Developing Educationally Meaningful & Legally Sound IEPs: Measurable Annual Goals

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Today’s Agenda

• 9:00 – 10:15 Background Info
• 10:15 – 10:30 Break
• 10:30 – 12:00 Assessment & Present Levels
• 12:00 – 12:30 Lunch by Reggie’s
• 12:30 – 2:00 Writing Measurable Annual Goals
• 2:00 – 2:15 Break
• 2:15 – 3:00 Progress Monitoring
“Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?”

“That depends a good deal on where you want to get to.” said the Cat

“I don’t much care where,” said Alice

“Then it doesn’t matter which way you go,” said the Cat

-Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland, Lewis Carroll-
Changes in Special Education Law

- The Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act of 1990
- The Individuals with Disabilities Education Act Amendments of 1997
- The IDEA Improvement Act of 2004
  - IDEA 2014????

Issues of Access

Issues of Quality
Congressional Report on IDEIA

The purpose of the 2004 reauthorization was to:

• “Improve educational results for children with disabilities”

• “To assess and ensure the effectiveness of education for children with disabilities”
Comments to IDEIA Regulations

These requirements “emphasize the importance of using high-quality, research-based instruction in special education settings consistent with (NCLB)” (p.32)

“This system will require evidence in the form of data-based documentation reflecting formal assessment of progress during instruction through repeated assessments” (p. 32)
The IEP

• The “I” in IEP means “individualized”

• The IEP is “specially designed instruction to meet the unique needs of the child”

• IEPs, which are the blueprint of a student’s free appropriate public education (FAPE), are legally binding commitments of resources from an LEA

• The IEP must be designed to confer meaningful educational benefit
THE BIG PICTURE

Programming
1. Develop the IEP
2. Deliver services

Assessment
1. Assessment for Eligibility
2. Assessment for Instruction

Progress-Monitoring
1. Formative Evaluation
2. Reevaluation
The Four Parts of the IEP Process

- Assessment/Evaluation
- Programming
- Monitoring Progress/Evaluation
- Placement*

*Can be a separate process from IEP
Assessment
Assessment Questions

✓ **Who** should receive special education services?
  
  • *Eligibility & classification decisions*

✓ **What** instructional services will be provided?
  
  • *Assessment must lead directly to instructional programming*

✓ **How** effective are the special education services?
  
  • *Progress monitoring*
Assessment Cautions!!!
Assessment CAUTIONS

✓ Too often the IEP team focuses on tests to determine eligibility without doing assessments that relate meaningfully to instruction

✓ Parents must be included in the assessment process

✓ Request assessments that you believe are important (for goals & related services)

✓ Assessments should not be first presented to parents at an IEP meeting
Assessment Checklist

✓ Were parents fully informed about assessments that were conducted and did they give their written consent?

✓ Were parents involved in the assessment process?

✓ Were supplementary aids, supports, & program modifications considered to allow the student to participate in general education?

✓ Was the assessment instructionally relevant (the results inform programming decisions)?
Assessment Summary

• A relevant assessment is the path to good goals

• A relevant assessment is the first step in program development

• Assessment depends on everyone’s input
Programming
Programming

**The process**: In the IEP process, the educational program for a student is developed and then the success of that program is evaluated.

**The document**: The IEP is the blueprint that constitutes a student’s free appropriate public education (FAPE).
Programming Requirements

✅ Special education programming consists of:
  - Special education services
  - Related services
  - Supplementary services
  - Program modifications

✅ Special education services must be based on “peer-reviewed research”

✅ The program must be designed to confer “meaningful educational benefit”
PEER-REVIEWED RESEARCH

IEPs must include a statement of special education services and supplementary aids and services based on peer reviewed research.

-Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004-
What Does This Mean?

✓ Special education teachers must adopt and use scientifically based approaches for which there is supporting research in peer-reviewed journals or by an independent panel of experts.

✓ Educators are accountable for:
  • Using evidence-based educational practices
  • Knowing the research behind the procedures we use
  • Ensuring that our educational programs confer “meaningful educational benefit”
Programming Cautions!!!

CAUTION
Programming CAUTIONS

What research or evidence are the current special education practices based on?

Too often special education programs are often not based on evidence-based practices.

If parents have a research-based method they have legitimate information on suggest it.
Programming Checklist

✓ Were programming decisions individualized?

✓ Was the programming based on the needs of the student and not the availability of services?

✓ Were supplementary aids, supports, & program modifications considered to allow the student to participate in general education?

✓ Were all necessary services specified and delivered?

✓ Were the parents meaningfully involved in all programming decisions?

✓ Was behavioral programming included in the IEP if behavior was a concern?
Evaluation
Formative Assessment Tells Us

• If our instruction is working

• If we should continue our instructional strategies or revise them

• If a student is ready to move on to more complex skills
Evaluation Cautions!!!
Evaluation Cautions

How will progress toward the goals be measured?

–*Too often goals are not measurable!*

What will be the progress reporting method and schedule?
Evaluation Checklist

✓ Is the student’s progress being monitored regularly?

✓ Is the student’s progress toward each of his or her goals being reported to the parents at least every nine weeks?

✓ Has the school reconvened the IEP team to reevaluate at least annually?

✓ Has the school notified the parent of the three year reevaluation and received permission to conduct it?

✓ If the school does not want to do a total reevaluation, have they made a request to the parents?
Six Assumptions about post IDEIA 2004 IEPs
Assumption # 1

The IEP is the blueprint of a student’s free appropriate public education (FAPE).
Assumption # 2

The IEP must focus on the critical skills and behaviors a student needs to access the general education curriculum and not the general education content itself.
Assumption # 3

The IEP should describe **measurable outcomes** for a student.

- The IEP defines a student’s progress in specific areas over a year of instruction
- Data should be collected on general outcome measures that are indicators of educational health
Assumption # 4

The services described in the IEP must be based on research-proven educational practices.

—“What we know from research now needs to be implemented.” President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education (P. 24, Nov., 2001)
Assumption # 5

IDEIA 2004, and thus our special education program, requires measuring progress toward each of a student’s goals, reacting to that information, and reporting progress to his/her parents.

“We recommend the continuous monitoring of student progress...which research has shown enhances instructional outcomes and results for children.” President’s Commission on Excellence in Special Education (P. 26, Nov., 2001)
Assumption # 6

To meet the requirements of IDEIA 2004, and ensure a meaningful education for students, **data collection** must occur at all stages of the IEP process.

- Assessment requires baseline data collection
- Writing goals requires the IEP team to include the data collection process
- Progress monitoring is the collection, and appropriate use, of data
The purpose of the 2004 reauthorization was to:

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“This system will require evidence in the form of data-based documentation reflecting formal assessment of progress during instruction through repeated assessments” (p. 32)
THE STATE OF THE ART

“Sadly most IEPs are horrendously burdensome to teachers and nearly useless to parents. Many, if not most, goals and objectives can’t be measured and all too often no effort is made to actually assess the child’s progress toward the goal.”

Bateman & Linden, 2006
The IEP Process

Step 1: Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

Step 2: Measurable Annual Goals

Step 3: Special Education Services

Step 4: Progress Monitoring
Step 1
Write the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance Statement
Present Levels

Based on a full and individualized assessment, the IEP team determines a student’s unique educational needs to which special services must be directed and explains the effects of the student’s disability on his or her learning and involvement in the general education curriculum.
The PLAAFP statement is a brief, but detailed, description of all areas of academic achievement and functional performance that are affected by a student’s disability.
Accurate PLAAFP statements provide the starting point for all decisions regarding a student’s IEP
If the IEP fails to assess the ‘child’s present levels of academic achievement and functional performance’ the IEP does not comply with [IDEA]. This deficiency goes to the heart of the IEP; the child’s level of academic achievement and functional performance is the foundation on which the IEP must be built. Without a clear identification of present levels, the IEP team cannot set measurable goals, evaluate student progress or determine needed educational services (p. 694).
Montgomery Township, 3rd Cir., 2005

The IEP team failed to consider (the student’s) non academic difficulties, which included depression and suicidal tendencies, as well as harassment and bullying (43 IDELR, 186, P. 188)
The students PLAAF indicated a deficiency in written expression, but the IEP did not contain measurable goals in written expression

“Given the evidence we conclude...that the IEP was inadequate” New York Supreme Court, 40 IDELR 180
Two Parts of the PLAAFP

• The educational need arising from a student’s disability

• Effect on a student’s involvement in the general education curriculum
## Critical Elements of PLAAFP

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<th>Identifies Educational Need</th>
<th>Serves as a Baseline</th>
<th>Connected to a Goal and Service</th>
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PLAAFP Statement Example:
Academics

Jeremy is a fourth grade student with a severe reading problem. He currently reads at an average rate of 24 words per minute out of his grade level reading textbook; his peers read at an average rate of 62 words per minute in the same book. Jeremy’s reading problems make it difficult for him to work successfully in general education classes that require him to learn by reading.
Gathering Information

Determine how the student’s academic and functional needs are discrepant from expected levels of academic and functional skills.

- Norm-referenced tests, statewide assessments
- Curriculum-based measurement, curriculum-based Assessments
- Classroom performance information from all teachers
- Intervention results (RTI)
- Observational data
- Behavioral data (i.e. checklists, rating scales, discipline referrals)
- Functional Behavioral Assessments
PLAAFP Cautions!!!
PLAAFP CAUTIONS

- Are the PLAAFPs understandable & clear to everyone on the team?
- Do the PLAAFPs identify all areas of need?
- Are the PLAAFPs precise enough to lead to measurable annual goals?
- Do the PLAAFPs describe *only* the unique needs that will be addressed in the IEP?
- Do the PLAAFPs lead to an annual goal, special education service, or both?
Common PLAAFP Errors

- Writing vague descriptions of academic and/or functional needs
- Writing statements that are not related to a student’s disability
- Writing statements based solely on a standardized battery of tests
- Writing PLAAFP statements that are not individualized
- Using a student’s disability as the PLAAFP statement
“There should be a direct relationship between the present levels of performance and the other components of the IEP. Thus, if the statement describes a problem with the child’s reading level and points to a deficiency in reading skills, the problem should be addressed under both (1) goals and (2) specific special education and related services provided to the child.” (Question 36)
PLAAFP

Annual Goals

Services

Progress Monitoring
Step 2
Develop the Measurable Annual Goals
The annual goals tell us (a) what we expect the student to learn or be able to do in 1 year, and (b) how we will know when they have learned or can do it.
Measurable Annual Goals

• Goals should include academic and functional areas if needed

• Goals should be directed at meeting a student’s needs related to the disability so he/she may be involved in and progress in the general curriculum
Characteristics of Goals

✓ The essential characteristics of IEP goals are that they must be **measurable** and be **measured**

✓ If a goal is not measurable it violates the IDEA and may result in the denial of FAPE (Bateman & Herr, 2006)

✓ If a goal is not measured that violates the IDEA and may result in the denial of FAPE (Bateman & Herr, 2006)
Goal Requirements in the IEP

✓ The IEP must describe how the student’s progress toward the annual goals will be measured.

✓ The IEP must include the schedule for reporting progress to a student’s parents as often as students in general education get report cards.

✓ The report must include information on the progress a student is making toward his/her goals (Indiana, Article 7).
The student’s annual goals and objectives in each IEP simply do not contain objective criteria which permit measurement of Student’s progress. . . . A goal of ‘increasing’ reading comprehension skills or ‘improving decoding skills’ is not a measurable goal. . . . Even if [present levels of performance] were clearly stated, an open-ended statement that Student will ‘improve’ does not meet the requirement . . . for a ‘measurable’ goal (p. 563)
Every Measurable Goal Must:

a) Allow a clear yes or no determination of whether or not it has been achieved

b) Tell evaluators what to do to determine if the goal was achieved without adding anything to the goal

c) Pass the stranger test (different evaluators can agree if the goal has been achieved)
Writing a Measurable Annual Goal

Three components of a measurable goal:

1. **Target behavior**
   *What do we want to change?*

2. **Stimulus material or conditions**
   *How will we measure change?*

3. **Criterion for acceptable performance**
   *How we will know if the goal has been achieved?*
Target Behavior

- Observable, **measurable**, verifiable, & repeatable
  - To write, to read aloud, to initiate interactions

- **NOT** invisible or open to many interpretations
  - To understand, enjoy, improve, develop
Condition or Given

• How you will **MEASURE** the target behavior?
  - The context, materials, or environment
Criterion for Acceptable Performance

• How you will know when the child has achieved the goal?
  – May be stated in terms of accuracy, speed, quality, fluency
  – Collect data NOT subjective opinion
The GOOD!!!

• In 32 weeks, when presented with a passage from the 2nd grade reading text, Jeremy will read aloud 48 words per minute with less than 2 errors.
The BAD!!!

Jeremy will improve written language skills as measured by increased scores on the language section of WJPB.
And The UGLY!!!

When required to problem solve on a daily basis, Doug will reduce by 50% the following behaviors: Abandonment issues, verbally assaultive, depression, impulsivity, sibling related difficulty, destroying property, lying, unruly/ungovernable, difficulty with authoritative figures, hyperactivity, low self esteem, cruelty to animals, excessive self blame, excessive anxiety, poor ego strength, poor intellectuality, poor academics, poor reality contact, excessive aggressiveness, poor social conformity, poor anger control, excessive sense of persecution, and excessive resistance as measured by teacher observation.
## Critical Elements of Goals

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<tr>
<th>Target Behavior</th>
<th>Condition or Given</th>
<th>Criterion for Acceptable Performance</th>
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Goal Format: Reading

In 36 weeks when given a randomly selected grade 4 passage Doug will read aloud 84 words correctly in one minute.
Goal Format: Writing

In 36 weeks when given a story starter and 3 minutes to write Stacey will write 32 correct word sequences.
In 36 weeks when given a worksheet of 40 randomly selected multiplication and division problems Tony will write 58 correct digit sequences.
Annual Goal: Behavior

In 36 weeks Jeremy will successfully complete 90% of the homework assigned in his social studies and science classes. To be successfully completed, assignments must be 90% correct.
Ambitious, but Reasonable

Not a Cadillac

Not a Junker

But a Serviceable Chevy
Short-Term Objectives

• Original intentions-1975

• Benchmarks OR short-term objectives

• Short-term objective as task analysis
Goal Cautions!!!
Goal CAUTIONS

• Are the goals measurable (3 components)?
• Are the goals too broad or vague?
• Do the goals misuse percentages?
• Are the goals ambitious, but realistic?
• Do the goals align with the PLAAFPs/Services?
Annual Goal Checklist

✓ Are goals linked to the assessment and the PLAAFP statements?

✓ Are goals specific, clear, & measurable?

✓ Does the goal section of the IEP contain information on how the student’s progress will be measured?

✓ Does goal section contain of the IEP information on how progress will be communicated to the student’s parents?

✓ Is the student’s progress toward achieving the goals actually measured?
Step 3
Determine the Services that will be Provided
The service statements are what the LEA will do to help a student meet his or her goals.
Service Statements

Service statements answer the question: What will we do in response to the student’s needs?

- Special education services
- Related services
- Supplementary Services
- Program Modifications
- Special factors (e.g., Assistive technology)
Peer-Reviewed Research

IEPs must include "a statement of special education services and supplementary aids and services based on peer reviewed research."

-Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004-
Finding PRR

• Peer-reviewed journals
  • Exceptional Children
  • Focus on Autism and other Developmental Disabilities

• Legitimate cites on the Internet
  • National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities
  • What Works Clearinghouse
## Critical Elements of Services

<table>
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<th>Clearly Specified</th>
<th>Address all needs in PLAAFP</th>
<th>Based on PRR</th>
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Examples of Service Statements: Academics

Jeremy will attend resource room for reading remediation five days a week for one hour each day. Programming will involve direct instruction on the five essential elements of reading as identified by the National Reading Panel (http://www.nationalreadingpanel.org/).
Service Statement Cautions!!!
Service Statement  CAUTIONS

- Be certain all team members understand what services will be offered
- Be certain all team members understand the logistics of the services to be offered
- Ensure that services are based on legitimate research
- Ensure that all services are tied to a PPLAAFP statement and an annual goal
Service Statements Checklist

✓ Are the service statements clearly based on the student’s needs as described in the PLAAFP statements?

✓ Do the service statements clearly describe what the school will do in response to the student’s unique educational needs.

✓ Do the service statements include the anticipated amount of services, the frequency, location, & duration of these services.

✓ Are the services that are in the student IEP based on peer-reviewed research?

✓ Were services that could allow the student to be involved in an progress in the general education curriculum considered by the IEP team?
Step 4
Monitor the Student’s Progress
“Progress monitoring is a scientifically based practice that is used to assess students' academic and functional performance and evaluate the effectiveness of instruction.”

OSEP Center on Progress Monitoring
Legal Requirements

• Measure a student’s progress toward his/her goal (formative evaluation)

• Report a student’s progress to his/her parents (reporting schedule)

• Revising the special education program if a student is not making progress

• Continue to monitor progress
How Progress Monitoring Works

- The student’s current levels of academic achievement and functional performance are determined.
- Annual goals are identified that represent meaningful growth over an academic year.
- The student’s academic or functional performance is measured on a regular basis (weekly or monthly).
- Progress toward meeting the student’s goals is measured by comparing expected and actual rates of learning.
- Based on these measurements, teaching is adjusted as needed.
“Although subjective teacher observation provides valuable information, teacher observation is not an adequate method of monitoring student progress.”

“Without supporting data, teacher observation is opinion which cannot be verified.”

Caution: Misuse of Percentages

• Annual goals that contain percentage of accuracy is not helpful where the IEP fails to define a starting point, an ending point, or the curriculum in which student will achieve 80 to 85% accuracy (Rio Rancho Public Schools, 2003, p. 563)

• In other words, percentages, by themselves, are meaningless
• “Periodic review of progress on the goals and objectives provides the disabled student’s teacher with supportive data needed to make a determination of the success of the intervention...” (p. 248).
### Critical Components of PM

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<th>“Real Data”</th>
<th>Doable</th>
<th>Numbers not Words</th>
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Progress Monitoring Cautions!!!
Progress Monitoring Cautions

A data-based method for monitoring student progress is essential to ensure that a student receives meaningful educational benefit.

– How will the child’s progress will be monitored?
– What data collection method will be used?
– How and when will the parents be informed of their child’s progress?
Collect meaningful data,
Don’t collect DUMB Data
Data
U can’t
Measure or
Believe
Dumb data is as bad as no data because it deludes us into thinking it is meaningful!!
Examples of Meaningful Data

• Academic skills
  – Speed: How fast does the student respond?
  – Accuracy: How many correct responses?
  – Fluency: How many correct responses within a certain period of time?

• Behavioral skills
  – Frequency: How often does a behavior occur?
  – Duration: How long does a behavior last?
Data are numbers, not words!!!
Data-based Decision Making

• Now that I am collecting the data what do I do?
• Is my student progressing at an acceptable rate?
• Do I need to change instruction?
• Is the instructional change I’ve made effective?
• Should I raise the student’s goal?
Data that Indicates Progress

Weeks of Instruction

Problems Correct in 7 Minutes

most recent 4 points

goalline
Data Indicates Making an Instructional Change

![Graph showing weekly progress over weeks of instruction with a goal line and recent 4 points highlighted.]
Progress Monitoring Checklist

✓ Was the student’s progress toward each of his or her goals measured at least as often as students in general education get report cards?

✓ Was a student’s progress toward the goals reported to his or her student’s parents at least as often as students in general education get report cards?

✓ Was the method of monitoring progress and the schedule/format for reporting a student’s progress to his or her parents included in the IEP?

✓ If the data showed that a student may not meet his or her goals, were needed instructional changes made to the student’s program and did the teacher continue to monitor progress?
Checking the IEP
## Bringing it all Together

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<th>Goal</th>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Progress Monitoring</th>
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## Bringing it all Together

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<td>Curriculum Based Measurement in reading, twice a week.</td>
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Conclusion: Develop SMART IEPs
Specific
Measurable
Ambitious
Research-based
Team developed
Resources

