



THE BLUE UMBRELLA  
*collective*





# CREATE AN IEP

YOU AND YOUR TEAM

CAN BE PROUD OF

AND SET YOUR CHILD  
DOWN A

*path to success*

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Does the idea of helping to create an IEP overwhelm you and leave you feeling like you don't have anything to offer to the team? Do you end up leaving the IEP meeting feeling like what the team created doesn't represent your child and might not be enough to meet their needs?

The emotions that are activated when dealing with critical issues around our children can be intense and walking into your first IEP (or your 10th or 20th) can be an overwhelming experience.

Not long ago, I met with a family who had just finished their son's second IEP. They were feeling confused and upset.

They hadn't felt heard at the IEP meeting but what was most upsetting to

them was that they didn't feel like they had enough knowledge even to know if the new IEP for their child was what he needed.

They felt as if they were failing their son because they didn't know enough to make sure what they'd done for their son was the right thing. That's a terrible feeling.

The good news is that it doesn't have to be that way!

What if I told you that all you have to do is connect the dots to assure your child has an IEP that meets all of his/her needs? Hopefully you'll say,

*"A simple connect the dots? I can handle that!"*

Let's start at the beginning where all good connect the dots start! Grab the Connect The Dots PowerSheet to keep you on track.



eating, social skills, behavior skills, communication skills, and mobility skills.

Developing the present levels requires an assessment to gather data to be able to define current levels accurately.

Present levels are critical because they are the starting point for the entire IEP.

Without accurate present levels, the team won't know where to start, and without that starting point, it's impossible to know where to go next.

The IEP team must talk about the impact of the child's disability on his or her ability to learn and do the kinds of things that typical, nondisabled children learn and do.

It is NOT the IEP teams' job to assure that every child can fully experience schooling (in the same way) that nondisabled children do, however, it IS their job to make sure that all children access the learning environment to the maximum extent possible!

## DATA-DRIVEN PRESENT LEVELS

The present levels statement is developed by considering the areas of development in which a child with a disability may need support.

These are roughly divided into two areas of development: academic and functional.

*Academic Development* generally refers to a child's performance in academic areas (e.g., reading or language arts, math, science, and history).

*Functional Development* are generally skills that are not considered academic. Some examples of these skills could be;

## OBJECTIVE AND MEANINGFUL IEP GOALS

The goals should always be developed based on the deficits noted in the Present Level of Performance section of the IEP.

### *Power Rule!*

*If there is a deficit noted in the present level portion of the IEP, there needs to be a goal in that area, and if there is a goal, there needs to be a present level.*

*(This is an easy way to remember what needs to be included in the IEP).*

Just as present levels will be discussed and recorded in both academic and functional development areas, IEP goals should be developed in those areas as needed.

IEP goals should be individualized for each student. No two students are alike so no two goals should be alike!

### *IEP goals need to:*

- Be measurable
- Include a baseline of where the student currently is performing
- Specify what skill they focus on
- Be actionable
- Be time specific

Goals are the heart and soul of an IEP! People tend to focus on the services, but the goal is what will be taught and what a student is expected to learn!

The goals lay out the learning path for a student and the focus for their entire school year.

Although an IEP will not include every single item that a student will work on throughout the school year, by looking at the goals, anyone involved in the process should be able to see what the targets and focus for that child are.

## THOROUGH AND THOUGHTFUL ACCOMMODATIONS AND MODIFICATIONS

Accommodations change how a stu-

dent learns the material. A modification changes what a student is taught or expected to learn.

Students that are working on grade level curriculum but just need support in the way things are presented are changes in the way they learn, generally only require accommodation.

Some students are working far below grade level or require a separate curriculum. These students typically will have both accommodations AND modifications.

### *Examples of Accommodations include:*

- Extra time to complete the assignment
- Doing every other math problem (as long as all standards are covered)
- Movement breaks
- Ability to type assignments

### *Examples of Modifications Include:*

- Below grade level assignments (that cut out critical standards)
- Use of alternative curriculum
- Use of notes and textbook for all tests

### *Power Rule!*

*Accommodations help a student while they are learning the skill deficits identified in the present levels and goals. These are the supports that educators provide for students WHILE they are learning the skill.*

## SERVICES THAT MEET THE CHILD'S NEEDS

By definition, special education is

“specially designed instruction.”

Specially designed instruction means adapting, as appropriate to the needs of an eligible child the content, methodology, or delivery of instruction:

- To address the unique needs of the child that result from the child’s disability
- To ensure access of the child to the general curriculum
- So that the child can meet the educational standards.

What does that mean? Special education is an umbrella under which many supports and services may be included.

No two programs should look exactly alike, just as no two students look precisely alike.

Other services that may be recommended by the IEP team could be (but not limited to):

- Speech and Language
- Occupational Therapy
- Counseling
- Behavior Supports
- Physical Therapy

**Power Rule!**  
*Services are driven by goals which are driven by present levels. (Connect the dots)*

MORE services are not always the end goal. The law states that a student’s IEP must be “reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child’s circumstances.”

This progress must be “appropriately ambitious in light of his [or her] circum-

stances,” as “every child should have the chance to meet challenging objectives.”

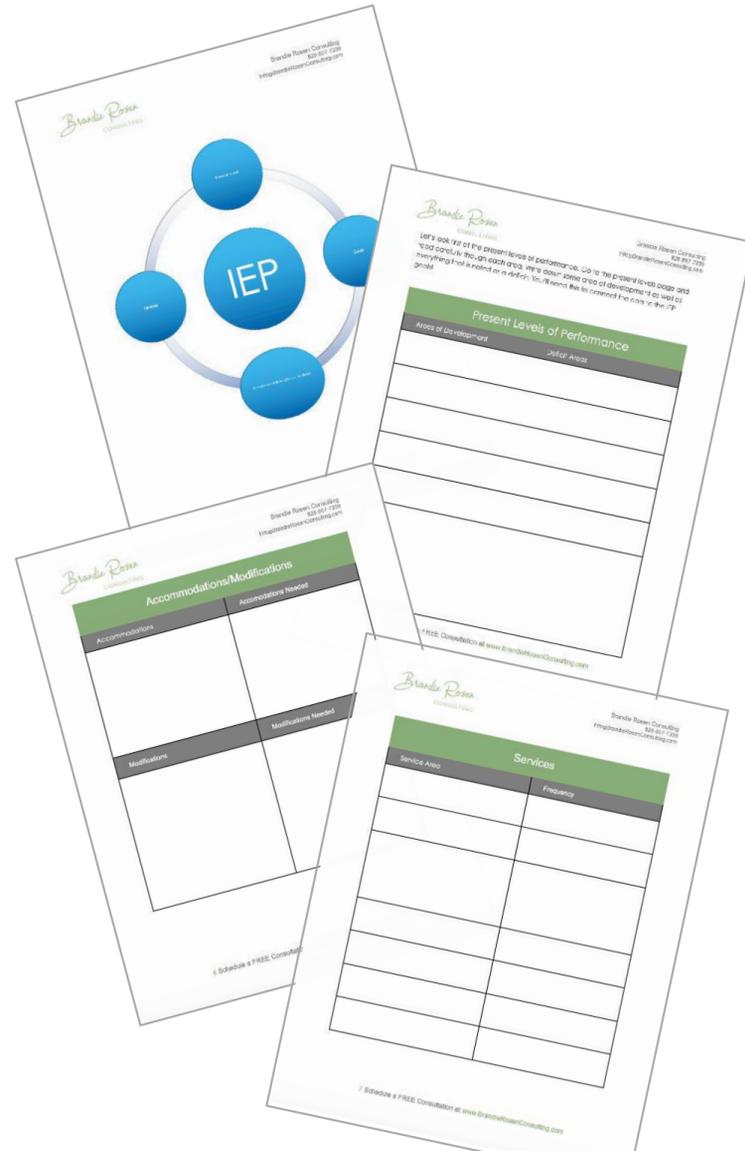
See, I told you “connecting the dots” would be easy! Grab the Connecting the Dots PowerSheet to take this information and connect the dots for your own child’s IEP.

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