Writing Measurable IEP Goals

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IEP Clinic

Partnership for Extraordinary Minds

Learning Objectives

- What are the Present Levels of Performance (PLOPs)?

- Why are the PLOPs so important to developing an IEP?

- What are the parts of an IEP goal?

- What does "measurable" mean in terms of IEP goals?

- How do objectives support goals?

Present Levels of Academic Achievement & Functional Performance (PLOPs)

- How do you know where you're going if you don't know where you are?

- The importance of the PLOPs cannot be overstated.
  - Basis for generating annual goals and short-term objectives
  - Serve as the standard against which to measure performance or progress*

- The PLOPs should accurately capture current student performance.
  - <u>Strengths</u>: What can the student do now?
  - <u>Needs</u>: What needs does the student have?

- It is especially important that the PLOPs be detailed, accurate, and complete when a student is transitioning from elementary to middle school and from middle to high school.

*The IEP from A to Z, p.16

Understanding the Parts of the PLOPs

INDIVIDUALIZED EDUCATION PROGRAM (IEP) II. PRESENT LEVEL OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND FUNCTIONAL PERFORMAN
MARYLAND STATE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION (MSDE) DIVISION OF EARLY INTERVENTION AND SPECIAL EDUCATION SERVICES (Form approved by MSDE for use July 1, 2019)

Name: _____ Agency: _____ IEP Team Meeting Date: ___ / ___ / ___

ACADEMIC _____ Document student's academic achievement and functional performance levels in academic areas, as appropriate.

Source(s): _____

Summary of Assessment Findings (including dates of administration): _____

Instructional Grade Level Performance: _____

(Consider private, state, local school system, and classroom based assessments, as applicable.)

Does this area impact the student's academic achievement and/or functional performance? ○ YES ○ NO

Sources:
Classroom data (teacher reports/observations)
Parent Input (outside reports)
Formal Testing (Woodcock Johnson, Map-M)
Informal Curriculum-based Assessments
        (exit tickets; unit tests)
Data from Behavior Intervention Plan (BIP)

Instructional Grade Level Performance:
For academic goals, how do the student's skills correspond to grade level (technically required to categorize this without supports)?

For social-emotional or behavior goals, how does the student perform in terms of chronological / developmental age?

Narrative description that includes both strengths and needs.

If marked "yes," this is an area of need and the team needs to write a goal.

Anatomy of A Goal

- IDEA 2004 requires the IEP to contain a statement of *measurable* annual goals, including how progress toward meeting them will be measured.

- Measurable means you can count or observe progress.

- Four parts to a well-written goal:
  - Area of need (reading, social skills, math problem solving, etc.)
  - "Given statements" that define what, where, and/or much support needs to be "given" to achieve the goal
  - Direction of behavior (increase, decrease, maintain, etc.)
  - Level of attainment / Criteria for mastery: how much will the student's competence change within one year as a result of intervention (be functioning at grade level, know all his/her sight words, manage materials independently, etc.)

Breaking Down the Goal

Area of Need:
There should be at least 1 goal for every area listed in PLOPs as "impacting academic or functional performance." (YES was checked on the PLOP)

GOAL _____

Goal: _____
_____
_____
_____

By: ☐☐•☐☐•☐☐☐☐ (MM•DD•YYYY)

Evaluation Method: ☐ INFORMAL PROCEDURES   ☐ CLASSROOM-BASED ASSESSMENT   ☐ OBSERVATION RECORD   ☐ STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENT   ☐ PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT   ☐ OTHER ___

With _____ ☐ % Accuracy   ☐ % decrease   ☐ ____ out of ____ trials   ☐ % increase   ☐ other_____

ESY goal? ○ YES ○ NO

Objective 1: _____   Objective 3: _____

Goal states that given certain supports, the student will change competency (increase, decrease, etc.) by acting in a certain way until she reaches the desired level of attainment (grade level, independently, etc.).

What are "Givens"?

- A "given" is support that a student needs to be given in order to reach the goal.

- WHAT: Given a graphic organizer and access to speech to text technology, Johnny will write a paragraph consisting of a topic sentence, three supporting ideas, and a concluding sentence.

- WHERE: May need to specify multiple settings in objectives, if generalization is an issue
  - Given a non-structured setting (recess, lunch, etc.), Jane will initiate interaction with peers in 4/5 opportunities.
  - Given sand or water table, and highly preferred toys, Billy will play in parallel fashion across from 1 adult and 1 peer for a 5-minute play period in 7 / 10 opportunities.

- HOW MUCH SUPPORT: Given fading prompt hierarchy …

WHAT IS A PROMPT HIERARCHY ANYWAY?

- Prompt dependency happens when a child can only demonstrate skill when prompted.

- Prompt hierarchies aim to fade prompts.

- If your child needs prompts in order to practice a skill, a hierarchy should be specified in the annual goal or the objectives.

Level 0	Independent Performance or Initiation	Student will pack up at dismissal independently.
Level 1	Expectant waiting or time delay	Student will pack up within 1 minute of the end of class bell ringing.
Level 2	Gestures, manual signs, or visual cues.	Given a visual schedule, student will pack up at dismissal independently.
Level 3	Verbal cues	Given one verbal prompt from the aide, student will pack up at dismissal.
Level 4	Combination of cues	Given a visual schedule and verbal reminders, student will pack up at dismissal.
Level 5	Physical Cues or assistance	Given adult assistance, student will place items in backpack at dismissal.

The IEP from A to Z, p. 50

Securing your "Givens"

- Check to see that "givens" are included in the Special Considerations and Accommodations portion of the IEP (Part III of the IEP)

SUPPLEMENTARY AIDS, SERVICES, PROGR

○ Instructional Support(s)

Nature of Service

○ Allow use of highlighters during instruction and assignments
○ Allow use of manipulatives
○ Allow use of organizational aids
○ Check for understanding
○ Frequent and/or immediate feedback
○ Have student repeat and/or paraphrase information
○ Limit amount to be copied from board
○ Monitor independent work
○ Paraphrase questions & instruction
○ Peer tutoring/paired work arrangement
○ Picture schedule

○ Provide alternative ways for students to demonstrate learning
○ Provide assistance w/ organization
○ Provide home sets of textbooks/materials
○ Provide proofreading checklist
○ Provide student w/ copy of student/teacher notes
○ Repetition of directions
○ Use of word bank to reinforce vocabulary and/or when extended writing is required
○ Other: _____

SUPPLEMENTARY AIDS

○ Program Modification(s)

Nature of Service

○ Altered/modified assignments
○ Break down assignments into smaller units
○ Chunking of text(s)
○ Delete extraneous information on assignments and assessment, when possible
○ Limit amount of required reading
○ Modified content
○ Modified grading system
○ Open book exams
○ Oral exams
○ Reduce number of answer choices
○ Reduced length of exams

SUPPLEMENTARY AIDS, SERVICES, PROGR

○ Social/Behavior Support(s)

Nature of Service

○ Adult support
○ Advance preparation for schedule changes
○ Anger management training
○ Check for understanding
○ Crisis intervention
○ Encourage student to ask for assistance when needed
○ Encourage/reinforce appropriate behavior in academic and non academic settings
○ Frequent eye contact/ proximity control
○ Frequent reminder of rules
○ Home-school communication system
○ Implementation of behavior contract

○ Provide frequent changes in activities or opportunities for movement
○ Provide manipulatives and/ or sensory activities to promote listening and focusing skills
○ Provide structured time for organization of materials
○ Reinforce positive behavior through non-verbal/verbal communication
○ Social skills training
○ Strategies to initiate and sustain attention
○ Use of positive/concrete reinforcers
○ Other: _____

Metrics: How will You know if Goal is Achieved?

- This is the crux of the measurable piece of the goal.
- Common terms used here include: increase, decrease, maintain.
    - This is why the PLOPs are so important. Increase or decrease have no meaning if we don't have a baseline from which to measure!
    - What type of metric makes most sense?
        - X out of Y trials
        - Increase of 80% over baseline
        - With 90% accuracy

GOAL	_____

Goal: _____
_____
_____

By: ☐☐ • ☐☐ • ☐☐☐☐ (MM•DD•YYYY)

Evaluation Method: ☐ INFORMAL PROCEDURES   ☐ CLASSROOM-BASED ASSESSMENT   ☐ OBSERVATION RECORD   ☐ STANDARDIZED ASSESSMENT   ☐ PORTFOLIO ASSESSMENT   ☐ OTHER _____

With _____ ☐ % Accuracy   ☐ % decrease   ☐ ____ out of ____ trials   ☐ % increase   ☐ other_____

ESY goal? ◯ YES ◯ NO

Objective 1: _____   Objective 3: _____

How Do Objectives Support Goals?

- IDEA 2004 eliminated the requirement that short-term objectives for diploma-bound students be included in the IEP.

- Some jurisdictions, such as Maryland, continue to include objectives in all IEPs.

- Short-term objectives describe the steps necessary for the student to progress toward the annual goal.

Objectives Examples

- Objectives can describe component tasks or skills necessary to achieve the overall goal:

Goal: Given sentence starters, a writing rubric, and written directions of the assignment, Student will write 3 – 5 sentences on the assigned topic, using grade-level vocabulary, capitalization, and punctuation for 4 out of 5 trials.

Obj 1: Student will compose 3-5 sentences using proper capitalization and punctuation with no more than 2 errors for 4 out of 5 trials.

Obj 2: Student will compose 3-5 sentences using descriptive words to increase the detail of sentences with no more than 2 spelling errors for 4 out of 5 trials.

Obj 3: Student will compose 3-5 sentences using sequence words (first, next, then, etc.) in 4 out of 5 trials.

Obj 4: Student will compose 3-5 sentences using proper capitalization and punctuation and spelling, and then edit his work 1 time before turning it in for 4 out of 5 trials.

Objectives: Example 2

- Objectives can define progressive benchmarks toward reaching the annual goal:

Goal: Given direct instruction in typing and a color-coded keyboard, Student will increase her typing speed to 20 wpm with 80% accuracy in the therapeutic setting.

Obj 1: Student will increase her typing speed to 10 wpm with 80% accuracy.

Obj 2: Student will increase her typing speed to 15 wpm with 80% accuracy.

Obj 3: Student will increase her typing speed to 20 wpm with 50% accuracy.

Obj 4: Student will increase her typing speed to 20 wpm with 80% accuracy.

Resources For Additional Information

From Emotions to Advocacy, Second Edition: The Special Education Survival Guide, by Pam Wright and Pete Wright.

The IEP from A to Z: How to Create Meaningful and Measurable Goals and Objectives, by Diane Twachtman-Cullen and Jennifer Twachtman-Bassett, 2011.

Understood.org:
"Setting Annual IEP Goals: What You Need to Know,"
https://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/ieps/setting-annual-iep-goals-what-you-need-to-know

"How to Tell if Your Child's IEP Goals are SMART," by Andrew M.I. Lee, JDhttps://www.understood.org/en/school-learning/special-services/ieps/how-to-tell-if-your-childs-iep-goals-are-smart

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