

# TIPS FOR ALIGNING IEP GOALS WITH STATE STANDARDS



Aligning IEP goals with state standards ensures that students with disabilities have access to grade-level expectations while still receiving individualized support. Use the following guidance to create strong, meaningful, and standards-based goals.

## START WITH THE STATE STANDARDS

- Review the grade-level standards for the student's enrolled grade.
- Identify the essential skills embedded in each standard.
- Select standards that connect naturally to the student's Present Levels of Academic and Functional Performance (PLAAFP).

## USE THE PLAAFP TO DRIVE GOAL SELECTION

- Ensure the PLAAFP includes clear, measurable data describing strengths, needs, and skill gaps.
- Choose standards that match the student's documented areas of need.
- Avoid choosing standards unrelated to current performance levels.

## BREAK DOWN STANDARDS INTO ACHIEVABLE COMPONENTS

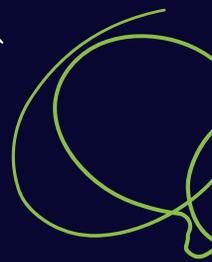
- Deconstruct complex standards into smaller prerequisite skills.
- Focus on foundational academic or functional skills that support the grade-level expectation.
- Write goals that allow the student to progress toward grade-level mastery, even if not fully at grade level.
- identify the prerequisite skills within the standard and build the goal around the most essential components.

## MAINTAIN MEASURABILITY AND CLARITY

- Ensure goals include clear criteria: condition, skill, measurement, and mastery level.
- Replace vague verbs like understand or know with observable actions like identify, solve, write, or explain.
- Write goals with observable actions and measurable criteria that clearly define expected student performance.

## ALIGN SUPPORTS AND ACCOMMODATIONS

- Pair each goal with accommodations that support mastery of the standard.
- Ensure supports do not change the rigor of the standard unless the team agrees a modification is required
- Ensure accommodations directly support the skill in the goal without altering the intended rigor of the standard.



**Aligning IEP goals with state standards ensures equity, access, and meaningful progress for students with disabilities. By choosing standards thoughtfully, individualizing support, and maintaining strong collaboration, educators can create plans that promote both inclusion and achievement.**

## PRIORITIZE FUNCTIONAL AND ACADEMIC RELEVANCE

- Select standards that meaningfully connect to real-life application.
- For transition-age students, consider how the standard supports college, career, or independent living goals.
- Select standards that build skills the student will use in academic settings, real-world tasks, or future goals.

## COLLABORATE WITH GENERAL EDUCATION TEACHERS

- Consult with content-area teachers to ensure that goals reflect academic priorities.
- Use their insight to connect IEP goals to classroom instruction and pacing guides.
- Work with general education teachers to ensure goals support classroom expectations and curriculum pacing.

## USE PROGRESS MONITORING TOOLS THAT MATCH THE STANDARD

- Align data collection tools (rubrics, probes, checklists, work samples) to the skill being measured.
- Monitor frequently to ensure instruction aligns with the standard's expectations.
- Choose measurement tools that directly assess the specific skill targeted in the aligned standard.

## KEEP RIGOR HIGH WHILE INDIVIDUALIZING SUPPORTS

- Maintain high expectations while adjusting the level of scaffolding needed.
- Goals should provide access to grade-level content, not remove students from it.
- Maintain grade-level expectations while adjusting instructional supports to ensure the student can meaningfully access the content.

## REVISIT STANDARDS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

- Review the alignment each quarter, especially if the student shows rapid progress or new challenges.
- Adjust the IEP if needed to stay aligned with instruction and student growth.
- Regularly review student progress and adjust goals or supports to stay aligned with evolving instructional needs.