

Writing Goals and Objectives for an Early Childhood Individualized Education Program

- The goals and objectives in a child's Individualized Education Program (IEP) provide a way for families and staff to measure progress in a child's functioning and pre-academic skills. IEPs for preschool children should focus on using the daily routines and activities of the classroom to work on skills that he or she will need to learn to increase their participation in the classroom, become more independent in daily routines, and have positive relationships with the other students and the adults in the classroom.
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- Parents are the expert on their child and have important information to share which makes them a vital member of the IEP team. When writing goals and objectives for a child's IEP, there are pieces of information that should be considered which include:
 - Results of the most recent educational evaluation
 - Any medical information families want to share with the team
 - What a child knows and can do
 - Any concerns parents have about their child's learning or development
 - Reports from the program the child attends
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- One way to think about writing goals is for parents to talk with teachers and ask them for a sample of a typical daily schedule. By looking at the daily activities of the program, parents can think about which activities may be a challenge for their child. These activities may include:
 - Transitions
 - Interacting with other children and adults
 - Snack time
 - Circle time
 - Teacher directed learning
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- Parents should also look at any areas of development in which their child may have needs. These include:
 - Communication
 - Gross motor or fine motor
 - Self-help skills such as eating and toileting
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- Ask this question: "What do I want my child to be able to learn to do?" Once families have figured out the skills that their child needs to learn or improve, they should also keep in mind that IEP goals are usually written for a year.
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- There are other things that should be considered when writing the goals and objectives:
 - The child's current level of performance must be described either in the goal statement or in the PLAAFP (Present Level of Academic and Functional Performance)

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- Each goal must be measurable and observable
- Goals should be functional, relevant and meaningful to the child's participation and independence in the preschool setting
- Each goal must have at least two objectives. (Objectives are the steps leading to the accomplishment of the goal)

Objectives should include the following:

- The skill that the child will be able to do
- The conditions under which it should be performed
- Criteria for deciding if the objective is being met
- Evaluation (the percentage of accomplishment and who will be collecting the data)

As the IEP team is developing the goals and objectives, parents should be thinking about what special education or related services will be necessary for their child to achieve the goal.

Be sure to remember that:

- All members of the IEP should be able to understand the goals and objectives, so they should be free of special education jargon
- The staff is required to measure and report progress of children on both IEP goals and objectives and the preschool curriculum. Families should also be able to see progress at home and in the community
- The staff should show parents how they can work to support their child's learning at home

During the process of gathering information from families about what is working well and what is challenging, as well as hopes and dreams for their child, the other members of the IEP team can pair that information with what they know about child development and research based methods of teaching, and together the IEP team can write goals and objectives that will help to prepare the child for kindergarten.