

# IEP REFLECTIVE FRAMEWORK

## PRESENT LEVELS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AND FUNCTIONAL PERFORMANCE

A UTAH STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE GUIDE



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## PLAAFP GOALS

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The Reflective Framework for Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP) Goals depicted in the image above, has the central purpose of providing equitable access to grade-level content for students with disabilities. This purpose is supported by six surrounding components:

1. Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance
2. Special Factors
3. Individualized Education Program Goals
4. Specially Designed Instruction and Service Time
5. Accommodations and Modifications
6. Transition

The purpose of this document is to review the requirements for PLAAFP Goals, as well as to give specific examples of how to implement these requirements.

## REQUIREMENTS

Requirements for Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) and Service Time are outlined in the Utah State Board of Education's [Special Education Rules \(USBE SER\)](#).

According to section III.I.1.a.:

"In developing, reviewing, and revising individualized education programs (IEPs), the IEP team must consider:

- (1) The strengths of the student;
- (2) The concerns of the parent(s) or adult student for enhancing the education of the student;
- (3) The results of the initial or most recent evaluation of the student, and
- (4) The academic, developmental, and functional needs of the student."

Additionally, as per section III.J.2.a., each IEP must contain:

"A statement of the student's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance (PLAAFP), including:

- (1) How the student's disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum (i.e., the same curriculum as for nondisabled students); or
- (2) For preschool students, as appropriate, how the disability affects the student's participation in appropriate activities."

## IMPORTANCE OF GOALS

A well-written PLAAFP is the first component of the IEP. It is central to ensuring a comprehensive approach in identifying student needs, and to ensuring access to grade-level standards while addressing procedural compliance. A PLAAFP is the first piece of information an IEP team may develop on a student with a disability. This information describes the students' strengths, concerns of the parent, results of evaluations, and the student's academic developmental, and functional needs. Effective practices, accommodations, modifications, and learning strategies are stated in the PLAAFP to help the student be successful. If the PLAAFP is insufficient or incomplete, it is difficult for the student to receive a free appropriate public education (FAPE).

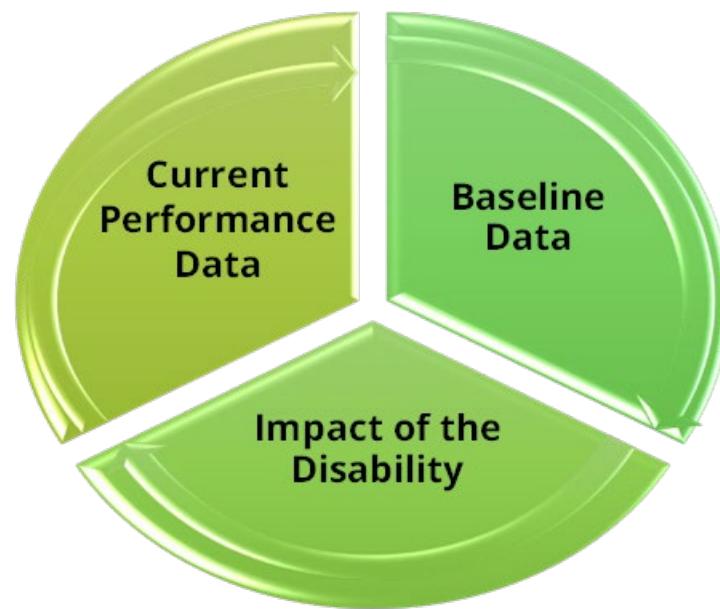
When developing the PLAAFP, the IEP team must consider the unique strengths and needs of the student. If the student were to transfer to another school, does the PLAAFP contain enough detailed information to describe what the student needs?

There should be sufficient data in the PLAAFP to create challenging, measurable goals, and to determine which special education, related services, accommodations, and modifications are necessary for a student to progress in the general education curriculum. If an IEP team fails to provide clear identification of the student's present levels, to establish a baseline for IEP goals, and to ensure parent participation, it could result in a denial of FAPE.

## COMPONENTS

To effectively demonstrate how the disability impacts the student's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum, the PLAAFP should contain the following:

- Student's current performance
- Baseline data
- Impact of the disability on the student's progress in the general education curriculum



### CURRENT AND BASELINE PERFORMANCE DATA

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Baseline and current performance data are the starting point for writing measurable goals. Data should be current, specific, measurable, and correspond directly to the annual goals. Consider data that will most accurately and specifically reflect the student's current level of functioning in each area. Teams should use data that is already being gathered regularly and align with grade-level standards to reflect where the student performs in relation to grade-level peers.

Types of data teams may consider:

- Parent and teacher input
- Student strengths and weaknesses
- Generalized student observations
- Student interests and learning styles
- Report cards
- Statewide assessments
- Standardized assessments
- Universal screenings
- Social/behavioral/adaptive checklists
- Progress monitoring
- Achievement tests
- Curriculum-based measurements
- Any information that helps the team understand how the student's disability affects involvement and progress in the general education curriculum.
- Transition assessments
- Transition observations

Data includes information not only for academics but also social/behavior, functional/adaptive skills, speech/language, motor, and any other area(s) where the student has an educational need. Past data that is no longer applicable should be excluded.

## IMPACT OF THE DISABILITY

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The impact of the disability explains how the student's disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum ([see Rules III.J](#)). When IEP teams can identify the impact of the student's disability, they can better determine the type and amount of specialized instruction that will enable the student to progress. It is not sufficient to state that the student has a disability.

For example, "Barry has a disability in reading" offers no information on how Barry's disability affects his progress in the general curriculum; it only states that he has a disability. Two students with the same disability can look very different in the general education classroom. The impact statement sets them apart. What is

unique about each student, and how do these specific characteristics inhibit each student's progression?

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## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN DETERMINING IMPACT

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Some questions teams may want to consider when determining the impact are:

1. **Why** is this student not making sufficient progress in meeting grade-level standards?
  - a. Is the student unable to read grade-level material such as written instructions or textbooks? Does the student need audiobooks or material read aloud to access the curriculum?
2. **What** does the disability look like in the general education classroom?
  - a. Is the student acting out, looking around for help, sitting alone, off-task, or interrupting the class?
3. **How** is this student different from their same-aged peers?
  - a. Is the student able to keep pace with the rest of the class and understand instructions given by the teacher?
4. **How** is the student's disability interfering with their ability to access the general curriculum?
  - a. Can the student comprehend the material being read or taught? Can they complete assignments independently?

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## EXAMPLES OF IMPACT STATEMENTS

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**Reading:** Devin's disability in reading comprehension causes him to have difficulty reading grade-level material, including instructions and questions on assignments, textbooks, stories, and word problems in math. Devin needs all grade-level material read aloud either through audiobooks, a peer reader, or the teacher. Devin's disability impacts his ability to independently read, comprehend, follow along at the same pace as his peers, and complete grade-level classroom assignments.

**Behavior:** Jesse has difficulty focusing, staying on task, and following teacher instructions. He often keeps his head down or stares out the window. Jessie's disability impedes his ability to follow along with the class, learn grade-level material, and complete assigned tasks in all classes.

**Written Expression:** Tina's disability in written expression negatively impacts her ability to complete written tasks independently. Tina often sits quietly, not working, and will not ask for help when given an assignment that requires writing more than one to two short sentences. This impacts her academic success in all instructional settings requiring written work.

**Math Calculations:** Audrey lacks foundational math skills, limiting her ability to participate in and comprehend grade-level math instruction. She is unable to complete grade-level assignments without significant support and reteaching of skills.

**Social Skills:** Kylie struggles with respecting personal boundaries with her general education peers, which negatively impacts her ability to create and keep friends, find peers to work on projects with, and complete group assignments. Kylie's social skills deficits impede her progress in both academic and social settings.

## EXAMPLES OF PLAAFP

### 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STUDENT: SPECIFIC LEARNING DISABILITY

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#### CURRENT PERFORMANCE & BASELINE DATA: 4<sup>TH</sup> GRADE STUDENT

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Jill is a 4th grade student who has a specific learning disability in reading fluency. Jill has a strength in listening comprehension. She is able to process oral information, which allows her to comprehend teacher instructions, retain information she hears, understand material read aloud, and contribute to class discussions. Jill struggles with decoding grade-level words and reading with sufficient accuracy and fluency to support her comprehension. Her parents point out that she struggles to read independently and is easily frustrated when given homework assignments that require reading grade-level texts. She enjoys it when her parents read a variety of books out loud with her. When read to, she makes predictions and adds thoughtful comments about the events and information from the story.

According to oral reading fluency assessments given over four weeks, Jill's currently reading independently at a 1st grade level: she can read 52 correct words per

minute (CWPM) with 92% accuracy with a retell score of 20. At a 4th grade level, she reads an average of 24 CWPM with 65% accuracy with a retell score of 10. The spring benchmark for 4th grade is 115 CWPM with 98% accuracy, with a score of 33 for retell. Jill completed the LEA-wide reading benchmark assessment and scored in the "well below benchmark" range. Jill's lack of fluency due to her word-level reading difficulty makes it hard for her to retell what she reads. A possible relationship has been identified between her word level reading accuracy and oral reading fluency in observing Jill's reading patterns. Jill would benefit from additional phonemic awareness practice and instruction to increase her reading fluency to support her comprehension.

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#### IMPACT OF THE DISABILITY: 4TH GRADE STUDENT

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Jill's disability impedes her progress in the general curriculum. At this time, she does not read fluently and accurately and is unable to read and comprehend grade-level material in all academic areas independently. As a result, Jill has difficulty reading grade-level texts, and directions in a timely manner. Jill prefers using text-to-speech accommodations rather than having the teacher read material aloud as it draws less attention to her disability.

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#### 7TH GRADE STUDENT: SIGNIFICANT COGNITIVE DISABILITY

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##### CURRENT PERFORMANCE & BASELINE DATA: 7TH GRADE STUDENT

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Sophie is a 7th grade student with a significant cognitive disability and approximately 85% of her math instruction is provided through small groups with three to four other students. Sophie's parents indicate that Sophie uses eye gaze at home as her primary mode of communication and would love to see Sophie increasing her use of eye gaze during instruction. Sophie has been receiving explicit instruction with number sense vocabulary and demonstrates that she can use eye gaze or gestures to match or identify groups of up to five tangible objects representing "more" and "less" in 8/20 (40%) opportunities. Sophie non-verbally matches or identifies the meaning of "same" or "equal" with 98% accuracy when provided with visual or tactile groups of objects or items. Sophie has also been



working on geometry vocabulary and demonstrates the ability to identify basic geometrical shapes (i.e., square, triangle, circle) with 95% accuracy when using picture representations of those shapes. She has also been working on generalizing her ability to recognize shapes to items in her environment. Sophie is currently able to generalize shapes to real objects in 12/25 opportunities when the real item is paired with the visual item.

Although Sophie identifies “more” and “less” with approximately 40% accuracy, she still needs to build that academic language to a point where she can be proficient with that terminology. Sophie really benefits from integrating math concepts with vocabulary. Vocabulary like “more” and “less” is also used to integrate Sophie’s number sense and knowledge of geometric shapes. Sophie currently identifies through pointing and gesturing to numbers up to 10 with 78% accuracy but identifies numbers 1–5 with 100% accuracy. During instruction, we are often using numbers (1–5) or shapes (square, circle, or triangle) that we know she is proficient with to practice or teach the concepts of “more” and “less.” Once Sophie identifies “more” and “less” with more accuracy, she will then need to be able to classify, group, or pair items together based on whether the characteristics are “same/equal” or “more/less.”

Based on the Personal Preference Indicators assessment completed with Sophie’s parents on 3/20/22, Sophie enjoys being around people and lively activities. She enjoys being outside, swimming, listening to music, playing with her dog, and watching videos of animals. She does not like being left alone and will gesture when she wants attention. Sophie makes food choices by pointing but does not currently make choices about what she wears or watches on her iPad. Life Skills Assessment: Self Reliance, completed with her parents on 3/15/22, indicates that Sophie can recognize pictures of items she wants to play with but is not consistently making choices in her environment. She is flexible and can move from one activity to the next easily. She is currently not using a switch or communication device for communication or choice-making at school or home. For Sophie to be more self-determined, she needs to be able to make consistent choices and indicate her wants and needs.

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## IMPACT OF THE DISABILITY: 7TH GRADE STUDENT

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Sophie's disability impacts her ability to demonstrate a functional understanding of how we use math in the real world, and her ability to access the general education curriculum. Numbers, shapes, and visual/tangible manipulatives used in math are simply a representation of something else. For math concepts to be meaningful for Sophie, she needs to be able to develop the language skills with math so she can group, categorize, and compare numbers, shapes, and manipulatives in a functional way.

## 10TH GRADE STUDENT: OTHER HEALTH IMPAIRMENT

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### CURRENT PERFORMANCE & BASELINE DATA: 10TH GRADE STUDENT

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Matthew is a 10th grade student who has been diagnosed with anxiety and ADHD. Matthew does well in math, science, engineering, and art. His reading scores indicate he reads at a 12th grade level, and he is able to learn new concepts quickly. Matthew likes working with his hands and building things. Matthew has a disability that impacts his Executive Functioning and written expression skills.

In written expression, Matthew is anxious, struggles with producing clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to the task, purpose, and audience. Matthew's mother notes that he can sit at the kitchen counter at home for over an hour and not write anything. In his English class, Matthew was given three argumentative writing assignments. He was expected to write a multi-paragraph essay in which he introduces a claim; develops claims and counterclaims with supporting evidence for each; uses words, phrases, and clauses to link the major sections; and provide a concluding statement that supports the argument presented. On the first assignment, he demonstrated severe anxious behavior and was unable to write anything independently. On the second and third attempts, he was given a graphic organizer and support from the teacher to help him get started. On both assignments, he wrote two short paragraphs and scored 3/12 and 5/12 on a writing rubric. His arguments were disjointed and difficult to follow. He was able to produce a claim with no evidence

but did not write a counterclaim. He did not use transitional linking words and lacked a concluding statement that supported his argument.

As noted above, Matthew's Executive Functioning deficits affect him in other content areas. Based on classroom observations in History, Biology, and Language Arts, when initially given a complex task, Matthew appeared to be overwhelmed by the task 90% of the time (e.g., saying "I don't know what to do") and putting his head in his jacket. He appeared distressed/worried and was able to ask for help with the task (e.g., saying "Can you help me") only 20% of the time. Matthew's teachers noted that, when offered support to break down a large task into written steps with due dates his stress typically seems to decrease immediately, and he can complete the steps with minimal help. He would benefit from instruction in building his awareness of when he needs this support and learning to break complex tasks into manageable steps.

Matthew is currently employed part-time at his uncle's law firm. Based on information from a 2/5/21 workplace interview with Matthew and his uncle, Matthew has demonstrated strengths in the workplace in answering the telephone and filing various legal documents. Based on the Your Future Interest Profiler Inventory from 12/16/20 and an Informal Student Interview, Matthew demonstrates a strong interest in becoming a high school teacher. Based on results from the 1/23/21 Self-Determination Checklist, Matthew can participate in his IEP meetings and express his interests and preferences. Based on student work samples and opportunities for classroom presentations, Matthew can access the computer by logging in and typing terms in the search bar for research with 100% accuracy. Matthew can determine which links to access when a list is generated by the search 20% of the time independently. This difficulty with accessing research impacts Matthew's ability to obtain information on employment opportunities and colleges. It will affect his ability to conduct research information for college coursework when Matthew attends college. Matthew needs to be able to access research with 90% accuracy independently.

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## IMPACT OF THE DISABILITY: 10TH GRADE STUDENT

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Matthew's disability inhibits his progress in the general curriculum. In reviewing Matthew's academic patterns, a cyclical connection has been made between his

anxiety, executive functioning skills and multi-step tasks. When given a complex task, Matthew exhibits an increase in anxiety and an inability to begin the task and demonstrate proficiency in grade-level standards.