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Chapter 1
Introduction
Stepping Out: A community-based instruction curriculum

Stepping Out presents a complete and comprehensive community-based instruction (CBI) curriculum. While the programmatic approach is designed to initiate pre-outing activities and rehearsals in the classroom, its focus is to take instruction out of school and into the community. Materials included with the Stepping Out program allow you to do both: Rehearse in the classroom and take students into the community.

The range of life skills covered in this curriculum extends from simple and basic, such as using a public restroom, to more complex, like banking. Carefully designed and orchestrated outings have been selected on balance to cover the most common and vital areas, but by necessity can’t include all community-based life skills a student will need. Blank outing sheets are included (pgs. 50–53) for you to add outings that might apply to a specific student, and we strongly encourage you to do so. Also, look for creative community locations to practice multiple outings. As you immerse yourself in this curriculum, bear in mind that while 18 crucial everyday life skills are presented in great detail, you are also encouraged to add as many of your own as necessary.

Mastering multiple outings is a tall order because so many skills are needed to get by in the real world. Yet, becoming truly independent means taking as much control as possible over the many areas of your life. The more skills users master, the easier their transition to independence. This is why Stepping Out was created: To cover everything from basic personal needs like hairstyling to such practical and more involved concerns as grocery shopping and using public transportation.

Academic Skills Aren’t Necessary

Stepping Out is based on the concept that people don’t need academic skills to master basic life skills. People who can’t tell time can learn to catch a bus. Individuals who can’t read a telephone book can learn to make a phone call. Nonreaders can use Stepping Out, the nonverbal can use it, everyone can use it. And by using it they will all learn to become successful in accessing community activities and resources.
Structured Classroom Planning and Rehearsals

Since community outings require a lot of planning and resources, much of your work preparing students for outings will take place in the classroom. The key components to Stepping Out planning and rehearsals are Cues and Worksheets to help students train for and complete community outings. Every cue, worksheet and outing provides detailed classroom activity instruction. Pick an outing to focus on and you will find that related cues and worksheets are suggested within the lesson. (See pg. 13 for more details on classroom instruction.) Utilize these materials in the classroom and follow the outing rehearsal instructions before Stepping Out. You may want to copy associated worksheets, cues and outing checklists and assemble and place them in a binder or folder so all your materials are ready when you need them.

Community Outings

After introducing cues and worksheets and rehearsing in the classroom, it’s time to schedule outings, the most important component to the Stepping Out program.

One of your concerns in planning for and instructing during an outing is the relationship between development and generalization of skills. Some skill sets will generalize naturally while others will be more difficult. Consider this when making site selections: For example, some places are the same from site to site, like McDonald’s fast food restaurants. Others, however, like grocery shopping, are very different everywhere you go, with aisle organization in a completely different order.

The 12 Steps of Stepping Out

Follow these steps to set up, implement and maintain this program.

1. Begin by reading this instructor’s guide. It has everything you need to implement a successful CBI program.
2. Secure support for this program from administrators and coworkers. Build lasting alliances.
3. Learn how to use the cues, practice using them in the community yourself before introducing them to students.
4. Reorganize class schedules to accommodate CBI training.
5. Introduce Stepping Out to parents, caregivers, participants, community. Get the word out and the community solidly behind you.
6. Complete an ID card for each participant.
7. Develop individual program plans based on student needs.
8. Determine each user’s cue training needs. Show how to use cards effectively, first in the classroom, then the community.
9. Identify community training sites.
10. Use classroom time to administer worksheets and rehearse outing steps to prepare students for community outings.
12. Evaluate student performances on an ongoing basis.

Mastering multiple outings is a tall order because so many skills are needed to get by in the real world. Yet, becoming truly independent means taking as much control as possible over the many areas of your life; the more skills users can master, the easier their transition to independence.
Some skill sets will generalize naturally while others will be more problematic. Consider this when you are making site selections: For example, some places are the same from site to site, like McDonald’s. Others, like grocery shopping, are different everywhere you go. Hence, the student’s ability to generalize will be an important skill.

Hence, the student’s ability to generalize the location of needed grocery items will be paramount. As instructor, try to balance these two: Introduce students to a variety of outing scenarios, some different and some similar, and stress those differences in your instruction. One way to do this, for example, would be to conduct two separate grocery store outings, choosing two stores with very different layouts. Emphasize the differences as well as the similarities to students.

**New Edition Updates and Enhancements**

This new edition of the Stepping Out Instructor’s Guide includes 18 outings covering a span of common life skills. These outings have been selected because they are critical for students to be able to master in pursuit of an independent post-high school life.

This enhanced edition has numerous updated areas. They include:

- Reproducible forms that are more accessible, easier to use and updated to conform to IDEA mandates.
- Better integration and organization of cues and worksheets into outing training.
- A PDF CD-ROM is included allowing you to print any page from this book in the quantities you need.
- Color cues can be printed on a color printer from the PDF.
- Two complete sets of Stepping Out Cues, as well as two Attainment Pocket Books are included with the Stepping Out Curriculum (however, not if you only ordered the Stepping Out Instructor’s Guide).
- TechnoTools recommendations and scripts provided within each outing and cue instruction page. See pg. 30 for more info on TechnoTools.

**Stepping Out PDF CD**

Included with this manual is a CD-ROM containing two PDF files:

- **STEP_OUT.pdf**—this book in its entirety
- **CUES.pdf**—a 19 page file in full color with complete instructions for printing most Stepping Out color cues

You need Adobe Acrobat (also provided on the CD-ROM) installed on your computer (Mac or Windows) to access these files. Open the PDF file in Acrobat and print any page of this book or any cue in the quantity you need.
Planning for CBI Schoolwide

If the concept of CBI training is new to your facility, you will find it necessary to introduce Stepping Out to parents, administrators and co-workers and to show them how it works. You won’t be able to effectively administer this program without their input and support. Educate your team.

Begin with some basic public relations work. Encourage parental support and participation by sending the following home. Note—These resource materials can be found in Chapter Three:

**Introductory Letter** (pg. 41)—along with the two related attachments, explains Stepping Out to caregivers.

**Home Questionnaire** (pg. 44)—Helps parents provide vital information about their child.

**Home/School Communication Form** (pg. 46)—Facilitates communication between you and parents about progress and concerns.

In addition, help fellow teachers and administration understand the Stepping Out program by sharing the **IEP Master List** (pg. 49). This handout details all 18 outings, listing each community living goal. This is a concise summary of the program’s mission.

Discuss the following issues with administrators and caregivers:

**Funding**
You might have access to some initial funding but if you have a lot of students and plan many outings, it will soon be gone. Consider these suggestions for generating operating monies:
- Use student lunch money for restaurant training.
- Have students shop for needed family groceries, using funds from home.
- Reroute instructional supply money and use for community training.
- Use vocational training earnings. This money can also be part of banking training.
- Hold your own fund-raiser: provide a service (e.g., car wash) or sell goods (e.g., candy bars) to generate funds.
- Use discount fares offered for individuals with disabilities.

**Transportation**
Encourage use of public transportation as much as possible.
Find a transportation service for individuals with disabilities if available. Use taxis and car pools, or walk where you can. Use the school bus only as a last resort.
Liability and Insurance

Your students are customers like everyone else and most businesses have insurance to cover accidents. You may, however, want to get written permission from caregivers before starting outings. Prepare a simple form granting blanket permission for all Stepping Out outings (one is provided in the Resource Materials Chapter, pg. 45).

Student to Teacher Ratio

Although it would be ideal, it isn’t possible to take everybody out every day. It is recommended that you take students out at least once a week with no more than four students per trainer at a time. Use instructional aids, itinerant resource teachers (the community is a natural setting for speech or physical therapy training) parents, volunteers and administrators as trainers.

Materials and Supplies

Outings require materials and supplies. These can include program materials like cues as well as personal items such as coats and gloves. Many outings require funds. Students should always have an ID Card handy. Some activities can be done in advance so you don’t lose precious outing time: for example, filling out bank forms in class.

Each outing lists necessary materials and supplies. In addition, use materials as they appear in the community: for example, if the restrooms you will be using have a different symbol than that on the cue, reproduce it on the back of the card for the student’s reference.

Make sure you have the following items before going on an outing:

Teacher Checklist
- Outing Checklists, pgs. 212—303
- Emergency information for each participant (completed ID Card)
- Site Analysis form, pg. 47
- Additional money

Student Checklist
- Completed ID Card
- Phone Cue with emergency telephone number (probably your training facility) with correct change taped to it
- Appropriate dress for weather, age and outing
- Wallet with money, credit card, appropriate cues, forms, bank book, purse or fanny pack
- Medication, eyeglasses other personal aids like menstrual care items
- Umbrella, coat, hat, etc.
Classroom Instruction

While Stepping Out is primarily a community-based program, classroom instruction is necessary to help prepare users for community outings. Besides basic cue, worksheet and outing instruction, some additional issues to consider include:

1. Teaching students to monitor their appearance, behavior and to organize and gather necessary materials and belongings. Two forms in the Resource Materials Chapter make this process a little easier (Figs. 1.1 and 1.2).

   Check It Out (pg. 54)—a self-monitoring form to help students prepare for an outing and remember what to bring along. This form is completed before each outing.

   Be Sociable and Stay Safe (pg. 56)—a yes/no checklist to facilitate a discussion about hygiene, organization and safety issues related to an outing. This form is to be reviewed before leaving school and filled out by the student after she returns from an outing.

2. Assess the need for additional materials and supplies prior to conducting each outing. For example, the student must go to the bank to get some money before he goes shopping. Fill out the withdrawal slip in class before leaving. Make it an instructional moment by using Stepping Out cues and worksheets.

3. Prepare students for possible emergency situations. Outing instructions include a list of problems that may occur. Discuss these problem situations in class and rehearse when possible. Simulate outing steps in the classroom. Make simulations realistic. For example, students should stand up when they practice paying at a grocery store so they can learn how to manipulate their wallet, money, cue cards, receipts and change.

Goal Setting and Assessments

Before goals can be planned it is necessary to understand how a Stepping Out skill is assessed. Your key tool is the Outing Checklist, discussed in detail in Chapter Two (see pg. 26). Use it for initial assessments and to evaluate community performances on an ongoing basis. Then, transfer results from individual Outing Checklists to the Progress Report form (Fig. 1.3), pg. 48 as a handy synopsis of a student’s performance on all 18 outings.
Also, include your students in goal setting and assessments. Pg. 55 provides a Personal Goal Sheet (Fig. 1.4) where space is provided for students to write their own goals and evaluate their progress.

Long Term Goals and Objectives

Long term goals are provided for each outing and target mastery of the entire outing. To facilitate IEP creation and to share the CBI goals of the Stepping Out program with regular classroom teachers, administration and parents, all long term goals from each of the 18 outings are listed on the IEP Master List, pg. 49.

In the early stages, it is probably better to target training goals to the skills you have selected as deficit areas. For example: Grocery Shopping (Outing 9, pg. 249) has three short-term objectives with a total of 37 steps. For example, Johnny adequately performs most of these, but on a few has trouble that impedes his ability to shop independently. Johnny's objectives, therefore, will concentrate on these problem steps and not on the entire outing.

It is not always necessary or realistic to master every single step in an outing in order to be able to perform it adequately and fulfill its goal. Accordingly, we suggest taking a functional approach. When a student has achieved functional performance of an outing regardless of whether there are one or more steps or skills she has been unable to master, she has met its goal.

Ongoing Evaluations

When performing life skills in the community, there is a need for constant reassessment and program evaluation. Reassessments are necessary because as performances improve and goals are reached, training needs change. As training moves forward, goals are adjusted to reflect the progress made.

The sequence is as follows:
1. Initial assessment in the school and community provides a baseline for training;
2. Setting goals and objectives establishes a program plan founded on the baseline;
3. Developing skills provides community training following the program plan;
4. Evaluation continues to reassess training performance based on achievement of goals, setting new goals and reviewing the program's overall effectiveness.
Site Selection

Become familiar with your students’ community, if you are not already, and scout training sites ahead of time, picking the ones that work best for your class. Make sure you read the curriculum first so you know what specifics to look for at the site. An example would be Outing 14, Dining in a Fast Food Restaurant, pg. 274. Then, preview potential sites and choose the best ones.

Survey Training Sites

When assessing potential training sites, complete the Site Analysis form (Fig. 1.5), included in Resource Materials chapter, pg. 47, with these considerations in mind:

1. **Location**—Consider two issues. Can you get to the site, and if so, how? Can students frequent it on their own? It’s ideal to have a location close by because you can spend more time shopping or banking and less time getting there. On the other hand, a bus or taxi outing are naturals. So check into sites on area bus routes.

2. **Select typical sites**—Skill generalization is easier from restaurant to restaurant when sites share similarities. Franchises and affiliates, (which often have similar floor plans) make good training sites.

   **Note:** Not all your fast food training should be in McDonald’s. Or KFC. Make a point of visiting different franchises so your students can make the transition when they have to.

3. **Site conditions**—Features change from site to site: e.g., bathroom accessibility, pricing policies, rush times, aisle width, and department organization. Some of these issues pose interesting training challenges. For example, early in training you probably will avoid rush periods, but as skills improve, students will need this kind of exposure.

4. **Management notification**—Introduce yourself and explain your program to site managers before showing up unannounced with your group. If you get off on the right foot, it will help to cement a lasting relationship and insure the longevity and success of your program.