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Tips for Writing the IEP

The creation of IEPs is a time-consuming process that is dreaded by many special educators. The paperwork that professionals in special education deal with on a daily basis is enormous and often DOES interfere with their efforts to provide instruction. Although databases of ready-to-use goals are available, these goals are often too general for use in creating IEPs and may not be suitable for special education students who have unique needs. This chapter includes practical suggestions for creating easy-to-read IEP goals and objectives that will be relevant to the learning needs of students.

Key Components of the IEP

Key components of the IEP are listed below:

1. **Present Level of Performance**

   Specify the student's present level of academic achievement and functional performance. The information included should be relevant to the student's specific learning needs and the special education or related services that will be provided. Assessment results that relate to performance should be reported.

2. **Measurable Annual Goals**

   Include academic and functional goals relating to needs that result from the child's disability. These goals should be written to specify what the student can reasonably be expected to accomplish within a 12-month period. Goals should include the desired direction of behavior (e.g., increased use of pronouns), area of need, and the level of attainment in measurable terms. These goals should help the student to become involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum.

3. Measurable Benchmarks or Short-Term Objectives

Include measurable benchmarks or short-term objectives for students with disabilities who take alternative assessments, aligned to alternate achievement standards. Short-term objectives are designed to measure progress toward meeting the annual goals at specific points during the course of the school year.

As mentioned previously, *short-term objectives* are created by breaking down annual goals into discrete components. *Benchmarks* specify the amount of progress that the student is to make at specified points during the school year. Many IEPs include a combination of benchmarks and objectives. Benchmarks and objectives make it possible to provide parents with information about the progress that students are making in achieving instructional goals.

4. Schedule for Reporting Progress

Create a schedule for reporting the student's progress in meeting the annual goals. These reports, for example, may be provided during the period in which report cards are issued.

5. Services Required

Specify the special education and related services that will be provided to the child or on behalf of the child. It is important for parents to understand how the student's program will be modified to provide the needed resources.

6. Special Accommodations Required

Describe any accommodations that are required to measure the child's academic and functional performance on state or district-wide assessments. If the team determines that the child cannot participate in the regular assessment, specify the reasons for this determination and why the proposed alternate assessment is appropriate.

Answers to the following questions provide the essential information needed to develop an IEP.

- **What specific learning needs have been identified?**
- **What services will be provided by the school to meet these unique needs?**
- **What will be achieved by the student who receives these services?**

Target Population: Severe Attention Deficits (Autism)   *Form 4-2*
Student: _____

When creating IEP goals and objectives, focus on the behavior observed and include specific measurement criteria.

Score			Skill	Behavior Observed
	1		The student will imitate pointing gestures when the teacher says, "Point to the ___" and points to a common object on the table.	
	2		The student will imitate gross motor actions when presented wtih prompts.	
	3		The student will listen to a sound and will then select the source of that sound when presented with 3 possible choices.	
	4		The student will imitate words modeled by the teacher.	
	5		The student will point to pictures named by the teacher.	
	6		The student will remain on task for a period of 8 minutes with no more than 4 prompts.	
	7		The student will work independently for 5 minutes on a classroom assignment.	
	8		The student will greet classmates and take turns during a classroom play activity.	
	9		The student will use speech to initiate interactions with others.	
	10		The student will respond to questions relating to basic needs by responding *yes* or *no*.	
	11		The student will complete a classroom play activity before switching to another activity.	
	12		The student will respond to the request "stop" when engaging in inappropriate behavior.	
	13		The student will respond to questions beginning with "What do you need to do when _____?"	
	14		The student will use speech to request that others participate with him/her in game activities.	

Skill Area: Social Interaction Strategies (Pragmatic Skills) *Form 4-9B*

Student: _____

When creating IEP goals and objectives, focus on the behavior observed and include specific measurement criteria.

Score		Skill	Behavior Observed
	1	The student will initiate verbal interactions by greeting others in a friendly manner.	
	2	The student will initiate verbal interactions with others by asking questions.	
	3	The student will initiate verbal interactions with others by making comments related to a topic of common interest.	
	4	The student will maintain a topic of conversation by making 4 or more relevant statements.	
	5	The student will take turns with others during informal conversations in the classroom.	
	6	The student will maintain eye contact and remain silent when others are communicating.	
	7	The student will change the topic of the conversation when others have finished saying what they need to say.	
	8	The student will rephrase statements when clarification is needed to communicate specific information.	
	9	The student will make requests for clarification when he/she does not understand what is said.	
	10	The student will provide sufficient detail for others to understand the intended message.	
	11	The student will produce clear, concise messages relevant to the topic of discussion.	
	12	The student will answer questions by providing information that is not already known to the listener.	
	13	The student will react to feelings expressed by others by making comments that show support and/or concern.	
	14	The student will provide sufficient information to meet the needs of the listener.	