

Progress Monitoring Made Simple

A guide for collecting meaningful data without overwhelming staff

Purpose

Progress monitoring is essential for measuring student growth, informing instruction, and meeting legal requirements. This guide provides straightforward, efficient strategies to collect and use data that truly reflects student performance.

Step 1: Identify What to Measure

Start with IEP goals, behavior plans, or instructional objectives. Focus on data points that directly connect to targeted skills. Avoid collecting excessive data that will not inform decisions. Common examples include:

- **Academic:** reading fluency (words correct per minute), math facts correct, written expression rubric scores
- **Behavioral:** frequency of target behavior, duration of on-task time
- **Functional:** number of independent transitions, accuracy in daily living tasks

Step 2: Choose Simple Data Collection Methods

- **Tally sheets** – quick checks for frequency counts
- **Checklists** – mark off observed skills or steps completed
- **Rubrics** – provide clear criteria and consistent scoring
- **Timed probes** – short, timed tasks to measure fluency or speed
- **Rating scales** – quick ratings of performance or behavior

Step 3: Make Data Collection Routine

Integrate data collection into daily instruction rather than treating it as a separate task. Assign clear responsibilities and maintain consistent schedules.

- Collect data at the same time or during the same activity each day/week
- Use digital tools (Google Forms, tablets) for easy recording and tracking
- Train all staff on how to collect and interpret data consistently

Step 4: Summarize and Share Data

Summarizing data regularly allows teams to make timely decisions. Use simple visuals for quick interpretation.

- Create line graphs or bar charts to show trends over time
- Highlight progress toward goals with percentages or growth rates
- Share updates with students and families to increase engagement

Sample Data Collection Forms

Academic Progress Monitoring – Reading Fluency Example:

Date	Words Read Correctly	Errors	Comments

Behavior Progress Monitoring – Frequency Count Example:

Date	Target Behavior	Frequency	Notes

Quick Reference: *Do's and Don'ts*

Do	Don't
Collect data that is directly tied to student goals	Collect data you won't use
Be consistent in timing and method	Change measurement tools without reason
Review and act on data regularly	Ignore small changes in data trends

Action Starter: Try Tomorrow

- Select one student goal and decide on the simplest way to track it
- Create a quick form or tally sheet for tomorrow's lesson
- Share the data plan with any staff supporting the student