

Knowing Your Student

Facilitator Guide



About the Activity

The present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP) statement provides the foundation for the individualized education program (IEP). A critical component of the PLAAFP statement is identifying and describing the student’s needs that result from the impact of the disability. As noted in IDEA, Sec. 300.320(a)(1), the PLAAFP statement is “[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** (emphasis added).”

The PLAAFP statement is the foundation for the remaining parts of the IEP. It describes how the disability impacts the current performance of the child and all the needs that will be addressed through the IEP. Quality PLAAFP statements help provide a complete picture of the student, including the child’s strengths and circumstances.

This short activity helps participants understand how to quickly describe the impact of the disability and the student’s needs that will be included in the PLAAFP statement and how to drive the development of the services and aids and goals within the IEP. This activity can help ensure meaningful participation of all team members in the IEP development. It can be especially helpful to use with families as they share their deep knowledge of their child’s needs and strengths.

Activity Objectives

By completing this activity, participants will be able to identify and describe in the PLAAFP statement the impact of the student’s disability and their primary and secondary needs.

Activity Overview

- **Purpose:** Identify and describe the impact of the disability and the primary and secondary needs of the student with a disability. Encourage all IEP team members to share what they know about the student and the student’s needs.
- **Suggested time:** 18 to 20 minutes
- **Suggested audience:** General and special educators, administrators, special education staff, preservice educators, families
- **Materials:** Timer. If desired, you can provide participants with a space for notetaking.

Facilitating the Activity

This brief, multistep activity requires participants to stand up and move around the room. If space is not available for movement, you can have participants pair with someone sitting near them.

Tips for completing the activity

- Introduce the activity in stages. See Exhibit 1 for an overview of the activity.
- If the audience is not all educators, ensure those assigned as “1s” can identify a student with a disability that they know well.
- Use a timer (external or web-based) or other indicator (e.g., chimes, music) to get attention and move participants through the steps of the activity.
- Participants don’t need materials to complete the activity, but if desired, they can bring a piece of paper or sticky note to make notes during the activity.

Materials

- Timer
- *Optional:* Provide participants with sticky notes or a space to note their thoughts.

Exhibit 1. Sample Structure for an 18- to 20-Minute Session

Step	Description
Reflection (30 seconds)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have participants think about a child with a disability whom they know well.
Pairing and Introductions (2 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask participants to stand and pair with someone they don’t know. • Have participants quickly introduce themselves (e.g., 15 to 30 seconds) and number off 1 and 2. • Ask everyone assigned as <i>Person 1</i> to raise their hand. Repeat for everyone assigned as <i>Person 2</i>. • Review the instructions for the activity.
Describe Student (3 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask <i>Person 1</i> to select a known student with a disability and describe the student’s disability, how it affects the student’s access to and progress in general education, and what <i>Person 1</i> thinks needs to happen for the student to be successful. • Ask <i>Person 2</i> to listen and note the impact of the disability as well as the student’s primary and secondary needs.
Questions & Clarification (2 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have <i>Person 2</i> ask clarifying questions.



Step	Description
Confirm Description (2 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Together, have the pair confirm the description of the student, the student's needs, and what services and supports would be best.
Group Discussion (10 minutes)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Prompt participants to return to their seats. Have participants discuss the activity as a whole group. The following are some questions to consider: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are some key takeaways from this activity? How easy/difficult was it to describe the student? How could this activity facilitate more meaningful engagement of families and other educators in the IEP planning and development?

Alternative Option

- If time is limited, consider shortening the group discussion.
- This activity can be facilitated virtually by using breakout rooms. In this case, provide all the instructions to participants before having them join the breakout rooms. Send reminders for each step. When using breakouts, provide a little extra time for each step of the agenda. *Person 3* can serve as the timekeeper and ask clarifying questions.

Key Ideas to Reinforce While Facilitating the Activity

This section summarizes some key ideas for facilitators to emphasize during the activity.

- This activity centers discussion on the student rather than the IEP form or the process of developing an IEP.
- The activity can take place before the IEP meeting to help the team clarify the student's needs. For example, a discussion with the general education teacher, family, related service providers, and after-school providers may be helpful in collecting and summarizing information to inform the PLAAFP statement.
- Before writing a comprehensive PLAAFP statement and developing the remaining parts of the IEP, it helps to clearly identify the impact of the disability and the student's needs.

After the Activity

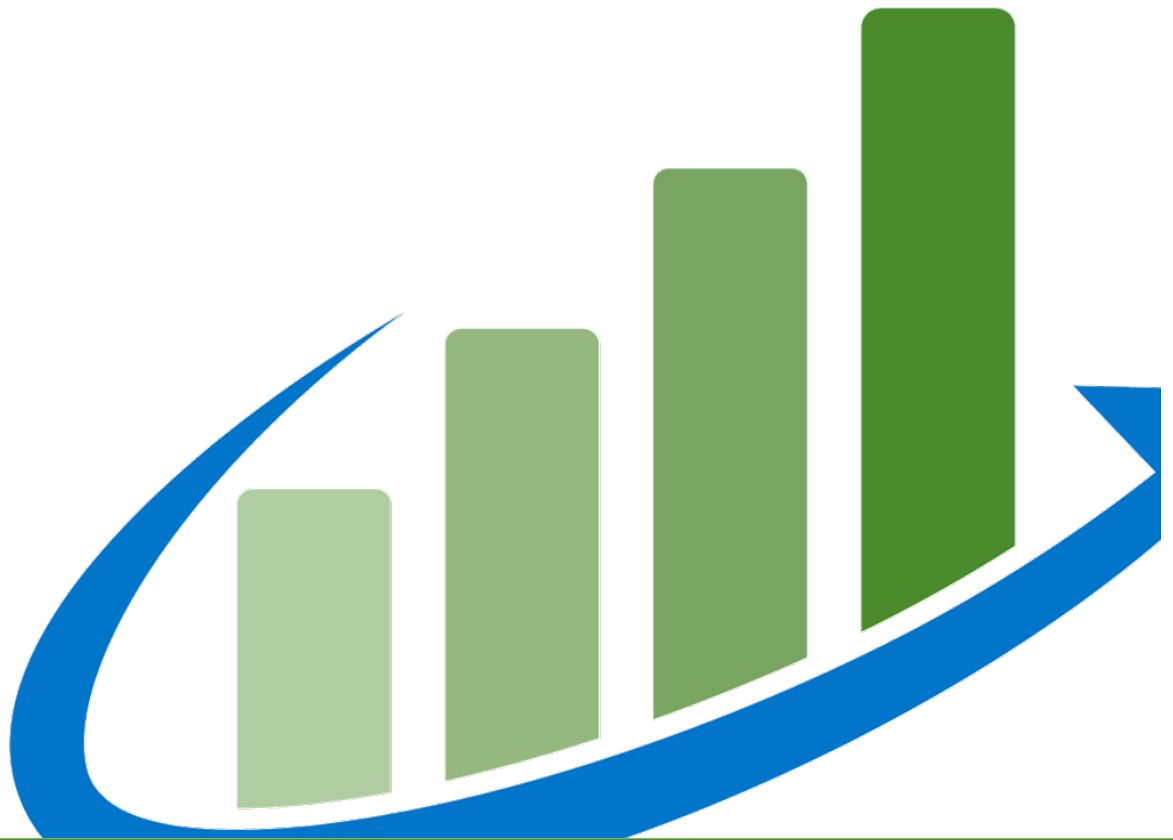
Following the activity, facilitators could share the following resources to help participants learn more about the IEP and how disabilities may affect a student:

- PROGRESS Center [IEP Tip Sheets](#)
- PROGRESS Center [IDEA Disability Category Tip Sheets](#)
- PROGRESS Center [Self-Paced Learning Courses](#) focused on the IEP

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