



How do I know if my child is making progress on their IEP?

The Individual Education Plan (IEP) is designed so students can make reasonable progress on their annual goals, access the general education curriculum, and participate with non-disabled children as appropriate. As parents, we hope our children will maximize their potential. It may be a surprise that special education is not required to make that happen. However, we can focus on helping our child make reasonable progress and benefit from their education.

What is reasonable progress? Court decisions have said that special education services must be “reasonably calculated to provide some educational benefit.” For some students their disability may limit their ability to catch up to their non-disabled peers. For other students, their abilities coupled with specialized instruction can result in more than a year’s gain in skills.

Measuring progress: IEP goals are required to be specific and measurable. In order to measure progress, the baseline in an annual goal should clearly describe the skills your child has in words that you can understand. The goal one year later for that same area should also be written in specific terms.

Ask yourself: *When I read the baseline and the annual goal can I make a picture in my mind of what my child will be doing?* Progress can be measured by:

- standardized tests;
- work samples such as homework, tests, or recordings of speech;
- teacher observation using check lists, charts, or other methods of recording data.

The same measurements should be used to determine both baseline and progress on goals.

It can be helpful to have a graph or chart of a skill for a specific time period. Examples:

- Math calculation scores using the same standardized test given each year.
- Reading fluency rates of words read per minute recorded every 6 weeks.
- Blurting out in class measured by number of times per day this happened in 4 weeks.

You should receive regular reports on the progress your child is making on their IEP goals as well as traditional progress reports and report cards if they are participating in general education. The schedule of these progress reports is agreed to in the IEP.

What is not a measure of progress? It is not enough to be told your student made a lot of progress or what a delightful student your child is to have in class. If you don’t clearly understand how your child’s progress is measured you need to ask that this be done.

If you determine that your child is not making reasonable progress, there are things you can do. See the Matrix publication *Help! I don't think my child's IEP is working as well as it should, what do I do?*

More information - Continuous Progress Monitoring is a proven way to measure progress. See the National Center on Response to Intervention [www.rti4success.org/] for more information on nationally-recognized efforts to ensure valid measurements of progress. California State Standards can also provide a way to measure progress [www.cde.ca.gov/ci/].



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