

IEP Goals Workbook for Your Autistic Child

Make each goal in your child's written school plan (IEP) clear enough to measure. Then bring your questions to the meeting.



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Write one goal, part by part

Federal law says each yearly IEP goal must be measurable. Pick one skill from your child's current IEP or the new draft and fill in each line.

1 What your child does now.

Copy this from the present levels part of the IEP, the section that says what your child can do today.

2 The date to reach the goal.

Yearly goals cover about 12 months, so this is often the date of the next yearly review.

3 When and where it will happen.

Name the moment, such as snack time or when the teacher gives a direction to the class.

4 What your child will do.

Write one action that another person in the room could see or hear.

5 How many times out of how many tries, such as 4 of 5.

6 How the school will count it.

The IEP must say how progress is measured, such as a weekly tally sheet or samples of work.

7 The whole goal, written as one sentence.

For example, by June, during centers, Sam will ask a classmate for a turn in 4 of 5 chances, counted on a tally.

Fix three weak goals

Each goal below is too vague to measure. Rewrite each one on the lines, using the parts from the page before. For example, "Sam will read better" has no date and no number, so no one can tell when it is met.

1 Sam will improve communication skills.

Ask yourself when Sam needs to ask for something and how often that should happen.

2 Sam will behave better in class.

Choose one skill Sam can use when upset, like asking for a break, and add a number.

3 Sam will work on math skills.

Name one math skill, such as adding numbers up to 10, and the percent correct to reach.

Goals to adapt for your child

Pick a goal that fits your child, then add a date and how the school will count it.

Talking and friends	Daily living and behavior	Reading and math
When stuck on class work, asks an adult for help in 4 of 5 chances.	Follows a picture list to wash hands with no reminders, 4 of 5 times.	Reads a short story at their level and answers 4 of 5 questions correctly.
When work gets hard, asks for a break with words or a break card, 4 of 5 times.	Unpacks the backpack and hangs up the coat with one reminder or less, 4 of 5 mornings.	Reads 50 common sight words out loud, 90 percent right on 3 checks in a row.
Follows a two-step direction from the teacher in 4 of 5 tries.	Opens lunch boxes and bags with no help from an adult, 4 of 5 lunches.	Puts three picture cards from a story in the right order, 4 of 5 tries.
Answers a who or where question about a short story in 4 of 5 tries.	Packs the take-home folder from a checklist with one reminder or less, 4 of 5 afternoons.	Writes a sentence that starts with a capital and ends with a period, 4 of 5 tries.
Takes turns in a board game with one reminder or less, 4 of 5 games.	When upset, points to a feelings card or names the feeling, 4 of 5 times.	Counts out a set of up to 20 objects correctly in 9 of 10 tries.
Waves or says hello back when a classmate greets them, 4 of 5 times.	When upset, uses a calm-down tool listed in the IEP, 4 of 5 times.	Adds two numbers up to 10 on a number line, 8 of 10 correct on 3 checks in a row.
Asks to join a game at recess with words or a sign, 3 of 4 recesses.	Moves to the next activity within 2 minutes after a timer rings, 4 of 5 times.	Solves a one-step word problem read aloud, 4 of 5 problems correct.
Stops and steps back when a classmate says stop, in 4 of 5 chances.	When plans change, starts the new activity with one reminder or less, 4 of 5 times.	Picks the right coins to pay for an item under one dollar, 4 of 5 tries.

Questions to ask at the meeting

Ask the team about	What they said
What my child can do now for each goal, in numbers.	
How the school will measure each goal, and how often.	
When I will get progress reports, and what they will show.	
Who will teach each skill, and for how many minutes a week.	
What help or changes in class will support each goal.	
How the concerns I shared from home shaped these goals.	
How each goal will help my child at home or with friends.	
Whether my child needs a talking device or other tool to learn.	
If behavior gets in the way, what positive supports you will use, like teaching better ways to ask.	
What the team will do if a report shows my child is behind.	
Whether my child needs services in the summer to keep skills.	
When I get my copy of the IEP.	

Track each progress report

Your child's IEP must say when you will get progress reports. Each time one comes, copy the numbers for up to three goals onto this sheet.

Write down	Goal 1	Goal 2	Goal 3
The goal, in a few words you will remember.			
Where your child started, written as a number.			
The target number for the end of the year.			
Report 1, with the date and the new number.			
Report 2, with the date and the new number.			
Report 3, with the date and the new number.			
Report 4, with the date and the new number.			
On track or behind, and what you plan to ask.			

Federal rules give two examples of when reports can come, four times a year or along with report cards. If a report has no number, ask the case manager, who oversees your child's IEP, for the data.

When a goal is not on track

Federal rules say the IEP team must change the plan as needed when progress stalls.

Step 1: Compare the reports, then ask the teacher

Copy both numbers onto your tracker. Then ask the teacher or case manager what they see in class and what they have tried.

Step 2: Ask for a meeting in writing

Send the note on the next page. Texas calls the IEP meeting an ARD meeting, and the school must agree to meet or send a written reason within five school days. Confirm this with your district. In Colorado, ask the case manager how to request a meeting.

Step 3: Bring people who know your child

You may invite others who know your child well, such as a BCBA (board certified behavior analyst). Ask them to bring numbers from their own sessions.

Step 4: Get the change in writing

If the team agrees to change a goal, ask for it in writing and a new copy of the IEP. A small change you both agree on can be written up without another meeting.

Step 5: Get outside help if you still disagree

Texas and Colorado both offer IEP facilitation, where a neutral person helps keep the meeting on track and makes no decisions. It costs parents nothing, and both you and the school must agree to it. In Texas, call the SPEDTex help line at 1-855-773-3839 to ask how to request it. The state must get the request within 10 calendar days of an ARD meeting that ended in disagreement, so call soon and confirm the rules with SPEDTex. In Colorado, ask the case manager or call the state special education office at 720-926-1453 and leave a message for a call back. In other states, ask your state education agency about its facilitation or dispute options.

Note to your child's case manager

Send this when a progress report shows a goal is not on track. Email gives you a dated copy of what you sent.

Today's date

Dear case manager's name,

I am writing about the IEP goal for child's name on the skill, in a few words. The goal is target number by date, and the last two progress reports show first number and then second number. I would like to meet with the IEP team to talk about why the number has not moved. Then we can decide whether the goal or the help around it should change. Please send me a few dates that work for you, and a copy of the data behind the last report.

Thank you,

Your name

Phone number or email

Keep every email and every reply in one folder. In Colorado, you can also copy your district's special education director. The state names this person as the first contact when an IEP is not being followed.

Sources

Facts checked on 2026-09-25. Sources change over time, so check each one before you act on it.

U.S. Department of Education, IDEA rule 34 CFR 300.320, what an IEP must contain

<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.320>

U.S. Department of Education, IDEA rule 34 CFR 300.321, who is on the IEP team

<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.321>

U.S. Department of Education, IDEA rule 34 CFR 300.322, parent participation

<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.322>

U.S. Department of Education, IDEA rule 34 CFR 300.324, writing and changing the IEP

<https://sites.ed.gov/idea/regs/b/d/300.324>

Texas Education Agency, Parent's Guide to the Admission, Review, and Dismissal Process, January 2025

<https://www.spedtex.org/resources/parents-guide-ard-process>

Texas Education Agency, individualized education program facilitation

<https://tea.texas.gov/special-populations-and-support/special-education/dispute-resolution/individualized-education-program-facilitation>

Colorado Department of Education, IEP Procedural Guidance, revised July 2017

<https://ed.cde.state.co.us/fs/resource-manager/view/00bbb119-c6d9-4331-b661-70b3b3989ffa>

Colorado Department of Education, parent and family questions about IEPs

<https://ed.cde.state.co.us/cdesped/spedparents/parent-faq>

Colorado Department of Education, special education facilitation

<https://ed.cde.state.co.us/spedlaw/adr/special-education-facilitation-information-frequently-asked-questions-faq>

This kit is general information and is not medical or legal advice. Talk to a qualified professional about your child's situation.

Pair your child's IEP with ABA therapy

Alpaca Health matches families with a BCBA, a board certified behavior analyst, for applied behavior analysis (ABA) therapy, and handles the insurance paperwork. Your child's ABA team tracks progress, and you may choose to share those notes with the IEP team. If you want to start ABA therapy, you can begin with the Alpaca Health intake form.



When you are ready

[Start with Alpaca Health →](#)

<https://secure.alpacahealth.io/signup>



Scan to open

The full article on IEP goals for autism has more example goals, sorted by skill area. <https://www.alpacahealth.io/family-resources/iep-goals-for-autism>