



# Facts-on-Hand

## IEP Goals and Objectives

FAPE-41

“Facts-on-Hand” is an easy to read series on special education and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA). IDEA is the nation’s special education law. Under IDEA, if a child is found to be a child with a disability, he or she is eligible for special education and related services.

If your child has a disability and is eligible for special education and related services, a team of people will gather to talk about what special instruction and services your child needs. This team includes you, the parent.

The team reviews the information available about your child. This includes such information as classroom work, reports from teachers and from you, and achievement test results. It also includes the results of individual evaluations of your child, whether conducted by the school or private practitioners.

You and the other team members use this information to determine how your child is currently doing in school and what special needs he or she has. For example, your child may have trouble with reading, writing, paying attention, speaking, or behaving appropriately. Together, the team decides what your child needs to work on during the year.

Team decisions are written down in a document called the Individualized Education Program (IEP). An important part of your child’s IEP will be his or her annual goals and short-term objectives<sup>1</sup>. This “Facts-on-Hand” explains more about annual goals and short-term objectives.

### What are annual goals and short-term objectives?

Every child with an IEP has goals and objectives for the year. Goals and objectives are written statements in the IEP. They describe what the child will learn or focus on in the upcoming year in school.

Goals look at big steps. They state what the child is expected to learn during the year. For example, take Suzie.

She’s six and only knows the names of a few objects. An annual goal for Suzie could be, “ Suzie will correctly name 60 new objects”.

Objectives (or in other cases, benchmarks) are smaller steps. They break the annual goal down into smaller pieces. For example, Suzie has the goal of naming 60 new objects. This goal may be broken down into several objectives such as:

1. By December 31, Suzie will name 20 new objects in her environment.
2. By March 15, Suzie will name 20 additional new objects in her environment.
3. By June 15, Suzie will name 20 additional objects in her environment.

When Suzie meets all of these objectives, she also reaches her annual goal.

Suzie’s IEP will have goals and objectives written just for her. There should be a connection between her individual needs and the goals and objectives in her IEP. The goals and objectives must also relate to how Suzie will be involved and make progress in the academic content that all other children are doing.

### What does Suzie need to do to meet a goal or objective? How will the IEP team measure Suzie’s progress?

Suzie’s IEP must include information about how her progress toward the annual goals will be measured. This information may be in another part of the IEP or written directly into the goal and objective statements themselves. For example, one of Suzie’s objectives could read: Suzie will correctly name 20 new objects, nine out of ten times, based on teacher observation.

<sup>1</sup> Please note: Sometimes major accomplishments called benchmarks are used in the IEP rather than objectives. Everything that applies to objectives applies to benchmarks in the same fashion.



**How will I know if my daughter is meeting her goals?**

The IEP must include a statement of how the school will let you know how your daughter is doing at least as often as parents are informed of their nondisabled children’s progress. At this time, they will describe your daughter’s progress towards each of her goals and whether she is making enough progress to reach her goals by the end of the year. Be sure to review this information carefully.

**What do I do if my son isn’t making good progress toward his goals?**

If you don’t think that your son is making enough progress on his goals, there are several things that you can do. First, talk to his special education teacher or principal. You may need to ask for an IEP meeting. Your son’s IEP can be reviewed and changed at any time of the year. The IEP team (which includes you) can look at your son’s progress. Maybe he needs more services. Perhaps the goals and objectives need to be changed. Maybe more testing is needed. Together, your son’s IEP team can decide what needs to be done to help him make progress.

**My son has an IEP with written goals and objectives. For most classes, he does not need extra help, just a special seating arrangement. Do we need to write goals and objectives for this accommodation?**

No. If your son only needs special seating to be successful in the regular classroom, his IEP does not need to include goals and objectives for the special seating. Special seating is an accommodation that he needs to succeed. This needs to be recorded in his IEP. Accommodations and modifications are usually not written as goals and objectives, but put into another part of the IEP. Your son’s IEP will include a statement of any services and supports (including accommodations, program modifications or interventions) the school will provide your son.

**Real Life Example**

Maria is in fourth grade. She has a learning disability. Tests show that Maria can read first grade books at a rate of 20 – 30 words per minute. The IEP team writes an annual goal for Maria to improve her reading.

Annual Goal:

Maria will read 2<sup>nd</sup> grade material at a rate of 60 – 80 words a minute with no more than 0 – 2 errors.

Objectives:

By November 15, Maria will read 1<sup>st</sup> grade material at a rate of 60 – 80 words per minute with no more than 3 – 5 mistakes.

By February 15, Maria will read 1<sup>st</sup> grade material at a rate of 80 – 100 words per minute with no more than 0 – 2 mistakes.

By April 15, Maria will read 2<sup>nd</sup> grade material at a rate of 40 – 60 words per minute with no more than 3 – 5 mistakes.

By June 15, Maria will read 2<sup>nd</sup> grade material at a rate of 60 – 80 words per minute with no more than 0 – 2 mistakes.

Maria’s teacher records Maria’s reading and error rates throughout the year in order to measure her progress.

**For a look at what the law says:**

See the IDEA regulations Section 300.347, and Appendix A. The regulations are available online at [www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/IDEA/regs.html](http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/IDEA/regs.html).

They are also available in hard copy at no charge from ED Pubs. Order online at [www.edpubs.org](http://www.edpubs.org) or by phone 1.877.433.7827, 1.877.576.7734 TTY/TDD, 301.470.1244 FAX.

**For more information:**

See FAPE *Facts-on-Hand - Modifications and Accommodations*

**Other resources**

The Technical Assistance Alliance for Parent Centers (The Alliance)  
888.248.0822, [www.taalliance.org](http://www.taalliance.org)

The National Information Center for Children and Youth with Disabilities (NICHCY)  
800.695.0285, [www.nichcy.org](http://www.nichcy.org)

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