**The IEP Objectives/Benchmark Is Created...Now What?**

I have been asked repeatedly how I come up with goals and how do I document progress or regression on them. Good questions! In coming up with goals, it all starts with some form of assessment. I don’t pull goals out of midair. Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired has some great goals posted on their site: <http://www.tsbvi.edu/instructional-resources/109-resources/instructional-resources/2783-vi-goals-and-objectives>. I may tweak the wording, but the goals are a great guide! As for documenting progress or regression…that is a process!

The IEP meeting has been held and all IEP Objectives and benchmark goals have been approved. Now the question becomes how to document progress/regression on the goals for progress notes and such. Teachers need to have data to support the noted progress/regression on the objectives/goals. This also helps teachers tweak lessons to focus on the weaker areas or the areas a student regresses on while expanding on the student strengths.

I like to look at the individual goal and determine what information I need to track in order to document information on this goal. I try to make the data collection sheets as simple as possible and keep my marking system the same. I am typically in a hurry to document the student’s work as they are doing it. I don’t want to try to recall later what they did or did not do. My comments I usually write in either immediately following the student lesson or before going home that day. If I wait too long important pieces of information may be lost.

For instance, in the goal of “Moving from a verbal prompt to independence, Student X will identify the same/different braille shapes with 85% accuracy”…this is an easy one as it is clearly defined in the title. Since this required little information in the form, I was able to put two of the forms on one page. See below:

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| IEP Benchmark Goal |  | | | |  | | | |  | | | |  | | | |  | | | |  | | | |
| Same braille shape |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Different braille shape |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Comments** |  | | | |  | | | |  | | | |  | | | |  | | | |  | | | |

I made the data sheet to be quite simple. This form has room for six days of documentation. There are 4 trials per day and I mark each trial as follows: + = demonstrated, - = not demonstrated, / = not attempted, and √+= with assistance.

Then when I look at a magnifier goal “Student X will use a magnifying glass to scan large busy pages for small details, finding the requested item 3 out of 4 times, by October 16, 2015”. Now with this particular student, the goal came with him from another district. In his previous district this was a consult goal and I had made this a direct services goal. I felt that in order for a student to learn to use the device, the student needs direct services to do so. And with this particular student, I was correct. Upon my first initial periods of working with him, I learned he did not know how to use the device. So instruction needed to start at square one. I task analyzed what skills he needed to have in order to meet with success using the device independently in a one-to-one setting and back in the classroom.

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill** | **Date:** | | | | **Date:** | | | |
|  | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** | **1** | **2** | **3** | **4** |
| Knows purpose of device |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Aware of dominant eye |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Place magnifier on worksheet/book so that it is resting flat on the surface |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Slide the magnifier over the object using hand until the center of the round dome is on top of the area you want to magnify |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Look directly into the top center of the dome to read the magnified text/image |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Using device, copies:   * Symbols * Words * Sentences |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Storage/Maintenance |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Determine safe location to store device at school |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Handle the device correctly |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Initiate the use of the device |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Communicate to others the purpose |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Uses appropriate materials to clean the device |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

With this particular data collection sheet, I used a different scoring system: I = Independent, SI = Semi Independent (self-initiates; requires minimal assistance), AN = Assistance Needed, and U = Unable to perform. I used the different scoring system as I needed to at a glance see how independent the student was becoming with the device. I created this form years ago and use it not only as a data collection sheet, but also as a pretest/post test. I have found this very effective in establishing a baseline.

Before I considered his goals mastered, I transitioned him back into the classroom and continued documenting on this form his progress. I was there to facilitate any problem that arose and was able to demonstrate to the teacher how it could be and should be used in the room. Long story short, the goal was met with success in the classroom!!

My same thought process was also true for goals relating to the Expanded Core Curriculum (ECC). The next student is in middle school and has two goals to be worked on. The first goal is “by IEP completion date (01/07/16) investigate careers in the computer field and possible accommodations to the career choices with 80 percent accuracy.” Based on his ECC evaluation I did as part of his three year evaluation, this goal was decided upon as he hopes to one day work in the computer industry, but was not sure of what aspect of it. This goal is a little different in regards to the data collection sheet. Instead of my completing the sheet to document student work, the student fills information on the form and saves it on my computer. When a page is filled, I will print a copy of it for him to keep in his binder.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Name of Occupation** |  |
| **Description of Occupation** |  |
| **Education Required** |  |
| **Salary Range** |  |
| **Other** |  |

As one can see, it is a very basic form. We discussed prior to his meeting what information he felt he needed to know as he investigated careers. I guided his thought process through leading questions. He also wrote both of his goals for his meeting! One last thing on this form, we also keep track of any website or resource we use. He doesn’t put that in the ‘Other’ row, but rather under each occupation table. This makes it very easy to go back and review where he’s looked. It is also teaching him valuable skills for when those research papers start coming his way!

The second goal is “by IEP completion date (01/07/16) learn about his eye condition and acuities to aid him in advocating for himself with 80 percent accuracy.” This was VITALLY important to the student as he is in the 7th grade with limited knowledge of his visual impairment. He knew he can’t see in the center of his eye. He was interested in learning more about his eye condition. He was able to develop the list of accommodations for the upcoming school year with me.

I created this form years ago and use it not only as a data collection sheet, but also as a pretest/post test. I have found this very effective in establishing a baseline. When I created this, I sat down to try to determine what information I felt the student needed to know about his/her eye condition and to whom he would need to relate all or part of the information to.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Skill** | **Date:** | **Date:** |
| States visual acuity (20/200) |  |  |
| Explains what the visual acuity means in his own words |  |  |
| States visual anomaly or eye disease (Stargardt) |  |  |
| Defines visual anomaly or eye disease in his own words |  |  |
| Able to differentiate what to say about visual impairment to:   * Peer * Classroom Teacher * Gym Teacher * Other Service Providers * Parents * Medical Experts |  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

Again, this is a little different than the other goals. I used the same scoring system as I used in the magnifier form: I = Independent, SI = Semi Independent (self-initiates; requires minimal assistance), AN = Assistance Needed, and U = Unable to perform. Since I am having the student document on the other objective, we document this one together each time we work on it. This provides him with a chance to practice to self-advocate with me and has led to some really good discussions!

The IEP meeting is over. Goals have been written and approved by the committee. Data sheets are now done. Time to work on those activities/materials/etc. to implement those goals. The nice thing about having data sheets is that writing progress notes is easier as you have the data to refer to. If a parent/teacher/administrator/other wants to discuss a student with you, you have this data to bring to the meeting. Whether you use my forms as a guide or not is not important. The important thing it to have something that you can use that makes sense to you.