

IEP Components Series

Measuring and Reporting Data

Another component of the IEP that IDEA requires is specifying how the child's progress will be measured. This statement flows naturally out of the annual goals written for the child, which must be measurable. If you're familiar with the 1997 Amendments to IDEA, you'll recognize this component, because it is maintained under the Amendments of 2004. This issue of NASET's IEP Component series focuses on measuring and reporting progress in a student's IEP.

IDEA's Exact Words

IDEA states that each child's IEP must contain:

(3) A description of—

(i) How the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals described in paragraph (2) of this section will be measured; and

(ii) When periodic reports on the progress the child is making toward meeting the annual goals (such as through the use of quarterly or other periodic reports, concurrent with the issuance of report cards) will be provided...[§300.320(a)(3)]

Prompting Questions to Help Guide Writing the Discussion

IEP teams may find it easier to address this component of the IEP by framing the discussion around specific questions. For example, the IEP team might ask itself these three questions:

- *How* will the child's progress be measured?
- *When* will the child's progress be measured?
- *How well* will the child need to perform in order to achieve his or her stated IEP goals (and, for some children, benchmarks or objectives)?

The information on how well a child must perform and how his or her progress will be measured is often called **evaluation criteria**. Well-written evaluation criteria are stated in objective, measurable terms. (You'll note the tie-in with the requirement that the annual goals written for a child must be measurable.) For example, a child might be required to perform a task "with 90% accuracy" or get 18 out of 20 words correct in each of 5 trials. These are concrete numbers or scores, establishing what the IEP team considers an acceptable level of performance or progress for the child.

In other instances, progress may not be measured in number scores, such as statements like this:

By June 15, Vicky will complete the obstacle course unassisted, as documented by the adapted physical education teacher.

In this example, the teacher will observe and take notes while Vicky completes the obstacle course. Teacher observation/notes are one way of checking progress. Other ways of checking progress may include:

- reviewing class work and homework assignments;
- giving quizzes, tests, or teacher-made assessments; and
- giving informal and/or formal assessments (the QRI or Woodcock-Johnson, for example).

Reporting to Parents on the Child's Progress

IDEA's exact words above also refer to the periodic reporting of each child's progress, which gives parents, other members of the IEP team, and the public agency the opportunity to review the IEP and make adjustments if they are warranted. When a child does not make the progress expected, then it's essential to determine why and take corrective action.

The 2004 Amendments to IDEA are less prescriptive about the timing of such reports than the 1997 Amendments. IDEA '97 required that parents of a child with a disability be informed of their child's progress "at least as often as parents of nondisabled children" [IDEA '97, at §300.347(a)(7)]. This is no longer true. Final Part B regulations have been modified to track the language used in the statute as passed by Congress in December 2004 [specifically, section 614(d)(1)(A)(i)(III)].

It's also important to note that the statute does not require report cards or quarterly report cards. When IDEA mentions them in §300.320(a)(ii) (see above), they "are used as examples...of when periodic reports on the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals *might* be provided" (71 Fed. Reg. at 46664, emphasis added). As the Department of Education clarifies:

The specific times that progress reports are provided to parents and the specific manner and format in which a child's progress toward meeting the annual goals is reported is best left to State and local officials to determine. (*Id.*)