

Present Level of Educational Performance (PLEP)

The Present Level of Educational Performance (PLEP) is a summary describing the student's current achievement in the areas of need as determined by an evaluation. It specifically addresses the student's strengths, effective teaching approaches, and interventions to enable student success. It explains the needs of the student and states how the student's disability affects his or her involvement and progress in the general curriculum. The PLEP contains current specific, measurable, objective baseline information for each area of need affected by the disability. In addition, it links the evaluation results, the expectations of the general curriculum, and the goals for the student. For preschool children, the PLEP describes how the disability affects the child's participation in age appropriate activities. The PLEP also addresses the student's transition needs in the areas of instruction, employment and post-school adult living, community services, and related services.

Every goal must relate to a need identified in the PLEP.

The PLEP:

- Summarizes the individual's current performance
- Incorporates information from a variety of sources in an integrated statement.
- Facilitates instructional planning by providing a bridge from the evaluation process and results to instructional interventions.
- Provides guidance for future interventions by communicating the results of past interventions.
- Describes behaviors specifically in objective, measurable terms.
- Describes other educational needs that result from the student's disability.
- Describes the student's performance in areas of need in relationship to the standards and benchmarks of the district's general curriculum.
- Describes student strengths that are relevant to reaching the IEP's annual goals and the long-term expectations for the student.
- Describes factors, which have led to past success for the student (effective interventions and strategies).
- Describes the student's performance levels using the same indicators specified in the goals of the past IEP (for IEP reviews).
- Describes the student's current needs relative to long- range goals.
- Provides current baseline information for areas in which goals are set, and special education is provided.

Examples:

1. In the general education curriculum, students are expected to complete all assignments. John turns in an average of 60% of his math assignments, 50% of his reading and language assignments (on average per week). Of assignments turned in, fewer than 75% are complete. Accuracy of turned-in work fluctuates markedly from less than 10% to 100%.

2. Christine is working on the district's standard to be able to read, understand, and respond to a variety of materials for various purposes. Our focus will be on functional vocabulary. Christine is able to say the sounds of 15 of 26 letters of the alphabet independently (missed v, d, l, r). With a gestural prompt she was able to say the sounds of w, x, y, z, g, l, n. Chris is able to read 19 survival words.

She is also working on the standard of writing effectively for a variety of purposes. Christine can write her name without a model 70% of the time. She forgets the "r" or transposes the "r" and the "l". Her "z" looks like a "2" and her "n" and "h" look alike. Christine cannot say her address.

3. Charlie is having difficulties in math. He is unable to meet the general education standards in the area of understanding and applying a variety of problem-solving strategies. He can compute additional problems when using touch math. He has difficulty processing story problems

when they are read to him in a one-to-one situation. He does not understand the relationship of the language in the problems and the computation. He needs to learn to set up and solve story problems. He was not able to complete any of the addition or subtraction story problems on the second grade math assessment.

Measurable Annual Goals

There is a direct relationship between the goal and the needs identified in the PLEP. Goals are also descriptions of what a student can reasonably be expected to accomplish within a 12 month period with the provision of special education services. There are four critical characteristics of a well written goal: it is meaningful, measurable, able to be monitored, and useful in making decisions.

When a goal is written it must be stated so it is meaningful. The "meaningful determination" is made by considering a number of factors:

- The skill the goal represents is necessary for success in current and future environments;
- The family believes the accomplishment of the goal is important;
- The goal specifies a level of performance and an expectation that is reasonable; and
- Its accomplishment is related and significant to the behavior.

Goals are measurable. They must reflect behavior that can be measured.

A goal can be monitored. There are multiple increments in performance between the present level of performance and the criteria stated in the goal. The goal should be written so it can be monitored frequently and repeatedly.

Finally, goals are useful in making decisions regarding a student's education. Monitoring the goal results in data used to determine the effectiveness of the individual's education program. Appropriate changes may be made to the student's IEP in order to help him or her achieve optimum success.

Goals must be written so they can pass the "Stranger Test." In other words, a goal is written so someone who did not write it could use it to develop appropriate instructional plans and assess student progress. They must also pass the "So What Test" meaning the IEP Team considers the importance of the goal. Specifically, the IEP Team answers the question, "Is the skill indicated in this goal really an important skill for the student to learn?" If the answer is, "No" then the goal, short-term objective, or benchmark (major milestone) is probably inappropriate. The IEP Team must also consider the importance of the goal in light of social relevance. Social relevance provides another question, "Is this skill/behavior one that the student's peers engage in?" If the answer is "Yes" then this goal is probably a valid one.

The IEP Team must establish challenging goals that may be achieved within a year; their focus must be on selecting goals from the standards and benchmarks of the local district. The student's performance is measured against the district standards and benchmarks. As districts develop assessments to measure their standards and benchmarks, all students need to be included. The IEP Team selects a district standard, a benchmark, or a composite of district benchmarks that includes more than one skill for writing a goal.

For each area of need prioritized on the PLEP, the IEP Team needs to:

Write a goal using this format:

Timeframe: In 36 weeks,

Conditions: given a fourth grade level passage

Behavior: Jenny will read

Criterion: 100 words per minute with 95% decoding accuracy

- * Timeframe is usually specified in the number of weeks in the goal period (36 weeks = 180 school days)
- * Conditions specify the manner in which progress toward the goal is measured. Conditions are dependent on the behavior being measured and involve the application of skills or knowledge.
- * Behavior clearly identifies the performance which is being monitored; usually reflects an action or can be directly observed; and is measurable.
- * Criterion identifies how much, how often, or to what standards the behavior must occur in order to demonstrate that the goal has been reached. The goal criterion specifies the amount of growth the student is expected to make by the end of the annual goal period.

Examples:

In 32 weeks, across all settings, Ian will identify 20 major warning words and symbols (e.g., Stop, Poison, Danger, Hazard, etc.) with 95% accuracy and will identify appropriate actions to take when these words are seen with 100% accuracy.

In 32 weeks, when a grocery item or items are needed, Marlo will go shopping at the grocery store, pay for her purchases using the nearest dollar strategy and count change (+-\$1.00), on three consecutive trips to the store.

David will write answers to simple addition facts with sums 0 to 20 (e.g., 4 + 5) in five minutes on a worksheet at a rate of 40 digits correct per minute with no errors by October 1999.

During the IEP year, given different board games and two to three peers, Mary will play cooperatively for 15 consecutive minutes for ten turn-taking exchanges.

PLEP: At 36 months, Abigail is working on developmental skills of early object use and functional play with toys/ objects. Abigail is able to perform exploratory schemes (banging, shaking, throwing) as she plays with toys/objects. She applies the same schemes to all objects, and she does not demonstrate an understanding of the functions of toys/ objects. Abigail has learned to imitate her parents' and other adults' actions when provided with a model of combining two schemes to manipulate a toy in a functional play activity. Abigail's parents want her to play with her toys without her requiring their constant attention and modeling of actions.

When given toys/objects, Abigail will perform five schemes with them (shake, roll, bang, throw, push). She does not combine schemes into a functional play sequence with the toys/objects. Children between 18-24 months of age typically play with toys/objects by combining schemes to see a cause-and-effect relationship and to use objects according to their functions. By 36 months, children are beginning to engage in symbolic or pretend play.

Annual Goal: In 36 weeks, when given the opportunity to play with six-eight different toys/objects, Abigail will spontaneously link four discrete schemes according to the toys/objects intended functions three times per observation period across five consecutive play times.

PLEP: John displays difficulties writing his thoughts on paper. He has very creative ideas but does not understand sentence construction or how to develop paragraphs. He needs to use punctuation and capitalization consistently. John received 12 out of 50 points on the district's assessment for expressive writing. He needs to learn to write the four different sentence types (simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex) correctly and integrate them into a paragraph.

Annual Goal: In 36 weeks John will write at least a six sentence paragraph using at least three different sentence types scoring 45/50 on the writing rubric.

PLEP: Michelle is working on the standard of the general education curriculum to enhance reading fluency. Michelle has difficulty identifying words in isolation. When reading a test, she uses context clues and picture clues to identify words unfamiliar to her. When reading words in isolation, she attempts to dissect the word phonetically, but has difficulty drawing closure to the word and pronouncing the word as a whole. Michelle studied the DISSECT word identification strategy in seventh grade. It appears she still uses this strategy with some limited success.

When asked to read passages from her government textbook, Michelle read at an average rate of 82 words per minute with 96% accuracy in word identification. This compares to a norm of 150-200 words per minute with 98-99% accuracy for high school juniors. During this reading probe, Michelle stated that she can read faster when she reads aloud. It seems that her literal comprehension also improves when she is able to read aloud. She used a ruler as a guide to enable her to read line by line.

Annual Goal: Given sample passages of at least 200 words or more from high school level textbooks, Michelle will read grade levels materials at an average rate of 100 wpm with 98% accuracy or better in word identification.