

ECSE Orientation: Early Childhood Special Education and the Individual Education Plan



Creating Functional IEPs

Introductions

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Vermont Guiding Principles: Supporting Each and Every Young Child and Family's Full and Equitable Participation

We believe that each and every child...

- Learns within the context of secure and authentic relationships, play, and interactions within their environments.
- Deserves equitable access to experiences that acknowledge and build on their uniqueness.
- Deserves opportunities to deeply learn and develop to their full potential through joyful interactions in safe, accepting environments.

Advancing Equity

All children have the right to equitable learning opportunities that help them achieve their full potential as engaged learners and valued members of society. Thus, all early childhood educators have a professional obligation to advance equity. They can do this best when they are effectively supported by the early learning settings in which they work and when they and their wider communities embrace diversity and full inclusion as strengths, uphold fundamental principles of fairness and justice, and work to eliminate structural inequities that limit equitable learning opportunities.

*- National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC
Position Statement on Equity, April 2019)*

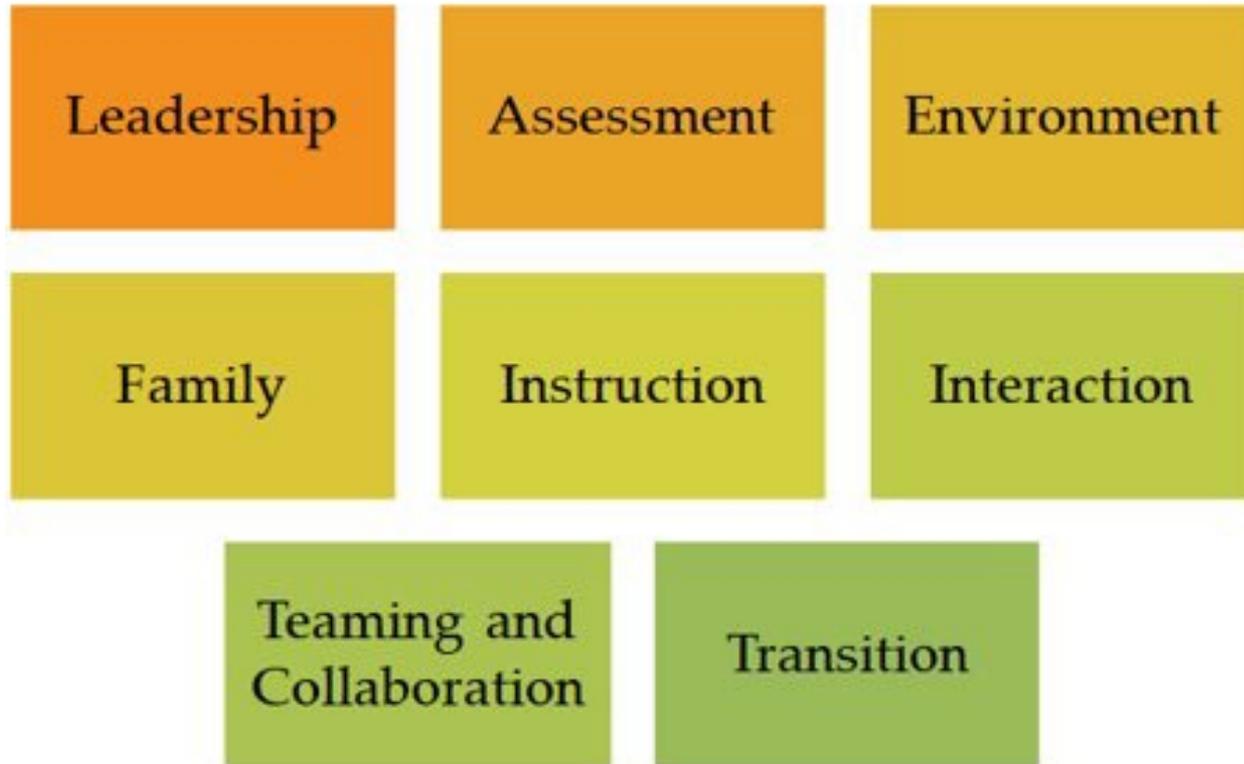
Considerations for Equity



1. Provide high quality early education programs that build on each and every child's unique individual and family strengths, cultural background, language(s), abilities, and experiences.

2. Eliminate differences in educational outcomes as a result of who children are, where they live, and what resources their families have.

DEC Recommended Practices



Example of DEC Recommended Practices: Interaction

Sensitive and responsive interactional practices are the foundation for promoting the development of a child's language and cognitive and emotional competence. These interactional practices are the basis for fostering all children's learning. For children who have or are at risk for developmental delays/disabilities, they represent a critical set of strategies for fostering children's social-emotional competence, communication, cognitive development, problem-solving, autonomy, and persistence

DEC Recommended Practices: Interaction

INT1. Practitioners promote the child's social-emotional development by observing, interpreting, and responding contingently to the range of the child's emotional expressions.

INT2. Practitioners promote the child's social development by encouraging the child to initiate or sustain positive interactions with other children and adults during routines and activities through modeling, teaching, feedback, or other types of guided support.

INT3. Practitioners promote the child's communication development by observing, interpreting, responding contingently, and providing natural consequences for the child's verbal and non-verbal communication and by using language to label and expand on the child's requests, needs, preferences, or interests

DEC Recommended Practices: Practice Improvement Tools

INTERACTION Checklist 1 of 4

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Adult-Child Interaction Checklist

This checklist includes practices that can be used to engage a child in adult-child interactive episodes to promote and support child competence. The main focus of the practice is responding promptly and positively (contingently) to a child's behavior to elicit or maintain child interactions with an adult during everyday activities and play. Adult contingent responsiveness is characterized by sensitive, prompt, positive, and an appropriate amount of adult responses to maintain and not interrupt child interactions.

The checklist indicators can be used by a practitioner to develop a plan to use the practices with a child or to promote a parent's or other family members' use of the practices. The checklist rating scale can be used to do a self-evaluation to determine if the different practice characteristics were used by a practitioner with a child or as part of promoting a parent's use of the practices.

Practitioner: _____ Child: _____ Date: _____

Please indicate which practice characteristic you were able to use as part of interactions with a child:

	seldom or never (0 - 25%)	Some of the time (25 - 50%)	As often as I can (50 - 75%)	Most of the time (75 - 100%)	Notes
1. Observe the child's participation in everyday activities and social play	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
2. Identify the focus of the child's attention or engagement in the activities (e.g., child interests)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
3. Follow the child's lead and interests or preferences	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
4. Interpret the child's behavior and responses as an intent to interact or communicate with you	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
5. Respond promptly and positively (contingently) to the child's behavior in a way that maintains a child's interactions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
6. Enter into the child's play or interactions to encourage your-turn-my-turn play and joint-attention interactions	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	
7. Encourage the child to try new things (behavior elaborations) through modeling, expansions, or other types of guided supports	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	

This checklist is based upon the following DEC Recommended Practices: Interaction 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
 The DEC Recommended Practices are available at <http://dec-sped.org/recommendedpractices>
 Access this checklist and other products at <http://ectacenter.org/decip>
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INTERACTION Practitioner Practice Guide 1 of 7

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Nursery Rhymes and Child Interactions

Using rhymes during interactions with toddlers helps them explore the sounds and purposes of language. Songs, finger plays, and rhyming games provide opportunities for toddlers to have fun during interactions with adults while building skills for understanding and using language.

[Watch a video of this guide](#)

Using Rhymes with Young Children

- During everyday interactions with toddlers in your classroom, pay attention to the materials and activities they like to do and the things that hold their attention. Use these interests as the focus of songs and rhymes they will enjoy (e.g., "Tyrese loves to build with blocks, the color of his bright red socks!")
- When you notice children engaging in sound or word play, join in their play and respond positively. Repeat their sounds and words and expand on what they say by introducing new or novel rhyming sounds/words. For example, noticing children making farmyard sounds as they play with a barn and animal figures: "Jan's cow just said, 'Moo!' Can you moo? I can too!"
- Use familiar rhymes or songs or create new ones using a child's name or words a child often says. Point out or emphasize the words that rhyme. Make rhymes silly and fun to keep a child engaged. For example, "Ben put a hen in the pen. Matt put a hat on a rat."
- Put action and meaning to the story of the rhyme by combining rhymes with finger plays or body movements. Demonstrate the motions while saying the rhyme; then repeat the rhyme while helping children do the motions. Encourage the children to say or sing the rhyme while acting out the motions independently; show your excitement about their participation. For example, have toddlers hold hands while sitting facing one another. Show them how to rock back and forth to the music while singing "Row Your Boat".
- Provide multiple opportunities for children to use favorite rhymes, finger plays, and songs in different classroom activities and throughout the day. For example, when children are having a snack, playing outside, transitioning between activities, or getting ready for nap.



Photo: Ji Pksarote / Shutterstock.com

A Quick Peek

The children in Jolynn's class loved singing songs and looking at rhyming books. Several children gathered around Jolynn as she read a book about animals. When they reached a page with a spider, Cade exclaimed, "Spider song! Spider song!" Jolynn grinned at him and said, "Shall we sing Eensy Weensy Spider?" Cade and Evie clapped their hands in approval of the familiar song, and Jolynn sang the song through, showing them how to make the motions. "Let's do it together next," she encouraged them. Cade and Evie joined in, trying to sing and make the motions as Shea and Addie watched and listened intently. Singing "Out came the sun...", Jolynn helped Evie hold her arms up. Later, she noticed Cade and Evie helping Addie and other children try to sing and act out the song.

You'll know the practice is working if...

- Children participate more often in interactions involving rhyming games
- Children enjoy engaging in word play and manipulating vocal sounds
- Children use new sounds and words in their everyday interactions with you and other children

This practice guide is based upon the following DEC Recommended Practices: Interaction 1, 2, 3, 4, 5
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 Access this practice guide and other products at <http://ectacenter.org/decip>
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Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS)



Early MTSS



Vermont's Early Multi-tiered System of Supports

Promoting a Statewide Birth to Five (Early MTSS) and PreK-3 MTSS Sustainable System



Components of Early MTSS

- Strong System Support and Leadership Team
- Partnership and Collaboration
- High Quality Responsive Learning Environments
- Comprehensive Assessment Data Feedback Loops
- Well-designed Professional Learning Opportunities

Sustaining Pyramid Practices

- Established Leadership Teams
- Developed Systems Inventory of Practice + External System/Event Support
- Built a State Cadre of Pyramid Model Trainers and Practice Base Coaches
- Identified Measures: TPOI, ASQ-M, TS GOLD, CLASS, BIP and Inclusive Classroom Profile (ICP)
- Early MTSS Practice and Implementation Manual (Learning team)



Early MTSS balances building a system of supports for Universal PreK programs, PreK-3rd grade, center based childcare, home-based childcare, Head Start and community partners in order to promote implementation of evidence-based practices to improve social, emotional and behavioral skills for each and every child

Birth to Five

Early MTSS Embedded into State Policy and Practices!

PreK-3rd Grade



Objective



Today we will learn or refresh our knowledge and practice in writing individualized, functional, measurable, and well-formed IEP goals in order to address the unique needs of each child receiving Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Services in Vermont.

Overview of the Purpose

Learning or refreshing our knowledge on how to write individualized, functional, measurable, and well-formed IEP goals is an important first step in developing each unique child's IEP.

Strong IEPs set the standard for strong teaching.



Definition of an Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Individualized Education Program (IEP) is a legal document under United States law that is developed for each public school child in the U.S. who needs special education. It is created through a team of the child's family and district personnel who are knowledgeable about the child's needs. IEPs must be reviewed every year to keep track of the child's educational progress.



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Form 5: Early Childhood Special Education (ECSE) Ages Three Through Five Individualized Education Program (IEP)

Important Dates and School District Information:

School District of Residence: A-G: Select your district H-O: Select your district P-Z: Select your district
IEP Case Manager: Annual Meeting Date: Next Annual Review Date:
Next 3 Year Evaluation Date: Effective Date of Revision:

Child Information:

Child's Name: Gender: Date of Birth:
Primary Disability Category: Developmental Delay in the following area(s):
 Adaptive Cognitive Skills Communication Fine/Gross Motor Social/Emotional
Child Count ID #: Current Age: School or Program: Grade Assigned:
Is this student an English Learner? Y N If yes, what is the child's home or native language?

Family Contact Information:

Parent(s)/Guardians:
Telephone # (Home): (Cell): (Work):
Address:
Is an interpreter needed? Y N If yes, what language?

OSEP

- "Section 1414(d)(1)(A)(i)(I) of the Act requires an IEP to include a statement of the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance."
([Commentary in the Federal Register, page 46662](#))
- This is required by federal law, regardless of whether the ultimate goal of the IEP is to teach the child functional skills or academic skills.



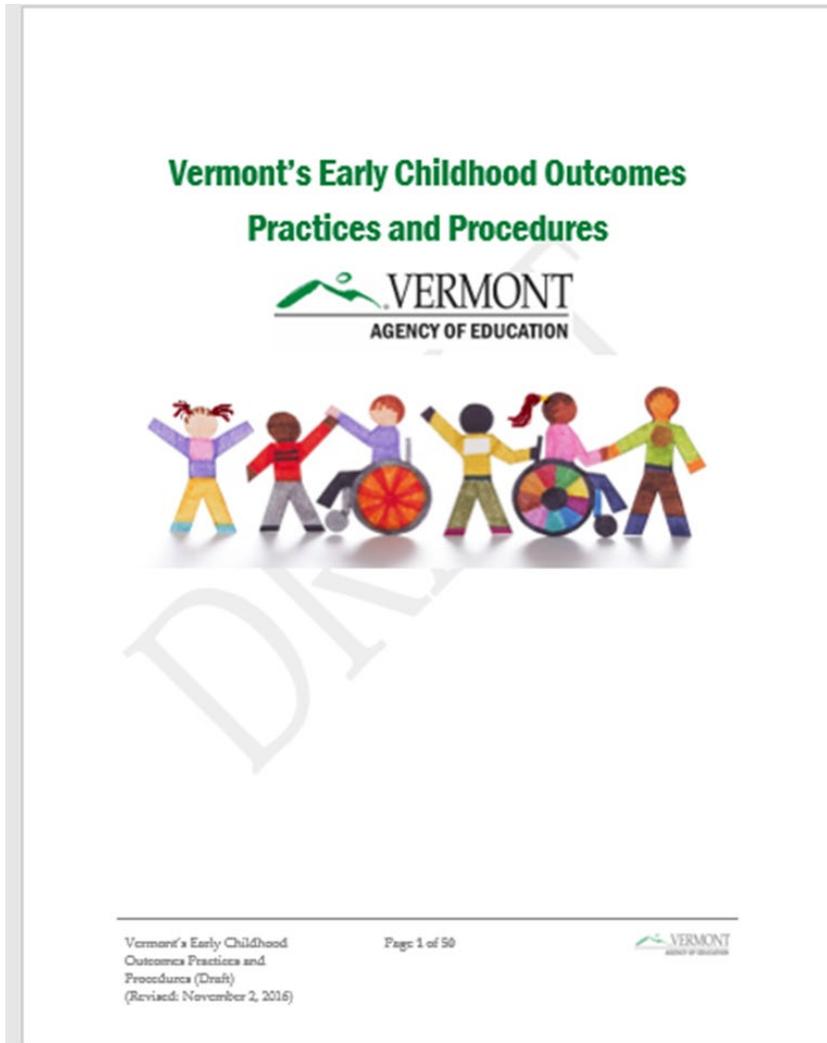
Definition of Present Level of Education and Functional Performance (PLEFP)



It's essential to get accurate data on how your child is functioning, getting that baseline data, because this is the information from which you'll develop your child's IEP goals.

- Describe the child's skills and abilities based on their initial special education evaluation, observations, and family input and should cover all areas of development.

Teaming



Gathering Information

What does
the family
want for
their child?



Determining Strengths and Challenges

What does the child already do well?

What does a successful day look like?



Data Informed Decision Making through Evaluation and Assessment

What has been learned during the evaluation and functional assessment process about the child's skills, development and what impacts their learning?



Working Together

Critical for
developing
high
quality,
functional
outcomes



Present Levels of Educational and Functional Performance (PLEFP) on the ECSE IEP



Present Levels of Educational and Functional Performance (PLEFP)

Present levels of *educational*
AND *functional*
performance are the
foundation upon which the
Individualized Education
Plan (IEP) can be developed
to specify appropriate goals,
services, supports,
accommodations and
placement for the child.



The PLEFP should....

- Be stated in terms that are specific, measurable, and objective;
- Describe current performance, not past performance;
- Describe the effect of the disability on the child's progress in appropriate activities;
- Prioritize and identify needs that will be written as goals;
- Identify strengths as they relate to possible interventions;
- Provide baseline data for each need; and
- Set the measurement method for each goal.



Educational AND Functional

Educational refers to a child's current and discrete skill level in one or more of the following five developmental domains:

- Social/emotional
- Adaptive
- Communication
- Cognitive
- Motor



Functional emphasizes how the child is able to use and integrate these discrete skills in order to intentionally use skills in a way that is meaningful to the child across routines and various settings.

Think Function First!

The first and most important step after gathering information is focusing on functional planning.

- Carefully consider context – home, school, and community
- What the child and family actually need in everyday activities and events to promote family and child success
- Supports practice in real-life situations.



Diane Riva
01906 614

Function is a relative term...

What is functional for one person might not be functional for another person.

We need to consider interrelationships:

- Person
- Activity/task/routine
- Environment



How is this functional?

- Planning
- Practicing
- Imitation



Appropriate Activities

"Appropriate activities" are defined as those developmentally appropriate activities that children of the same age. The Vermont Early Learning Standards focuses on learning through play and embedding developmentally appropriate activities within instruction of:

- Literacy
- Math
- Dramatic play etc.



PLEFP Example 1

Katie enjoys listening to stories individually, with an adult, and is able to maintain attention from the beginning to the end of a story. Observations conducted during large-group activities (lasting 15 minutes or more) indicate that Katie is able to maintain attention to the speaker of the group for 2 minutes without physical or verbal support from staff. After the 2-minute time frame, staff must physically redirect Katie back to circle time as Katie frequently tries to leave the group to play with other toys in the classroom. Typically, children of the same age will attend to a group activity for approximately 10 minutes with minimal verbal redirection. Katie's attention span interferes with her ability to gain new information from group activities such as story-time.



PLEFP Example 2

Sam has many friends, and enjoys participating in group activities. Sam is easy to work with, maintains good eye contact, and follows directions well. During playtime activities, Sam is unable to communicate wants and needs easily. In a 100-word sample of spontaneous speech, Sam had a whole-word accuracy score of 23%. Sam has difficulty describing things and events to peers and adults when those items or events are not immediately present. In these situations Sam is unable to use their strong non-verbal communication to help others understand them. Typically, children of the same age will initiate conversations with others and maintain topic of conversation 2-4 turns.



PLEFP Example 3

Alex uses single words, signs, and a few 2-3 word combinations to communicate wants and needs at home and at school. Alex initiates social interactions with peers and labels objects in the learning environment. Typically, children Alex's age use 4-5 word sentences to communicate wants and needs. During a 20-minute play period with peers, Alex used 18 single word utterances (a word or sound) with 5 utterances also included a sign and 2 word combination (my shoe). When 2 word combinations were modeled for Alex, Alex initiated only the last word of the phrase. Alex's family reported that they have a difficult time understanding what Alex wants or needs. Typically children of the same age will combine 5-8 words into sentences and use abstract detailed language to express wants and needs.

GOALS Writing Section



IEP Goals

In order to develop meaningful, individualized goals and outcomes, we need to apply what we know about:

- How children learn in everyday routines and activities.
- How to conduct the formative assessment, and
- The 3 functional early childhood outcomes:

- Social Relationships
- Knowledge and Skills
- Actions to Meet Needs



Mapping IEP S.M.A.R.T Goals and Components

 SMART Goal Map

	Make it S pecific	What do you want to accomplish?
	Make it M easurable	How will you know when you have accomplished your goal?
	Make it A ttainable	How can the goal be accomplished?
	Make it R elevant	Is this goal worth working hard to accomplish? Explain your answer.
	Make it T imely	When will the goal be accomplished?

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Specific, Be Clear, NO Jargon!

Must be written in clear, concise language.

Instead of....use

- Ambulate ...crawl or walk
- Mean length utterance...3-word phrases
- Pincer grasp....thumb and finger
- Oral-motor skills....bite, chew, or swallow
- Verbal exchanges...back and forth



What does Measurable mean?

To *measure* is to assess the extent, quality, value, or effect of something

What do you see if the child has accomplished the goal or objective?

Multiple evaluators can agree on whether the child has reached the goal



Components of Measurable

A measurable goal allows us to know how much progress has been made since the last measured performance.

A measurable goal can be measured as written, without additional information.

Measurable goals and objectives have observable, visible or countable behavior.

Measurable goals and objectives have a criterion or level of performance.

Attainable



Must be related to helping students be successful in the general curriculum and/or address educational needs resulting from the disability (should relate to performance goals).

Reasonable



Must indicate what the child can reasonably accomplish in a year.

Time-Based



Specific criterion or ways for which it can be assessed; must have a beginning and an end.

Additional Considerations when writing S.M.A.R.T Goals

- Must be accompanied by at least 2 short term objectives
- Needs to reference the Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS)
- Must be functional.
- Emphasize the positive
- **INDIVIDUALIZED.**



Holder for Objectives



The Role of Objectives within the IEP

- Breaks down the S.M.A.R.T goals
- Creates sequential steps for the child to reach their short and long-term goals
- Are completed in a specific period of time
- Provide focused, concrete steps toward achieving the goal.



S.M.A.R.T Objectives

- Provide a focus for instruction
 - Meaningful
 - Functional
- Provide a basis for monitoring children's learning
 - Serve as the basis for making decisions about the child's progress
- Communicate expectations among team members and family
- Ask yourself:
 - Is the goal/objective **useful** and **meaningful** to the family and other caregivers?
 - **Why** should the child work on this goal?
 - The answer should be immediately apparent.



A breakdown example

•**Specific::** a clear description of when and where the child will demonstrate the behavior. A description of any assistance that will be provided before, during the performance of the behavior.

- Examples
 - At meals, circle, and moving from activity to activity
 - To sit at a table and to know where to put their belongings

•**Child's name:** Child will...

• **Attainable and Reasonable, action, skill:** states what the child actually will do.

- Examples:
 - Will use a word to make a request
 - Will sit in circle
 - Will walk forward 5 steps

•**Measurable:** How the targeted behavior will be measured and considered mastered

•**Time Based:** Indicates a projected performance attainment time frame

See it, Hear it, and/or Do it, Using Functional Words

- Write
- Name
- Say
- Play
- Point
- Go to
- Ask
- Share
- Draw
- Put away
- Stay in/with
- Approach other children



Reviewing the Goals and Objectives

- Includes the families' priorities
- Is useful and meaningful
- Reflects real life situations
- Can occur with multiple people across multiple activities, routines, and settings
- The expectations are clear
- It is free of jargon.



Example 1- Meet Taylor



Goal Components: SPECIFIC- Target Behavior

Target Behavior should state clearly what the child is to do.



For example: Taylor will use 2 word phrases to make request of adults and peers.

Other Examples:

- Will use a word to make a request
- Will sit in circle for 2 minutes
- Will walk forward 5 steps

Goal Components: Attainable and Reasonable

Attainable and Reasonable components identifies the activities or routines in which the behavior is expected.

For example: Taylor will use 2 word phrases to make requests of adults and peers, during meals, self-care routines, and when moving from one activity to another at home and school

Other Examples:

- At meals, circle, and moving from activity to activity
- To sit at a table or to know where to put his/her/their belongings



Goal Component: Measurable

How the target behavior will be measured?

For example: Taylor will use 2 word phrases *in order to/so that* make requests of adults during meals, self-care routines, and when moving from one activity to another at home and school **2 times a day on 5 separate days.**

It should represent a useful level of behavior.

Examples:

- In 4 to 5 opportunities
- During 2 daily activities or routines



Putting it All Together

Taylor will use 2 word phrases *so that* (functional) Taylor can make requests of adults and peers (reasonable and attainable target behavior) during meals, self-care routines, and when moving from one activity to another at home and school and across routines (specific and measurable) 2 times a day on 3 separate days (measurable for maintenance across time) by May 2022.

Meet Tia

Tiana will walk, using her walker, in order to get to and from all activities inside the classroom, including from the classroom to the playground, keeping up with her friends for 3 consecutive days each week for 4 weeks.



Meet Ryan

Ryan will use a combination of spoken words, pictures and/or gestures in order to communicate with teachers and peers for at least 5 of the following communication interactions each day for 10 days.

Interactions can include greeting others, gaining other's attention, asking for help, protesting, requesting, commenting, labeling, answering questions, using please and thank you, asking another to join in play.



Related Services

Related services under IDEA, are services required to assist a student with a disability to benefit from special education.

Each student's need for related services is determined on an individualized basis, just as her need for special education is determined and indicated on the IEP. Programs must include:

- frequency,
- location,
- and duration or service

It is NOT Specially Designed Instruction (SDI), but IS additional services meant to assist a student in benefiting from special education.



Common Related Services

- Speech-language pathology and audiology services
- Interpreting services
- Psychological services
- Transportation
- Physical and occupational therapy
- Recreation, including therapeutic recreation
- Counseling services, including rehabilitation counseling
- Orientation and mobility services
- Medical services for diagnostic or evaluation purposes
- School health services and school nurse services
- Social work services in schools
- Parent counseling and training



Universal Design for Learning (UDL) vs Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)



Universal Design for Learning (UDL)

The term **UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING (UDL)** means a scientifically valid framework for guiding educational practice that:

1. provides flexibility in the ways information is presented, in the ways students respond or demonstrate knowledge and skills, and in the ways students are engaged; and
2. reduces barriers in instruction, provides appropriate accommodations, supports, and challenges, and maintains high achievement expectations for all students, including students with disabilities and students who are limited English proficient.

Universal Design for Learning is a set of three principles which provide all students with the ability to learn. It is based on neuroscience, which indicates that our brains are wired to learn information through different pathways, which control the “What”, “How”, and “Why” of Learning.

Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)

Specially designed instruction in the Individuals with Disabilities Act (IDEA) is defined as “adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child, the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction-”

- (i) To address the unique needs of the child that result from the child’s disability; and
- (ii) To ensure access of and full participation in the child’s general curriculum, so that the child can meet the educational standards within the jurisdiction of the public agency that apply to all children. [34 CFR 300.39](#) (b)(3).

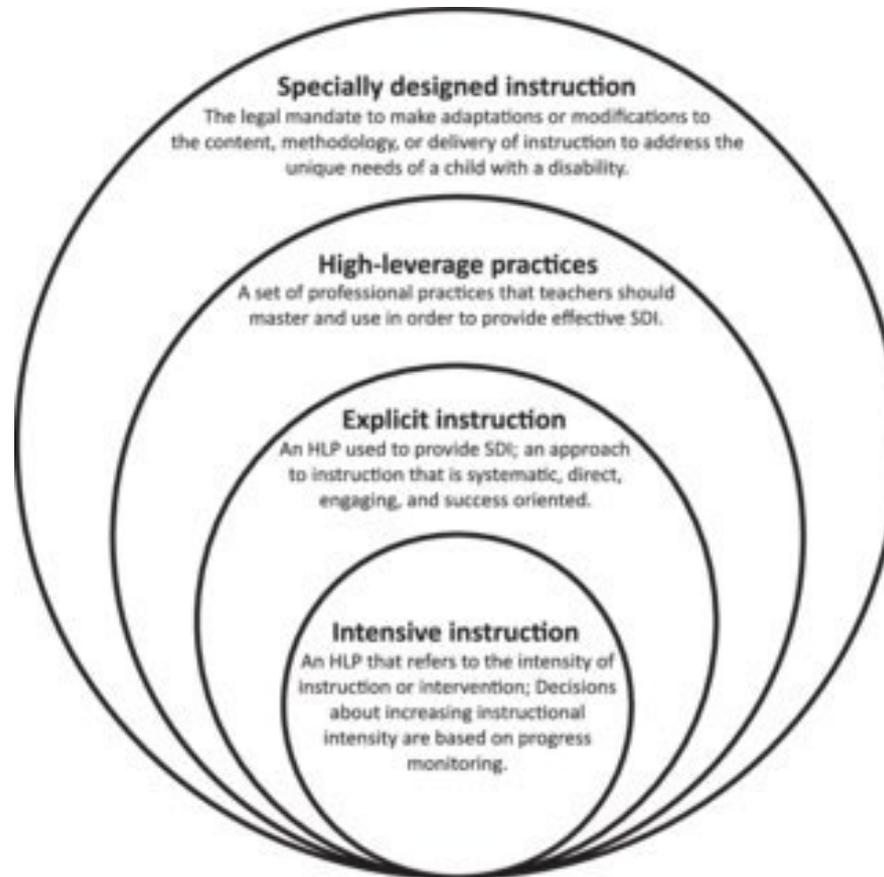
Specially Designed Instruction (SDI) is specially designed instruction, curriculum, or an educational program designed for an individual student.



Guiding Principles of SDI

- Children receiving special education are general education learners first and always
- Highly effective special education services and outcomes are dependent on highly effective universal (Early MTSS) implementation of practices to fidelity.
- Effective SDI is designed through collaboration between families, educators, and administrators
- SDI is delivered across the child's routines, activities, and learning environments.
- **The Vermont Early Learning Standards** embedded within high quality inclusive environments along with evidence-based practices helps to create effective SDI
- SDI supports learners to use tools, materials, and strategies to access their general education curriculum
- Data Based Decision Making guides implementation of SDI

Mapping Specially Designed Instruction (SDI)



Resources

CONNECT Modules: The Center to Mobilize Early Childhood Knowledge

<http://community.fpg.unc.edu/>

These modules are designed for faculty and professional development providers to use in their professional development.

Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS)

<https://vels.education.vermont.gov/>

The Vermont Early Learning Standards (VELS) help inform families about the development and capabilities of children from birth through grade 3 and guide educators in the development and selection of program-wide curriculum and educational strategies for children from birth through grade 3.