

Program Rationale:

MSB **L.I.F.E.** is designed to support and foster appropriate outcomes for students. Successful transition from school to adult life for a student with a disability can be complex. Since the passage of IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act) in 1990, and its subsequent reauthorizations in 2004 and 2006 as IDEIA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act), schools have been held more accountable for providing educational services that will ensure success beyond high school including activities such as:

- Instruction for transition
- Community experience
- Development of employment skills
- Post-school adult living objectives
- Daily living skills (Activities of Daily Living Skills)
- Functional vocational assessment and training

MSB **L.I.F.E.** Eligibility:

- Students who are blind/visually impaired with mild to moderate additional disabilities.
- Students seeking a Missouri high school diploma.
- Students ages approximately 18-21.
- Students who would benefit from additional skills in functional learning experiences in the home and community.
- Students who plan on entering the workforce after graduation or additional programming

For more information, please contact:

Joy Waddell, Assistant Superintendent

3815 Magnolia Ave.

St. Louis, MO 63110

Website: msb.dese.mo.gov

Phone: 314-776-4320 ext. 1140

Fax: 314-776-1875

Email: joyce.waddell@msb.dese.mo.gov



Missouri School for the Blind

MSB **L.I.F.E.** Learning Independence From Experience



Ages 18-21 Community-Based Transition Program

What Is the **MSB L.I.F.E.** Program?

Missouri School for the Blind is pleased to offer **MSB L.I.F.E.**, a unique educational program designed to facilitate a positive beginning to the world beyond traditional high school. **L**earning **I**ndependence **F**rom **E**xperience is a community-based transition program.

MSB L.I.F.E. is offered in two-levels, designed to provide qualified students with the opportunity to continue their educational experiences in an age-appropriate simulated community setting. Each day, students will work in three areas of transition: Employment, Independent Living, and Education and Training, based on their IEP-driven transition goals.

MSB L.I.F.E. allows students to learn and develop through active participation in thoughtfully organized, supported community-based learning experiences. Participants learn and practice the skills necessary to live independently in a supervised apartment-style dormitory setting. Students work in the community, supported by a MSB Job Coach. Students are provided with opportunities to use newly-acquired skills and knowledge in real-life situations which extend what is taught beyond the classroom into the community.

Level 1

MSB L.I.F.E. Level 1 is a day program. Level 1 students report to the MSB **L.I.F.E.** apartment at 8:30 a.m. where they meet with a **MSB L.I.F.E.** Coach to set daily goals and determine their daily schedule. Students and coaches meet as a group to discuss pre-determined weekly topics related to successful inclusion in community work and living. Level 1 students participate daily in four structured, supported sessions including: Applied Academic Skills, Applied Activities of Daily Living Skills, Employment Skills Development, and Leisure Recreation Skills. The program concludes at 3:30 daily.

Level 2

MSB L.I.F.E. Level 2 builds on the skills and concepts learned in Level 1. Level 2 immerses students in the supported, simulated community 24

hours a day. Level 2 students live in the **MSB L.I.F.E.** apartment, and work and participate in leisure activities in the community. Students are responsible for their own meals and housekeeping, with limited supervision from MSB staff. In Level 2, students spend more time in a work setting, with decreasing support from Job Coaches. Level 2 students continue to work with LIFE Coaches to set goals and assess their personal progress. Successful completion of the **MSB L.I.F.E.** program will aid students in their transition to employment and independent living.

MSB L.I.F.E. curriculum strands include:

- **Applied Academics** (Education/Training) – Applied Academics takes the 3 R's to the application level. **MSB L.I.F.E.** students practice functional academic skills in the context of the work place, home or community. Applied Academics is an approach to learning which focuses on challenging students to connect what they learn in school with the world they experience. The basic premise is that if academic content is made more relevant, participatory and concrete, students learn better, retain more and apply learning in their lives. **MSB L.I.F.E.** Coaches help students understand the reason for studying subject matter and capitalize on the students' natural learning inclinations and problem-solving approaches to move academic skills well beyond the classroom throughout their lives.
- **Applied Activities of Daily Living Skills** (Independent Living) – The **MSB L.I.F.E.** Applied Activities of Daily Living Skills curriculum includes skills and activities designed to increase independence in the home. Independent living consists of all the tasks and functions persons perform, in accordance with their abilities, in order to lead lives as independently as possible. Some independent living skills are addressed in the existing core curriculum, but they are often introduced as isolated splinter skills or taught in the classroom without the opportunity to practice in an authentic setting on a regular basis. **MSB L.I.F.E.** Activities of Daily Living Skills emphasize increased independence in personal hygiene and care, clothing management, personal food preparation, and household management.

- **Embedded Related Services** (all areas) - **MSB L.I.F.E.** provides IEP-driven instruction based on each student's individual needs, including related and secondary services. Therapy activities are developed to teach skills which students need to perform their job duties or fulfill their job functions. For example, a student who has speech intelligibility concerns will be engaged in activities addressing that issue as directly related to his or her job duties, i.e. answering the phone, greeting customers, etc.



- **Employment Skills Development** (Employment) – **MSB L.I.F.E.** students develop workplace readiness skills and get experience by working or volunteering at a community job site under the supervision of a MSB Job Coach. The **MSB L.I.F.E.** Work Experience curriculum concentrates on developing job skills including communication, time management, managing the workplace social environment and maintaining a production rate. Students develop skills in the use of adaptive equipment and assistive technology in the workplace. **MSB L.I.F.E.** students participate in structured community-based work experience at least two ½ days per week.



- **Leisure Recreation Skills** (Expanded Core Curriculum for Blind/Visually Impaired) – The **MSB L.I.F.E.** Leisure Recreation Skills curriculum is designed to help students explore a wide variety of community activities, games and leisure pursuits. Adult life can be stressful and everyone needs activities that help them relax and relieve the stress. The **MSB L.I.F.E.** curriculum focuses on helping students explore, plan and participate in recreational and leisure activities including: playing board games, participating in sports, journaling, arts and crafts, dance, music, gardening and book clubs.



- **Social Skills and Self-Advocacy Development** (Expanded Core Curriculum for Blind/Visually Impaired) - The **MSB L.I.F.E.** Social Skills curriculum focuses on development of age-appropriate socialization and self-advocacy. Skills sets include: getting along with and sharing responsibilities with others, self-determination, self-advocacy and exploration of community resources.
- **Work Site/Community-Based Orientation and Mobility** (Expanded Core Curriculum for Blind/Visually Impaired) - **MSB L.I.F.E.** students develop mastery of orientation and mobility skills related to the community work site as well as transportation to and from work from a certified O&M specialist. Orientation and Mobility needs are identified through the IEP process and delivered as a related service. The O&M specialist is a key member of the **MSB L.I.F.E.** staff and works closely with the staff to assure students have the skills to safely navigate their new environments. In general, **MSB L.I.F.E.** students will work on the following: orientation to the work site, concept and sensory development skills, cane skills and travel techniques including public transportation, orientation skills which will address mapping and route planning, visual efficiency skills as it relates to travel, personal safety and advocacy skills.



Who Are the **MSB L.I.F.E.** Coaches?

MSB Transition Coordinator – The Transition Coordinator, in conjunction with the Teacher of the Visually Impaired and Student Employment Coordinator facilitates students programs, conducts assessments, monitors student progress and modifies instructional programs as needed. The Transition Coordinator is the primary conduit to the student's home community and will coordinate and facilitate the student's transition team. The Transition Coordinator will compile detailed information at least quarterly to report progress to the student, family and local educational agency in the form of the **MSB L.I.F.E.** Report.



Student Employment Coordinator – The Student Employment Coordinator works collaboratively with the Transition Coordinator and the Teacher of the Blind and Visually Impaired to coordinate students programs, conduct assessments, monitor student progress and modify instructional programs as needed. The Student Employment Coordinator evaluates and secures job-sites, assists students in interviewing and job attainment. The Student Employment Coordinator determines the best means for a student to learn the job, while continuing to provide support for the student. This support will include formal and informal assessment, (information will be gained by the student's performance on the job) and training (direct training for each student or consultation with people who typically provide training or Job Coaches). The Student Employment Coordinator assigns and oversees all MSB Job Coaches, collects and coordinates work-site data and provides Transition Coordinator with a detailed quarterly report of relevant job-related data for the **MSB L.I.F.E.** Report.



Job Coaches - The MSB Job Coaches work one-on-one with students in the community-based work setting. The MSB Job Coaches collect both criterion/ goal-related and anecdotal data daily. The MSB Job Coaches provide quality control. The Student Employment Coordinator and/or Job Coaches provide the initial training/modeling at each new community-based work setting. MSB Job Coaches monitor student trainees' progress daily and gradually fade out assistance as the student becomes more independent. The Student Employment Coordinator and Job Coaches create a baseline to compare data at the end of the quarter to show student trainee progress.

Teacher of the Visually Impaired – The Teacher of the Visually Impaired (TVI) in coordination with the Transition Coordinator and Student Employment Coordinator facilitates students programs, conducts assessments, monitors student progress and modifies instructional programs as needed. The TVI provides direct instruction in the Expanded Core Curriculum for the Blind and Visually Impaired and coordinates the morning and afternoon meetings for **MSB L.I.F.E.** participants. The TVI works in conjunction with the Student Employment Coordinator to provide participants with a quarterly report of relevant ADL-related data. The TVI assists in the coordination of student's daily schedules and goal planning. The TVI collects and coordinates student's progress data and provides the Transition Coordinator with a detailed quarterly report of relevant home-related data for the **MSB L.I.F.E.** Report.

Orientation and Mobility Specialist and Related Services Providers – The Orientation and Mobility Specialist and Related Service Providers give direct instruction based on student's IEP goals. The O&M specialist provides instruction in the community setting designed specifically to help student access community and work sites, including the use of public transportation. Related Services Providers focus therapy on issues surrounding the work place and home and will, as often as appropriate, use a "push-in" model to provide therapy in the **MSB L.I.F.E.** apartment, coordinating activities with other components of the student's program. The O&M Specialist and Related Services Providers will provide information for the quarterly **MSB L.I.F.E.** Report.

