

## IEP Goals

IDEA is the nation's special education law. Under IDEA if a child is found to be a "child with a disability," he or she is eligible for special education and related services.

If your child has a disability, under IDEA, a team of people will gather to talk about what special instruction and services your child needs. This team includes you, the parent.

The team reviews the information available about your child. This includes such information as classroom work, reports from teachers and from you, and achievement test results. It also includes the results of individual evaluation of your child that has been conducted by a private practitioner.

You and the other team members use this information to determine how your child is currently doing in school and what special needs he or she has. For example, your child may have trouble with reading, writing, paying attention, speaking, or behaving appropriately. Together, the team decides what your child needs to work on during the year. Team decisions are written down in a document called the Individualized Education Program (IEP).

### What are annual goals?

Annual goals list the skill or behavior that the child will work on during school. These are written statements in the IEP.

Goals are big steps. For example, Suzie is six, but evaluation information shows that she knows the names of only a few objects. An annual goal for Suzie could be, "Suzie will correctly name 60 new objects."

Some children will also have objectives as part of their IEP. Objectives (or benchmarks) are smaller steps. They break the annual goal down into smaller pieces. For example, Suzie has a goal of naming 60 new objects. This goal may be broken down into several objectives such as:

1. By December 31, Suzie will name 20 new objects in her environment.
2. By March 15, Suzie will name 20 additional new objects in her environment.

3. By June 15, Suzie will name 20 additional new objects in her environment.

### When Suzie meets all of these steps, she also reaches her annual goal.

Suzie's IEP will have goals (and sometimes objectives) written just for her. There must be a direct connection between her individual needs and the goals in her IEP. The goals must also relate to how Suzie will be involved and make progress in the academic content that all children are expected to learn.

### Questions to Consider:

#### What does my child need to do to meet a goal? How will the IEP team measure progress?

A child's IEP must include information about how progress toward the annual goals will be measured. This information may be in another part of the IEP or written directly into the goal statements.

#### How will I know if my child is meeting the IEP goals?

The IEP must include a statement of how the school will let you know how your son or daughter is doing in school. This information will be shared with you at least as often as parents of children who do not have disabilities are informed of progress. Progress reports will describe the progress towards each of the child's goals. Be sure to review this information carefully.

#### What do I do if my child isn't making good progress toward the goals?

If you don't think that your child is making enough progress in meeting IEP goals, there are several things that you can do. First, talk to the special education teacher or principal. You may need to ask for an IEP meeting. Your child's IEP may be reviewed and changed at any time. The IEP team (which includes you) will look at your child's progress. Maybe more services are needed. Perhaps the goals need to be changed.



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Maybe more testing is needed. Your child's IEP team can decide what needs to be done to improve progress.

**My son has an IEP. For most classes, he does not need extra instruction, just special seating. Do we need to write a goal for this?**

No. If your son needs special seating to be successful in the regular classroom, his IEP does not need to include a goal for the special seating. It is an accommodation that he needs to succeed. This should be recorded in his IEP. Your son's IEP will include a statement of the services and supports (including accommodations, modifications or interventions) the school will provide.

**Real Life Example**

Maria is a fourth grade student. She has a learning disability. Tests show that Maria can read first grade books at a rate of 20 – 30 words per minute. The IEP team writes an annual goal for Maria to improve her reading.

**Annual Goal:**

Maria will read 2nd grade material at a rate of 60 – 80 words a minute with no more than 0 – 2 errors.

**If Maria's IEP also has objectives, they might look like this:**

By November 15, Maria will read 1st grade material at a rate of 60 – 80 words per minute with no more than 3 – 5 mistakes.

By February 15, Maria will read 1st grade material at a rate of 80 – 100 words per minute with no more than 0 – 2 mistakes.

By April 15, Maria will read 2nd grade material at a rate of 40 – 60 words per minute with no more than 3 – 5 mistakes.

By June 15, Maria will read 2nd grade material at a rate of 60 – 80 words per minute with no more than 0 – 2 mistakes.

Maria's teacher records Maria's reading and error rates throughout the year in order to measure her progress.

**For a look at what the law says:**

See the IDEA federal regulations. The regulations are available online at <http://idea.ed.gov>.

They are also available in hard copy at no charge from ED Pubs. Order online at [www.edpubs.org](http://www.edpubs.org) or by 1.877.433.7827 Phone, 1.877.576.7734 TTY/TDD, 301.470.1244 Fax

**Other resources**

The Technical Assistance ALLIANCE for Parent Centers (ALLIANCE)  
888.248.0822, [www.taalliance.org](http://www.taalliance.org)

The National Dissemination Center for Children with Disabilities (NICHCY)  
800.695.0285, [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)

Your Local Parent Centers: