PROGRESS MONITORING

Understanding how students move toward their IEP goals

SEPAC PRESENTATION

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Every student learns differently. Understanding the student's needs—and the supports in place—helps families and school teams make sense of progress.

LEARNER

Strengths, needs, interests, and individual goals

SCHOOL TEAM

Instruction, services, accommodations, and data

FAMILY

Insight, questions, collaboration, and advocacy

Goals for Today’s Session

01 Define progress monitoring

02 Distinguish progress monitoring from report cards

03 Describe how progress is measured, reviewed, and reported

04 Explain why the process differs by student and goal

What Is Progress Monitoring?

Progress monitoring is the ongoing collection of information to determine whether a student is making progress toward an annual IEP goal.

STARTING POINT

What can the student do now?

CURRENT PERFORMANCE

What does the data show over time?

TARGET

What skill or level is the goal aiming for?

Why Monitor Progress?

MAKE GROWTH VISIBLE

Look beyond a single moment or score to see patterns over time.

CHECK WHAT'S WORKING

Use information to understand whether instruction and supports are helping.

RESPOND IN TIME

If progress is limited, the team can discuss changes rather than waiting for the annual review.

Progress reports are provided as often as report cards. Monitoring helps the team see what is working and consider timely adjustments.

Progress Monitoring vs. Report Cards

REPORT CARDS

- Reflect performance in the course
- Often include assignments, tests, participation, and classwork

IEP PROGRESS REPORTS

- Reflect growth toward individualized annual IEP goals
- Use measures selected to fit each goal

A student may earn a passing grade yet show limited progress on an IEP goal—or make progress on a goal while struggling in a course.

IEP Goals vs. Report Cards

Different Purposes. Different Goals.

Both are important, but they measure different things and serve different purposes.

IEP Goals
Focus on Skills and Progress

- Set specific, measurable skills the student will work on.
- Focus on individual needs and unique strengths.
- Track progress toward goals over time.
- Guide special education services and supports.

Report Cards
Show Academic Performance

- Measure how the student performs against grade-level standards.
- Use letter grades, percentages, or descriptive comments.
- Show what the student knows and can do in the classroom.
- Are shared with families to provide a snapshot of overall progress.

IEP Goals build skills. Report Cards show progress.

Together, they help create a complete picture of your child's learning journey!

Individualized IEP Goals: The Foundation

The goal—and the way progress is measured—should reflect the individual student's needs.

- Evaluation information and the PLAAFP help identify strengths and areas of need.
- IEP goals target specific needs—not the general standards.
- The measurement method should match the skill described in the goal.

Two students in the same class may have entirely different goals—and may need entirely different ways to measure progress.

Examples of Individualized Goal Areas

ACADEMIC

Reading, writing, math

COMMUNICATION

Language and interaction

SOCIAL-EMOTIONAL

Regulation and behavior

EXECUTIVE FUNCTION

Planning and organization

FUNCTIONAL

Skills for school routines

DAILY LIVING

Personal independence

MOTOR

Fine and gross motor skills

TRANSITION

Post-school readiness

Who Collects Data—and How Often?

WHO MAY COLLECT DATA

- Special education teachers
- General education teachers
- Related-service providers
- Paraprofessionals, under appropriate supervision

HOW OFTEN?

The evaluation procedure is determined by the individual goal and documented in the IEP; this helps determine how often information is collected regarding a specific goal.

The important question is not simply “How often is data taken?” but “Does the method and schedule give the team useful information about this goal?”

How Is Progress Monitored?

SKILL CHECKS

Curriculum-based measures, such as oral reading fluency or math computation

STUDENT WORK

Work samples, portfolios, rubrics, and teacher-made assessments

OBSERVATION

Checklists, task analysis, and structured observation

BEHAVIOR & SERVICES

Behavior tracking and related-service data

STANDARDIZED TOOLS

Measures such as DIBELS or i-Ready, when appropriate

STUDENT REFLECTION

Self-monitoring when appropriate to the student and goal

Progress Monitoring Across Settings

SELF-CONTAINED

May include frequent, embedded data collection across individualized academic, behavioral, and functional goals.

PULL-OUT RESOURCE

May include targeted skill probes, work samples, and progress checks during specialized instruction.

IN-CLASS RESOURCE

May include data from supported instruction and classroom tasks, coordinated across staff.

GENERAL EDUCATION

May include classroom work, observation, curriculum-based measures, and goal-specific checklists.

These are examples, not fixed rules. The IEP goal determines what information is useful.

What If Progress Is Not Sufficient?

1. **Review the information** — Look for patterns, context, and barriers.
2. **Discuss possible responses** — Consider instruction, strategies, and supports.
3. **Determine next steps** — Further assessment or changes may be appropriate.
4. **Convene the IEP team if needed** — Discuss whether goals, services, or supports should be revised.

Sample Goal: Attention During Instruction

Self-contained example goal

“By the end of the IEP period, the student will maintain continuous on-task behavior for 2 minutes during a 10-minute whole-group lesson, given up to 2 verbal prompts, in 4 out of 5 opportunities.”

Objectives break down the goal into smaller portions that are also evaluated with progress mark

POSSIBLE DATA SOURCES

- Target-behavior tracking chart
- Teacher or paraprofessional observation

The measure should be clearly defined so staff can collect consistent, meaningful data.

Similar Goal, Different Setting

The skill may sound similar, but the setting, level of support, and data method can change.

ELEMENTARY EXAMPLE

Attention during a short teacher-led lesson

Possible measure: interval or duration chart

MIDDLE SCHOOL EXAMPLE

Attention during a class period or specific task

Possible measure: scheduled observations and task completion

HIGH SCHOOL EXAMPLE

Sustained attention during independent work

Possible measure: work completion and self-monitoring

Illustrative examples only. Actual goals and measurement criteria must come from each student's IEP.

PROGRESS IS PERSONAL.

MEASUREMENT SHOULD BE MEANINGFUL.

Progress monitoring helps families and school teams understand growth, celebrate steps forward, and identify when a student may need something different.

Any specific questions about your child's progress should be directed to your child's case manager