



Goal Writing at Your Child's IEP

You are an integral member of the IEP team, the team that decides the Individualized Education Plan (IEP) for your child. This plan includes writing goals which are positive statements describing the educational gains your child will work toward in the upcoming school year. It is important for you to understand how goals are created so that you can participate in a meaningful way.


What Kinds Of Goals Are Written In An IEP?

Goals are written in any area of need that affects a child during his school day. They focus on the individual needs of your child and vary from student to student. Areas of assessed needs may include the following:

- *academics*
- *social skills*
- *communication*
- *speech and language*
- *fine motor (i.e. actions using the small muscle movements of your fingers),*
- *gross motor (using large muscles)*
- *behavior*
- *vision*
- *hearing*
- *recreation and leisure*
- *adaptive living skills*
- *transition to adult living (at age 16 and above)*
 - *education or training*
 - *employment*
 - *as needed, independent living*

Goals are written to address academic areas in which your child is significantly below grade level as well as other areas of identified disability.

S.E.P.A.C.



Special Education Parent Advisory Committee

The goal of SEPAC
is to empower parents
of special education students
to become an effective
team member in their child's
education through flexibility,
collaboration, knowledge and
effective communication
with other team members.

For more information or to contact
SEPAC, call (530) 265-0611 x203

What Is The Process When Writing Goals?

- At your child’s IEP meeting, the team will report the “present levels of performance” in all areas of the school program. Assessment reports from teachers, therapists and the school psychologist may also be presented. As a vital member of the team, you will report your observations and any concerns regarding your child’s progress.
- Based on the information from parents, teachers and educational specialists, the team will identify broad areas of need that target the student’s deficits. These provide the basis for the annual goals to be written into the IEP. You will work together to write goals.
- At the parent’s request, reports from outside specialists will also be considered by the IEP team, and will assist with the creation of goals.



Usually, team members bring “draft goals” to the meeting as suggestions for what to focus on for the next one year period. With the team’s input, these goals can be modified during the meeting. Additional goals can also be written at the meeting and existing goals can be updated.

How Might Program Placement, Services, Accommodations and Modifications Be Described?

Based on the goals, the team will consider *program placement*, *services*, and needed *accommodations* and *modifications*.

- Examples of *program placements* could be time spent in a learning center or in a Special Day Class.
- Examples of *services* could include Specialized Academic Instruction, Speech and Language Therapy and Occupational Therapy.
- An *accommodation* allows the student to demonstrate the same skill in a different way. Examples include additional time for assignments and fewer questions on a page of school work.
- A *modification* significantly changes the skill being learned. Children with more extensive disabilities are more likely to have modifications on their IEP.

How Are Goals Written?

Each goal will target a *specific* and *measurable* learning need within a broader area. Each goal has specific components as follows:



- **Baseline:** This refers to a description of the child's present performance related to the specific goal. The baseline provides the starting point from which to measure progress.
- **Time Frame:** Each goal includes a date by which the team is intending for your child to attain the goal. This is typically one year.
- **Content:** This identifies the specific learning or content standard to be mastered. For example: a student with reading difficulty may have a goal targeting reading fluency and/or comprehension.
- **Behavior:** This is what the student does to demonstrate he has learned the skill.
- **Performance level:** This identifies the criteria and method for *measuring* the goal.

As an example, consider this for a sixth grade student:

Baseline: Student reads a fourth grade reading passage with 80 words and 7 word errors per minute.

Goal: By (Date), given a fifth grade reading passage, the student will read 120 words with 5 or fewer errors per minute, as measured by teacher recording.

What Are Some Additional Goal Considerations?

- The goals are focused on the student and are usually written to reflect a year's worth of progress. Therefore goals should be broad enough to cover a year's growth.
- Effective IEP's focus on several key areas of assessed and identified need.
- Goals are broken down into *objectives*, also called *benchmarks*, when a student is going to take the California Alternate Performance Assessment (CAPA) *rather than* the California Standards Assessment (CST) or the California Modified Assessment (CMA). The type of test the student takes is an IEP team decision.



As an example, consider this goal broken down into benchmarks for a student taking the CAPA:

Goal: By (month/day/year) when participating in free time period with a peer, (student) will ask a question using (specify mode of communication here) on 4 of 5 supervised opportunities as measured by data collection.

Possible *benchmarks* for this goal might include these:

- Ask for a desired snack item
- Ask a social question of a peer
- Ask a peer to play a game
- Remember that school is a dynamic environment where many subjects and skills are presented even if they are not specifically written into a goal.

How Is Progress Reported On Goals?

Progress towards goals, including objectives, must be provided to parents on the same reporting schedule as for general education students. At the annual IEP, each of the goals should contain a determination of whether the goal was met. If your child is not progressing toward their goals, you may contact the school and request a meeting to discuss progress at any time during the year.



More on Parent Input:

- Throughout the year, review assessments and student work.
- Consider your child's needs and identify concepts or skills you would like your child to learn over the next school year.
- While you do not need to write the goals, the more specific the list of "learnings", the more easily they can be communicated to the team.
- You may want to provide this information to the team prior to your child's IEP meeting.
- You may want to ask your Special Education Director or child's teachers for information regarding curriculum adoptions and specific teaching methodology.

Resources:

www.nevco.k12.ca.us

www.warmlinefrc.org

www.nichy.org.