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RESOURCES: GOAL WRITING

See "Goals & Objectives Related to Essential California Content":

<http://www.carsplus.org/publications.php>

Other links:

<http://www.kid-power.org/samples/goals.html> <http://www.specialed.us/issues-IEPissues/writingiep/writingindex.htm>

<http://www.specialed.us/issues-IEPissues/writingiep/GoalsMeasurable.html>

<http://www.familyvillage.wisc.edu/education/iepsamples.html>

http://www.wrightslaw.com/advoc/articles/plan_iep_goals.html

<http://concordspedpac.org/IEPGoals.html> <http://www.reedmartin.com/iepgoals.htm>

<http://specialed.about.com/cs/behaviordisorders/a/goals.htm> <http://www.iep4u.com/>

WrightsLaw "Smart IEPs" book: www.fetaweb.com

The term SMART IEPs "describes IEPs that are specific, measurable, use action words, are realistic and relevant, and time-limited.

S Specific

M Measurable

A Use Action Words

R Realistic and relevant

T Time-limited

Specific

SMART IEPs have specific goals and objectives. Specific goals and objectives describe each behavior and skill that will be taught, and define each skill or behavior in ways that are observable and measurable.

Measurable

SMART IEPs have measurable goals and objectives. Measurable goals and objectives allow

you to assess the child's progress. When you use measurable goals and objectives, you know when a goal is reached and when a skill is mastered. If you establish a goal to lose 25 pounds, you will use scales to measure your progress.

Action Words

SMART IEPs use action words like: "The child will be able to . . . "

Realistic and Relevant

SMART IEPs have realistic, relevant goals and objectives. SMART goals and objectives address the child's unique needs that result from the child's disability. SMART IEP goals are not based on district curricula, state or district tests, or other external standards.

Time-limited

SMART IEP goals and objectives are time-limited. Time-limited goals and objectives enable you to monitor progress at regular intervals.

Example SMART Goal: Mark learns to type

- At the end of the first semester, Mark will touch-type a passage of text at a speed of 20 words per minute, with no more than 10 errors, with progress measured on a five-minute timed test.
- At the end of the second semester, Mark will touch-type a passage of text at a speed of 40 words per minute, with no more than 5 errors, with progress measured on a five-minute timed test.

Example SMART Goal: Megan Learns to Read

- Meet Megan, a fifth grader who has not learned to read. Megan's reading decoding skills are at the 10th percentile level. How will Megan's parents know if she is benefiting from the special education program?
- If Megan receives an appropriate education, her scores on reading subtests will improve.

According to Megan's SMART IEP goal:

- After one year of specialized instruction, Megan will be able to decode words at the 25th percentile level as measured by the decoding score of the Gray Oral Reading Test-Diagnostic (GORT-D).
- When Megan's reading skills reach the 25th percentile level, she is making progress.

- Her progress will be measured with standardized tests.
- Megan's next IEP will include new goals and objectives to bring her reading skills up to the level of her peers.

Example Non-Goal: The student will appreciate classical music.

- To accomplish this non-goal, the student will listen to classical music three hours a day, for one month.

How can you assess "appreciation of classical music?" How will independent observers know if the student appreciates classical music?

The goal focuses on a state of being. You cannot measure a state of being.

Tips on Goals for school administrator audience from <http://www.specialed.us/issues-IEPissues/writingiep/writingindex.htm>

Measurable annual goals:

1. What do you want the student to know or be able to do in 12 months as a result of this IEP?
2. Is this information measurable / observable? What will you observe? (The annual goal - "Increase study skills for academic success" is not measurable. However, the statement "The student will demonstrate the following study skills: skimming written material and the use of reference materials in the social studies class" is measurable and observable.)
3. Does the goal have meaning for the parents? For other IEP members who will be working with this student? If you used jargon, do you provide additional information somewhere else? For example, some of you state that the goal will be achieved by reaching a Standard Score of 85, or increase expressive communication by greater or equal to .5 Standard deviation. If you use this terminology, either your goal or your objectives need to describe what the student will accomplish when he/she reaches that standard score or standard deviation.

Present Level of Educational Performance:

1. What do you want the student to know or be able to do in 12 months, and why can't he /she do it now? In other words, how does the disability affect the student's progress?

2. What can he / she do now? What is the actual starting point for each area of need?
What are the current skills / knowledge?
3. If, in nine (9) weeks, you have to describe the student's progress in this area of need, what kind of information will you be able to provide?

Short-term objectives and benchmarks (Note: IDEA 2004 requires benchmarks for students with severe disabilities)

1. Are the objectives / benchmarks clear, observable steps that will advance the student from the "Present Level of Educational Performance" to the "Measurable annual goals"?
2. Is each objective measurable?
3. Is each objective / benchmark a major milestone or other obvious marker along the path from "Present Level of Educational Performance" to the "Measurable annual goals"?