



Writing Effective IEP Goals

Stephanie H. Cook, Ed.S.

Director of Education

Down Syndrome Association of Greater Charlotte

scook@dsa-gc.org

704-916-9312

What is an IEP Goal?

- (2)(i) A statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals designed to—
 - (A) Meet the child’s needs that result from the child’s disability to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum; and
 - (B) Meet each of the child’s other educational needs that result from the child’s disability...
[§300.320(a)(2)(i)(A) and (B)]

Source: <http://idea.ed.gov>



More about IEP Goals

- Where's the child heading this year?
- What will he or she work on, both academically and in terms of functional development?
- What does the IEP team feel the child can achieve by the end of the year—again, academically and functionally?

Source: <http://nichcy.org>



Where do goals come from?

- Start with Present Levels
 - What can your child do now?
 - What is the next step for that skill?
- Include data – specific numbers, scores, etc that can be continually measured to show progress
- Present Level of Performance
 - “PLOP”, “PLP”, “PLAAFP”

IDEA and PLP

Each child's IEP must contain...

- (1) A statement of the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, including—
 - (i) How the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum (i.e., the same curriculum as for nondisabled children); or
 - (ii) For preschool children, as appropriate, how the disability affects the child's participation in appropriate activities...

Source: <http://idea.ed.gov>



PLP should include

- Identify specific academic and nonacademic **performance areas**
- Provide **assessment** information specific to the performance
- Include strengths, **needs** and **impact** of disability
- Link to an appropriate **goal**

PLP - Performance Areas

- The “present levels” statement is crafted by **considering the areas of development in which a child with a disability may need support.**
- These are roughly divided into the two areas of development: **academic** and **functional.**

PLP - Performance Areas

Neither academic or functional is specifically defined in IDEA.

Academic Performance

Generally refers to a child's performance in academic areas

- reading or language arts, math, science, and history

Functional Performance

Generally refers to activities of daily living

- social skills such as making friends and communicating with others;
- behavior skills, such as knowing how to behave across a range of settings; and
- mobility skills, such as walking, getting around, going up and down stairs.

PLP - Assessment

- Assessment/Monitoring
 - Document assessment and monitoring methods used to determine the current performance level
 - Curriculum based tests
 - Teacher input
 - Observations
 - Writing samples
 - Parent input
 - Norm referenced tests
 - Multiple measures

PLP - Impact

- How does the child's disability affect academic performance and progress in the general education curriculum?
- How does the child's disability affect functional performance and, from there, his or her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum?

Source: <http://nichcy.org>



PLP - Example

Strengths: Lydia is able to read first grade literature books independently. Her fluency score is 61 words per minute, slightly under the target of 65 words per minutes. Her score for answering comprehension questions is 5/10 and her vocabulary score is 5/10 which are below target. She reads common sight words at 2nd grade level. Lydia can blend words with 2 and 3 letter consonant blends as well as words with short and long vowel patterns. She is able to apply phonics skills to decode words during structured reading time.

Needs: Lydia is unable to comprehend grade level reading texts. She has difficulty stating main ideas, answering “how” and “why” questions and reading with comprehension in other subject areas such as Social Studies and Science. She also has difficulty attending to task, participating in the classroom discussions and completing follow up reading comprehension assignments.

Impact of Disability: Lydia’s specific learning disability impairs her ability to read which impacts her involvement and progress in the general education curriculum.

PLP – Link to Goals

PLP Needs

Lydia is unable to comprehend grade level reading texts. She has difficulty **stating main ideas**, answering “how” and “why” questions and reading with comprehensions in other areas such as Science and Social Studies. She also has difficulty attending to task, participating in classroom discussions and completing follow up comprehension assignments

IEP Goal

When given a selected 3rd grade passage, Lydia will **state the main idea** and supporting details in the passage 75% of the time in 4 out of 5 trials as measured by student works samples and teacher charted data.

PLP – Link to Goals

PLP Needs

Max has difficulty adding and subtracting multi-digit numbers with regrouping due to a lack of understanding of place value. He does not know basic multiplication facts or understand how to compare simple fractions. He has **difficulty choosing the correct operations** to solve multi-step word problems. In addition, Max has difficulty following directions and recalling previously learned information.

IEP Goal

When given a mixture of 10 math problems requiring both single and multi-step solutions, Max will **choose the correct operation** to solve the problem in 4 out of 5 trials as measured by student work samples.



Back to Goal Writing!

S.M.A.R.T. Goals

- **Specific**
- **Measureable**
- **Action-oriented**
- **Realistic and Relevant**
- **Time-oriented**

Specific

- SMART IEPs have specific goals and objectives.
- Specific goals target areas of academic and functional performance
- They include clear descriptions of knowledge and skills that will be taught and how the child's progress will be measured

Which goal is specific?

- *Dylan will increase study skills for academic success*
- *Dylan will use the following study skills:
Skimming written material and use reference materials in social studies class*

Measureable

- You can count or observe it
- Allows parents and teachers to know how much progress was made since the performance was last measured
- Lets you know when the child reaches the goal

Which goal is measureable?

- *Owen will improve his reading skills*
- *Given second grade material, Owen will read a passage of text orally at 110-130 wpm with fewer than two errors*

Action-oriented

- IEP goals include three components:
 - Direction of behavior (increase, decrease, maintain, etc)
 - Area of need (i.e., reading, writing, social skills, transition, communication, etc)
 - Level of attainment (i.e., to age level, without assistance, etc)

Which goal is action oriented?

- *Betsy will decrease her anger and violation of school rules*
- *Provided with anger management training and adult support, Betsy will be able to independently remove herself from environments that cause her to lose control of her behavior so that she has no disciplinary notices.*

Realistic and Relevant

- Must address child's unique needs that result from their disability
- NOT based on district curricula, state or district tests, or other external standards

Which goal is realistic?

- *Jody will increase her reading level from 1.2 to 4.1 by the end of the school year.*
- *Jody will increase her reading fluency score from 99 wpm to 140 wpm by the end of the school year.*
- *Jody will correctly answer “wh” questions about a 4th grade passage when the passage is read aloud to her.*

Time-Limited

- What does the child need to know/be able to do after one year of special education?

Which goal is time-limited?

- *Given 5th grade material, Alex will increase his reading fluency score from 70 to 120 wpm.*
- *Given 5th grade material, Alex will increase his reading fluency score from 70 to 120 wpm with 4-6 errors by the end of the school year.*

Examples – Are these goals...

Specific?

Measurable?

Action-oriented?

Relevant and Reasonable?

Time-oriented?

Is this S.M.A.R.T.?

- *Provided with grade level material, Jenny will increase her ability to design, use and communicate a variety of mathematical strategies to solve problems with 70% accuracy.*

- Specific
- Measureable
- Action-oriented
- Realistic
- Time-managed

Is this S.M.A.R.T.?

- *By December 2013, when given an emergent reader/grade level text, Drew will read the passage fluently with 90% accuracy (excluding self corrections), in 4 out of 5 consecutive trials, as measured by teacher running record.*

- Specific
- Measureable
- Action-oriented
- Realistic
- Time-managed

Source: www.goalbookapp.com

Is this S.M.A.R.T.?

- *During the school day, Kelly will appropriately interact with her peers in 4/5 opportunities.*

- Specific
- Measureable
- Action-oriented
- Realistic
- Time-managed

Is this S.M.A.R.T.?

- *Tyler will demonstrate gross motor skills sufficient for safe, independent, functional mobility in the school setting.*

- Specific
- Measureable
- Action-oriented
- Realistic
- Time-managed

Is this S.M.A.R.T.?

- *When in PE, Jack will follow the class rules accurately to participate in all PE activities for 4/5 trials.*

- Specific
- Measureable
- Action-oriented
- Realistic
- Time-managed

Is this S.M.A.R.T.?

- *When given a task or direction Jacob will begin the task within 1 minute and remain on task for a minimum of 10 minutes independently with no more than 2 prompts on 8 out of 10 independent tasks, as measured by staff data.*

- Specific
- Measureable
- Action-oriented
- Realistic
- Time-managed

Is this S.M.A.R.T.?

- *Jane will write and edit a five-sentence paragraph that addresses a given subject twice a month. Each paragraph will include a topic sentence, at least four details and a conclusion. She will earn a score of 75 percent or higher on a writing rubric for each writing assignment. There will be at least four writing assignments per quarter.*

- Specific
- Measureable
- Action-oriented
- Realistic
- Time-managed

Putting it all together....

- Use these PLPs to write a S.M.A.R.T. IEP goal

Present Level of Performance (PLP): Kelly

- Based on informal testing and classroom observations, Kelly can now throw a ball overhand and catch it from 10 feet away. She can follow one step directions in order to complete the activity. Also Kelly is keeping her hands and feet to herself most of the time and she is continuing to share items with her peers during class. She is inconsistent in following directions, keeping her hands to herself, and participating in the whole group activity on a consistent basis upon receiving the initial directive. This inability to consistently follow rules in order to fully participate in PE inhibits Kelly's progress with the general education class and affects her functional performance in the total school environment because she has difficulty following the rules when in an unstructured, less closely supervised school setting.

Jenny: PLP

- Jenny is able to identify all letters and sounds. She is reading at a Rigby level 6. Jenny is reading 37/40 primer sight words and 18/41 first grade sight words. She demonstrates weaknesses in reading comprehension and decoding. Jenny has shown inconsistent progress in writing expanded sentences and spelling words correctly. She is able to write numbers and count numbers to 100. Jenny has not yet mastered adding or subtracting numbers. She is able to make 1:1 correspondences with numbers and objects but is not able to count up from a number, she starts back at 1 each time. Jenny's classroom behavior has greatly improved but she still demonstrates some difficulty in following classroom directions. She is normally easily redirected but continued support and social lessons would benefit Jenny behaviorally.

Amy: PLP

- A review of informal assessments and teacher observations in the classroom has shown that Amy can rote count to 100 consistently. Amy is able to add and subtract single digit numbers using different strategies such as hundreds board and using manipulatives. She can add and subtract on her fingers as well. She can add and subtract double digit numbers with some assistance using a hundreds chart. She can add with regrouping but has difficulty subtracting with regrouping. She can multiply 0's, 1's, 2's, 5's, and 10's. She can multiply using a calculator or a multiplication chart. She can not divide single digits. These skill deficits cause Amy to have difficulty making progress with grade level curriculum as she has difficulty solving grade level math problems. She exhibits age appropriate functional skills.

Stacy: PLP

- Based on classroom work samples and teacher observations, Amy can write her first and last name. She can spell many sight words. When given a picture prompt, Amy can write a short 3-4 word sentence and with support will embellish her sentence to include details. She does not write complete detailed sentences independently. She is inconsistent using capitalization, punctuation and spacing. The use of graphic organizers will help her add detail and expand her thoughts. These skill deficits impact her ability to make progress in the general education classroom because she does not complete written grade level material but they do not impact her functional performance within the total school environment because if necessary she could write her name

Michelle: PLP

- Based on teacher observations in the classroom and in small group settings, Amy can complete assignments when she is conformable with instructional material and teacher directions. Amy does require some prompting to stay focused on her work. However, Amy does not always want to participate in whole/small group activities or for one on one instruction. For example, when the teacher asks the class to transition from one activity to another, Amy does not always comply. During these times of non-compliance, she will often shut down and work on her preferred activity. These behavioral responses impact her ability to make progress in the general curriculum because she misses information given during these instructional times. They also affect her functional skills as she will also refuse to transition from one area to another within the total school environment.

Summary

- Successful goals begin with an effective PLP
- Create goals that are S.M.A.R.T.

Timeframe	Condition	Behavior	Criteria
In 36 instructional weeks	Using decoding skills and oral practice within a 3 rd grade practice	Joseph, a 3 rd grade student, will read	70 words per minute with fewer than 10 errors
By the end of the 2011-2012 school year	Given counseling with explicit instruction in 3 types of anger management techniques	Sara, a 10 th grade student, will utilize anger management techniques to reduce elopements from classroom as evidenced by	Remaining in classroom 90% of the day at least 4 days per week
By May 15, 2012	Given a 4 th grade story prompt and 30 minutes to write	Linda, a 4 th grade student, will write	A three paragraph essay using transition words in sentences and between paragraphs with 5 or fewer errors
In 36 instructional weeks,	When provided a visual schedule of the daily routine and asked, "What comes next?"	Christina, a 4 year old student, will verbally state the correct activating	In 4 of 5 anecdotal notes recorded
By May 15, 2012	Given a shirt with ½ inch buttons and fine motor skill instruction	Jose, a 6 th grade student, will button his shirt appropriately	By getting all ½ inch buttons in the correct buttons holes without assistance 4 out of 5 tries

Source:

<http://portal.esc20.net/portal/page/portal/doclibraryroot/publicpages/SpecialEducation/AGC/AGCStatewideLeadership/IEP%20QA%20March%2026%202013.pdf>

Resources

- <http://sped-v1.lausd.net>
- www.fetaweb.com
- www.wrightslaw.com
- www.nichy.com
- www.goalbookapp.com
- www.idea.ed.gov