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Setting the Foundation: PLAAFPs, IEP Goals

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# Session Objectives

* Know and understand the components of a PLAAFP statement.
* Know and understand the components of IEP goals.
* Describe the connection between PLAAFP statements and goals
* Understand how to align goals to state standards
* Elements of an IEP

# Elements of an IEP

1. Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance
2. Annual Goals and Objectives
3. Services and Supports

# IDEA’s mission

One purpose of IDEA is to “ensure that all children with disabilities have available to them a free appropriate public education that emphasizes special and related services designed to meet their unique needs and prepare them for further education, employment, and independent living”

20 U.S.C. SEC. 1400 (d)(1)

# Special Education Is…

“… specially designed instruction… to meet the unique needs of a child with a disability.”

20 U.S.C. Sec. 1401 (29)

# A third witness…

“The Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC) is the body of knowledge and skills that are needed by students with visual impairments due to their unique disability-specific needs.” AFB.org

# Writing PLAAFPs

“A problem well stated is a problem half solved.” --Charles Kettering, inventor and head researcher for General Motors

# What is a PLAAFP?

## The Law:

* + “A statement of the student’s present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, including:
    - (1) How the student’s disability affects the student’s involvement and progress in the general education curriculum (i.e., the same curriculum as for non-disabled students); or
    - (2) For preschool students, as appropriate, how the disability affects the student’s participation in appropriate activities;”
    - <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.320/a>

## Academic Achievement

* + The Department of Ed: *“Academic achievement” generally refers to a child’s performance in academic areas (e.g., reading or language arts, math, science, and history)."(71 Fed. Reg. at 46662)*
  + Academic achievement generally refers to a child’s performance in academic areas (e.g. reading, language arts, and math); or
  + For preschool children, age appropriate developmental levels.

## Functional Performance

* + Dept of Ed: “Skills or activities that are not considered academic or related to a child’s academic achievement... [This term] is often used in the context of routine activities of everyday living.”(71 Fed. Reg. at 46661)
  + Functional performance generally refers to skills or activities that may not be considered academic or related to a child’s academic achievement.
  + Functional is often used in the context of routine activities of everyday living and are varied depending on the individual needs of the child.
  + Functional performance can impact educational achievement.

## What it is:

* + Describes student’s current performance in relation to grade-level content standards using measurable, objective terms
  + Describes how the student’s disability impacts him/her in the general curriculum
  + Identifies current areas of critical need
  + Is based on current, relevant data from a variety of sources

## What it isn’t:

* + Only grade– or age-levels
  + Only standard scores
  + Subjective observations
  + A repeat of information from previous IEPs, PLAAFPs, FIEs

## The PLAAFP must be:

* + Current
  + Relevant
  + Objective
  + Measurable
  + Understandable

## Examples/Non-Examples

* + Non-Examples
    - Damien has difficultly attending to tasks.
    - Per Carmen’s FIE, the EOWPVT-R shows Carmen’s expressive language is at 19 months. The ROWPVT-R administered as part of her FIE measures her receptive language is at 26 months.
    - Sammy struggles with word problems. His learning disability in reading comprehension results in a need to have text read aloud to him.
  + Examples
    - Based on classroom behavioral charts, Damien’s attention difficulties result in him staying on task an average of 7 minutes per assignment during independent work and 12 minutes per assignment during group work. Discipline referrals show Damien has been referred to the office 3 times from August – December for disrupting class during independent work. Damien has had no office referrals during group work this school year.
    - Based on parent and teacher observations, Carmen uses one-word utterances to communicate wants and needs to known adults. Observational data shows she does not communicate with adults whom she has known less than two weeks.
    - Sammy’s learning disability in reading comprehension results in a need for extended time in many courses where reading is concerned. Specifically, state assessments, classroom data, and benchmark assessments show he averages 45% mastery with mathematical word problems. When math word problems are read aloud to him on these same assessments, his mastery level averages 78%. He accurately converts fractions to decimals in 3 of 7 trials in word problems that are not read aloud to him; his accuracy rate is 6 of 7 trials in stand-alone conversions (non-word problems) and in word problems that are read aloud to him.
  + Non-Examples
    - Maria has difficulty reading 3rd grade-level text.
    - John has difficulty following classroom rules.
    - Daniel has poor comprehension skills.
  + Example
    - Based on running records, Maria reads 3rd grade brailled narrative text at 50 words correct minute (wcpm); however, with expository text her words correct per minute is reduced to 30.
    - John is able to sit in his chair for 10 minutes using visual cues based on behavior charts, but without the visual supports he sits in his chair for 5 minutes (observations from 9/4/21 - 9/15/21).
    - Based on a teacher made and district benchmark test (8-26-21) of grade level material utilizing a graphic organizer, Daniel is able to correctly answer more than 70% of factual comprehension questions; however, his accuracy with inferential question is 40% therefore, inhibiting his progress in the general education curriculum.

## Questions to Answer:

* + What are the sources of information upon which the statement is based including the student’s strengths and what he is currently able to do?
  + Using the baseline data, what are the resulting priority educational needs to be addressed in the annual goals written for the student?
  + What are the effects of the disability on the student related to his involvement and progress in the general curriculum?

## In Other Words…

* + What’s the DATA?
  + What CAN the student do?
  + What does the student NEED to be able to do?
  + How does this IMPACT their ability to learn in a gen ed curriculum/environment?

## Example: Communication

* + Based on teacher/parent reports, informal and benchmark assessments conducted 9-19-2021, Matthew asks and answers “who” and “what” questions with 85% accuracy. He independently speaks in full five-word sentences about non–personal topics and follows two–step oral directions 70% of the time. Matthew is friendly and outgoing and does not exhibit frustration when he is unable to understand or communicate effectively. However, he has difficulty with “where” and “when” questions and answers with 60% accuracy; and with “why” and “how” questions he answers with 30% accuracy. He is unable to relate personal experiences without verbal prompting from an adult and has difficulty expressing that he does not understand what others are telling him 50% of the time. Matthew’s communication skills limit his ability to interact with adults and peers as needed to progress in the 6th grade general curriculum.
  + VI specific examples: <https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Documents/Vision/PLAAFP%20Examples%20for%20VI.pdf>
* Remember! The PLAAFP is the foundation of the entire IEP.

# Writing IEP Goals

## The Law

* + [(2) (i)](https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.320/a/2/i) A statement of measurable annual goals, including academic and functional goals designed to—
    - [(A)](https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.320/a/2/i/a) 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
    - [(B)](https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.320/a/2/i/b) Meet each of the child’s other educational needs that result from the child’s disability;
  + [(ii)](https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.320/a/2/ii) For children with disabilities who take alternate assessments aligned to alternate academic achievement standards, a description of benchmarks or short-term objectives;
  + [(3)](https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.320/a/3) A description of—
    - [(i)](https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.320/a/3/i) How the child’s progress toward meeting the annual goals described in paragraph (2) of this section will be measured; and
    - [(ii)](https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.320/a/3/ii) When periodic reports on the progress the child is making toward meeting the annual goals (such as through the use of quarterly or other periodic reports, concurrent with the issuance of report cards) will be provided;
    - <https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.320>

# Writing IEP Goals

* Goals are required in all areas of the child's unique needs and are not restricted to a category of eligibility nor to the general curriculum.
* Once a child is found to be IDEA eligible, *all* his or her unique needs need to be addressed, not just those in the area or category of eligibility.
  + "He has a learning disability in reading, so we can only have goals in that area, not in writing or math." -- WRONG!!!
* (Side note: Another common misconception is that if the child is not identified as emotionally or behaviorally disturbed, then a behavior plan is not necessary or appropriate for inclusion on the IEP.)
* Goals are *not* required in areas of the general curriculum where only accommodations and modifications are needed. The necessary accommodations and modifications must, however, be included on the IEP.

# Think SMART

* Specific
* Measurable
* Action
* Realistic and Relevant
* Time-Limited

# Specific

* Specific goals target areas of academic achievement and functional performance.
* IEP goals must include clear descriptions of the knowledge and skills that will be taught and how the child’s progress will be measured.
* Look at these two goals. Which one is specific?
  + *Dylan will increase study skills for academic success.*
  + *Dylan will demonstrate the following study skills: skimming written material and use reference materials in social studies class.*

# Measurable

* Measurable means you can count it, or can time it, or you can measure accuracy.
* Measurable goals allow us to know how much progress the child has made since the performance was last measured.
* A measurable goal or objective:
  + Reveals what to do to measure whether the goal or objective has been accomplished
  + Gives the same conclusion if measured by several people
  + Allows a calculation of how much progress it represents
  + Can be measured without additional information.
* Which of these two goals is measurable and observable?
  + *Owen will improve his reading skills.*
  + *Given second grade material, Owen will read a passage of text orally at 110-130 wpm with 80% accuracy.*

# Action

* IEP goals include three components that must be stated in measurable terms:
  + direction of behavior (increase, decrease, maintain, etc.)
  + area of need (i.e., reading, writing, social skills, transition, communication, etc.)
  + level of attainment (i.e., to grade level, without assistance, etc.)
* IEP goals use action words like: “The student will be able to . . .”
* Which of these goals is specific, measurable and includes action words?
  + *Betsy will decrease her anger and violation of school rules.*
  + *Provided with anger management training and adult support, Betsy will be able to remove herself from environments that cause her to lose control of her behavior so that she has no disciplinary notices.*

# Realistic and Relevant

* IEPs should have realistic, relevant goals and objectives that address the child’s unique needs that result from the disability.
* IEP goals are not based on district curricula, state or district tests, but should be tied to the gen ed standards as appropriate.
* Which of these goals is specific, measurable and realistic?
  + *Keltsey will demonstrate improved writing skills.*
  + *Keltsey will improve her writing and spelling skills so she can independently write a clear, cohesive, and readable paragraph consisting of at least 3 related sentences, including compound and complex sentences.*

# Time-Limited

* What does the child need to know and be able to do after one year of special instruction? What is the starting point for each of the child’s needs (present levels of academic achievement and functional performance)?
* Time-limited goals and objectives enable you to monitor progress at regular intervals.

# Time-Limited Example

* Alex is in the fifth grade. Alex’s reading skills in contracted braille are at the early fourth grade level. Here is a specific, measurable, time-limited goal that tells you what Alex can do now and what he will be able to do after one year of specialized instruction:
  + **Present Level of Performance**: Given third grade material in contracted braille, Alex reads 50-70 wcpm with 80%.
  + **Annual Goal**: Given fifth grade material in contracted braille, Alex will read 90 wcpm with 90% accuracy within one year.
* To break this out into objectives…
  + To ensure that Alex meets his goal, we will measure his progress at nine-week intervals (4 times during the school year).
    - After **9 weeks**, given fourth grade material, Alex will read 90 wcpm with 85% accuracy.
    - After **18 weeks**, given fifth grade material, Alex will read 50-70 wcpm with 85% accuracy.
    - After **27 weeks**, given fifth grade material, Alex will read 70-80 wcpm with 90% accuracy.
  + So that, at the **end of the year**, Alex will read 90% wcpm with 90% accuracy.

# Remember

* IEP goals cannot be broad statements about what a student will accomplish in a year, but must address the student’s specific academic achievement and functional performance.
* The IEP must identify all of the student’s needs, how the school will meet these needs, and how the school will measure the student’s progress.
* The IEP must be based on the student’s present levels of academic achievement and related developmental needs, address the child’s academic and functional needs, and include research validated instructional methods.
* Once the IEP team has developed measurable annual goals for a child, the team must:
  + Develop strategies that will be effective in realizing those goals, and
  + For some students, develop measurable, intermediate steps (short-term objectives) that will enable parents, students, and educators to monitor progress during the year
  + If needed, revise the IEP consistent with student instructional needs.

# The Formula

* Given (some sort of condition),
* student will (specific, observable behavior),
* with (how much or how many) accuracy/prompts,
* with (what) consistency [every day? 4 consecutive data collection days? every recess opportunity?]
* as measured by (teacher observation & data collection? chapter reading test?),
* by (date to be completed).

# A Word about “Givens”

* Goals sometimes require a statement of a given and sometimes don’t. Common sense is the guide.
  + A **given** is needed: Given access to the Internet, the student will locate ten sources of information on topic X. (Without the Internet, it would be a different goal.)
  + A given is **not** needed: The student will bounce to a height of one foot, five consecutive times without falling off a trampoline. (The ‘given’ trampoline is embedded).
  + A **given** is needed: Given a calculator, the student will correctly solve ten 3-digit x 2-digit multiplication problems in one minute. (Without the given, it becomes a different, but also completely legitimate task.)
  + A given is **not** needed: The student will swim 200 yards in X time without stopping, using two strokes of her choice. (We can assume the presence of water.)
* Common sense is the best guide for when a given needs to be stated explicitly. If the goal is that Joe zips his pants on 10 consecutive trials, we can assume he has pants that zip.
* Don’t put conditions that aren’t needed and never use “instruction” as a given. It is always an assumed given, because if the student could already perform the goal without instruction, it wouldn’t be an IEP goal. If Sally has a goal that she will write braille contractions, the braille writer is a given.

# What’s wrong?

* When reading grade level reading passages, Karen will answer “why” questions with 90% accuracy.
* In one year, Steven will learn braille contractions with 80% accuracy over 3 trials.
* Rebekah will name 3 shapes in one year.
* In a large group activity, Mark will pay attention with 80% accuracy.
* When given a faucet of water, James will independently complete a 5-step handwashing routine over 3 consecutive trials by April 1, 2024.

# Aligning Goals with the Standards

From ECC Essentials

[**https://www.aph.org/product/ecc-essentials-teaching-the-expanded-core-curriculum-to-students-with-visual-impairments**](https://www.aph.org/product/ecc-essentials-teaching-the-expanded-core-curriculum-to-students-with-visual-impairments)[**/**](https://www.aph.org/product/ecc-essentials-teaching-the-expanded-core-curriculum-to-students-with-visual-impairments/)

# 4 Steps to Standards-Based IEPs

* Step 1: Examine and Identify Standards
* Step 2: Conduct Appropriate Assessment
* Step 3: Select Goals and Benchmarks
* Step 4: Implement the IEP

# Step 1: Examine and Identify Standards

* Review core content standards for the student’s specific grade level; find alternative standards as appropriate and/or available
* Meet with general education teachers and families to obtain information regarding skills in the content
* Conduct evaluations to determine access to content
* Explain to families and professionals about the ECC areas and their relevance to the core curriculum (ensure access to academic learning)

# Step 2: Conduct Appropriate Assessment

* Provide specialized assessment in the areas of the ECC as determined by the education team

# Step 3: Select Goals and Benchmarks

* Determine present levels through assessment and use those to design measurable goals for identified areas of the ECC
* Identify core content standards related to the student’s grade and ability level, and align relevant standards with the ECC goals.
  + May seem straightforward—like reading grade level words in braille
  + May seem unrelated—like understanding own vision impairment
* Unpack standards as needed
* Use alternative standards as appropriate

# Step 4: Implement the IEP

Remember! Assessment drives Present Levels which drive goals which drives instruction.

# Examples:

* Grade 3 reading standard: Read with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support comprehension
  + ECC area/s:
  + Goal/s:
* In reverse, goal may be that a student will create a scale model of an O&M route.
  + ECC area: O&M, compensatory access
  + Grade 7 math standard: Solve real-world and mathematical problems involving area, volume, and surface area of two- and three-dimensional objects composed of triangles, quadrilaterals, polygons, cubes, and right prisms.

# Final Example: AT

* PLAAFP: Andrew has been introduced to using the internet by using a screen reader (JAWS). He is able to navigate research topics with verbal support. In order to make progress in the 8th grade writing standards, Andrew needs to be able to independently navigate websites using a screen reader in order to write a research report.
* Grade 8 standard: write a research report that defines a thesis, reports important ideas, concepts, (etc) and uses a variety of sources, etc.
* Goal: In order to navigate web-based research sites, Andrew will independently use a screen-reader by using 20 shortcut keystrokes with 90% accuracy over 3 consecutive trials by September 18, 2024.

**Resources**

1. High-Quality PLAAFP Statements: <https://iris.peabody.vanderbilt.edu/module/iep01/cresource/q3/p06/>
2. Examples of PLAAFP Statements: <https://www.gadoe.org/Curriculum-Instruction-and-Assessment/Special-Education-Services/Documents/Vision/PLAAFP%20Examples%20for%20VI.pdf>
3. What is the Difference Between an IFSP and an IEP? <https://www.pacer.org/ec/early-intervention/understanding-the-system/difference-between-ifsp-iep.asp>
4. Functional, High Quality IFSP Outcomes and IEP Goals from ECTA: <https://ectacenter.org/~ppts/knowledgepath/ifspoutcomes-iepgoals/ifspoutcomes-iepgoals-section4.ppt>
5. Family-Centered Early Intervention Visual Impairment Services Through Matrix Session Planning: <https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1137407.pdf>