

What are Present Levels of Performance, Goals, & Objectives?

On a typical IEP (and keep in mind that the actual look of the document differs from state to state), the heart of the document will be a collection of current levels of performance and goals.

Present Levels of Performance (also called *Current Levels of Performance*) are exactly what they sound like: This is an explanation, usually by your child's therapist, of what your child can and can't do right now. Some school districts will bring in outside experts to evaluate your child, especially if this is your first IEP, but it is best to have your child's performance evaluated by someone who knows them and has a history of working with them.

Here is an example from Ivan's IEP:

Ivan has difficulty separating from his parents. He experiences tantrum behavior and a distressed emotional state when separated from his parents. He has a difficult time calming himself.

You then create ***Goals and Objectives*** to address this Present Level of Performance. Goals and Objectives get a lot of attention in IEP books and classes, but we've found that though they are very important, they aren't nearly as frightening or complicated as the books make them out to be.

Simply put, goals are measurable challenges that you want your child to meet. The important thing is that the goal be measurable so you can tell if it has been accomplished or not. Here is an example from Ivan's IEP:

Ivan will participate in a preschool classroom by transitioning in, separating, maintaining his composure, and engaging in activities for a 3 hour period 4 out of 5 days per week.

After the goal, the IEP team develops objectives, or things your child will need to do in order to meet their goal. Again from Ivan's IEP:

- *Within 10-15 minutes of arriving at school, Ivan will separate from his parents and begin his school day 4/5 days over a 3 week period.*
- *During lunch time in the classroom, Ivan will tolerate sitting at the table and eating his food for a 10 minute period 4/5 days over 3 weeks.*

Though it is important to come to your IEP meeting with a list of goals you'd like to see on your child's IEP, don't spend too much time trying to write them in this sort of language at home. That's best left to the professionals. Write your goals and objectives as a team, but be sure to be prepared to give your own valuable input as well.