

**IEP CONFERENCE ROLE PLAY:
DEVELOPING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES**

Principal Role

Present at the conference besides yourself:

Ms. Greer – Connie’s mother; also a special education teacher

Connie Greer – Tenth grade student

Ms. Everet – Career education teacher (LD)

Dr. Carlin – Principal

You do not have time to attend all the IEP conferences in your school, but you are glad to be at this one. You know Ms. Greer and Ms. Everet to be highly competent teachers, and you were right in suspecting that the conference would run smoothly. Connie is a model high school student, well-behaved, and industrious. She is lucky to have a mother who is a special education teacher. Your only concern at this point is that the meeting is running a bit behind schedule; it is 4:15 p.m. and you have to be at a principal’s meeting at 4:30 p.m.

You are a bit disgusted by Connie’s presence and are not really sure how her being here is helpful. Clearly you believe that people can’t always be frank when the student is present. So far she hasn’t said anything, however, and you are beginning to relax about her presence.

You have been very impressed with Ms. Everet’s career education program; in fact, it was written up in a national journal as a model program, and you were congratulated for having such a fine teacher on your faculty. You have been uneasy lately because she might move on to an administrative positive in a neighboring district. You are very anxious to keep her at Athens High. Because your policy is usually to back the parent, even to serve as his/her advocate at these conferences, you are glad there has been no confrontation today. You would really be torn if any difficulty developed between these two people.

Teacher Role

Present at the conference besides yourself:

Ms. Greer – Connie’s mother; also a special education teacher

Connie Greer – Tenth grade student

Dr. Carlin – Principal

Ms. Everet – Career Education Teacher (LD)

You are pleased with how well the conference is going. You and Ms. Greer have worked together on several committees in the district, and you have always seen things very much alike. She has contributed a great deal to the conference by her knowledge and preparation, and you are ready to move the group to the next topic: goals and objectives.

You feel very confident in this area. As head of the special education department at Athens High, you have developed a program over the years that you believe to be educationally sound and very beneficial to your students as future job employees. The sophomore year includes a strong academic component and introduction to job-related skills. There will be time during Connie’s junior and senior years for community jobs where she receives wages; you know from experience that Connie will not be able to handle these jobs if she does not get adequate skills this year. You plan to present the three-year program as a whole, and you feel confident that everyone will agree with your recommendations.

Your only point of discomfort is with Dr. Carlin. She does not really agree with the idea of student involvement and could be a problem in this discussion. You firmly believe in the student’s right to have a say in his/her own educational program. Up to this point, Connie has not said much; however, you plan to ask for her

preferences for her goals and objectives because there are a variety of courses that can fulfill her requirements. You proceed.

Mother Role

Present at the conference besides yourself:

Ms. Everet – Career education teacher (LD)

Dr. Carlin – Principal

Connie Greer – Tenth grade student

Ms. Geer – Connie’s mother; also a special education teacher

You always find these IEP conferences somewhat ironic because you are usually on the other side of the table. As a teacher of primary students with mild disabilities, you spend a great deal of time in IEP conferences. You are pleased that you can be an informed parent, unlike some of those parents with whom you work, who are not much help. You were surprised when informed that Connie would be present. She recently has been showing some signs of adolescent rebellion; while you supposed that it’s typical, you are nervous about how she will respond in this meeting. You don’t want her to say anything to make you lose your professional demeanor in this meeting. On the other hand, though, it’s time for Connie to become more independent, and attending this meeting is a step in that direction. You feel more strongly about Connie’s independence than your husband does. He still feels protective of her. You’re glad (guiltily) that he’s not here, because he always tends to “side” with Connie. Connie recently has started showing signs of accepting more responsibility, and you would like to see that change reflected in her education.

The conference has gone well thus far. You all know and have worked with each other, and you appreciate the professional manner in which the conference is being run. You are about to get to the heart of the meeting: goals and objectives. You believe strongly that Connie needs a great deal of experience in the adult world, that she should be getting as much job experience as soon as possible, and that the emphasis on academic subjects should be minimal. You definitely want her in a regular community job for at least 50% of the school day. You are confident that the others will feel the same way.

Student Role

Present at the conference besides yourself:

Ms. Everet – Career education teacher (LD)

Dr. Carlin – Principal

Ms. Greer – Connie’s mother, also a special education teacher

Connie Greer – Tenth grade student with a learning disability

You really don’t know why you are here today even though your teacher and mother both think it is important. It was really much easier before you got to high school, and everyone just told you what you were going to take. How are you supposed to make all these decisions? All you know or really care about is your best friend, Daisy, who was in all your classes in junior high. You almost never get to see her now. Today you plan to let everyone know that what is most important to you, is being in the same class with Daisy.

Mom is acting more like a teacher than a mother today. If you were all at home, Dad would probably call her on it. You wish Dad were here. You’re his girl, no matter what. When he sometimes takes Mom’s side when a conflict comes up, you can tell he sympathizes with you.

One thing you don’t want is to have to get a job and leave school part of the day; your folks have been talking about that a lot lately. Your opinion is that it is hard enough to get to high school and deal with your learning disability without having to figure out a job, too. You are not too sure if you should say anything; or if you should, when you should you say it. Your teacher has been the boss of the meeting, and she is starting to talk about your classes.

Observer

Your role is to observe the group's interactions and make note of the empowering and disempowering interactions that you observe among group members. As you observe the group, denote specific actions within the Partnership Table provided below:

	Empowering Behaviors	Disempowering Behaviors
Communication		
Professional Competence		
Respect		
Commitment		
Equality		
Advocacy		

Which behaviors impeded trust between the family and the professionals?

Which behaviors facilitated trust among the family and professionals?

Final Comments/Insights: