



Strategies for Analyzing PROGRESS Center IEP Tip Sheets

Facilitator Guide



About the Activity

The following activity is intended to help educators and administrators gain a deeper understanding of the required components of the individualized education program (IEP) under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). The activity uses the PROGRESS Center IEP [Tip Sheet Series](#) to introduce the IDEA language, provide tips for implementation, and share resources for the required IEP components. This activity includes time for individual, peer, and group reflection and discussion.

Activity Objectives

By completing this activity, participants will be able to

- explain the IDEA requirements for an IEP component,
- identify tips for implementing an IEP component, and
- access additional resources related to an IEP component.

Facilitating the Activity

This section presents an overview of the process and materials needed to facilitate the activity along with an optional activity to help participants deepen their understanding of the selected IEP component.

- Review the structure and purpose of the activity.
- Identify the selected IEP component for review and related tip sheet. This activity can be facilitated with any of the [IEP Tip Sheets](#) from the PROGRESS Center. It can be especially helpful for reviewing the [Overview of Statement of Services and Aids](#) and the four companion tip sheets that are part of that collection.
- Review selected IEP Tip Sheet(s) and prepare to address questions that participants may have related to the topic.

Activity Overview

- **Purpose:** Understand IDEA requirements for IEP components
- **Suggested time:** 15–20 minutes
- **Suggested audiences:** General and special educators, administrators, special education staff, preservice educators
- **Materials:** Participant handout, Copy of selected IEP Tip Sheet, highlighter, sticky notes

Materials

Each participant will need the following:

- Copy of participant handout
- Copy of selected [IEP Tip Sheet](#)
- Highlighter
- Sticky notes



- Schedule time to facilitate the activity. It is recommended that you schedule at least 15 to 20 minutes to facilitate the activity. The time for the activity should be driven by the needs of your participants.
- Prepare materials (participant handout, copy of a PROGRESS Center IEP Tip Sheet, highlighters).

Sample Activity Structure

Step	Description of step
Set the stage (2 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set the activity purpose by reviewing why this activity is important and the primary activity objectives. • Pass out materials. • Orient participants to the structure of the selected IEP Tip Sheet.
Step 1: Independent reflection (2–3 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask participants to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – individually review the IDEA definition outlined on the top of the tip sheet, – highlight or underline areas that stand out to them in the definition, and – note takeaways and reflections.
Step 2: Small group or partner sharing (3–5 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask participants to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – turn to a partner or form a small group, – share what stood out to them while reviewing the IDEA definition on the tip sheet, and – note any outstanding questions that they have.
Step 3: Whole-group discussion and reflection (10–15 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask participants to share reflections, takeaways, and questions with the full group. • Address participant questions. • Reinforce the main ideas from the tip sheet.

Optional Activity: In Your Own Words

In this optional activity, participants to deepen their understanding of the selected IEP component.

Sample Structure for an Optional Activity

Step	Description of step
Individual definition (4 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask participants to independently jot down in their own words what IDEA says about the IEP component. Ask them to consider how they would define the component for a new colleague or parent.
Share definitions in pairs (3 minutes per partner)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In pairs, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ask the first participant to share with their partner, and switch partners and repeat.

Key Ideas to Reinforce While Facilitating the Activity

This section summarizes some key ideas that are important for facilitators to emphasize while facilitating the activity. Across all tip sheets, it is important to reinforce that IDEA outlines the minimum requirements for the components of an IEP, but states are allowed to include additional requirements.

The table below describes some of the main ideas to reinforce when using three of the tip sheets. If you choose to use a different tip sheet, it is important to review the tip sheet and consider the primary messages you would like to reinforce during the activity before you begin the activity.

Key Ideas to Reinforce in Select Tip Sheets

Tip Sheet	Key ideas to reinforce
PLAAFP Statement: Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance	<p>The PLAAFP statement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> describes how the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum, identify the student needs that must be addressed through the IEP, captures the baseline of the student's learning, and ensures connection to goals and services.



Tip Sheet	Key ideas to reinforce
Measurable Annual Goals	Academic and functional IEP goals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • should focus on what the student should do, not on what they should not do, in order to promote progress, • are written in a way that connects to the baseline performance identified in the PLAAFP statement, and • include the condition, target behavior, and level of proficiency/timeline.
Overview of Statement of Services and Aids	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IDEA intentionally uses the word <i>and</i> to illustrate that this is one statement with four parts: special education, related services, supplementary aids and services, and program modification and support for school personnel. • The needs identified in the PLAAFP statement should guide the selection of the proposed services and aids.

After the Activity

Following the activity, facilitators may find it helpful to:

- Repeat the activity with another [IEP Tip Sheet](#). Consider using one of the four companion tip sheets within the [Overview of Statement of Services and Aids](#) collection.
- Share the PROGRESS Center [Self-Paced Learning Courses](#) focused on the IEP.

PROGRESS Center

at the American Institutes for Research® ■

www.promotingprogress.org



1400 Crystal Drive, 10th Floor
Arlington, VA 22202-3289
202-403-5000 | www.air.org

