

More than Taking an Order: The Importance of Skill Development in Employment through the Lens of the Fast Food Industry for Students in a Life Skills Setting

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Learning about America and About the World from McDonald's: An Interdisciplinary Approach

Abstract

This unit seeks to engage students in a high school life skills classroom with the skills necessary to attain and maintain jobs related to the fast food industry. The service industry is a steadily increasing job sector for high school students. A simple google search can lead to upwards of 3,000 open positions in fast food in one zip code alone. Many of these students have the desire to work in the realm of fast food, but are unaware that working at McDonald's requires more skills than asking the question, "Would you like fries with that?" Through this semester long unit students will experience the day to day job requirements of McDonald's and other fast food employees through, videos, ethnography, interviews and simulated job experiences. Culminating their experiences in a short power point presentation to their peers about the myths, realities of working in the fast food industry. This unit will be geared toward students in a high school life skills classroom and will extend over a ten-week period with each lesson being approximately 90 minutes in length once per week. Through this unit students will engage in the real life and simulated situations based around the social or soft skills needed to gain and maintain meaningful employment in various aspects of the food industry. Lessons will be aligned with both the PA common core and the individual transition goals as stated in each students Individualized Education Plan (IEP).

Rationale

Target Audience

This unit is designed for students in a high school Life Skills is this classroom the majority of students are identified as a being students with Intellectual Disabilities (ID). In the state of Pennsylvania, a student with an IQ under 75 is considered to have an intellectual disability. Ranging from the ages of 14-21 these students are approaching graduation and transitioning from the classroom setting they have known from a young age into the workforce. Students should be exposed to the different forms of employment available to them beginning at age 14. As the students ages grow closer to 21 they should begin going into the fields and experiencing jobs through the supports of a job coach and or other supports to assist them cognitively to complete assigned task. The students this unit is aimed towards have little to no experience with jobs in the fast food realm. This unit starts at the bottom and works towards a broad end with students expanding their awareness of jobs available at McDonald's and the

Food Service Industry

The service industry is a steadily increasing job sector for high school students. A simple google search can lead to upwards of 3,000 open positions in fast food in the 19122 zip code alone. Fast food workers, in the notion that students are accustomed to, are the first contact between the customers and the restaurant. They are responsible for ensuring customer satisfaction and addressing any questions or comments that customers may have. Students may not be aware of the many tasks fast food workers perform. These tasks involve taking customer orders, assembling the orders, and acting as cashiers. The food is then served through “drive thru” windows or over counters in the restaurant. Students may be aware of these jobs, but do not have an understanding of the needed skills to attain and sustain these jobs. Through this unit students will explore the different jobs that the McDonald’s Corporation has to offer and also the skills, risks, and benefits associated with each of these jobs as related to their own personal strengths and weaknesses as explored through a previous unit on personality and career traits.

Using the Lens of McDonald’s

Fast Food is a concept that is well known among high school aged students. Historically, McDonald’s has been known as a hangout for teens due to the very quick service and relaxed atmosphere. Teenagers are very familiar with the sights, sounds, and smells of a McDonald’s restaurant. However, many teens are unaware of the long hours of standing and working with difficult customers that come with working in the fast food industry. For example, in a typical McDonald’s a worker is on his or her feet for the entirety of their shift working directly serving others. With these drawbacks in mind and using the familiarity of McDonalds as a bridge for students this unit will help students ease into the concept of employment and will help them make connections with the environment. The familiarity of the setting and what they have witnessed in McDonald’s restaurants throughout the years will help them quickly learn the expectations of the job. McDonald’s also has a proven track record for providing on the job coaching and support for employees with special needs.

Transition services for students with special needs

As this unit is geared towards students in a high school life skills setting putting IEP transition goals at the forefront of planning is important. According to the Ross and Bateman (2018), “Employment rates among prime-aged adults with disabilities in the 100 largest metropolitan areas range from 28 percent to 60 percent”. With this statistic in mind, it is important to expose students with intellectual disabilities to jobs that require various levels of functional skill. The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) is a federal law that lays out a student’s rights in special education. Students over the age of 14 according to IDEA are required to begin receiving services in the area of transition. This portion of the law which is exemplified through Indicator 13 of the State Performance Plan required by the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 2004 is

the percent of youth with IEPs aged 16 and above that have an IEP that includes appropriate measurable postsecondary goals. The goals are annually updated and based upon an age appropriate transition assessment, transition services, including courses of study, that will reasonably enable the student to meet those postsecondary goals, and annual IEP goals related to the student's transition services needs. There also must be evidence that the student was invited to the IEP team meeting where transition services are to be discussed and evidence that, if appropriate, a representative of any participating agency was invited to the IEP team meeting with the prior consent of the parent or student who has reached the age of majority.

Content Objectives

Through this unit students will engage in the real life and simulated situations based around the social or soft skills needed to gain and maintain meaningful employment in various aspects of the food industry. Students will have the opportunity to engage in the process of applying for gainful employment from the experience of writing a resume, to completing a job interview, followed by learning the necessary skill sets needed to apply for maintain and secure employment at a fast food restaurant, such as McDonald's.

Listed below are several example of lesson objectives:

- Complete a self-assessment of strengths and weaknesses
- Communicate verbally and in writing their intention to work at a specific job location
- Locate needed information within a job application
- Demonstrate through class participation the skills needed to maintain a job using the school Prepared, Respectful, On time, United as a community, Dedicated to learning (PROUD) motto by
 - Being on time to class and task
 - Being in uniform
 - Using appropriate language, as they would if working at McDonalds
 - Working with peers and listening to directives
 - Completing assigned task in a timely manner
- Complete a sample job application for McDonald's
 - This application will be modified, but students will have access to the un-amended version via the internet
- Create a resume highlighting strengths and interests
- Complete an interview and/or observation of one McDonald's employee and share his/her role with the class
 - Present finding with class via a power point presentation

Teaching Strategies

Students with complex special needs learn best through doing tasks. For this reason, all lessons in this unit will be rooted in the Quality Teaching for English Learners (QTEL) vision. While this vision is most often used in association with English language learners, this approach also works extremely well with students with special needs who often struggle in traditionally taught general education classrooms. QTEL is best described as working to provide educators with tools they need to accelerate language development, academic literacy, and disciplinary knowledge. These strategies can be best described as a three act lesson in which students are:

1. Introduced to the lesson through a series of open ended exploration based questions and tasks with no right or wrong answers developed to promote higher level thinking and questioning in a safe learning environment. Examples of activities students will use to become acquainted with material are:
 - a. Think, Pair, Share
 - b. Novel Ideas
 - c. Round Robin Sharing
 - d. Brain Dump
2. Given interactive tasks in which they engage more deeply with the concept through real world application and materials through conversation and exploration. Some examples of interactive tasks students will be using are:
 - a. Sort and Label
 - b. Read with a Focus
 - c. Carousel
 - d. Sort and Match
 - e. Jigsaw
 - f. Interview
 - g. Observation
 - h. Job Shadowing
 - i. Informal Observations
3. Encouraged to expand their learning by becoming the lead learners within the lesson and sharing what they have discovered concretely with the rest of their classmates. Some of the ways students will share their learnings are:
 - a. Final Product
 - b. Collaborative Poster
 - c. Power Point Presentation
 - d. Mock Interviews

e. Ethnographies

PA Common Core Standards

The standards describe what students should know and be able to do with the English language, prekindergarten through Grade 12. The standards provide the targets for instruction and student learning essential for success in all academic areas, not just language arts classrooms. The standards most commonly used throughout this lesson are listed below:

ELA Standards

- CC.1.4.11–12.L Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling.
- CC.1.4.11–12.X Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.
- CC.1.5.11–12.A Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on grade-level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively.

Math Standards

- CC.2.1.5.B.1 Apply place-value concepts to show an understanding of operations and rounding as they pertain to whole numbers and decimals.
- CC.2.1.5.B.2 Extend an understanding of operations with whole numbers to perform operations including decimals.
- CC.2.2.5.A.4 Analyze patterns and relationships using two rules.

Classroom Activities

The three sample lesson plans that follow with depicted activities represent the beginning, middle and end of the unit with students completing additional activities and lessons to supplement between lessons connecting working in the fast food industry with required life and vocational skills.

Name: Smith	Kensington CAPA High School School District of Philadelphia
Class:	Life Skills Support - 90 min block
Topic	Applying for a Job in Fast Food- Week 2 of 10 in McDonald's Transition Unit
Standards & Objectives:	By the conclusion of this lesson students will be able to

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate verbally and in writing their intention to work at a specific job location • Locate needed information within a job application • Complete a sample job application for McDonald's • Create a resume highlighting strengths and interests <p>PA Common Core Standards in Reading, Writing and Mathematics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC.1.4.11–12.L Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling • CC.1.4.11–12.X Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences. • CC.1.5.11–12.A Initiate and participate effectively in a range of collaborative discussions on grade-level topics, texts, and issues, building on others' ideas and expressing their own clearly and persuasively. <p>IDEA Indicator 13- Vocational Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligned to the class wide transition goal by the end of a 10 week semester, given explicit instruction and practice on work place expectations and job skills in the classroom and a community setting, students will demonstrate appropriate work place skills and interactions with peers during community based instruction and in the classroom with individual percentages aligned to each individual students
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<p><u>Extending Task (20Mins):</u></p> <p><u>Homework:</u></p>	<p>Completion of Resume- students will complete their own resume using the provided template as a resource to highlight their strengths and weaknesses for a job at McDonald's as reflected in this lesson and the previous lesson on strengths and weaknesses</p> <p>Students will complete an internet or community based job search. Bringing in one artifact to present and share next class meeting.</p>
Resources/materials and supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • SMART boards • picture of McDonald's scenario • student notebooks • pen/pencil • job task cards • chart paper • markers • teacher made McDonald's application • teacher made resume template
Reference to Textbooks and Curriculum Guides	QTEL approach to lesson planning and engagement used to accelerate language development, academic literacy, and disciplinary knowledge of all students.

(Sample Job/Task Cards)

Cashier	Cook	Janitor	Drive Through Operator
Manager	Happy Meal Designer	Meat Packer	Party Planner
Taste Tester	Truck Driver	Part Time	Full Time

(Sample of McDonald's Application Modified Template)

First Name	Last Name
Address	
Email Address	Phone Number
Have you worked for McDonald's before Y/N	Are you over 18 Y/N

Times Available to work	Morning	Weekdays	Weekends
	Afternoon	Weekdays	Weekends

Education

Middle School Name Location/City	
High School Name Location/City	

References

People who know how hard I can work

Person's Name	How I know them	Phone Number	Email Address

I declare that the information contained in this application is correct to the best of my knowledge and understand that any omission or incorrect information is just cause for the rejection of my application or dismissal in accordance with the Company policy. If hired, I understand that I may be transferred to another restaurant because of promotions, training or staffing requirements. I also agree that, at all times, I will follow the rules and regulations of the Company. I authorize the Company, or its agents, to verify the information provided, and to obtain any other information relevant to this application. This information may be obtained by telephone or in writing from educational institutions, my current or former employers, financial institutions, personal information agents and my personal references. This consent is valid during the consideration of my application for employment, and if I am hired, for the duration of my employment. (This is directly from a McDonald's Job Application found online in June of 2019).

Signature: _____

Date: _____

(Sample of resume template)

My Resume

Name	
Phone Number	
Email Address	
House Address City, State, Zip Code	
Birthdate(Month, Day, Year)	

Goals for the Year

Job Goal	
School Goal	

Education

Elementary School	
Middle School	
High School	
The subjects I like best are:	

The Subjects I like least are:	
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Skills

Outside of school I am good at ...	
Inside of school I am really good at ...	
I need to work on ...	

References

People who know how hard I can work			
Person's Name	How I know them	Phone Number	Email Address

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Name: Smith	Kensington CAPA High School School District of Philadelphia
Class:	Life Skills Support - 90 min block
Topic	Cashier Math – using money to make change- Week 4 of 10 in McDonald’s Transition Unit
Standards & Objectives:	<p>Objectives</p> <p>By the conclusion of this lesson students will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • use real world word problems to identify what the customers is requesting • use real world word problems to provide proper change to a customer <p>PA Common Core Standards in Reading, Writing and Mathematics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC.2.1.5.B.1 Apply place-value concepts to show an understanding of operations and rounding as they pertain to whole numbers and decimals. • CC.2.1.5.B.2 Extend an understanding of operations with whole numbers to perform operations including decimals. • CC.2.2.5.A.4 Analyze patterns and relationships using two rules. <p>IDEA Indicator 13- Vocational Training</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aligned to the class wide transition goal by the end of a 10 week semester, given explicit instruction and practice on work place expectations and job skills in the classroom and a community setting, students will demonstrate appropriate work place skills and interactions with peers during community based instruction and in the classroom with individual percentages aligned to each individual students.

<u>Homework:</u>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A math problem • A title • All students names <p>* each student will be assigned one color marker and demonstrate group participation by using only their assigned color on the chart paper *</p> <p>Students will complete three sample story problems about cashier math.</p>
Resources/materials and supplies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Notebooks • Pens/pencils • Calculators • Sort and Match Cards (one set per group) • Teacher Created Story Problem Worksheets (one per group) • Jigsaw Graphic Organizer (one per student) • Chart paper • Markers (4 colors for each group) • Homework Sheets (copy for each students)
Reference to Textbooks and Curriculum Guides	QTEL approach to lesson planning and engagement used to accelerate language development, academic literacy, and disciplinary knowledge of all students.

Sample Sort and Match Cards

Cards will be cut out and placed in an envelope in random order

After buying some pencils for \$64.05, Ronald has \$4.17 left. How much money did Ronald have to begin with?	Ronald gives \$2.65 to Bridget. If Ronald started with \$90.00, how much money does he have left?
Answer: \$64.05 + \$4.17 = \$68.22	Answer: \$90.00 - \$2.65 = \$87.35

		What operation was used Answer
D	Gerald has \$30.43 and Peter has \$4.17. How much money do they have together?	Show Work What operation was used Answer
E	Gerald has \$93.85 and Margaret has \$5.25. How much money do they have together?	Show Work What operation was used Answer

Jig Saw Activity Share Out Group Graphic Organizer
Team Color:

Group Member Name	Story Problem Worked on in Expert Group by team member Answer	I think my team member got their answer by ...	One way this problem is different from my problem is ...
Name:	After buying some marbles for \$99.73,		

	Christina has \$67.88 left. How much money did Christina have to begin with?		
Name:	Marie gives \$5.19 to Andrea. If Marie started with \$46.50, how much money does she have left?		
Name:	Kimberly has \$89.17 and Teresa has \$64.10. How much money do they have together?		
Name:	Gerald has \$30.43 and Peter has \$4.17. How much money do they have together?		
Name:	Gerald has \$93.85 and Margaret has \$5.25. How much money do they have together?		

One question my group still has is ...

Collaborative Poster Rubric

Group Members Names:

1	2	3	4
I only see one name	I only see 2 color markers	I only see 3 color markers	I see all 4 color markers

Story Problem is present	Story Problem is present and uses subtraction	Story Problem is present and related to money	Story Problem is present and related to using a cash register
No Visual Display is Present	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Visual Display is Present
No Title is Present	Title is Present	Title is Present and related to story	Title is Clear and related to story
No Math Problem is Present	Math Problem is Present	Math Problem is Present and related to story	Math Problem is Clear and related to story
Below 5 points Please Redo	5-10 Points = C	11-15 Points= B	16-20 Points = A

Cashier Math Homework

Name:

Date:

Story Problem	Work- explain how (use a math sentences)	Answer Please Show All Work
Jaimie wants to buy a Value Meal, with Chicken Mc Nuggets and large fries and a large diet coke that costs \$5. She has \$3. How much more money does She need to buy the Value Meal?		

You want to buy two McDonald's Phillie Big Box Meals. One costs \$12, with Mc Nuggets and the other \$19, and has Quarter Pounders with cheese. How much money do you need?		
Abby wants to buy dinner for her family for \$23.57. She gives you, the cashier, a \$20 bill and a \$10 bill. How much change do you give her back?		

Name: Smith	Kensington CAPA High School School District of Philadelphia
Class:	Life Skills Support - 90 min block- this is a two day lesson
Topic	Needed Job Skills - Week 9 and 10 of 10 in McDonald's Transition Unit
Standards & Objectives:	<p>By the conclusion of this lesson students will be able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate verbally and in writing different job descriptions of employees at McDonald's • Complete an interview and/or observation of one McDonald's employee and share his/her role with the class <p>PA Common Core Standards in Reading, Writing and Mathematics</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CC.1.4.11–12.L Demonstrate a grade-appropriate command of the conventions of standard English grammar, usage, capitalization, punctuation, and spelling • CC.1.4.11–12.X Write routinely over extended time frames (time for research, reflection, and revision) and shorter time frames (a single sitting or a day or two) for a range of discipline-specific tasks, purposes, and audiences.

<p><u>Extending Task (15 min each Mins):</u></p> <p><u>Homework:</u></p>	<p>Ethnography Power Point Presentations</p> <p>Between weeks 9 and 10 students will be given time to work on ethnography Power Point presentations both in class and at home for home work. 15 minute Power Points summarizing findings will be presented to the class during the final day of the unit in week 10.</p>
<p>Resources/materials and supplies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student Notebooks • Pens/pencils • Signed permission slips for trip to McDonald's • Septa Transpasses for each student • Student contract for behavior and expectations while at McDonald's • Interview template • Laptop Cart for Power Points • SMART board for presentation • Copies of rubrics and expectations to be sent home for homework.
<p>Reference to Textbooks and Curriculum Guides</p>	<p>QTEL approach to lesson planning and engagement used to accelerate language development, academic literacy, and disciplinary knowledge of all students.</p>

EDUCATIONAL FIELD TRIP PERMISSION SLIP

Dear Parent or Guardian:

An educational field trip has been scheduled for your child's class to conclude our transition unit on McDonald's. School board policy requires each child to have advance written permission to go on a field trip. *Students who do not have prior written permission will not be able to participate in the field trip.*

Please complete the lower section of this form and return it to school immediately.

Thank you.

Teacher: Ms. Smith, Ms. Z and Classroom Assistance Date: _____

Date of field trip: _____ Approximate Time: 10:00am - 11:00 am

Destination: McDonald's Restaurant on Front and Girard Ave, Philadelphia PA.

Your child will need: Money if he/she would like to purchase anything from the menu

Mode of transportation: Bus _____ School Van _____ Walking X_____

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Sign, detach and return this portion to Ms. Smith at Kensington CAPA High School

I have read the information above and give my permission for
(student's name) _____

From Kensington CAPA High School to attend the field trip to McDonald's

On ____ at 10 am. I understand that my child will be traveling by bus _____ school van
_____ walking X_____ (please check the appropriate one).

Teacher: Ms. Smith Department/Grade: Room 201 Life Skills

Parent/guardian Signature _____

Emergency Phone Number _____

Additional Information (medication, allergies etc.) _____

Student Field Trip Behavior Agreement

I, _____, wish to participate in this educational experience to observe and interview employees at McDonald's. I understand that while I am on a field trip I represent Kensington CAPA High School and that all school rules still apply while on the trip. I promise to be KCAPA PROUD and pay close attention to being respectful to all and remaining united as a community with my classmates while we are guest at McDonald's.

Signature: _____

McDonald's Employee Interview Template

First Name of Person Interviewed:

Name(s) of Students giving the interview:

Date of interview:

Question Asked	Answer given by employee	What did this answer make you think about
What can you tell us about McDonald's?		
What made you want to work at McDonald's?		
Who hired you?		
What hours do you work?		
Do you work full time of part time?		
Are you good at math? Do you need math in your job?		
Do you think you will still work here in 5 years?		

Questions of your own?		
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Ethnography/Interview Presentation Rubric

1	2	3	4
At least 2 interview questions are discussed	At least 4 interview questions are discussed	At least 6 interview questions are discussed	At least 8 interview questions are discussed
At least 2 pieces of information from the field trip are included in the PowerPoint	At least 3 pieces of information from the field trip are included in the PowerPoint	At least 4 pieces of information from the field trip are included in the PowerPoint	At least 5 pieces of information from the field trip are included in the PowerPoint
The description of the worker is un-clear	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	The description of the worker is clear
At least 2 things the worker did are discussed	At least 3 things the worker did are discussed	At least 4 things the worker did are discussed	At least 5 things the worker did are discussed
Power point is incomplete	Not Applicable	Not Applicable	Power point is Complete
Below 5 points Please see me for an additional assignment	5-10 Points = C	11-15 Points= B	16-20 Points = A

Annotated Bibliography

Food Service Industry

Books and resources with information about McDonald's and other fast food chains.

Mcdonalds Interview: 12 Must Know Questions and Answers

<https://worknearyou.net/mcdonalds-interview-questions/>

Actual interview questions student may encounter when applying for a job at McDonald's.

Ozersky, J. (2008). *The hamburger: A history*. New Haven: Yale University Press.

As stated on the book jacket this fast-paced and entertaining book unfolds the immense significance of the hamburger as an American icon. Josh Ozersky shows how the history of the burger is entwined with American business and culture and, unexpectedly, how the burger's story is in many ways the story of the country that invented (and reinvented) it.

Schlosser, Eric (2001). *Fast Food Nation: The Dark Side Of The All-American Meal*. Boston : Houghton Mifflin.

As stated by several internet reviewers: This book, *Fast Food Nation* describes how the fast food industry has reduced the overall food quality worldwide, created poor working conditions for millions of people and ruined public health.

Top 10 Tips For Teens Completing Job Applications

Alison Doyle - <https://www.thebalancecareers.com/job-application-tips-for-teenagers-2061581>

Simple and easily integrated tips for teenagers to use when filling out job applications and completing resumes.

Working At Mcdonald's: Interviews & Employment | Mcdonald's

<https://www.mcdonalds.com/us/en-us/careers/working-with-us.html>

First-hand accounts from McDonald's employees about employee satisfactions and the benefits of working for the McDonald's Corporation.

Educational

Books, websites and other resources dealing with special education and curriculum development for students in the state of Pennsylvania.

Only Four Out Of Ten Working-age Adults with Disabilities Are Employed

Martha Ross-Nicole Bateman-Martha Ross-Nicole Bateman -

<https://www.brookings.edu/blog/the-avenue/2018/07/25/only-four-out-of-ten-working-age-adults-with-disabilities-are-employed/>

This article found through a Google search examines the lack of people with disabilities who are attaining gainful employment after graduating high school at the age of 21.

People with Disabilities in America's Workforce: Time For ...

<https://ici.umn.edu/products/impact/251/1.html>

This website looks into the connect between the lack of jobs in the workforce and the lack of gainful employment for individuals with disabilities. Information from the U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics projects dramatic growth during the current decade in many industries and occupations in which people with intellectual and developmental disabilities have not typically been represented up until the time of the report.

Idea Indicators | Project10

<http://project10.info/DPage.php?ID=310>

As the nation's special education law, IDEA provides rights and protections to children with disabilities and to their parents. This website provides insights and information for parents about their rights and the rights of their children.

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (idea): What You Need to Know

Andrew Lee - <https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/your-childs-rights/basics-about-childs-rights/individuals-with-disabilities-education-act-idea-what-you-need-to-know>

View Standards - Sas - Sas - Pennsylvania Department Of ...

<https://www.pdesas.org/Standard/View>

PA academic standards that describe what students should know and be able to do with the English language, prekindergarten through Grade 12.