Regular meetings with teachers -Use of checklists/agenda planner -Teach self-advocacy and self-management, GUIDE for Life (develop a plan for student to signal to staff when irritable, develop toolkit for managing irritability, teach student to use). Consider a program: Zones of Regulation, Incredible 5 Point Scale, CASEL resources,etc.)



When planning academic adjustments, consider the four critical questions of a Professional Learning Community (DuFour, et al. 2016)

<p>What do we want this student to know?</p> <p>Can non-essential work be removed or reduced?</p>	<p>Math: _____ _____ _____</p> <p>ELA: _____ _____ _____</p> <p>Science: _____ _____ _____</p> <p>Other: _____ _____ _____</p>	<p>How will we know if the student has learned it?</p> <p>Can the student use other means of demonstrating knowledge? Oral answers, multiple choice, reduced number of problems, etc.</p>	<p>Math: _____ _____ _____</p> <p>ELA: _____ _____ _____</p> <p>Science: _____ _____ _____</p> <p>Other: _____ _____ _____</p>
<p>How will we respond if the student does not learn it?</p>		<p>How will we extend the learning if the student is proficient?</p>	



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Action Plan (consider need for assessment, related services, behavior plan, assistive technology, etc.)

Name	Role	Task/Responsibility	Due date/Timeline

Plan for collaboration and progress monitoring (consider how frequently, what tools, how information will be shared, etc.)
