

STEPS

Supportive Training Experiences Post-Secondary

2017-18 School Year

STEPS Course Catalog

Introduction

The course catalog includes brief descriptions of curricular content offered through the STEPS program for the purpose of summarizing the intended focus of such courses. Individual activities may change as student needs and interests change.

- The primary focus of each “course” is to promote purposeful independence, self-determination and generalization of skills across settings.
- Course content is suggested and specific activities are based on each student’s individual Post -Secondary Outcomes as included in the Transition Plan of the IEP.
- Skills, preferences, strengths and needs of both individual students and groups of students are considered when designing specific activities.
- Courses are designed to include experiential, age-appropriate opportunities within the local community, accessing available resources and services whenever possible.
- It is the intent of the STEPS program to offer courses to all students as appropriate and beneficial to student growth and intended Post- Secondary Outcomes.
- When including students who need more individualized adult support, course content is modified and adapted as needed.
- When students need less adult support, course content provides a guide for creating individualized experiences and practice as needed.

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Courses are organized according to the Post Secondary Outcomes of the IEP.

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EDUCATION FOCUSED COURSES

Creative Writing

Description: Students explore various forms of creative writing including poetry, short stories, and plays. The focus is on exploration and writing for enjoyment.

Content:

- Read various forms of writing
- Learn the components of different forms of writing
- Engage in writing various written pieces
- Use the writing process to draft, revise, edit and share original pieces

Functional Math/Cooking

Description: Develop, build, and maintain basic math skills necessary for everyday life. This Functional Math class includes a cooking component.

Content:

- Count, represent and compare numbers to 20
- Learn and practice calculator skills to solve basic addition and subtraction problems
- Use calendars and schedules to plan and manage daily living
- Practice time skills, including telling time to the hour and half hour
- Utilize functional fractions (i.e. when cooking, measuring)
- Identify different denominations of money, count money, and compare quantities
- Read, use, and create charts and graphs
- Solve real world problems encountered in everyday life
- Students apply measurement, time, and sequencing skills by making various snacks and small food items

Functional Math/Shopping

Description: Develop, build, and maintain basic math skills necessary for everyday life. This Functional Math class includes a shopping component.

Content:

- Count, represent and compare numbers to 20
- Learn and practice calculator skills to solve basic addition and subtraction problems
- Use calendars and schedules to plan and manage daily living
- Practice time skills, including telling time to the hour and half hour
- Utilize functional fractions (i.e. when purchasing items by weight)
- Identify different denominations of money, count money, and compare quantities
- Read, use, and create charts and graphs
- Solve real world problems encountered in everyday life
- Students apply planning and money skills by purchasing various items at the store

Functional Reading in the Community

Description: Develop, build, and maintain basic reading skills necessary for everyday life. This class contains a community component; students travel to various community locations (such as a library or store) to practice functional reading skills.

Content:

- Recognize letters and words in text found everyday items (such as labels, recipes, schedules, and directions)
- Identify and comprehend familiar functional sight words in the school environment and in the community (i.e. safety signs, bathroom, exit)
- Utilize comprehension strategies (such as predicting and summarizing) when presented with reading material, often read aloud
- Read one's own personal information (such as name, address, or birthday)

General Math

Description: Develop, build, and maintain higher level math skills necessary for everyday life.

Content:

- Read, order, represent and compare large numbers
- Use calculators to solve addition, subtraction, multiplication, and division problems
- Demonstrate understanding of decimals and negative numbers in real world contexts
- Solve real problems by comparing monetary amounts (as when balancing spreadsheet or ledger, or using a debit card)
- Practice budgeting and maintaining bank accounts (checking, savings, debit card)
- Understand a paycheck (i.e. wages, deductions)
- Use appropriate tools to measure length, volume, weight, and temperature
- Solve real problems creating and reading graphs and charts
- Practice time skills including telling time to the quarter hour and solving real problems with elapsed time

General Reading

Description: Build and maintain reading skills and strategies using a variety of texts and functional materials

Content:

- Practice fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension skills using a wide variety of texts including:
- Local newspapers and various magazines
- Labels/Directions, as on medication, cleaning supplies, recipes, packages
- Leveled reading stories, as through read alouds and Reader's Theater plays
- Adapted books, including those with modified content, visuals/pictures, and supplemental audio/video
- Student personal novels or books
- Practice reading strategies, including author's purpose, fact vs. fiction, summarizing, predicting, making inferences, and compare/contrast
- Participate in student-chosen book clubs
- Strengthen writing skills through written assignments based on individual student need
- Utilize Internet resources to research different topics and to create written documents to display findings

Reading Basics

Description: Develop and build basic decoding, fluency and comprehension skills.

Content:

- Instructors utilize reading intervention programs to deliver instruction on the basics of reading.
- Students engage in practice opportunities in decoding, reading with fluency, and comprehending various texts at their individual levels.

Skills Math/Cooking*

Description: Develop and build foundational math skills using age-appropriate experiences.

Content:

- Practice rote counting skills and number recognition
- Count and compare sets of everyday items
- Identify 2- and 3- dimensional shapes
- Sort and order items using characteristics such as size, color, weight etc.
- Identify the relative positions of various items (i.e. first/last, above/below.),
- Recognize and count denominations of money
- Use calendar skills to identify and order days of the week and months of the year
- *Some Skills Math Classes include a cooking component, which allows students to apply measurement, time, and sequencing skills by making various snacks and small food items

Skills Reading

Description: Develop and build foundational reading skills using age-appropriate experiences.

Content:

- Participate in reading and language experiences through a variety of multimedia activities including electronic periodicals, ebooks, music, Smartboard activities, and read alouds
- Answer comprehension questions based on shared reading experiences
- Respond in a variety of ways to environmental text, as on Smartboards, calendars, iPads, and schedules

EMPLOYMENT FOCUSED COURSES

Community Work Training

Description: Students gain experience and develop general work skills in real work environments with the support of job coaches.

Content:

- Perform a variety of job tasks which can generalize to different settings
- Build and practice work routines
- Develop general work skills, primarily:
- Communicating and interacting in socially expected ways with coworkers, supervisors and customers
- Solving authentic problems in work situations
- Identifying areas of interest and strength for future employment
- Gaining work experience in a variety of settings
- Maintain appropriate appearance at job training sites
- Polo-style shirt: STEPS polo shirts OR plain gray polo shirt, with no graphics or stripes.
- Black pants: Docker style, slacks, or black denim.
- Closed-toe, rubber-soled shoes: gym shoes are acceptable unless otherwise informed.

Functional Vocational Skills

Description: Prepare students for purposefully contributing in adult work environments whether paid employment or volunteer work. Students participate in Vocational Skills as often as possible when at STEPS – this information can be practiced over and over again. Skills are practiced at each individual student’s level.

Content:

- Learn and practice meeting workplace expectations:
- Practice independent work skills
- Limit “disruptive” behaviors
- Utilize work-break schedule
- Increase time on task
- Learn and practice appropriate workplace communication:
- Practice greeting routine/sign in
- Request additional work and/or supplies
- Request a break if needed
- Request help if needed

General Vocational Skills

Description: Prepare students for purposefully contributing in adult work environments whether paid employment or volunteer work. Students should have a folder or binder to keep information – which will be useful as resources even after leaving the program. Students participate in Vocational Skills as often as possible when at STEPS – this information can be practiced over and over again.

Content:

Getting a job:

- Job exploration (Explore areas of interest; Determine work strengths; Research possible jobs; Explore Job shadow opportunities)
- Application process (Obtain contact information; Develop and/or update resume; Complete practice applications; Complete job applications and follow up)
- Interview skills (Attend to physical appearance; Practice questions/answers; Role play; Participate in “mock Interviews”)

Keeping a Job:

- Expectations in the workplace (Completing Job Tasks; Understanding Evaluations)
- Soft Skills (Using Appropriate Conversation Skills with supervisors; coworkers and customers; Understanding appropriate Lunchroom/Break Room behavior; Role play scenarios)
- Paperwork (Keeping track of your hours; Reading Paychecks; Completing other paperwork)

Production

Description: Provide purposeful activity and skill development through the STEPS Program micro-enterprise.

Content:

- Participate in work training opportunities at different levels of an enterprise including: development and marketing, assembly and packaging, and the sale and delivery of product
- Develop activities and skills that may transfer into a student owned micro-enterprise
- Practice job-specific skills, which may include:
 - Collating
 - Assembling
 - Packaging
 - Processing items
 - Sorting
 - Practice general work related skills including:
 - Task completion
 - Time on task
 - Reading for real situations
 - Completing a multiple step task

- Problem solving

Workplace Communication

Description: Discuss and problem-solve workplace communication related to maintaining employment.
***Individual students are placed in this class once paid employment has been obtained.**

Content:

- Problem solve issues that occur in the workplace
- Participate in guided, work-related discussions
- Discuss work readiness topics and practice work skills

INDEPENDENT LIVING FOCUSED COURSES

Arts & Crafts

Description: Build knowledge and leisure skills involving arts and crafts.

Content:

- Explore various art movements, artists, and famous works
- Utilize various art techniques to create original pieces of art
- Create craft items using common materials

Budget Lab

Description: Build and maintain personal budgeting and shopping skills in the community using real life situations. Project based units with opportunities both in the community and online. This class is typically reserved for second and third year students only.

Content:

- Understanding where your money comes from
- Differentiate between wants and needs and determine where to get items
- Practice comparison shopping
- Thinking about paying for things on your own that your parents have always handled
- Estimate costs of things - including clothes, meals, furniture, gifts, personal items, etc.
- Recognize how income impacts choices
- Explore necessities for living in an apartment
- Explore costs connected to living on your own - rent, utilities, etc.

College Skills (Fall Only)

Description: Discuss and problem solve real life situations relevant to a successful community college experience. *Individual students are placed by Case Manager; students considered are either currently enrolled in “for credit” community college classes or seriously considering enrolling during current school year.

Content:

- Learn the importance of time management
- Develop skills for manage homework, reading, and long term projects
- Learn to navigate the college campus

- Contact college professors, guidance counselors, and other resources
- Advocate for yourself- understand and explain your specific accommodations
- Develop skills for working in cooperative groups

Community Exploration

Description: Students explore a variety of community settings for the purpose of participating in functional, real world activities and events. Settings may include restaurants, post offices, banks, malls, stores, movie theaters, walking paths, and bowling alleys.

Content:

- Create and/or practice routines for successful community involvement
- Practice appropriate behavior and communication skills in various settings within the community
- Practice scheduling and managing required details appropriate for various settings (e.g., carrying money, purchasing items, bringing library card, returning books on time)

Cooking Alone Lab

Description: Gain experience and improved independence related to a variety of cooking activities. This class includes a monthly fee for individual food and ingredients. - This class is typically reserved for second and third year students only.

Content:

- Practice planning meals and finding appropriate recipes
- Create shopping lists, participate in shopping trips, and purchase items at the grocery store
- Learn to cook on a budget using higher-level planning skills
- Practice comparison shopping for price and nutritional value
- Learn food storage skills to promote food safety and freshness
- Use recipes to obtain needed supplies and follow recipe steps sequentially to successfully prepare foods
- Safely use a variety of appliances to prepare meals (e.g. utensils, simple tools, microwave, oven, stove, etc.)
- Develop healthy kitchen clean-up habits and routines

Fitness

Description: Students are provided with support and instruction to engage in fitness activities to improve flexibility, strength, coordination and body awareness. Students are taught in a small group under the leadership of the physical therapist and work on motor control based on needs identified in an IEP. *Individual students are placed in this class based on a recommendation by the student's physical therapist in collaboration with the student's case manager.

Content:

- Engage in stretching and strengthening routines that include yoga, Pilates, general callisthenic exercises, etc., 1-2 times per week
- Participate in cardio-fitness exercises including dance, cardio-kickboxing, step aerobics, Zumba, etc., 1 time per week
- Discuss strategies to maintain fitness for students with movement challenges
- Develop exercise routines that can continue into adulthood

Functional Life Skills

Description: Students learn and practice a variety of basic life skills related to shopping, hygiene, health, safety, and leisure.

Content:

- Practice basic paying routines and ordering food
- Differentiate between wants versus needs
- Learn and practice basic hygiene routines (washing hands, using soap, shampoo, brushing hair, looking in the mirror, etc.)
- Preventing colds, flu, and other common illnesses (blowing your nose, covering mouth when you cough, use hand sanitizer, etc.)
- Recognize and participate in leisure activities
- Recognize important community signs (Bathroom, Exit, Don't Walk, Hospital, etc.)
- Create emergency cards to carry in their wallets
- Differentiating between healthy and unhealthy foods and building balanced meals

General Life Skills

Description: Students learn and practice a variety of life skills related to housekeeping, health, safety, and leisure.

Content:

- Learn basic first aid, including how and when to seek medical attention
- Learn about domestic and community safety skills
- Discuss healthy habits (eating nutritious foods, exercising regularly, etc.)
- Practice socially appropriate phone skills
- Practice accessing community resources
- Learn self-advocacy skills related to one's disability
- Learn basic transportation information
- Learn and practice basic hygiene routines (washing hands, using soap, shampoo, brushing hair, looking in the mirror, etc.)
- Learn safe and socially appropriate phone and internet practices

Hobby

Description: Build appropriate social, communication, and behavioral skills for engaging in meaningful age-appropriate activities while exploring hobbies and interests as well as filling "down time."

Content:

- Make recreational and leisure-time choices
- Practice social skills, such as sharing and turn taking
- Practice managing behaviors, as during wait time, or when winning/losing
- Develop activities to engage in during "short chunks" of down time in real life – as when waiting at Dr.'s office, in a restaurant, or in the car
- Exploring hobbies may include activities such as:
 - Wii games, dancing or karaoke
 - Cards/Board games/Foosball
 - Jigsaw puzzles
 - Computer activities

- Collecting, scrapbooking, photography
- Coloring or puzzle pages

Independent Community Exploration (ICE)

Description: Students build skills for independently planning and participating in variety of preferred activities across community settings. This class is reserved for second and third year students who will be living independently.

Content:

- Plan, schedule, and participate in preferred activities with STEPS peers independently
- Use social communication skills to identify common interests and agree on outings
- Locate addresses and phone numbers using computer search engines
- Practice telephone skills required to request details (cost, times, etc.)
- Use advance planning skills, calendars and schedules, and electronic maps (i.e. MapQuest, Google Maps) to schedule activities
- Determine travel times and consider transportation options
- Generalize skills by using a structured format to plan and execute social activities outside of school

Independent Leisure Time

Description: This “class” is offered as an alternative to Hobby for students who prefer a quiet setting for supervised, independent leisure activities in the middle of the day. Activities include but are not limited to drawing*, coloring*, writing, or surfing the internet. (*Students must bring their own art materials if they choose to draw or color.)

Library

Description: Students visit the library with a focus on accessing the materials and resources available to them. Students may check out or return books, read books or magazines, participate in read-alouds or recorded books, use computers, and/or participate in library programs. A valid library card is not necessary for participation.

Mall Walking

Description: Students participate in mall-walking before stores open with the support of job coaches. Focus is on participating in walking as a cardiovascular exercise as well as practicing appropriate social and behavioral skills in the mall setting.

Move & Groove

Description: Provide students with an opportunity to engage in a variety of movement experiences to promote renewed energy level and enhanced body awareness, and to provide a break from academic instruction or prolonged stationary activity. Group movement activities will occur in a classroom as well as outside when weather conditions permit.

Content:

- Group exercise activities include, (but are not limited to): yoga, dance, bean bag toss, walking, exercise videos, and aerobics

Skills 203

Description: Skills Room 203 provides a “home base” for students who require consistent daily support for mobility, health and safety, personal hygiene, and self-care. Students in room 203 are provided with enriching activities and experiences throughout the day.

Content:

- Develop and review calendar skills
- Review personal daily schedules and routines
- Participate in yoga
- Explore leisure activities (i.e. books, games, puzzles, computer activities)
- Enjoy different genres of music, and select songs for listening
- Engage with peers during large group social skills lessons
- Participate in functional skill practice (i.e. folding, sorting, sequencing)
- Engage in a variety of sensory motor activities
- Participate in community activities, such as morning mall walking

Social Skills Groups

Description: Students develop and practice appropriate social language and emotional regulation skills through involvement with peers in facilitated, small group sessions which meet regularly and often utilize community settings. Students are placed in a Social Skills group by the Social Worker or Speech Pathologist. Social skills groups include: Social Thinking, Self-Awareness, Self-Development, Healthy Relationships, Women’s Empowerment, AAC (Augmentative and Alternative Communication) class and/or Lab, CSI (Careful Social Investigations) class and/or Lab, Functional Communication, Self-Advocacy, Goal Setting, Coping Skills, and Anger Management.

Content:

- Practice interpersonal skills and self-advocacy
- Participate in supported problem solving on the jobsite, in the community, and in personal relationships
- Make decisions and set personal goals
- Meet with friends and practice friendship maintenance skills
- Learn to use and understand non-verbal communication and other modes of communication
- Practice social etiquette in a variety of settings with carryover practice at school
- Exercise emotional regulation
- Develop disability awareness
- Learn social thinking skills and role play to practice application
- Labs offer opportunity for generalizing skills in the community

Theater

Description: Students participate in the activities associated with performing plays for audiences.

Content:

- Read scripts
- Speak with fluency and expression
- Participate in set design, including making/obtaining props and backdrops
- Perform plays for audiences

Transportation Training

Description: Students develop and practice skills to access appropriate public transportation. Individual plans are created to provide necessary staff support when students begin using public transportation. This class is typically reserved for second and third year students only.

Content:

- Learn and practice pedestrian skills (i.e. crossing at the signal, using the crosswalk, recognizing stop signs, safely navigating parking lots, waiting for buses)
- Repeated practice of local bus routes from the Naperville train station to the mall or to College of DuPage
- Practice paying, boarding and riding Metra train
- Investigate and comprehend local bus and train schedules
- Share information between students/families and STEPS related to accessible and available public transportation options
- this is done individually when student is enrolled in Ride DuPage
- Practice problem solving situations that may occur when using public transportation

YMCA

Description: Students will learn and apply exercise techniques at the local YMCA. They will build an awareness of and ability to safely engage in general fitness routines that can be completed at any community fitness center. This class visits the local YMCA each week; membership is not mandatory, though there is a cost associated with each visit for non-members.

Content:

- Practice appropriate cardio-exercise activities
- Practice appropriate flexibility and strengthening activities
- Participate in group motor games or ball activities and promote fitness through recreational/leisure opportunities
- Develop work out routines with students and families for those with memberships at community fitness clubs

Zones of Regulation (or Self-Regulation)

Description: Students learn strategies to get themselves into the optimal emotional state for any given situation. Class participation is based on a recommendation by the student's occupational therapist in collaboration with the student's case manager.

Content:

- Practice strategies in the following integrated areas:
- Sensory processing (perceiving inputs)
- Executive functioning (conscious control of action)
- Emotional regulation (objectivity, motivation, perspective of others)
- Develop tools and coping strategies and mechanisms for self-regulation and optimal performance

MISCELLANEOUS COURSES

Advisory

Description: Students begin each day in Advisory, often meeting with their Case Managers to work on specific goal areas.

Content:

- Prepare physically and emotionally for the day
- Set up and record individual schedules for the upcoming day/week including: work training sites, transportation, classes, community trips and social activities
- Practice skills related to time management when following a schedule: elapsed time, being ready on time, factoring in travel time, and managing “wait time”
- Engage in friendly, social communication with peers
- Participate in topical discussions related to pop culture and current events
- Work on specific goal areas, when necessary