

IEP Goal Discussion Questions

Your child's educational needs are what drives the goals your child will work on. Schools help you understand your child's current needs by documenting them in the Multi-Disciplinary Team (MDT) evaluation and in the "present level of academic achievement and functional performance" area of the Individualized Education Program (IEP). Your child can have both academic needs and functional needs. Academic needs can include various skills associated with reading, writing, and math. Functional needs can include the areas of communication, behavior, social skills, organizational skills, sensory issues, self-help or daily living skills, motor skills, vocational skills, and more. There must be a direct relationship between the identified needs and the IEP goals. Your child's documented needs are the foundation of the IEP. It's what the IEP team uses to develop the goals and make decisions on accommodations/supports, services, instruction, and placement.

So with that in mind, here are some questions to think about when you have your team discussion about IEP goals:

- What areas of need (deficit) are the biggest concerns for my child?

We encourage parents to list their child's top 3-5 needs and prioritize them by importance to give you a starting place for a discussion about needs and goals.

- What specific need will this goal address? It is an academic or functional need?
- What are the specific targets that this goal will focus on? What skills and/or knowledge will be taught to my child in this goal?
- What is it about my child's disability that interferes with him/her achieving this skill or knowledge?

It is good to ask questions that help you understand why your child is not able to do something.

- What makes this goal meaningful to my child? Is the outcome of this goal – what my child should know or be able to do – necessary for his/her success in school?
- Will this goal help my child be involved, participate, and make progress in the general curriculum?
- Is the expectation of this goal reasonable?
- Should there be short-term objectives or benchmarks included in this goal?

Objectives are smaller, specific, measurable steps that your child will work on to help him/her achieve his/her IEP goals.

- What is my child's current level of functioning in each of his/her skill deficit area?

Be sure to know the starting point for each goal based on the baseline data the IEP team has gathered. The annual goal monitors your child as he/she goes from his/her present level of performance to the level of performance expected by the end of the IEP year.

- Is the goal measurable? Am I able to count it or observe it?
- How is the data being collected to measure the progress my child is making on this goal?

Be sure to discuss the evaluative criteria and procedures being used for each goal.

- Is this goal easy to understand?

If there is any part of the goal that is unclear to you, do not be afraid to ask questions in order to understand it better. Be sure the goal is written in a way so everyone on the team understands it and can explain it to another person.

- What are some examples of the specially designed instruction that will be used to teach my child the knowledge or skills he/she needs to learn in this goal? How will the goal be addressed and taught throughout my child's day and in his/her various environments (i.e. regular education classroom, resource classroom, self-contained/alternate learning classroom, during specials, recess, lunchtime, etc.)

This is how the school will meet your child's needs throughout his/her day.

- What are some examples of the specific accommodations and/or modifications that will be provided to my child to help him/her make progress on this goal?

Accommodations and modifications are two different kinds of supports so be sure you understand the difference and know which are being provided as part of this goal.

- What happens if my child is struggling and not making adequate progress on his/her IEP goals?
- What happens if my child does not achieve the level of attainment for goal mastery that is written in the goal by the end of the school year or IEP timeframe?
- What happens if my child achieves his/her goal before the end of the school year or IEP timeframe is up?