

What are Annual Goals?

Annual IEP goals guide the decisions about the instruction, supports, services, accommodations, and adaptations that will be included in the IEP in order to maximize a student's growth potential within a school year.

They serve as a roadmap within the IEP to identify and measure specifically what knowledge, skills and/or behaviors a student is expected to be able to demonstrate within an academic year during which the IEP will be in effect. They are required by law to be revised annually. If your child will be participating in the alternate assessment, they must also have short-term objectives or benchmarks in the IEP.

How are my child's annual goals selected?

Annual goals are selected by the IEP team members, including you, the parent.

Goals should focus on the knowledge, skills, behaviors that a student is expected to learn/develop based on their individualized needs. Your child may have annual goals in any or all of the below areas:

Reading	Communication	Social Skills	Attention
Writing	Physical Development	Play Skills	Behavior
Listening	Motor Skills	Memory	Career and Vocational Skills
Organization	Cognitive Processing	Visual Perception	Independent Living Skills
Study Skills	Problem-solving	Auditory Perception	

Goals, however, are not limited to these areas and it's important to remember that active parent participation is critical to the successful creation and development of the annual goals. As a parent, you can and should provide input to make the goals both challenging and attainable, and to prioritize which goals are most important for your child.

What should I look for when I review my child's annual goals?

Check that goals are written clearly (you should understand them!) and that they are measurable, observable, and positive.

Annual goals should support your child's participation and progress in the general curriculum (for pre-school students, participation in age-appropriate activities.) An effective way to develop goals is by using the SMART method:

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Specific: To what are we referring?

Measurable: Can you count or observe the results?

Attainable: Is this goal within reach for my child?

Results-oriented: What are the desired results we are seeking to identify?

Time limited: By what timeframe are they to be achieved?

You should be able to identify that **each** of these areas are addressed in a well-written goal.

How is progress measured?

Your child's progress toward their annual goals is typically measured by the professionals who are providing services and reported to the parents throughout the school year in the progress reports, as well as during the parent-teacher conference. However, there are often goals where your observations about your child's progress is also critical. For example, can your child do their homework independently, or do they need a lot of help? Are you noticing that your child is reading on their own, or reading signs they see in the car or the store?

Important: If you wish to receive progress reports at a different frequency, you should express this to the IEP team and have it included within the IEP.

For students participating in alternative assessment, the SMART goal structure should still be followed to address academic, socioemotional, functional, & independent living skills and needs, but should be broken down into more short-term objectives and/or measures. If alternative assessment applies to your student, be sure to understand the promotional/graduation criteria in place for your child (diploma vs. credential).

Do I have a right to review annual goals at the IEP meeting?

Yes. Progress is something that is measured over a specific time period and for this reason, it is important to review the goals and progress reports at the IEP meeting, as well as throughout the school year (especially when you have concerns!).

To ensure a joint review of annual goals, inform the IEP team *in writing* prior to the IEP meeting, that you want the team to consider whether the prior year's annual goals were met and that you want to discuss this year's goals. If you don't believe your child made progress last year, review the relevant goals and progress reports by checking that the goals are measurable. If a student did not make progress, the IEP team should consider new strategies, including additional specialized instruction, related services, and/or other appropriate interventions.

Note: You do not need to wait until your annual IEP meeting to have a discussion with the IEP team about any of your concerns.

Helpful Sinergia Webinars on You Tube: [Understanding the IEP](#), [Turning 5: The Kindergarten IEP](#), [Special Education in Charter Schools: Understanding your Rights](#)

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