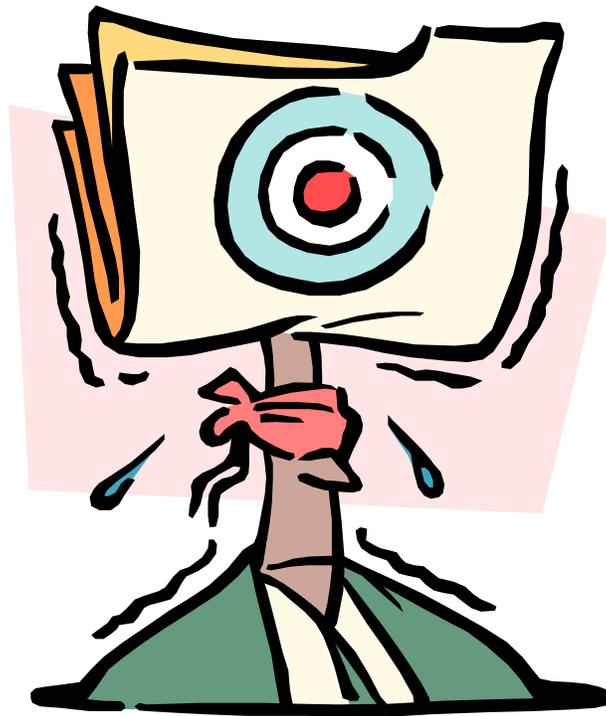


AN IEP PRIMER

THINGS TO CONSIDER



STOMP

Specialized Training Of Military Parents

***STOMP-Working Together for Military Families of Individuals
With Disabilities***

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STOMP Project is funded through a grant from the U.S. Department of Education. Information contained in this packet does not necessarily reflect the views of the Department of Education.

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Individualized Education Programs (IEP)

Purpose of the IEP Requirement

The IEP provision in the Act and regulations has two main parts:

- (A) the IEP meeting(s) - at which parents and school personnel jointly make decisions about the "program" for a student with a disability, and
- (B) the IEP document itself - which is a written record of the decisions reached at the meeting.

The overall IEP requirement, comprised of these two parts, has a number of purposes and functions, as set out below:

1. The IEP meeting serves as a communication vehicle between parents and school personnel, and enables them jointly decide upon what the student's needs are, what will be provided, and what the anticipated outcomes may be.
2. The IEP itself serves as the focal point for resolving any differences between the parents and the school; first through the meeting and second, if necessary, through the procedural protections that are available to the parents.
3. The IEP sets forth in writing a commitment of resources necessary to enable a student with a disability to receive special education and related services.
4. The IEP is a management tool that is used to insure that each student with a disability is provided special education and related services appropriate to his/her special learning needs.
5. The IEP is a compliance/monitoring document which may be used by monitoring personnel from each governmental level to determine whether a student with a disability is actually receiving the free appropriate public education agreed to by the parents and the school.
6. The IEP serves as an evaluation device for use in determining the extent of the student's progress toward meeting the projected outcomes.

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) is the framework established by the team to describe the student's school program. It must be developed at least annually, but more frequently if needed when changes are being considered. It includes the description of the student's current level of functioning, measurable annual goals, short-term objectives/benchmarks¹, needed related services and accommodations.

Don't forget the "I" in IEP.

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) will consist of:

- A statement of the student's present educational performance level and how that affects the student's involvement in the general education curriculum.
- Measurable annual goals for the student.
- Short- term objectives or benchmarks.
- Specific educational services the student needs.
- Specific related/supportive services, based on determined needs, such as speech therapy, physical therapy, large print materials, etc.
- Projected dates for the initiation, duration and location of educational and related services including extended school year, if needed.
- The extent, if any, the student will not participate in the regular education program.
- Appropriate criteria, evaluation procedures and the schedules for determining at least annually whether instructional objectives are being met and the methods by which the parent will be informed of progress towards the goals at least as often as parents of non-disabled children are informed of their child's progress. (This information must identify the goal(s) being worked on and if the progress towards the goal is sufficient to attain the goal by the time identified in the IEP.).
- Transition planning for students 14 years and above, and transition goals for students 16 years and above.².
- Documentation that at least one year prior to the student turning the age of majority, both the parent and student are informed of what rights transfer to the student.

¹ Short-term instructional objectives break the skills described in the goals into distinct components. Bench-marks can be thought of as describing the amount of progress a student is to achieve within a specific segment of the year.

² Transition planning must look at more than vocational goals. It is to include consideration of post secondary schooling, living situations, job, and other areas identified by the team.

A Student's Individualized Education Program Can Be Delivered Through:

- A regular classroom in a public school with appropriate supportive/related services.
- A special class in a public school with appropriate supportive/related services.
- A special public school.
- A special education program in private day or residential school which meets specific standards (if this is needed to meet the educational requirements of the student)
- A special home or hospital program

Services must be continued even when the student has been suspended or expelled for more than 10 cumulative days in a given school year.

APPROPRIATE RELATED/SUPPORT SERVICES

Some students will require the inclusion of related services or other support services in order for them to be successful in their special education setting. The IEP team (including the parent) , will determine the type and amount of related or supportive services to be provided to the student, or on behalf of the student. These services may include:

- Speech and language services
- Social work services
- Special readers
- Braillists, typists and interpreters
- Physical and occupational therapy
- Audiological services
- Orientation and mobility services or other necessary therapeutic services
- Consultative services
- Supportive institutional services
- Counseling

- Psychological services
- School nurses
- Parent counseling and training
- Medical services for evaluation and diagnostic purposes

GOALS IN THE IEP

Goals - What Are They?

Goals are statements about things we're aiming to do, get or become. Setting goals for ourselves and systematically working toward them is a way of turning an ambition or desire into a reality. If you know what you want, you're more likely to get it.

Setting educational goals for students is an important part of planning an appropriate instructional program. Educational goals are statements that tell what skills or behaviors that teacher and student are aiming for. They are usually written for one school year at a time. Annual goals, such as "Will be able to dress self", may be steps along the way to life goals such as "will be independent" and represent a specific set of skills that the student will hopefully master during a given school year.

The goals must be specific enough to provide direction to the teacher and others who must implement the goal. Parents need to understand what the expected outcome will be and how it will be determined.

Setting Goals

Parents can make a real contribution to the design of their student's educational program when they take some time to think about goals that they would like to see their student reach. These goals can then be discussed at meetings with school personnel. The following exercise is designed to give you practice in identifying essential, realistic, reachable goals for your student.

The following guidelines pertain to one method of developing measurable annual goals. Measurable annual goals focus on student or learner behavior. They specify the desired behavior a student will exhibit as evidence of learning. Four elements are basic to measurable goals:

1. Descriptive - What will the student do?
2. Conditional - Under what conditions will the student perform?

3. Evaluate - What measures will indicate success?
4. Temporal - What is the projected target date for mastery?

Such analysis assures that the writer(s) of the goals will communicate successfully and clearly with all readers, users and evaluators.

This is one model for writing goals. It includes the following criteria:

- a. Begin each goal with "The student (or student's name) will...". This establishes consistency and uniformity among the goals, while focusing on the student and a behavior.
- b. Describe the behavior a student is to demonstrate using specific words defining an observable element (descriptive element).
- c. Designate the conditions under which the student will be able to demonstrate the desired action (conditional element).
- d. Specify the level of performance which will indicate successful achievement of the goal (evaluative element).
- e. Specify the projected date by which the student will complete the goal (temporal element).
- f. Keep the language simple.

SOME EXAMPLES OF MEASURABLE ANNUAL GOALS

- Johnny will increase his written language skills from writing simple descriptive sentences to describing in short three to four sentence paragraphs the sequence of events from a given story or passage with 100% accuracy as measured by teacher evaluation by June 2000.
- Susan will grasp small items (i.e. raisins, beans, buttons) using a pincer grasp with 80% accuracy in 3 separate settings as measured by teacher data by June 2000.
- Jimmy will button or zip his jacket unassisted (Using fasteners, as appropriate) on 3 separate occasions as measured by therapy observations by June 2000.

The goals will have either short-term objectives or bench marks that further define the strategies or level of performance that is expected at certain intervals to determine if the student has achieved the goal.

Remember there are **four** elements that the measurable annual goals will include. They are:

(1) Descriptive Element

The portion of the goal that describes the behavior the student is to perform is the descriptive element. Action words can be used when writing the objective. Some suggestions are:

add	complete	divide	mark
alphabetize	compute	draw	multiply
answer	count	explain	name
build	cut	find	practice
check	demonstrate	identify	read
choose	describe	label	record
circle	discuss	list	spell

Example: will mark the triangles
 will select the most appropriate title
 will write his name

(2) Conditional Element

The portion of the goal that indicates the conditions under which the student will be expected to perform is the conditional element. Phrases which could be used as the conditional element are:

- when shown a worksheet
- given a list of
- using a telephone directory
- after observing a demonstration
- using (name of book, worksheet, etc.)
- without teacher assistance
- from the following list

(3) Evaluation Element

The portion of the goal that describes the expected level of performance is the evaluative element. These are examples of phrases which can be used:

- with 80% accuracy
- 9 out of 10
- at least 50% correct
- 90% of the time

(4) Temporal Element

The goal will provide the projected target date that the student is expected to master the goal. This is usually written for a one year period, but can be shorter, if appropriate. The descriptor should provide a timeline (i.e by December 2000) to indicate when the goal should be completed.

The key to developing effective goals and objectives/benchmarks is the active involvement of all of the team members. Parents and educators, alike, should share their ideas, concerns, and expectations for the student before beginning to develop the goals. The student, if appropriate, should also help in the development of the IEP goals and objectives.

REMEMBER to always focus on the strengths as well as the needs of the student.

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