Developing Meaningful Active Learning Goals

Curriculum and IEP considerations

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OSERS (Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services) letter from the Director Melody Musgrove states:

- "The standards must be clearly related to grade-level content, although they may be restricted in scope or complexity **or take the form of introductory or pre-requisite skills**."
- Focusing on prerequisite skills is appropriate for children at these developmental levels

OSERS continues…

- Based on the interpretation of "general education curriculum" set forth in this letter, we expect annual IEP goals to be aligned with State academic content standards for the grade in which a child is enrolled.
- This alignment, however, **must guide but not replace the individualized decision-making required** in the IEP process.

OSERS letter further clarifies:

- In fact, the IDEA's **focus on the individual needs of each child with a disability is an essential consideration** when IEP Teams are writing annual goals that are aligned with State academic content standards for the grade in which a child is enrolled so that the child can advance appropriately toward attaining those goals during the annual period covered by the IEP.

OSERS letter indicates…

- In developing an IEP, **the IEP Team must consider how a child's specific disability impacts his or her ability to advance appropriately toward attaining his or her annual goals** that are aligned with applicable State content standards during the period covered by the IEP.

Steps to Align to Standard Curriculum

- An IEP is only developed after a thorough evaluation has been made
- Begin by completing a comprehensive assessment such as the functional scheme or other comparative tool.
- This assessment can then be used to explain the PFAAFP (present level of achievement & functional performance)

	0-3 months	3-6 months	6-9 months	9-12 months	12-15 months	15-18 months	18-24 months	24-30 months	24-30 months	30-36 months	36-48 months
Gross Movement	68%	36%									
Fine Movement	71%	66%									
Mouth Movement	40%	40%									
Visual Perception	60%	46%									
Auditory Perception	100%	83%	43%								
Haptic-tactile Perception	76%	76%	70%								
Smell and Taste Perception	46%										
Spatial Perception	83%	67%									
Object Perception	100%	71%	31%								
Language non-verbal	100%	76%									
Language verbal	73%	63%									
Social Perception	100	100	67								
Emotional Perception		100	67								
Play and Activities	67%										
Toileting Skills		100%	100%	20%							
Undressing and Dressing	100%	100%	33%								
Personal Hygiene	100%	50%									
Eating Skills	0%	17%									

Using the Functional Scheme

- Using the functional scheme in the previous slide, the PLAAFP may state:
  - The child is generally functioning at a 0-3 month level with splinter skills occurring primarily in the 3-9 month range.
  - This is helpful later when explaining why Active Learning programming strategies designed for sensorimotor & early pre-operational level learners is an appropriate instructional approach.

Active Learning IEP Assessment

- Gather information from
  - Physical therapist
  - Occupational therapist
  - Speech Pathologist
  - O & M Specialist
  - VI consultant
- Detail skill levels in
  - ADLs
  - Motor skills
  - Communication skills
  - General Education – math/writing/reading
  - Socio-Emotional
  - Medical

Positive Behavioral Supports

- For many students trust, bonding and communication supports are key to reducing barriers to learning
- Use specific strategies such as The Five Phases of Educational Treatment
  - Offering
  - Imitation
  - Interaction
  - Sharing the Work
  - Consequences

Instructional Strategies & Interventions

- Because of significant physical, sensory, cognitive and/or emotional issues, these students are not able to participate in the same instructional activities as their same-age peers.
- They must approach academic content first by developing foundational concepts and skills.
- Utilize specially designed learning environments & activities as a specialized strategy to reduce barriers to learning (Active Learning)

Assistive Technology

- Active Learning equipment (hopsadress, little room, resonance board, etc.) are considered assistive technology. They are needed to:
  - Develop specific motor skills needed to travel and eat
  - Teach spatial relations for the purpose of orientation and mobility
  - Increase awareness of auditory qualities of various sounds
  - To produce specific speech sounds

Supplementary Aids & Services

- Altering the physical room arrangement
- Having one-to-one assistance
- Time for staff collaboration
- Specialized equipment & materials
- Slowing the pace of instruction
- Having more breaks
- Training staff to implement instruction
- Utilizing real objects and hands on experiences
- Flexible schedules

Related Services & Program Modifications

- Training of all support staff and parent on Active Learning
- Training can take the place of on-line information, reading materials, conferences
- Modifications may include
  - Time to create new learning environments
  - Purchase of aids, interesting materials, use of the functional scheme or FIELA curriculum

Goals & Benchmarks

- Base goals on your comprehensive assessment
- Most students “need everything” so set priorities
- Work with families to identify the greatest needs
- Look at areas of function that are holding back learning, and fill-in the gaps prior to moving on

Goals

- A well written goal should:
  - Positive
  - Describe a skill that can be seen and measured
- A well written goal should answer:
  - Who? – will achieve the goal (THE STUDENT)
  - What? – skill or behavior
  - How? – in what defined manner or level
  - Where? – in what setting or conditions
  - When? – by what time, ending date

Example goal

- By the end of the school year (when), the student (who) will reach and grasp (what skill/behavior) a variety of preferred objects using a palmar grasp (how, what manner) when placed in a specific learning environment during independent play and during adult-child interactions using the techniques of offering and/or imitation (where, setting & conditions) at least 10 times during a 15 minute observation period completed weekly (level).

Benchmark Objective

- By December, during independent play in the Little Room and with a position board, the student will reach and grasp preferred objects using a palmar grasp at least 5 times during a 15 minute observation.
- By December, during a group activity, when offered graspable objects the student will independently reach and grasp the items offered when positioned immediately next to the students hand at least 5 times during a 15 minute observation period.

Active Learning & General Curriculum

- AL can is an instructional approach which can be used to teach any content
- IDEA clearly states that all students will have access to the standard curriculum, but does not state that it must be provided at grade-level.
- Instead a curriculum should be provided at the level the student needs to learn.

Active Learning & The Expanded Core Curriculum

- Assistive Technology
- Career Education
- Compensatory Skills
- Recreation & Leisure
- Orientation & Mobility
- Self-determination Skills
- Social Interaction Skills
- Sensory Efficiency Skills
- Independently Living Skills

Active Learning IEP Applications

- Transition Services
- Behavioral Intervention Plans (BIP)
- Placement
- It is a mistake to believe Active Learning is only a piece of equipment. It is a total approach to instruct students with special needs and can be addressed throughout the IEP

Grade Level Alignment

Priority Skills	General Curriculum Area
Self-concept, emotional skills	Health
Fine, gross motor skills (use of hands, arms, legs, feet, mouth)	Science & Mathematics & Fine Arts & Physical Education
Foundational concepts - object properties, functions	English Language Arts and Reading & Science
Receptive, expressive communication	English Language Arts and Reading
Audition - recognize, localize sounds	English Language Arts and Reading & Social Studies & Fine Arts

Grade Level Alignment

Priority Skills	General Curriculum Area
Vision, other senses - locate and identify objects, people	English Language Arts and Reading & Fine Motor
Tactile exploration	English Language Arts and Reading & Social Studies
Oral motor/speech skills - feeding, vocalizing, tactile exploration	English Language Arts and Reading & Fine Arts & Health
Overall body awareness	Social Studies & Health & Physical Education

Aligning Curriculum - Learners below 48 Months Developmentally

- Common Core
  - http://www.corestandards.org/read-the-standards/
- Dynamic Learning Maps: Essential Elements
  - http://dynamiclearningmaps.org/
- Texas Early Learning Pathways
  - http://earlylearningtexas.org/media/24000/texas%20early%20learning%20pathways.pdf

General Curriculum Skills Science

Prerequisite Skills in Science

Energy & Matter: Characteristics and Properties of Matter

- compare and contrast a variety of mixtures and solutions such as rocks in sand, sand in water, or sugar in water
- measure, compare, and contrast physical properties of matter, including size, mass, volume, states (solid, liquid, gas), temperature, magnetism, and the ability to sink or float

Organisms & Environment: Identify How Organisms Meet Their Basic Needs

- identify and compare the parts of plants
- identify parts of plants such as roots, stem and leaves and parts of animals such as head, eyes, and limbs

Science, Grade 5, Curriculum Goals

- **Matter and energy**. The student knows that matter has measurable physical properties and those properties determine how matter is classified, changed, and used. The student is expected to:
- (A) classify matter based on physical properties, including mass, magnetism, physical state (solid, liquid, and gas), relative density (sinking and floating), solubility in water, and the ability to conduct or insulate thermal energy or electric energy;
- (C) demonstrate that some mixtures maintain physical properties of their ingredients such as iron filings and sand; and
- (D) identify changes that can occur in the physical properties of the ingredients of solutions such as dissolving salt in water or adding lemon juice to water.

Science, Sensory Efficiency, Gross & Fine Motor

- By the end of the IEP completion date, **given a variety of materials used in various Science units (as well as other materials) in combination with perceptualizing aids (e.g. Support Bench)**, the student will experiment and explore the properties and characteristics of organic and inorganic objects and materials through tactile exploration using her mouth, lips, tongue, hands, arms, legs and feet five times within a **30 minute period.**

For More Information

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