



Individualized Education Program (IEP)

progress reports: How will you know if your child is making progress on IEP goals?

The Individualized Education Program (IEP) process is a logical one. Each year the IEP team, which includes the parents, develops an IEP. The child's present levels of performance determine the educational needs of the child. The team develops goals to meet those needs. Then what? How will you know if your child is making progress on those goals?¹

Why is making progress important? Making appropriate progress on IEP goals is the key to meaningful special education. "For all students, including those performing at grade level and those unable to perform at grade level, a school must offer an IEP that is 'reasonably calculated to **enable a child to make progress** appropriate in light of the child's circumstances.'" ²

Federal and state rules³ say that the IEP must identify:

- **How often** your child's progress toward annual goals will be measured (parents must be informed at least as often as parents are informed of their nondisabled child's progress)
- **How you will be informed** of the progress such as by written progress reports, a school conference, or an IEP meeting; if the progress report is not given in writing, parents may want to send an email confirming the verbal information they received
- If the **amount of progress** your child is making is likely to lead to the accomplishment of that goal by the end of this IEP year

Let's look at a simple example:

Goal: Jess will increase her ability to remember her materials when coming to class from 40 percent of the time to 80 percent of the time as measured by daily tracking procedures.

First IEP progress report: Jess is improving her ability to bring materials to class. During the previous two weeks, Jess brought her materials 55 percent of the time. At this rate of progress, Jess is on track to accomplish the goal by the end of the IEP year.

¹ There are more ways for parents to know if their child is making progress at school. See "How Will I Know if My Child is Making Progress," <https://media.pacer.org/php/php-c78.pdf>

² U.S. Department of Education, Questions and Answers on U.S. Supreme Court Case Decision *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District Re-1*, December 7, 2017

³ Federal IDEA: 300.320 (a)(3)(i) and (ii): The IEP must include a "description of how the child's progress toward meeting the annual goals described in paragraph (2) of this section will be measured; and 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."

Minnesota special education rule: 3525.2810 Subpart 1 (A)(9): The IEP must include "a statement of how the pupil's progress toward the annual goals described in subitem (2) (IEP goals and objectives) will be measured, how the pupil's parents will be regularly informed by such means as periodic report cards, at least as often as parents are informed of their nondisabled student's progress, of the pupil's progress toward the annual goals described in (2), and the extent to which that progress is sufficient to enable the pupil to achieve the goals by the end of the year."

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- **Parent agrees with report:** IEP continues as written.
 - **Parent does not agree with report:** IEP team meets to discuss parent observation of lack of progress.

What if you think your child is not making meaningful progress? “An IEP is not a guarantee of a specific educational or functional result for a child with a disability. However, IDEA does provide for revisiting the IEP if the expected progress is not occurring.”⁴ The Individuals with Disability Education Act (IDEA) states that the school must revise an IEP to “address any lack of expected progress toward annual goals.”⁵ Parents can request a meeting to discuss revisions to the child’s IEP. The child’s IEP may need changes in:

- Special education or related services
- Assistive technology
- Curriculum or method of instruction
- Educational setting

If the IEP team cannot agree whether or not your child is making meaningful progress, additional evaluation may be needed.

In summary, IEP progress report information helps the IEP team know if the plan is working for the child. If the child is not making meaningful progress, the IEP team should meet to revise the plan so that they will make necessary progress.

⁴ U.S. Department of Education, Questions and Answers on U.S. Supreme Court Case Decision *Endrew F.v. Douglas County School District Re-1*, December 7, 2017

⁵ IDEA regulation 300.324 (b)(ii)(A)