



Learning Independently, Here We Come!

A Checklist from the Independent Futures that Work! project
for Identifying Skills Needed for Learning Independently



Developing specific learning strategies can help individuals with disabilities to pursue postsecondary education and training experiences by enhancing their learning and improving their understanding and retention of information. This checklist identifies some key skills needed to learn more effectively, optimize learning experiences, and achieve better results from learning experiences. These learning strategies can assist in postsecondary transition programs for students with cognitive disabilities, college or university degree programs, and vocational training programs. Additionally, these learning strategies can assist in personal learning, job training, and other life-long learning opportunities.

This checklist can be used to mark off skills as they are mastered, as a transition assessment for postsecondary education and training, and to develop Individualized Education Program goals for skills still to be mastered.

Learning Strategies:

Area:	Skills the Youth Has Mastered:
<p>Goal Setting Establishing clear and realistic learning goals provides individuals with learning disabilities a sense of direction and purpose.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Sets clear, realistic, and achievable goals <input type="checkbox"/> Sets short-term goals <input type="checkbox"/> Sets long-term goals <input type="checkbox"/> Creates an action plan to meet goals <input type="checkbox"/> Tracks progress towards goals

<p>Prioritization and Time Management Being able to prioritize tasks and manage time effectively allows for sufficient time allocation for different subjects/topics and avoids procrastination.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Makes a task list <input type="checkbox"/> Assesses task importance and urgency <input type="checkbox"/> Uses the Eisenhower Matrix to prioritize tasks <input type="checkbox"/> Estimates task duration <input type="checkbox"/> Creates a daily or weekly schedule <input type="checkbox"/> Sets deadlines and milestones <input type="checkbox"/> Reassesses and readjusts tasks and priorities <input type="checkbox"/> Uses timers or reminders <input type="checkbox"/> Breaks tasks into manageable chunks <input type="checkbox"/> Establishes consistent routines <input type="checkbox"/> Uses calendars, to-do lists, color-coded organizers, and/or visual schedules to help keep track of deadlines
<p>Notetaking Taking organized and concise notes during classes, lectures, or while studying helps reinforce understanding and aids in reviewing and revisiting important information later.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Uses graphic organizers to organize notes <input type="checkbox"/> Captures key points, important concepts, definitions, examples and any additional information from lectures and classes <input type="checkbox"/> Summarizes key points, references, and important data or quotes from research <input type="checkbox"/> Summarizes key arguments, main ideas, supporting evidence, and any questions or thoughts from readings <input type="checkbox"/> Uses outlines, mind mapping, and/or assistive technology to organize and retrieve information
<p>Memory Techniques Utilizing memory techniques can improve memory retention and recall of information.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Uses mnemonic devices such as acronyms <input type="checkbox"/> Uses visualization to create vivid mental images <input type="checkbox"/> Uses chunking techniques to break large amounts of information into smaller, manageable chunks <input type="checkbox"/> Uses practice and repetition to help reinforce memory <input type="checkbox"/> Uses mind mapping to create a diagram to represent ideas or concepts

	<input type="checkbox"/> Uses association to link new information to something already known <input type="checkbox"/> Uses storytelling to transform information into a narrative or story to make it more memorable
<p>Collaborative Learning Working with others to learn allows for diverse perspectives and helps reinforce understanding through shared knowledge and feedback.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Engages in group discussions <input type="checkbox"/> Participates in study groups <input type="checkbox"/> Participates in collaborative projects <input type="checkbox"/> Shares knowledge and feedback with others <input type="checkbox"/> Shares the workload in collaborative learning environments <input type="checkbox"/> Builds relationships with teachers, counselors, and mentors who can provide guidance and support for learning <input type="checkbox"/> Recognizes, accepts, and understands constructive criticism
<p>Information Organization Developing skills to organize information can enhance comprehension and facilitate easy retrieval of information when needed.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Creates outlines <input type="checkbox"/> Creates concept maps <input type="checkbox"/> Develops summaries <input type="checkbox"/> Uses graphic organizers <input type="checkbox"/> Takes and organizes notes <input type="checkbox"/> Creates hard copy and digital files to organize information <input type="checkbox"/> Uses appropriate digital file management tools or software to help organize information
<p>Communication Skills – Written and Oral Communicating effectively with others through both written and oral means can play a crucial role in enhancing the learning process and achieving better results</p>	<input type="checkbox"/> Expresses thoughts clearly and concisely when taking notes, summarizing information, writing papers, or communicating with others through written mediums <input type="checkbox"/> Actively listens to audio recordings, online lectures, or podcasts <input type="checkbox"/> Asks thoughtful and relevant questions to engage with the material and clarify uncertainties <input type="checkbox"/> Communicates with others to express difficulties, request clarification, and/or seek additional resources or guidance

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Engages in discussions, shares ideas, and provides feedback in group learning situations <input type="checkbox"/> Communicates learned knowledge to others through presentations <input type="checkbox"/> Uses appropriate body language when communicating with others in learning situations <input type="checkbox"/> Verbally communicates with others clearly and concisely <input type="checkbox"/> Demonstrates proficiency in digital communication, including online etiquette, collaborative tools, and participation in virtual discussions <input type="checkbox"/> Pays attention to grammar, punctuation, and spelling in written works <input type="checkbox"/> Understands the consequences of plagiarism <input type="checkbox"/> Understands copyright laws <input type="checkbox"/> Understands how to cite reference sources properly to give credit to original authors
<p>Seeking Support Recognizing when to seek support and utilize available resources is an important skill for youth and young adults with disabilities who can benefit from such support.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Reaches out to disability support services in postsecondary institutions <input type="checkbox"/> Works with a tutor when needed <input type="checkbox"/> Works with a mentor who can provide guidance and support <input type="checkbox"/> Seeks out professionals in agencies/organizations that can provide support, such as vocational rehabilitation, mental health services, etc.
<p>Problem-Solving Utilizing problem-solving skills helps to overcome challenges, make informed decisions, and achieve goals.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Breaks down complex problems into smaller components <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluates information, arguments, and evidence objectively to make informed decisions or judgments <input type="checkbox"/> Generates innovative ideas and/or thinks “outside the box” <input type="checkbox"/> Assesses different options <input type="checkbox"/> Considers the pros and cons of situations <input type="checkbox"/> Makes choices based on available information and desired outcomes

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Looks at root causes, contributing factors, and underlying issues of problems <input type="checkbox"/> Uses flexibility and adaptability when changes occur <input type="checkbox"/> Evaluates the effectiveness and success of past problem-solving strategies to improve future decisions
<p>Reading Comprehension Being able to understand and extract key information from learning material presented in written form is crucial for independent learning.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies main ideas in written passages <input type="checkbox"/> Identifies supporting details in written passages <input type="checkbox"/> Makes connections between ideas in written passages <input type="checkbox"/> Builds a strong vocabulary by learning new words, their meanings, and how to use them in context <input type="checkbox"/> Builds reading fluency to read quickly, accurately, and with proper expression <input type="checkbox"/> Previews the text <input type="checkbox"/> Highlights or underlines key points <input type="checkbox"/> Understands the structure of different types of text <input type="checkbox"/> Draws inferences <input type="checkbox"/> Summarizes text <input type="checkbox"/> Uses context clues, word analysis and word relationships to find the meaning of unfamiliar words <input type="checkbox"/> Uses assistive technology such as screen readers, text-to-speech software, etc. to access text <input type="checkbox"/> Uses available accommodations and resources available to aid in reading comprehension



Independent Futures that Work is a project of the Alabama Parent Education Center in conjunction with the Parent Training and Information Centers from Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi, Oklahoma and Texas

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