



# Measurable Annual Goals

This tip sheet introduces information about developing measurable annual goals. It includes a brief summary of federal regulations and tips for implementation. To learn more, review the additional resources and check with state law for additional requirements.

## What Does IDEA Say?

According to IDEA, Sec. 300.320 (a)(2), each child's IEP must contain...

- (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;
- (ii) For children with disabilities who take alternate assessments aligned to alternate academic achievement standards, a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives.

## Essential Elements of Writing Measurable IEP Goals\*

Individualized education program (IEP) goals are developed as a team and are based on present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFPs). IEP goals must be written in language that **ensures that the progress from a student's present level of performance toward the goal can, and will be, measured**. Quality IEP goals address the condition, or context, in which the skill will be performed, target behavior, and level of proficiency/time frame.

Component	Guiding Questions	Examples
Condition 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under what context will the behavior or skill be expected to occur?</li> <li>• What level of independence is expected to complete the skill or demonstrate the behavior?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When given 30 first-grade sight words</li> <li>• When given a third-grade reading passage</li> <li>• When provided a sixth-grade-level story starter and 4 minutes to write</li> <li>• Independently</li> <li>• With no more than two reminders needed</li> <li>• When prompted</li> </ul>
Target Behavior 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What do we want the students to be able to do?</li> <li>• Is the behavior observable and measurable?</li> <li>• Is it a functionally relevant replacement behavior?</li> <li>• Is this a measure of student behavior, not adult behavior?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Student will read 60 words correctly</li> <li>• Student will use a learned strategy to de-escalate</li> <li>• Student will appropriately ask for help</li> <li>• Student will appropriately seek peer attention</li> </ul>
Level of Proficiency/ Timeline 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When will mastery of the skills be expected to occur?</li> <li>• What is the level of accuracy?</li> <li>• How many trials does the student need to demonstrate mastery of the skill?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 95% accuracy</li> <li>• Three consecutive probes</li> <li>• During 4 out of 4 trials</li> <li>• By spring benchmarking</li> <li>• At least 80% of the instructional period</li> <li>• During 8 of 10 peer interactions</li> </ul>

\*This content was adapted with permission from the National Center on Intensive Intervention's Strategies for Setting High-Quality Academic Individualized Education Program Goals and Strategies for Setting Data-Driven Behavioral Individualized Education Program Goals





## Where can you learn more?



**Dear Colleague Letter (2015, November 16)**. This OSERS Policy Guidance on Free Appropriate Public Education letter clarifies the necessity of writing ambitious but achievable IEP goals which align to grade level content standards. The letter highlights the importance of the IEP Team appropriately estimating the growth toward the state academic content standards that the child is expected to achieve in the year to help close the performance gap.



**Strategies for Setting High-Quality Academic Individualized Education Program Goals** (National Center on Intensive Intervention). This guide explains how educators can establish academic IEP goals that are measurable, ambitious, and appropriate through four steps: selecting a measure, establishing baseline performance, choosing a strategy for setting the goal, and writing a measurable goal.



**Strategies for Setting Data-Driven Behavioral Individualized Education Program Goals** (National Center on Intensive Intervention). This guide covers components of quality behavioral IEP goals; how to know which behavior(s) should be addressed through an IEP goal; information about behavior(s) of concern; how to set goals and progress monitor; common challenges and solutions; and additional resources and tools.



**What is Included in the IEP Document? Challenging, Ambitious, Measurable Annual Goals** (IRIS Center). This section is one component of the IRIS module, *Developing High-Quality Individualized Education Programs*. It describes key components to consider when developing measurable annual goals that outline what a student is reasonably expected to accomplish in a 12-month period, when provided with appropriate special education services.



**Developing IEPs that Support Inclusive Education for Students with the Most Significant Cognitive Disabilities** (TIES Center). This brief covers considerations for developing annual goals that are standards based for students with the most significant cognitive disabilities.



**PROGRESS Center Website**. The PROGRESS website includes additional information about developing high-quality IEPs and additional tip sheets in this series.



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