Helping Students with Brain Injury

The Helping Students with Brain Injury series is meant to be a tool for school professionals and parents. Each sheet in the series addresses various areas that can be affected after brain injury, and includes strategies for the classroom and sample IEP goals. The areas covered include attention & concentration; behavior; communication & information processing; executive functioning; memory; psychosocial & emotional; and visual & information processing. The series was developed by the Brain Injury Alliance of New Jersey and adapted, with permission, by the Brain Injury Alliance of Connecticut.

We encourage you to explore the various sheets and remain flexible in trying different strategies until you find the one that works. All brain injuries are unique and all students have different strengths and weaknesses, therefore different strategies may or may not work depending upon the student, the class, and the time of day, among other factors. Once you find a strategy that works use it consistently and share it with others who work with the student.

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Helping Students with Brain Injury

Impairments in sustaining attention and concentration are among the most common changes in cognitive functioning following a brain injury. They range from the inability to attend to a specific task for more than a few minutes to more prolonged difficulties, such as concentrating during a lecture. These problems disrupt academic functioning and may warrant individualized teaching and/or "cognitive breaks" during the day. If attention and/or concentration difficulties existed before the injury, they are likely to be more pronounced after the injury.

The following are sample strategies you can use. It is important to remember that all brain injuries are unique and that all students have different strengths and weaknesses, therefore different strategies may or may not work depending on the student, the class, and the time of day, among other factors. It is important to remain flexible in trying different strategies until you find one that works for that student, and to always keep in mind the ultimate goal of moving students towards independence. Once you have found a strategy that works use it consistently and share it with others who work with that student.

Difficulty with…	Strategy/Accommodation	Example
Following directions		Dave has difficulty with the verbal directions given prior to test taking.
	➢ Modifying info; breaking down tasks	➢ Dave is provided written step by step directions with his test.
	➢ Subtle cueing	➢ The teacher checks 5 minutes into the test on how Dave is doing and points to a direction he missed.
	➢ Using enlarged work	➢ Dave is provided the math test, and rather than 20 questions on page 1 there are four enlarged questions on page 1.
	➢ Stressing important information	➢ Dave is provided an outline highlighting the four main points of the chapter.
Talking out of turn		Sue blurts out the answer to the teacher's question.
	➢ Positive reinforcement for on task behavior and turn taking	➢ The teacher praises Sue for raising her hand before asking a question.
Tuning out distractions		Carl is looking out the window at the gym class outside instead of focusing on his teacher.
	➢ Reducing visual and auditory distractions	➢ Carl is seated at the desk in front of the teacher to reduce distraction.
Completing a classroom assignment		Lisa missed parts of the teacher's instructions and completed her mid-term report incorrectly.
	➢ Helping the student focus through routine.	➢ Lisa's language arts class always follows the same

		format: 10 minutes of lecture, 10 minutes of guided reading, 10 minutes of practice, 10 minutes of wrap up activity.
	➢ Shortened work	➢ Lisa's science test has 5 questions that test her overall knowledge of the subject rather than 20.
	➢ Testing accommodations	➢ Lisa is allowed extended time and test taking in a separate room.
	➢ Provide structure so the student can get started on the assignment	➢ Lisa'
Switching from one activity to another		Bob is still focused on the chapter summary while the class has moved on to lab work.
	➢ Display visual transition cues	➢ Bob has his schedule taped to his desk to reference throughout the day.
Being able to filter out and ignore background noise.		Nancy is easily distracted by students working in small groups within the classroom. She is unable to focus and work with her group.
	➢ Reducing visual and auditory distractions	➢ Nancy is seated at the desk in front of the teacher to reduce distraction.
Neurofatigue		Bobby's attention and concentration wanes later in the day.
	➢ Building in breaks	➢ Bobby has rest breaks built into his day, especially after very challenging classes. As he demonstrates improved stamina, the breaks will be reduced.

Adapting the strategies for the IEP

The IEP focuses on academic and/or functional areas affected in the school setting, with the goal of establishing measurable academic and/or functional goals. These goals include benchmark or short-term objectives, as well as criteria for measuring and evaluating the objective. It also includes modifications and supplementary aids, including assistive technology devices and services. As there have been numerous advancements in technology in recent years an assistive technology evaluation should be a consideration for all areas of impairment, including physical and cognitive impairments. *It is important to keep in mind that the IEP should be a fluid document, re-assessed regularly and able to be modified if strategies being utilized are not having the desired effect.*

Example:

Academic and/or Functional Area: Attention/Concentration

Annual Measurable Academic and/or Functional Goal: Attends to auditory instruction for 10 minutes by June 15.*

Benchmark or Short-Term Objectives: Attends to auditory instruction for 5 minutes (looking at teacher, remaining in seat) by November 30.

Criteria: Teacher and teacher aide assessment.

Evaluation: 3 out of 5 trials/observations.

Modification/Supplementary Aid: PowerPoint and/or teacher lecture notes ahead of time.

*Other areas of attention could also include attention to computer based tasks, written assignments, reading assignments, etc.

Academic and/or Functional Area: _____

Annual Measurable Academic and/or Functional Goal: _____

Benchmark or Short-Term Objectives: _____

Criteria: _____

Evaluation: _____

Modification/Supplementary Aid: _____

Helping Students with Brain Injury

Behavioral and personality changes often present the greatest challenges for the student after a brain injury. These changes are seen not only in moderate and severe injuries, but also in mild ones. If a student had any preexisting psychological or emotional problems, it is likely that a brain injury will exacerbate those problems. The same is true for those students with a previous psychiatric history. Special attention and support is crucial during recovery, treatment, and school reentry for these students.

The following are sample strategies you can use. It is important to remember that all brain injuries are unique and that all *students have different strengths and weaknesses, therefore different strategies may or may not work depending on the student, the class, and the time of day, among other factors. It is important to remain flexible in trying different strategies until you find one that works for that student, and to always keep in mind the ultimate goal of moving students towards independence. Once you have found a strategy that works use it consistently and share it with others who work with that student.*

Difficulty with…	Strategy/Accommodation	Example
Reduced self-control (difficulty with frustrating tolerance, regulating mood, disinhibition, impulsivity)		➢ Dave calls out of turn and has difficulty remaining in his seat. ➢ Nancy is frustrated at not understanding the assignment and knocks over her crayons on the floor. ➢ A student accidentally bumps Sue in the hallway and she yells at the student to watch where they are going. ➢ Dave is frequently sent to the principal's office for getting into fights with classmates.
	➢ Subtly cue the student as to what is expected	➢ Dave's teacher instructs the class to raise their hands if they know the answer, making eye contact with Dave when providing this reminder
	➢ Always be clear and consistent in directions and all communications	➢ The teacher read all directions slowly, making eye contact with Nancy.
	➢ Use redirection or refocusing away from the cause of the anger or frustration; shift the ➢ student's thinking to another area	➢ Nancy is offered other tasks to switch to when the student gets frustrated with one subject.
	➢ Break tasks down into smaller parts to reduce frustration	➢ Nancy is given each part of a test separately on different sheets of paper.

	➢ Avoid a confrontational approach; that only makes the student more upset	➢ Ask Sue what she thinks the issue is, rather than telling her.
	➢ Act as a model for controlled behavior	➢ Express to Sue your feelings and how you modified your behavior
	➢ Give immediate feedback about positive and negative behaviors	➢ Immediately following Sue's outburst her teacher pulls her aside to discuss her behavior; Sue's teacher follows up with her social skills teacher also.
	➢ Offer alternatives to problems that have been the cause of excessive agitation	➢ Discuss with Dave what made him angry and walk through other options for him to problem solve a situation that is making him angry.
	➢ Encourage ongoing communication among all staff so student has a consistent approach	➢ Sue's teachers, school psychologist and parents have an email chain so that if there is an issue, all can be notified.
	➢ Set clear and concise limits	➢ Dave is consistently reminded of the consequences for fighting with other students.
	➢ Help student identify a quiet place when breaks are needed	➢ Dave has a pass to go to the nurse's office when he feels he is losing control of his anger.
Lack of self-awareness		➢ Lisa does not understand why her classmates laugh when she tells the boy next to her in class that she loves him. ➢ Carl seems unaffected when his friend gets upset with him. ➢ Bob does not understand why his extra points are being taken away after acting out.
	➢ Use videotaping and/or role playing to teach appropriate behaviors and provide corrective feedback	➢ Lisa role plays in her social skills class. In addition, the school psychologist reinforces appropriate ways to express emotion and problem solving different social scenarios.
	➢ Write down rules to help the student remember them	➢ Bob has a laminated sheet of rules in the front of every folder and notebook.
	➢ Provide opportunities for academic and social success	➢ Dave is told thank you for remembering to raise your hand. Bob is praised for remaining attentive during reading time.

Adapting the strategies for the IEP

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Example:
Academic and/or Functional Area: Behavioral

Annual Measurable Academic and/or Functional Goal: Remains in seat for 30 minutes with self-checks every 5 minutes by June 15.

Benchmark or Short-Term Objectives: Remains in seat for 15 minutes with cueing every 5 minutes by November 15.

Criteria: Teacher and teacher aide assessment.

Evaluation: 3 out of 5 trials/observations.

Modification/Supplementary Aid: Thera-band and a wedge seat cushion.

Academic and/or Functional Area: _____

Annual Measurable Academic and/or Functional Goal: _____

Benchmark or Short-Term Objectives: _____

Criteria: _____

Evaluation: _____

Modification/Supplementary Aid: _____

Helping Students with Brain Injury

Communication deficits involve problems with both receptive and expressive language skills. Reducing the amount of information given, altering the complexity of information, and slowing the rate of presentation helps a student overcome these weaknesses. Expressive language difficulties are often demonstrated in weak organization of thought, difficulty staying on topic, and finding the right word to use on command. Written language reflects all these deficits and is often weaker than pre-injury levels.

The following are sample strategies you can use. It is important to remember that all brain injuries are unique and that all students have different strengths and weaknesses, therefore different strategies may or may not work depending on the student, the class, and the time of day, among other factors. It is important to remain flexible in trying different strategies until you find one that works for that student, and to always keep in mind the ultimate goal of moving students towards independence. Once you have found a strategy that works use it consistently and share it with others who work with that student.

Difficulty with…	Strategy/Accommodation	Example
Word finding (aphasia)		Dave cannot identify the Presidents of the United States on a test.
	➢ Provide alternative testing: matching, multiple choice, etc. that depend on recognition and not retrieval	➢ Dave is provided a multiple choice test on the history of the Presidency.
	➢ Provide word banks	➢ Dave is allowed a word bank for fill-in questions.
Comprehending class discussion and/or readings		Bill cannot understand the teacher's assignment. When asked to report on the middle ages submits a report on middle aged women.
	➢ Audio system that focuses on just the teacher's voice	➢ Bill's teacher wears a microphone that transmits just what the teacher is saying to Bill
	➢ Limit the amount of information and use concrete language	➢ Bill's teacher modifies the lesson on history of the President's so as to not include memorization of the President's names, but include comprehension of the role of the President.
	➢ Provide visual information to supplement class teaching/discussion	➢ Bill has an outline of the chapter to follow along before and after reading the chapter which highlights key points.
	➢ Providing an outline in advance of lectures	➢ Bill is given teacher's notes to make comprehension easier.

	➢ Use visuals (projected class notes or presentation) to reinforce/support lecture	➢ Bill's teacher writes on the board more so that he can see what is being talked about.
	➢ Desk copy of projected (overhead, powerpoint, proxima, etc.) notes	➢ Bill gets copies of all materials teacher uses prior to lecture.
	➢ Asking the student to repeat or paraphrase what was said in order to clarify that they understood what was said	➢ Bill's teacher asks him to summarize the main points of the lesson.
	➢ Student can listen to taped lectures at own pace, with text at the same time as an option	➢ Bill's teacher allows him to audio record classes; with a focus on chapter summary classes
	➢ Teacher sensitivity to student's confusion	➢ Bill's teacher recognizes when Bill is becoming overwhelmed by the information and slows down
	➢ Clarify by repeating, rephrasing, requesting questions, etc.	➢ Bill's teacher rewords what she is saying to increase the chance of understanding.
Organizing thoughts resulting in a choppy presentation with important details omitted		Lisa's oral report leaves out important details and doesn't make sense.
	➢ Assisting with an outline for presentations	➢ Lisa's teacher works with her to develop the outline and timeline for her oral report.
Pragmatics – turn taking, reading body language, give and take during conversations		Nancy has difficulty having conversations with people because she keeps talking out of turn.
	➢ Utilize social skill groups or a circle of friends (with non-disabled peers) to teach social skills	➢ Nancy attends a social skills group and her school social worker develops a circle of friends for her for recess.
Difficulty processing information if it is presented quickly and/or with auditory distractions		Sue is unable to follow what the teacher is saying because of the noise from the hallway.
	➢ Allow testing in a quiet place	➢ Dave takes his tests in a separate room.
	➢ Audio system that focuses on just the teacher's voice	➢ Sue's teacher wears a microphone that transmits just what the teacher is saying.
	➢ Seat student away from distractions	➢ Sue is seated away from the classroom door and closer to the teacher's desk.
Keeping up with the flow		Bob is still trying to grasp the concepts discussed during the

of information discussed, especially as information becomes more complex.		first 15 minutes of class while the teacher and class have moved on to a different topic.
	➢ Scaffold learning-provide the opportunity to preview at home or school	➢ Carl's teacher sends home outlines the day before the topic is discussed for student to review.
	➢ Allow extra time to process information, as well as retrieve and generate information	➢ Mary's schedule provides study hours after more difficult classes to write an outline of what was reviewed, prepare for homework, further reading, etc.
	➢ Teacher prepared notes, pre-reading and study guides in advance of a lecture or discussion	➢ Mary's teacher gives her an outline to follow during class.
	➢ Summarize at the end of a topic	➢ Mary's teacher goes over the main points of the topic before moving on to the next.
	➢ Chunk information together	➢ Mary's teacher chunks sections of the history lesson together.

Adapting the strategies for the IEP

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Example:

Academic and/or Functional Area: Communication and Auditory

Annual Measurable Academic and/or Functional Goal: Summarize the main points of the lesson without cueing with 80% accuracy by June 30.

Benchmark or Short-Term Objectives: Summarize the main points of the lesson with 60% accuracy by November 30. Begin phasing cueing out by providing 2 cues, then 1 cue, then eventually no cueing.

Criteria: Teacher and teacher aide assessment.

Evaluation: 3 out of 5 written summaries indicate 80% accuracy.

Modification/Supplementary Aid: Live Scribe Pen.

Academic and/or Functional Area: _____

Annual Measurable Academic and/or Functional Goal: _____

Benchmark or Short-Term Objectives: _____

Criteria: _____

Evaluation: _____

Modification/Supplementary Aid: _____

Helping Students with Brain Injury

Executive functioning affects a student's ability to work in a systematic and orderly manner. Difficulties in executive functioning result in impaired reasoning, abstract thinking, problem solving, and simultaneous processing (for example, listening and taking notes at the same time). It also affects the ability to set goals, self-monitor, initiate, plan, and shift ideas to find alternative solutions to a problem, or shift to a different subject, book, etc.

The following are sample strategies you can use. It is important to remember that all brain injuries are unique and that all students have different strengths and weaknesses, therefore different strategies may or may not work depending on the student, the class, and the time of day, among other factors. It is important to remain flexible in trying different strategies until you find one that works for that student, and to always keep in mind the ultimate goal of moving students towards independence. Once you have found a strategy that works use it consistently and share it with others who work with that student.

Difficulty with…	Strategy/Accommodation	Example
ORGANIZATION		
Organizing materials needed for class, homework, reports		Dave forgets to bring his calculator and notebook to math class.
	➢ Notebook or graphic organizer with schedule, calendar, folders, paper, index divisions, homework page	➢ Dave uses a graphic organizer that includes a calculator and other school tools.
	➢ Note taker or teacher prepared notes, including board assignments	➢ Dave keeps a homework pad for all assignments, including what is needed for each class.
	➢ Step cards for retellings, math calculation, etc.	➢ Dave has note cards outlining the steps for math formulas.
	➢ Different colored folders for different subjects	➢ Bob uses different colored notebooks and folders for different subjects.
Deciding which of many steps goes first, second, etc.		Nancy does not know where to start before beginning her book report.
	➢ Creating flow charts for tasks (task analysis – what to do 1st, what to do 2nd, what to do if something doesn't work, etc.)	➢ Nancy has written instructions for assignments, broken into Step 1, Step 2, etc.
	➢ Customized organizational system	➢ Nancy outlines her report bulleting out key items.
	➢ Graphic organizers for written expression, note-	➢ Nancy uses note cards for oral reports.

	taking, math work	
PLANNING		
Planning and budgeting time for homework, projects, tasks		Lisa has difficulty preparing to work on her history project, and waits until the last minute to get started.
	➢ Self-monitor the amount of time it is taking to complete reading, tests, homework	➢ Lisa's parents and teacher help time him on projects for a month so she gains a better understanding of the time it takes to do homework, reading, tests.
	➢ Benchmark calendar for projects (what will be done by the end of week 1, week 2, etc.)	➢ Lisa develops a written timeline on her calendar for what parts of the project need to be done and when.
	➢ To do list on the board or on a card on their desk or attached as a laminate to the zipper on their backpack	➢ Lisa works with her aid to develop a normal timeline for completing projects.
	➢ Cueing, beeper watch, cue cards	➢ Lisa's beeper watch goes off when it is time to start homework.
	➢ Set up chart with goals; use a timer to help pacing; reinforce task completion	➢ Lisa creates a checklist for what steps need to be completed to finish her project.
PROBLEM SOLVING		
Coming up with solutions to problems, including alternative solutions if the first does not work		➢ Dave becomes frustrated at not having a calculator and doesn't think to ask the teacher to borrow one.
	➢ Model and role play problem solving	➢ Dave's aid walks him through different ways to resolve the problem of forgetting a pen, pencil, calculator, etc.
	➢ Use a problem solving model (define the problem, generate solutions, look at pros and cons for each solution, check results to see which solution is more viable)	➢ Dave writes down possible solutions and the pros and cons for each possible solution.
	➢ Provide a checklist of steps for solving problems	➢ Dave writes down a timeline and steps to take in order to complete a project.
Using effective strategies to compensate for areas of weakness		Lisa has a post-it reminding her to bring the calculator but doesn't think to check the post-it before class.
	➢ Help to develop meta-cognitive skills (self-talk	➢ Lisa walks through the steps she normally takes to

	and self-analysis) ➢ Positive feedback followed by constructive feedback and solutions for fixing the problem ➢ Use of errorless learning (design tasks to ensure success and then the level of challenge can be increased gradually) to avoid frustration and a feeling of failure	prepare for a project, developing a timeline to meet the project deadline date. ➢ Lisa's teacher praises her for coming up with a new realistic timeline for projects. ➢ Lisa's teacher gives her a smaller project before assigning a more difficult one.
COGNITIVE RIGIDITY		
Shifting to a new topic		Sue has difficulty shifting from science to history.
	➢ Summarizing at the end of a topic and concretely stating when you are moving to a new topic ➢ Provide warning time for transitions, especially for changes in routine to allow the student to prepare for and expect the transition ➢ A brief break before tasks and warning times when tasks will change	➢ The teacher cues Sue to move on to her science book and put away her history book. ➢ The aid gives Sue a 5 minute warning before science ends. ➢ Sue takes a 5 minute break for the next subject begins.
Getting stuck in one mode of thought or thinking (perseveration)		Dave is still focused on forgetting his calculator.
	➢ Generating alternative solutions to different problems and practicing them	➢ Dave brainstorms solutions to what to do if he forgets his calculator (ask a friend to borrow one, ask the teacher to borrow one, etc.).
REASONING/ABSTRACT THINKING		
Answering open-ended essay questions, particularly "why" and "how" questions		➢ Lisa has difficulty with essays in her history class, and doesn't know where to begin. ➢ Tim remembers the key facts of the war but cannot answer why it occurred.
	➢ Have the student paraphrase what they have read or what has been discussed ➢ With "why" and "how" questions use examples or rephrase the questions ➢ Explain abstract language and concepts, and verify understanding	➢ At the end of each chapter Lisa's teacher asks for a summary of what has been read. ➢ Tim's essay questions provide examples. ➢ Sue's teacher asks her to explain what has been discussed in her own words in order to clarify that

		she understands.
Generalizing concepts compared to recalling concrete details		When Nancy is asked to summarize a topic she provides key details rather than a story.
	➢ Use the SQ4R Method: Survey, Question, Read, Write, Recite, Review	➢ Before reading a chapter Nancy reads the outline, skims the chapter, reads the summary questions, then reads the chapter, writes a summary, re-reads the outline and reviews what she read with the teacher or aid.
INITIATION		
Student has difficulty beginning assigned tasks		Robert does not know where to begin so he never starts his science project.
	➢ Divide task into steps	➢ Robert divides his project into Step 1, Step 2, etc.
	➢ Provide time benchmarks	➢ Robert's calendar includes a minimum time of when the project needs to begin, when he needs to be halfway done, etc.
	➢ Model appropriate problem solving	➢ Robert's teacher walks the class through the steps to complete their projects, including a fill in the blank timeline.
	➢ Rewards for starting tasks	➢ Robert's parents reward him for meeting Step 1.
	➢ To do list as an initiator	➢ Robert writes a to do list for his upcoming project and checks it daily.
	➢ Environmental cues – for example, a timer or alarm to get started	➢ Robert sets his smartphone to provide reminders for the various steps to complete his project.
SELF-MONITORING		
Self-monitoring and reviewing work for errors		Nancy does not proofread her papers and often has multiple mistakes in her work.
	➢ Self-monitoring checklists , including proofreading, assistive technology, etc.	➢ Nancy keeps a checklist for all written reports, including spell check, grammar check, reading it out loud, having her parents read it, etc.
	➢ Proofreading (1st for fluency, 2nd for punctuation, 3rd backwards for spelling)	➢ Nancy proofreads all work prior to submitting it
	➢ Utilize assistive technology to edit	➢ Nancy utilizes spell check and grammar check on all reports
Self-regulating		➢ Andrew is constantly getting up from his seat, has

(movement, communication, behavior)		difficulty regulating the volume of his voice, and doesn't understand why classmates do not respond when he yells to be heard.
	➢ Clearly state, teach, and reinforce behavioral expectations	➢ Andrew's teacher reiterates the "class rules" and provides clear instruction when Andrew starts to get up or his voice begins to raise
	➢ Make the student aware of their issues with self-monitoring, including subtle cueing	➢ Andrew's teacher or aid taps him on the shoulder when he begins to fidget or raise his voice
	➢ Functional behavior assessment to determine triggers and precursors – being realistic about what behavior can and can't be changed	➢ Andrew's functional behavior assessment find that he has a harder time following "class rules" later in the day caused by cognitive fatigue

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Example:

Academic and/or Functional Area: Executive functioning

Annual Measurable Academic and/or Functional Goal: Student will initiate the task within 3 minutes of the initial instruction being given by June 30.

Benchmark or Short-Term Objectives: By November 30, student will initiate the task within 5 minutes with teacher cueing being given when needed.

Criteria: Teacher and teacher aide assessment.

Evaluation: 80% of intervals over a period of 5 days in a row using a data sheet provided for the teacher to track the intervals.

Modification/Supplementary Aid: Smart phone voice reminder for project due dates and project benchmarks.

Academic and/or Functional Area: _____

Annual Measurable Academic and/or Functional Goal: _____

Benchmark or Short-Term Objectives: _____

Criteria: _____

Evaluation: _____

Modification/Supplementary Aid: _____

Helping Students with Brain Injury

Memory loss is very common. Mild brain injuries can result in short-term memory deficits, while moderate and severe injuries can cause both short-term and long-term memory deficits. Memory is often decreased after a brain injury since attention, concentration and organizational skills are usually affected. This results in difficulty learning new material, retaining it, and being able to retrieve information upon command. For example, a student may need many repetitions of material before grasping a concept, forget the information a day later, or not be able to recall information spontaneously. Yet this student may still demonstrate knowledge of the material on a multiple choice test.

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Difficulty with …	Strategy/Accommodation	Example
Short-term recall		Dave forgets what transpired throughout the day, including what happened in class and what is due for homework. ’
	➢ Homework book and notes (teacher writing down homework, making assignments available online, homework hotline)	➢ Dave keeps a homework notebook/calendar that includes work due the next day, upcoming tests and quiz dates, project due dates, etc. His aid checks it at the end of each class.
	➢ Calendar, electronic organizer	➢ Dave holds a calendar that contains all important dates.
	➢ Repeat directions, provide cueing to help with memory (begins with the letter “s”), write down directions	➢ Dave’s teacher reviews his homework notebook to make sure directions are included.
	➢ Audio recorder	➢ Dave tapes daily lectures in case there is something he forgets.
	➢ Lists and checklists	➢ Dave has a notebook that contains a list of all things he needs to remember.
	➢ Diary, journal, memory or log book for what the student does at home (to aid in social skill development) and school	➢ Dave writes his own summary of class at the end of each day to reinforce what was learned.
Names		Bob forgets the names of teachers even though they look

		familiar.
	➢ Memory books with pictures of teachers, their name and the subject they teach	➢ Bob has a picture of each teacher and their name on different colored subject notebooks.
Scheduling		Sue forgets what classes are at what time, despite having been in school for several days or weeks.
	➢ Daily schedule	➢ Lisa has a laminated schedule on each of his notebooks.
	➢ Map of the school, class schedule, and locker combination permanently in student's backpack	➢ Sue has a laminated schedule with a map and locker combination taped to the back of her notebooks.
	➢ Watches and timers	➢ Andrew is reminded of how long he has to do certain tasks by using a watch.
	➢ Consistency and organization	➢ Sue has the same schedule each day, with a laminated copy attached to her organizer.
Prospective Memory or Planning Ahead		Bill shows up for the class field trip and is told that he can't go because he has forgotten to get a permission slip, take it home, have it signed by a parent and returned to school.
	➢ Develop/monitor student notebook with organizers, math step cards, schedules, calendars, etc.	➢ Bill keeps an organizer that includes important deadlines, including permission slips, upcoming class trips, projects, etc.
New learning		Sally can remember how to do addition and subtraction but multiplication taught after the injury is difficult to comprehend and/or memorize.
	➢ Scaffolding – building upon existing learning	➢ The teacher builds on the math Sally knows to build up to learning multiplication
	➢ Rhyming and mnemonic techniques	➢ The teacher helps Sally come up with different terms to remember information.
	➢ Provide information more slowly	➢ The teacher tries to slow down as she is speaking.
	➢ Repetition, frequent review and multi-modality presentation (auditory and visual)	➢ The teacher repeats the main points several times.
	➢ Relating new information to learned information	➢ Sue re-reads old outlines before moving on to the new chapter.
	➢ Clustering information	➢ Sue's teacher groups her history events into different timelines.

- Predictable classroom routines and procedures
- The teacher teaches in a consistent manner, running the classroom the same each day.

Adapting the strategies for the IEP

The IEP focuses on academic and/or functional areas affected in the school setting, with the goal of establishing measurable academic and/or functional goals. These goals include benchmark or short-term objectives, as well as criteria for measuring and evaluating the objective. It also includes modifications and supplementary aids, including assistive technology devices and services. As there have been numerous advancements in technology in recent years an assistive technology evaluation should be a consideration for all areas of impairment, including physical and cognitive impairments. *It is important to keep in mind that the IEP should be a fluid document, re-assessed regularly and able to be modified if strategies being utilized are not having the desired effect.*

Example:

Academic and/or Functional Area: Memory

Annual Measurable Academic and/or Functional Goal: Able to review a daily checklist independently for 10 consecutive days by June 30.

Benchmark or Short-Term Objectives: Able to review a daily checklist with cueing for 10 consecutive days by November 30.

Criteria: Progress noted in progress report 4 times a year.

Evaluation: 3 out of 5 trials/observations.

Modification/Supplementary Aid: A checklist is available at all times at the student's desk.

Academic and/or Functional Area: _____

Annual Measurable Academic and/or Functional Goal: _____

Benchmark or Short-Term Objectives: _____

Criteria: _____

Evaluation: _____

Modification/Supplementary Aid: _____

Helping Students with Brain Injury

A student with a brain injury can have psychosocial difficulties for many reasons. The student may have unresolved fears and resentment about the injury. The part of the brain that influences emotional functioning may have been damaged. The student may feel insecure, isolated and different from peers.

The following are sample strategies you can use. It is important to remember that all brain injuries are unique and that all students have different strengths and weaknesses, therefore different strategies may or may not work depending on the student, the class, and the time of day, among other factors. It is important to remain flexible in trying different strategies until you find one that works for that student, and to always keep in mind the ultimate goal of moving students towards independence. Once you have found a strategy that works use it consistently and share it with others who work with that student.

Difficulty with…	Strategy/Accommodation	Example
Internalizing emotions (anxiety, depression, social isolation, shaken sense of self, profound sense of loss)		➢ Sally appears very jittery before an exam. ➢ Mary is withdrawn and does not socialize with other children and eats alone during lunch. ➢ Tommy looks at the floor during his entire presentation.
	➢ Provide supportive counseling	➢ Dave sees the school psychologist once a week to discuss how he is feelings.
	➢ Use a buddy system	➢ Mary is paired with another student from social skills for lunch, gym and recess.
	➢ Utilize social skills groups	➢ Mary attends social skills group twice a week focused on how to begin and maintain conversations.
	➢ Balance positive and constructive feedback in the classroom	➢ Tommy's talks with him about the importance of eye contact when presenting, cues him during the presentation, and praises him afterwards.
Externalizing emotions (Emotional lability, mood swings, impulsivity, disinhibition, decreased frustration tolerance, inappropriate behavior/language)		➢ Dave easily gets into arguments with teachers and fellow students. ➢ Bob yells out answers during class. ➢ Nancy gets easily irritated when having difficulty remembering her locker combination. ➢ Dave curses out the teacher when she corrects him, and is frequently in the principal's office.

	➢ Provide supportive counseling	➢ Dave sees the school psychologist once a week to discuss his feelings, and discuss techniques for calming himself when he becomes frustrated.
	➢ Balance positive and constructive feedback in the classroom	➢ Dave's teacher praises him when he remains calm in class.
	➢ Track the behaviors and antecedent	➢ Nancy's child study team conducts a Functional Behavior Analysis (FBA) to track her behaviors and make accommodations as needed (for example, providing her with a laminated card for her backpack with her locker combination).
Relationship building challenges (egocentric behaviors, blunted affect, unable to pick up social cues, vulnerability to alcohol/drugs)		➢ Dave cannot focus on his friends and only talks about himself. ➢ Mary does not show emotion and always seems serious. ➢ Sally stands too close when she talks. ➢ Sally has difficulty saying "no" to peers when they want to cut class to smoke in the woods behind the school.
	➢ Utilize speech therapy in the classroom to assist with communication challenges, such as picking up on social cues	➢ Sally role plays in speech therapy and her therapist observes her and provides cues in class.
	➢ Utilize social skills groups	➢ Dave, Mary and Sally attend social skills group twice a week focused on paying attention to their own facial expressions and body language, as well as those of others.
	➢ Balance positive and constructive feedback in the classroom	➢ Dave's social skills teacher role plays mutual conversations for him and cues with him with a tap on the shoulder when he begins talking about himself too much.

Adapting the strategies for the IEP

The IEP focuses on academic and/or functional areas affected in the school setting, with the goal of establishing measurable academic and/or functional goals. These goals include benchmark or short-term objectives, as well as criteria for measuring and evaluating the objective. It also includes modifications and supplementary aids, including assistive technology devices and services. As there have been numerous advancements in technology in recent years an assistive technology evaluation should be a consideration for all areas of impairment, including physical and

cognitive impairments. *It is important to keep in mind that the IEP should be a fluid document, re-assessed regularly and able to be modified if strategies being utilized are not having the desired effect.*

Example:
Academic and/or Functional Area: Psychosocial

Annual Measurable Academic and/or Functional Goal: By June 30 the student will be able to independently utilize a calming down strategy taught to her by the school psychologist before acting out on her agitation. Teacher cueing will be provided when needed.

Benchmark or Short-Term Objectives: By November 30 the student will be able to, with teacher cueing, identify when she is getting agitated and use a cue card to go through a calming down technique taught to her by the school psychologist. If the calming down technique does not work the student will be able to go to the school psychologists office. The student will also see the school psychologist weekly and be able to identify 3 positive things that happened during the week.

Criteria: School psychologist and teacher observations.

Evaluation: The baseline of leaving the classroom to see the school psychologist will reduce by 50%, and the baseline of behavioral outbursts will reduce.

Modification/Supplementary Aid: Functional behavioral assessment to determine triggers and a baseline.

Academic and/or Functional Area: _____

Annual Measurable Academic and/or Functional Goal: _____

Benchmark or Short-Term Objectives: _____

Criteria: _____

Evaluation: _____

Modification/Supplementary Aid: _____

Helping Students with Brain Injury

Brain injury frequently affects sensory-motor functioning, such as visual processing, which can significantly alter school performance. When the rate of processing visual information is reduced, the student is able to grasp only part of what has been presented. This affects all aspects of processing information whether it involves listening to a teacher, watching a slide show, or interacting with peers. The result is often misunderstanding, confusion, and subsequent inappropriate comments by the student.

The following are sample strategies you can use. It is important to remember that all brain injuries are unique and that all students have different strengths and weaknesses, therefore different strategies may or may not work depending on the student, the class, and the time of day, among other factors. It is important to remain flexible in trying different strategies until you find one that works for that student, and to always keep in mind the ultimate goal of moving students towards independence. Once you have found a strategy that works use it consistently and share it with others who work with that student.

Difficulty with…	Strategy/Accommodation	Example
Visual challenges (tracking, scanning, field cuts, integrating visual info)		Doug often loses spot on page where he is reading.
	➢ Extended time on tests and in-class assignments	➢ Doug's teacher allows him to stay after class to finish assignments.
	➢ Track with a finger or index card	➢ Doug uses an index card to track sentences as he reads and block out the rest of the information.
	➢ Avoid bubble response tests	➢ Dave circles the actual answer and not just the letter.
	➢ Highlighting	➢ Doug highlights key points in his textbook utilizing the teacher prepared outline.
	➢ Books on tape	➢ Doug utilizes books on tape since physical impairments make it difficult for him to track with his finger, an index card or highlighter
	➢ Page stabilizer with tracking/highlighting capability	➢ Doug uses a page stabilizer with a built in highlighter to follow along and highlight key information
Processing simultaneous information – visual and		Sally cannot write down notes from a projector and listen to teacher.

auditory at the same time		
	➢ Call up prior knowledge-link new learning to existing knowledge	➢ Bob's teacher reminds him of the earlier math concepts, referring him to his formula match index cards as a primer.
	➢ Use visual supports to support instruction	➢ Sally's teacher uses an overhead projector that has pictures to depict what is being taught.
	➢ Direct teaching of study skills, including taking notes from a text or reviewing vocabulary for a unit	➢ Bob keeps notes on a teacher prepared outline while reading from each of his textbooks.
	➢ Provide a copy of the PowerPoint will possible fill in areas	➢ Sally's teacher provides her with a copy of the PowerPoint but leaves fill in the blank areas to ensure she pays attention during the lecture
Pragmatics –not respecting personal space		Lisa stands too close during conversations and doesn't read the body language when others pull back.
	➢ Utilize social skill groups or a circle of friends (with non-disabled peers) to teach social skills	➢ Lisa attends a social skills group and her school social worker role plays with her to identify body language triggers.

Adapting the strategies for the IEP

The IEP focuses on academic and/or functional areas affected in the school setting, with the goal of establishing measurable academic and/or functional goals. These goals include benchmark or short-term objectives, as well as criteria for measuring and evaluating the objective. It also includes modifications and supplementary aids, including assistive technology devices and services. As there have been numerous advancements in technology in recent years an assistive technology evaluation should be a consideration for all areas of impairment, including physical and cognitive impairments. *It is important to keep in mind that the IEP should be a fluid document, re-assessed regularly and able to be modified if strategies being utilized are not having the desired effect.*

Example:

Academic and/or Functional Area: Visual and Information processing

Annual Measurable Academic and/or Functional Goal: Student independently uses an index card for tracking while reading by June 15.

Benchmark or Short-Term Objectives: Student uses index card for tracking while reading 50% of the time by November 30, with teacher cueing the remaining 50% of the time.

Criteria: Teacher observations.

Evaluation: 3 out of 5 trials/observations reported on quarterly progress reports.

Modification/Supplementary Aid: Student does not receive scantron/bubble response tests.

Academic and/or Functional Area: _____

Annual Measurable Academic and/or Functional Goal: _____

Benchmark or Short-Term Objectives: _____

Criteria: _____

Evaluation: _____

Modification/Supplementary Aid: _____