QUICK GUIDE

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USING THE IEP GOAL BANK FOR CHILDREN AFTER EPILEPSY SURGERY

In this guide, we share our tips and tricks for using our Individualized Education Plan (IEP) GoalBank for Children After Epilepsy Surgery.

But we will begin with a brief overview of the purpose and foundation of IEP goals.

It's important to note that writing IEP goals is **Step 4** of the **7-step IEP process** outlined on our website. If you have not done Steps 1, 2, and 3 please go back and start at the beginning! Our free webinar series can walk you through the process.

“A goal without a plan is just a wish.”[1]

According to the federal law (the Individuals with Disabilities in Education Act, or IDEA), each child’s Individualized Education Plan (IEP) must include:

- “a statement of measurable annual goals, including **academic and functional** goals,
- designed to **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
- meet each of the child’s **other educational needs** that result from the child’s disability.”[2]

These measurable, annual goals must be based on the **present levels of academic and functional performance (PLAAFP)** which is based on the **assessments** (Step 2).

The IEP team (which includes the parent!) determines the content of the child’s IEP. You and the team will review all the assessments and, pulling from the child’s strengths and areas of need, will write a clear and concise statement of present levels of academic achievement functional performance.

This statement is the foundation of the IEP. All goals, services, accommodations, and the final placements flow from the present levels statement. It gives the reader a clear snapshot of what the child can (strengths) and can’t (weaknesses) do.

The present levels statement must clearly describe:

- The **results** of the most recent evaluations;
- **Academic achievement** – the child’s performance in reading/language arts, math, science, and history;
- **Functional performance** – dressing, eating, going to the bathroom; social skills such as making friends and communicating with others; behavior skills, such as knowing how to behave across a range of settings; and mobility skills, such as walking, getting around, going up and down stairs;
- The **strengths** of the child;

[1] Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, French writer
[2] IDEA, Section 1414(d)

- How the child's disability affects the child's **involvement** and **progress** in the **general education curriculum**. (For preschool, this is how the disability affects the child's participation in appropriate preschool activities such as identifying letters, colors, using scissors, following instructions, and playing games).

If the child's present levels section of the IEP does not have clear **data**, you cannot develop meaningful **goals**.

The present levels statement should **not**:

- remain the same year after year;
- list test scores that are not self-explanatory;
- use highly technical language (e.g. "at risk," "confidence interval," "atypicality," "t-score," "clinically significant," "t-score");
- use imprecise language ("borderline," "low average," "above average");
- use terms and references that cannot be understood without reference to test manuals; or
- use vague terms ("student has a great sense of humor," "likes to help the teacher," "enjoys his peers").

And remember – all of the concerns in your **parental concerns letter** should be included at the end of the PLAAFP statement.

DRAFT THE GOALS

Once the PLAAFP statement has been written, it's time for the team to write goals. Remember, **the goals address areas of need** – the areas of need that were identified by your child's comprehensive assessments and detailed in the PLAAFP.

The information in the PLAAFP is what determines the **baseline** for each goal. It is impossible to develop an appropriate goal without a current, accurate, and thorough baseline in each area of need.

For example, if you want to write a goal for *letter identification*, it will be difficult to determine the progress the child can make in one year if you don't specify where they are today. If the student currently knows 5 lower case letters and 0 upper case letters that might lead to a very different goal than for a child who knows 20 lowercase letters and 15 uppercase letters.

While goals must be **aligned to your state's content standards for the general education curriculum**, they are not a restatement of the standards. Some goals may not

directly tie to the standards because they address a unique need that is not addressed in the general curriculum.

IEP goals are the specific details in your child's plan that describe what they should accomplish during the school year. The goals should be functional and useful in your child’s daily environment

GOALS MUST BE SMART

(specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and timebound)

Specific: Any teacher should be able to pick up your child's IEP and know how to work on the goals and what your child will be doing to meet each goal. "Helene will run faster" is not specific. "Helene will run a mile in 15 minutes" is.

Measurable: Each goal should expressly state how the skill will be measured, how data (or mastery criteria) will be collected, what percentage/accuracy will be attained. A substitute teacher or paraprofessional should be able to know how to work on and measure progress on the goal without further explanation. In order for a skill to be measurable, it must be observable (you can see it, hear it, count it). (So if we use the example above: running "faster" is not measurable, running a mile in 15 minutes is.)

Attainable: Something that you reasonably expect that the child will accomplish in the given time frame. Benchmarks can be helpful in breaking the goal into smaller steps. (NOTE: the IEP team can – and should – revise the IEP goals if the child is making unexpected progress, or failing to make expected progress.)

Relevant: The goal should be relevant to each child's individual needs, both academic and functional. It may not be relevant to a student to run a mile in 15 minutes, so while it is admirable, it would not be an appropriate goal for that child.

Time-Bound: The goal must have a deadline and include periodic progress reporting. If a goal is not met by the next annual IEP meeting then it is time to have a conversation with the team about making some adjustments to the student's plan (such as increasing or altering instruction, changing the setting, adding supports, etc.) to ensure meaningful progress.

HOW TO WRITE GOOD GOALS

GOAL FORMULA: By (when/date) + **given** (how/with what supports) + **Student will** (goal) + **in** (setting/context) + **with** (accuracy level) + **as measured by** (assessment tool/how often)

- **By (time frame):** When will the student meet the goal? Goals are typically written for one calendar year. Benchmarks might break the goal into smaller steps with deadlines for mastery of parts of a task.
- **Given (how):** What conditions or supports are needed for the student to achieve the goal (such as specialized instruction, type of instruction/methodology, related services, prompts or cues, hand-over-hand assist, a behavior plan, materials, accommodations, specialized setting, assistive technology, etc.)?
- **Student will (goal):** What skill/action/behavior at what level of performance will the student achieve? Be specific. Parents must understand the goals! Ask your IEP team to describe what the child will be doing when the goal is met. The goal should describe an observable behavior that the student will do when they achieve the goal.
- **In (setting/context):** Where will they be able to demonstrate this goal? In what context will the skill be measured (such as the classroom, therapy room, small group, in the community, in all settings, or one on one setting)? Will the student be expected to read independently in a quiet room without prompting, or all the time, in any setting?
- **With (accuracy level):** What accuracy is needed to meet the goal? This will depend on what you are measuring.
    - Note: 80% accuracy in 4 out of 5 trials is only 64% – do not accept this!
    - Reading goals that address accuracy should target 95% if the goal is for the child to read independently, but no less than 90% for “instructional level” reading (meaning a text a child is expected to read with some instruction and support). Anything below 90% is “frustration level.” If your child is using a specific reading program, ask to see the “mastery criteria” for that particular program.
- **As measured by (assessment):** What specific measurement tool or assessment strategy will be used to assess your child's progress towards the goal or show mastery, and how often will they be assessed for progress or mastery (such as 5/5 trials over a consecutive six-week period)? How many times must the behavior be observed for the goal to be considered met? Know what the IEP team is measuring, what measurement tools are being used, and what is considered 'mastery' for the goal as written.

Example:

By June 2022, **given** modeling, direct instruction, review and reteach methods daily, and multi-sensory teaching strategies, **Student will** recognize and name all upper and lowercase letters of the alphabet **in all settings** with 100% **accuracy** in 5/5 **trials** as **measured by** curriculum-based rubrics and assessments reported over a consecutive six-week period.

Key points:

- **Progress must be reported on IEP goals** at least as often as the general education students receive a report card, or more often. Ask your team if progress can be monitored more frequently, with data collected over a 6-week reporting period, for example, to monitor your child's progress, especially on academic goals. Waiting until the annual IEP meeting to determine that an intervention or instructional approach is not working may result in a lost year of appropriate education for your child.

- **Teacher observation** by itself is not a measurement tool; "formal/informal assessments" are not a specific description of the **assessment tool**. Ask the team what benchmarking system they use – such as Fountas & Pinnell, DIBELS, AIMSweb, etc. – or ensure that the team uses a validated and reliable assessment measure for progress monitoring.

- The child who has had epilepsy surgery may not learn and progress naturally through these skills the way typical kids do. Educators and providers should **explicitly teach the child what the end goal is** – what are they working towards? Expecting a child after brain surgery to make cognitive leaps or generalizing skills may be an unreasonable expectation.

WHAT'S IN THE IEP GOAL BANK FOR CHILDREN AFTER EPILEPSY SURGERY?

Please note that all of the goals listed in the GoalBank are **sample** goals and should only be used to provide ideas and guidance. Every goal for a child must be personalized based on the student's needs and their present level of achievement/success/strengths in each goal area.

This document contains the following goal areas (see bottom toolbar for tabs and use arrows to scroll right):

1. MY CHILD'S GOAL SPREADSHEET
2. Academics: Literacy
3. Academics: Math
4. Assistive Technology
5. Auditory (Hearing & Listening)
6. Augmentative & Alternative Communication (AAC)
7. Behavior/Mental Health
8. Communication (Speech & Language)
9. Executive Function
10. Functional/Life Skills
11. Health
12. Motor, Fine (OT)
13. Motor, Gross (PT & APE)
14. Orientation & Mobility
15. Transition (Education & Training, Employment, Independent Living Skills)
16. Vision

***NOTE**: Any box with a small **orange** triangle in the top right corner has 'hidden' comments - hover over the box to read more.*

> **The text in bold is the goal**; this is what the child should be doing when the goal is met. All the other words are the supporting details describing how the child will meet the goal (with what instruction, supports, how often, what setting etc.)

STEP-BY-STEP: CREATING YOUR PERSONALIZED SPREADSHEET

STEP 1:

START with a BASELINE from the PLAAFP to drive new goals.

Remember that it is essential to assess your child's underlying foundational skills before you can begin to determine appropriate instructional goals for the IEP. Use current, valid, accurate, and **comprehensive evaluations in all areas of suspected disability** to develop a clear and detailed **Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) statement** in your child's IEP.

The PLAAFP statement can include information from the family, the school, or outside evaluators as long as it is relevant to the child's disability or their academic and functional skills. Be sure that your **"statement of Parent Concerns"** is always added to the PLAAFP section in your child's IEP.

This "PLAAFP" data includes:

- measurable and observable information about the student's academic achievement and functional skills,
- standardized test results,
- developmental checklists,
- common core curriculum benchmarks/standards,
- other skills assessments.

Assessment data must identify:

- all areas of concern (skills deficits),
- include information on how those areas of concern impact the child in the educational setting,
- how the child will access grade-level standards.

Any concern or need in the PLAAFP statement must be addressed somewhere in the IEP – as a goal, accommodation/modification, or service. Every area of need in the PLAAFP *could* become a goal. However, it's best to **focus on the most critical aspects of skill acquisition and independence** (including functional skills and social/emotional skills) when writing IEP goals.

STEP 2:

Make a copy of the spreadsheet that you can edit: go to "file" in the toolbar, then select "make a copy." You should then have a template you can edit.

STEP 3:

Gather your child's last 2 finalized IEPs.

STEP 4:

Find the goals.

STEP 5:

Start putting the data into the spreadsheet using the progress updates from all of your child's goals from each reporting period.

Each child's progress toward the IEP goals must be documented at least as frequently as children in the general education program receive report cards, usually once a quarter or trimester. If you have not received this data, ask for it! Data is how the team monitors your child's progress. It's important that the services are provided on the basis of data to promote effective learning.

At a minimum, goals are reviewed annually.

STEP 6:

Put goals in the same category (or goals that have only changed slightly from year to year) next to each other on the spreadsheet to track progress from year to year for each goal. You need to know if each goal was MET or NOT MET, so that should be the first part of the conversation about your child's goals each year.

- Keep an eye out for "disappearing" goals – goals that disappear from one IEP to the next.
- If goals are frequently repeated or not met, it's possible that your child is not receiving FAPE.

STEP 7:

Leave a line or two in between each goal, so that when the next IEP comes and you see the proposed goals, you can match them up with existing goals.

BRP RESOURCES

- Education After Hemispherectomy
- Educational Assessment Checklist
- Educational Guides and Resources
- Central Auditory Impairment After Hemispherectomy
    - Quick Guide: Strategies for Cortical Auditory Impairment After Hemispherectomy
- Vision After Hemispherectomy
    - Quick Guide: Specialized Instruction, Accommodations, And Aids For Children With Homonymous Hemianopia
    - Webinar: Perkins School for the Blind: Vision After Occipital Lobectomy and Related Surgeries

FAVORITE GOAL BANKS

- A Day In Our Shoes: 500+ Measurable IEP Goals and Objectives – One of our favorite websites for all things IEP. Includes information on how to write goals as well as a list of goal banks
- National Foundation for the Blind Orientation and Mobility Goal Bank
- Bilinguistics: Speech Therapy Goals
- Bridges4Kids – A downloadable pdf with search capability.
- The Center on Brain Injury Research & Training (CBIRT): Sample IEP Goals for Students with TBI
- Michigan Department of Education: Orientation and Mobility Goal Bank Assessment
- PTS, Inc.: PT IEP Goals
- Speech Room News – includes preK – 12 speech goals
- Texas School for the Blind: Ideas for IEP Tasks - VI Goals and Objectives

OTHER FAVORITE RESOURCES

- Academy of Pediatric Physical Therapy (APTA): FACT SHEET Developing Collaborative IEP Goals
- American Occupational Therapy Association School Settings Fact Sheet
- American Speech & Hearing Association (ASHA): Central Auditory Processing and the Common Core
- American Speech & Hearing Association (ASHA): Writing Measurable and Academically Relevant IEP Goals With 80% Accuracy Over Three Consecutive Trials. (Diehm 2017)

- APH Career Connect: Transition to College: Program Activity Guide for Students Who Are Blind or Visually Impaired
- Center for Vision: VISUAL MOTOR INTEGRATION | Center for Vision Development
- Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University: Executive Function & Self-Regulation
- Colorado Department of Education: Brain Injury in Children and Youth: A Manual for Educators
- Common Core State Standards Initiative
- Family Connect: Mobility Devices for Young Children
- Miss Rae's Room Special Education Teacher Blog: How to Write SMART IEP Goals: A Quick & Easy 8 Step Formula, How to Track IEP Data, Progress Monitoring Special Education Students
- National Center on Intensive Intervneiton:
    - Academic Progress Monitoring Tools Chart
    - Strategies for Setting High-Quality Academic Individualized Education Program Goals
- Ocali.org: Writing Assistive Technology Into the IEP
- Perkins School for the Blind:
    - Understanding the Expanded Core Curriculum
    - The Expanded Core Curriculum (PDF)
- Reading Rockets: SMART IEPs (Step 2): Create Goals and Objectives, Write Measurable (Not Abstract) Goals, Student Progress Monitoring: What This Means for Your Child
- Speech Therapy Store: 432+ Free Measurable IEP Goals and Objectives Bank
- Teaching Students with Visual Impairments: Writing Goals
- Understood.org: Endrew F. advocacy talking points
- Wrightslaw: Transition - Legal Requirements for Transition Components of the IEP

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