

# **Chapter Seven: Alternate (Functional) Curriculum**

## **Alternate (Functional) Curriculum**

When it has been determined that a student's strengths and needs cannot be met through prescribed, modified prescribed, alternate programs or courses with or without accommodations, a functional curriculum may be required. Students who require a functional curriculum are identified as having moderate, severe or profound impairments in cognition and severe deficits in adaptive functioning as evaluated through the comprehensive assessment process. Severe deficits in adaptive functioning would be indicated by significant limitations in at least two of the following skill areas: communication, self care, home living, social/interpersonal skills, use of community resources, self direction, functional academic skills, work, leisure, health and safety. Reassessment is required every five years to ensure that an alternate curriculum is still a valid choice and that the student's individualized programming is addressing his or her strengths and needs.

A functional curriculum consists of programming in the following four domains: career development, personal development, independent living and functional academics. A student who accesses a functional curriculum will not receive high school credits.

Since there are thematic similarities between the functional curriculum and prescribed curriculum, students who are accessing a functional curriculum may have a number of the outcomes of their program delivered within inclusive classroom settings. For example, at the senior high level, many of the same outcomes outlined in the Career Development 2201 course are also in the career development domain of the functional curriculum.

## **Developing an Alternate (Functional) Curriculum**

An alternate curriculum must include the following components within each domain:

- strands, topics, and outcomes
- learning environment in which each outcome will be delivered
- personnel responsible for delivery of each outcome
- instructional strategies
- learning resources
- assessment and evaluation strategies
- progress notes

Learning outcomes describe what the student is expected to know and be able to do. With consideration of the student's strengths and needs, outcomes must:

- be current and relevant to the student
- contribute to the long term growth and development of the student
- contribute to meeting the student's strengths and needs in appropriate environments
- be age appropriate
- be attainable within one year

The student's alternate curriculum will be recorded on the **Record of Alternate (Functional) Curriculum** which becomes part of the IEP and is placed in the student's cumulative file. A copy is maintained by the teacher(s) as a working document. Progress notes will be maintained by the teacher(s) and consolidated at the end of each reporting period.

Additional information is detailed in *Programming for Individual Needs: Functional Curriculum Guide*.