

# Why are Annual Goals and Short-Term Objectives/Benchmarks Important?

Annual goals and short-term objectives/benchmarks in an IEP allow you to track a child's progress in school and help determine if a child's educational program is appropriate. [34 CFR 300.347 a (2)]

Goals and objectives/benchmarks are also important because they help to form and guide a child's specific instructional plan. **An IEP is not designed to be a detailed instructional plan**, but instructional plans must relate directly to IEP goals and objectives/benchmarks. Parents should always participate in developing appropriate IEP goals and objectives/benchmarks. [34 CFR 300.345]

**The goals and objectives/benchmarks define what kind of special education program and related services the school district must provide.** The school district must provide the programs and services necessary to meet the goals and objectives/benchmarks in a child's IEP. If a child needs a particular kind of special education program or service, the school district will provide the program or service if it is necessary to meet an IEP goal or objective/benchmark. [34 CFR 300.347 (a)(3)(i)]

Goals and short-term objectives/benchmarks determine appropriate special education services and areas of instruction. Goals and objectives/benchmarks must be linked to present levels of performance and measurable behaviors. They must also address the student's involvement and progress in the general curriculum.

## PART B Sec. 1414 **Evaluations, eligibility determinations, individual education programs, and educational placements**

The term "individualized education program" or "**IEP**" means a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in accordance with this section and that includes –

- (i) "a statement of measurable annual goals, including benchmarks or short-term objectives, related to—
  - meeting the child's needs that result from the child's disability to enable the child to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum; and
  - meeting each of the child's other educational needs that result from the child's disability;"

# Annual Goals

**Annual goals** are statements that describe what the student can **reasonably** accomplish within a twelve-month period.

## Annual goals:

- ◆ Enable the child to be involved in and progress in the general curriculum
- ◆ Meet the child's needs that result from the disability
- ◆ Every goal must be written in observable, measurable terms
- ◆ Each goal should have at least two short-term objectives/benchmarks
- ◆ Baseline data should be recorded for each goal and for each objective/benchmark
- ◆ How student's progress toward goals will be measured
- ◆ How the student's parents will be informed of such progress with the same frequency as progress is reported for general education students [34 CFR 300.347(a)(7)(ii)]

## Annuals goals should:

- ◆ Describe **reasonable** accomplishments within a twelve month period
- ◆ Have a direct relationship to the child's **present level of educational performance**
- ◆ Be a broad projection or idea of what you want the student to do

In writing objectives/benchmarks it is important to use verbs that are open to few interpretations and that require an overt, observable action, i.e.:

|               |                  |
|---------------|------------------|
| <i>write</i>  | <i>solve</i>     |
| <i>list</i>   | <i>recite</i>    |
| <i>define</i> | <i>construct</i> |
| <i>read</i>   | <i>compare</i>   |

For students 14 years or older transition services language must be included in the development of goals and objectives/benchmarks. [20 USC 1414 (d) (1) (A) and (d) (6) (A) (i)]