

## Quick Tips

### quick tips...

Essential information and/or interesting facts from Special Education Services, Alabama State Department of Education.

## for Standards-Based IEPs



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## WRITING APPROPRIATE GOALS

*We hope IEP Teams are developing IEPs that include defensible goals that are individualized and appropriate. The following information was prepared to help teachers and other pertinent staff make good decisions for IEP development and implementation.*

### **WEAK Goal for Phonics Skills and Word Recognition**

*By August 20XX, (student) will show an increase in phonics skills and word recognition (ELA K-5) 4 out of 5 attempts.*

#### Problems with this goal:

- Why are several grade spans (ELA K-5) mentioned? How would that many grades being included be considered individualized?
- In order for this goal to be measurable, what phonics skills are being addressed? What kind of word recognition?
- What percentage of accuracy is anticipated during the 5 attempts?
- Why August 20XX? Are extended school year services provided in June and July? Is this IEP being reviewed in August? The timeframe in the goal should be when you logically expect to evaluate this goal based on the starting and ending dates of the IEP and/or the start and end dates of the school year.

### **STRONGER, More Defensible Goals for Phonics Skills**

*By November 6, 20XX, (student) will decode words with common prefixes and suffixes (\*ELA 3.20.4, \*This reference means this is a third grade curriculum guide objective) with 90% accuracy.*

*By February 20, 20XX, (student) will decode regularly spelled two-syllable words with long vowels (ELA 3.20.3) with 90% accuracy.*

*By May 16, 20XX, (student) will distinguish long and short vowels when reading regularly spelled one-syllable words (ELA 3.20.1) with 90% accuracy.*

- The timeframes for goals might be staggered throughout the school year to match progress reporting periods. Some goals may include a skill that is expected to be evaluated at the end of the school year and/or before the next annual IEP meeting, in which case, the timeframe would be dated accordingly.
- The number of trials is not specified in these examples, but that is ok as long enough practice and trials are conducted in the classroom to substantiate answering if 90% accuracy was met, partially met, or not met.

## Reminder



### **The following resources are available on the web:**

- *Standards-Based IEPs*, a 38 minute presentation outlining the steps for developing standards-based IEPs
- *Q&A, Standards-Based IEPs*, a multiple page document that contains a variety of questions and answers related to standards-based IEPs  
(<http://alex.state.al.us/specialed/presentations.html>)

## The Individualization and Services Needed for Defensible Goals

### Course of Study Standard for 8th Grade:

*By the end of the year, read and comprehend literature, including stories, dramas, and poems, at the high end of Grades 6-8 text complexity band independently and proficiently. [RL.8.10]*

- Please do not be fooled into thinking it is ok to use a broad course of study standard (such as this one) verbatim in the goal.
- If the student can read and comprehend within the grade bands listed in the general education standard, he or she would not need a goal for this standard.
- In this case, even the curriculum guide objectives that go with this standard could be problematic without the appropriate services included.

### Curriculum Guide Objectives:

ELA 8.9.1: Read and comprehend text complexity band Grades 5-7.

ELA 8.9.2: Read and comprehend text complexity band Grades 4-6.

ELA 8.9.3: Read and comprehend text complexity band Grades 3-5.

(<http://alex.state.al.us/specialed/curriculum/cglanguagearts.pdf>)

It would be naive to assume progress on an important standard such as this one would be made without intensive, specially designed instruction. One logical scenario for helping an 8th grader (currently reading on the 3rd grade level) meet a goal related to the objective "Read and comprehend text complexity band Grades 4-6" is through a reading intervention program.

## Steps for Developing Defensible Goals

1. Identify the student's present level, specifically related to the course of standard being considered.
2. Use the student's present level to identify the skill level (e.g., in the case of a broad course of study standard, the grade or grade bands) the student can reasonably achieve in one year.

Keep in mind less than one year's progress in one school year makes the gap between the student's present level and the grade level expectation increase from year to year. The widening gap from year to year is a hot topic right now. The focus must be on where the student performs now, and the most progress you can hope to achieve in one year. Bottom line, a 9th grader currently reading on 3rd grade level is not going to miraculously go from 3rd grade reading to 9th grade reading. Similarly, only attempting an increase from a 3.0 to 3.5 reading level is also problematic.

3. Write the goal based on what the student can reasonably be expected to achieve in one year, using the highest expectations.
4. Identify and arrange the services that will be necessary to achieve the goal.

Obvious need: Specially designed instruction based on the course of study standards reflected in the goals.

In addition to instruction related to the standards: Intervention programs are strongly suggested to address broad achievement in reading and mathematics for students who are substantially below grade level.