



Adapted from *IEP Extreme Makeover*, Mickes, Goldman, O'Toole, LLC, 2010

Present Level

BEFORE: Kate is a ten-year old student in the fifth grade. She has ADHD and has difficulty concentrating and paying attention in the classroom.

AFTER: Kate is a ten-year-old student in the fifth grade at Pine Tree Elementary. Kate has a medical diagnosis of ADHD, and was identified as a student with an educational disability of Other Health Impairment by a multidisciplinary team, October, 2008. Kate is not currently taking any medication for her ADHD.

Kate's disability primarily affects her ability to concentrate and attend to a single classroom task for extended periods of time. She can work independently for 5-6 minutes, but requires continuous verbal prompts thereafter to continue working on the same task.

Per parent report, Kate also has difficulty independently completing tasks at home as well, and will often jump from one task (i.e., making her bed) to another (feeding her dog) without completing the first task.

BEFORE: Kate's ADHD also causes difficulty with reading and she does not currently read at grade level.

AFTER: Kate's disability also affects her ability to read at grade level. May 14, 2011, Kate was administered the Developmental Reading Assessment and read 101 words per minute at level 30 (early 3rd grade) with 90% accuracy. When reading out loud and to herself, Kate often skips over words that she does not immediately recognize without attempting to use context clues or other reading strategies to figure out the word. This causes her comprehension level to decrease significantly. Kate's reading difficulty affects her progress not only in the reading curriculum, but also in math, science and social studies activities that require reading.

BEFORE: Joey is a nine-year-old, healthy boy with normal vision and hearing. He has significantly delayed speech skills and has been identified as a student with a speech impairment under the IDEA. Though Joey has average cognitive abilities, his academic performance is adversely affected because he routinely fails to turn in homework.

AFTER: Joey is a nine-year-old, fourth grader at Green Acres Elementary with an educational disability of speech impairment. Specifically, Joey has articulation errors that adversely affect his intelligibility and the listener's perception when he participates in oral communication activities in the classroom and when communicating with peers.

Per Joey's' last re-evaluation, his cognitive abilities are in the average range. Though Joey has made significant gains in the past few years with respect to his articulation errors, he appears to be growing more conscientious of his still existing errors and currently goes to great lengths to avoid oral tasks and activities in the classroom. The team agrees that this avoidance behavior is a reflection of his educational disability. However, Joey also often fails to turn in his homework. This too adversely affects his academic performance. However, the team agrees that this particular behavior is not related to Joey's speech impairment.

BEFORE: Harry is a thirteen-year-old 7th grader with an educational diagnosis of Autism. Harry has significant delays with social skills and difficulty with various social interactions.

AFTER: Harry is a thirteen-year-old student in the 7th grade at Blue Water Middle School. Harry has been identified as a student with an educational disability of Autism since October, 2003. Harry's disability significantly affects his ability to appropriately interact with his peers and he often complains that he does not have any friends. Harry interprets his world and language very literally. Harry will often correct his peers when he believes they have given the wrong answer to a teacher's question, or add information that he believes is necessary to have a fully correct answer. Harry also often does not understand or engage in the appropriate use of colloquial phrases such as "what's up" or "what's happening."

Present Level: Practical Tips

- PLEPs should change every year!!!!
- Be specific and use examples.
- Include baseline data that correlates with the prior year's IEP goals.
- Differentiate between medical diagnoses and educational disabilities.
- Use the stranger test: Would a stranger be able to picture this child after reading the PLEP?
- Differentiate between school based information and parent or doctor provided information.
- If parents want you to include information that the Districts does not have documentation for, or include issues the District does not see, include that information, but preface it with:
 - "per parent report . . ." or
 - In the home environment . . .XXX, but at school . . . YYY"
- Differentiate between behaviors that are related to the disability, and those that are not (consider manifestation determination ramifications).
- Be wary of generalized descriptions of behaviors (e.g., "inappropriate behavior").

Measurable Annual Goals: Practical Tips

- Annual measurable goals are required.
- Must address the deficits resulting from the student's disability.
- Must represent what the child can reasonably achieve in one year's time.
- Must be revised as appropriate to "address any lack of expected progress". Although the IDEA does not require that a child achieve every goal, it does require the team to address the failure to achieve previously set goals.
- Ensure measurability: What data will be collected to show that progress is occurring?
- How many goals included in a student's IEP depends on the most pressing needs identified in the student's PLEP. There is no magic number. Too many may lead to failure to implement.