Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance (PLAAFP)

Establishing Appropriate and Meaningful Present-Level Narratives That Guide Teaching and Learning

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What is a PLAAFP?

A student's Individualized Education Program (IEP) team, which includes the parents, expects special education services to help the student improve at school. As a foundation for higher achievement, the IEP team will identify the student's current level of learning or performance and the effect or impact of a student's disability on learning. The present level of academic achievement and functional performance narrative, better known as the PLAAFP statement, is a primary component of an individualized education program (IEP) and is the basis for the development of all other components of the plan. The PLAAFP statements are intended to identify strengths and weaknesses of the student and all of the student's disability related needs. It is a concise summary of the information and data previously collected and known about the student. The IEP Team must consider the impact the disability has on the student's ability to learn and function as their non-disabled peers.

By regulation, the PLAAFP is defined as…

IDEA 2004: Sec. 300.320 under Definition of Individualized Education Program

(a) General. As used in this part, the term individualized education program or IEP means a written statement for each child with a disability that is developed, reviewed, and revised in a meeting and must include:

(1) A statement of the child's present levels of academic achievement and functional performance, including—(i) How the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum (i.e., the same curriculum as for nondisabled children);

With supporting regulation of its content defined as…

Development of IEP § 300.324 Development, review, and revision of IEP

(a) Development of IEP—(1) General. In developing each child's IEP, the IEP Team must consider—
(i) The strengths of the child; (ii) The concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child; (iii) The results of the initial or most recent evaluation of the child; and (iv) The academic, developmental, and functional needs of the child.

A Few Essential Questions for the IEP Team to Consider as They are Developing a PLAAFP:

- What are the disability-related challenges affecting his or her learning and involvement at school?
- At what academic and functional level is this student performing right now? (Where is the student's starting point?)
- Is there any other information needed to provide a complete picture of this student?
- What strategies, accommodations and/or assistive technology have already been successful for this student's learning?
- What are the grade-level academic standards for this student's grade, and how do the skills of this student compare to those standards?
- Has the student made progress in the current general education placement/curriculum?
- Has the student made progress with his/her current IEP goals and objectives?

Sidebar: What does the word "functional" mean, as used in "functional performance"? Functional means nonacademic, as in "routine activities of everyday living or ADLs." Routine activities that people tend do every day without needing assistance. This clarification should support IEP Team members with understanding that the purpose of the IEP is to prepare children with disabilities for life after school. This should also help the school understand that teaching children how to "function" in the world is just as important as teaching academic skills.

The writers of the IEP need to remember that the PLAAFP is based upon those identified student needs, strengths, interests and preferences. The following components must be included in the PLAAFP section:

- Factors to Consider
- Baseline Data
- Impact Statement
- Resulting Needs

Alignment of the PLAAFP with the Remaining IEP Components

The PLAAFP determines methods for ensuring involvement in, access to, adaptations, accommodations, or modifications to, the general education curriculum. Each area of educational need identified in the PLAAFP must be addressed in at least one other section of the written IEP such as:

- annual measurable goals and instructional objectives
- supplementary aids/services/supports
- special education programs and services
- secondary transition services

The writers of the IEP should consider a student's IEP as the needed road map guiding the student from a beginning level of performance to a higher level of achievement.

1 Putting the PLAAFP Pieces Together: A Framework to Consider

The PLAAFP will serve as a snapshot of the student at a particular time and place. It will describe the level at which the student is working academically and functionally. The information in the PLAAFP section of the IEP should be written in brief, clear, specific and accurate statements with enough information to describe the student's current skill levels in objective, measurable terms. If scores are reported, they should either be self-explanatory or explained. The following is an example of how to build a PLAAFP statement.

1.1 Factors to Consider

General Factors to consider include the following and require a brief summary of the discussion regarding each factor:

- **Strengths of the student** – provides an opportunity for the IEP team to discuss the student's individual skills and abilities which will facilitate his or her growth and learning.

  - **Example:** Based on current achievement data dated December 18, 2015, the student is performing in the average range of the cognitive abilities for auditory processing (SS 89) and short-term working memory (SS 88). When the student uses the accommodation of graphic organizer, he is a very creative writer.

- **Concerns of the parent/student** for enhancing the education of the student –provides the IEP team with an opportunity to ensure that parents have input regarding the education of their child.

  - **Example:** According to the parent, the student enjoys school most of the time and is progressing but struggles with the completion of homework assignments. The parent believes that the student needs additional time in the resource program and less time in general education setting.

  - **Example:** According to the student, he enjoys video games, playing hockey and basketball. He states that he needs help in his science and math classes due to difficulties with understanding reading assignments.

- **Achievement results from the most recent evaluations** – provides the IEP team with an opportunity to review any recent evaluations of the student. This can include any information provided by the district or independent evaluators.

  - **Example:** When compared to his same age peers, Michael's cognitive weaknesses are in the areas of comprehension knowledge SS 79, which falls in the low range, fluid reasoning SS 82, which falls in the low range, and long-term retrieval SS 79, which falls in the low range. Michael was assessed using the Woodcock Johnson IV Tests of Academic Achievement. The results indicated that Michael is significantly weak in reading comprehension. Therefore, grade level material will be quite difficult for him to read and understand.

Michael was assessed using the NWEA MAP district assessment.

8th Grade	Fall	Winter	Spring	Fall – 9th grade
Reading	194/217	194/219	190/220	189/220
Language Usage	200/216	203/218	217/219	203/218

MEAP	Math	Reading	Writing	Science
7th	4-Not Proficient	4-Not Proficient	3-Partially Proficient	N/A

1.2 Special Factors

The IEP team **must** consider for ALL students at each meeting:

- **Communication –** deciding if the student needs additional services from a speech and language pathologist.
- **Assistive technology needs**- deciding whether or not assistive technology will help the student achieve or be more independent

There are **additional areas of need** to be considered **only** as they are appropriate to the individual student. These areas are:

- The **use of positive behavioral interventions and supports**, and other strategies, to address behavior because the student has behavior that impedes his/her learning, or the learning of others.
- **Language needs of the student because the student has limited English proficiency**- the team must consider how existing English Language Learner (ELL) services will coordinate with special education services. If the student is not receiving ELL services, consider whether the student needs to be connected with these services.
- If the student is blind or visually impaired, the team must consider the need for **Braille instruction.**
- If the student is deaf or hard of hearing, the team must consider the **mode of language and communication.**

Sidebar: It is an expectation that for every special factor considered by the IEP team (i.e., the box is checked), the team will document the results of the consideration. If student needs are identified, the team will use the appropriate PLAAFP section to document relevant data, impact of the disability, and resulting special education needs. The team will further address those resulting needs in the relevant sections of the IEP, such as annual goals, supplementary aids and services, special education services and programs, and when required, secondary transition. If the IEP team has considered special factors and determined that there are no resulting needs, it is necessary to document why these options were considered but not selected elsewhere in the PLAAFP statement or in the Notice.

1.3 Base Line Data

PLAAFP **descriptions of data** must include statements of the students' present-day performance and development (what the student can and cannot do) in subject and skill areas (**see below**) and contain enough details so that a general audience can understand the information. The data should include comparative data descriptive of nondisabled peers and the anticipated trajectory of learning in order to accurately and appropriately set goals.

Baseline data must be current and include information such as:
- Curriculum based assessments
- Cognitive assessment
- Student work
- Teacher observation
- Parent input
- Other relevant data

Sidebar: A variety of sources of information should be used to determine the present level of performance. When findings are confined by more than one source of information, the team to an area outcome is compiled, analyzed and synthesized, it is time to write a present level statement. Be sure to use language that clearly indicates the statement is data-based and specific to the student. If specific assessments are referenced, whole and correct titles should be used, not abbreviations. Test scores should be reported with a narrative that interprets the scores or describes the student's performance on the test. Scores alone are not commonly understood by the general population.

Samples of various and current sources for the PLAAFP statement may include:

- *Ending levels of performance on last year's goals*
- *Performance on district and statewide assessments, Curriculum-Based Assessments*
- *Already attained in relation to grade-level standards*
- *Student's abilities, interests and strengths, including non-curricular and motivators*
- *Current/previous strategies, accommodations or assistive technology devices or services that have already shown success*
- *MET Reports: For students with SLD identify the area of eligibility and how it manifests in the school environment*
- *Student work*
- *Parent input*
- *Medical conditions*
- *Communication needs*
- *Performance growth based on progress reports*
- *Teacher's written observations*
- *Transition assessments*
- *Stakeholder's input*
- *The team will also need to know how the student stands in comparison to his or her peers. Are there any gaps between a student's ability to perform academically with grade-level skills or behave with age-appropriate developmental skills?*

Areas of Potential Need

General Education Curriculum (Reading, Writing, and Math)

Provide and describe data that identifies the student's involvement and progress in the common core standards and/or classroom environment (or in age-appropriate activities for preschool children.) Specify academic area(s) of need as indicated by the data. For students with a Specific Learning Disability (SLD), the area(s) of eligibility that apply to the student must be specified with data.

Secondary Transition Assessments

Includes age appropriate assessments related to training, education, employment, and independent living skills. Explain what the assessment data means for the student's transition into post-secondary life.

Communication/Speech and Language

Provide and describe data that identifies the communication/speech and language needs of the student. Data in this section may also support the need for assistive technology to address hearing or augmentative communication needs. For students with a speech and language impairment, data should support specific area of eligibility

Socio-Emotional/Behavioral

Development to the degree and quality of the student's relationships with peers and adults, feelings about self, social adjustment to school and community environment

Perception/Motor/Mobility

Provide and describe data that identifies gross and fine motor coordination, balance, and limb/body mobility. For students with a Visual Impairment (VI), provide and describe data provided by an orientation and mobility specialist, if necessary.

Adaptive/Independent Living Skills

Skills for academic success and independent living including personal care, preparing meals, household activities, managing resources, communication, ability to cope with the natural and social demands of his or her environment

Medical

Health, vision, hearing, or other physical/medical issues. Include any relevant information provided by medical personnel.

Sidebar: Prioritize needs and skills remembering that you have one academic year to support and demonstrate the student's academic/behavioral growth.

1.4 Impact and Resulting Needs:

Describe how the student's academic, developmental, and functional needs affect involvement and progress in the general education curriculum or participation in appropriate activities for preschool or post-secondary students.

The writers of the PLAAFP must be prepared to articulate how a student learns best and how the student's learning deficits, behavioral deficits, and/or medical conditions impede their involvement and progress in the general education curriculum and/or educational setting.

Teachers and other service providers sometimes question the difference between impact and resulting need. **The impact** is a description of how the disability affects the child's access to and progress in the general curriculum, while the **resulting needs** describe the individualized and specialized instruction and support the student will need. Impact and resulting needs are based on the current data. Keep in mind that all areas of resulting need **must be addressed** somewhere in the student's IEP.

Statements of Impact determine how the area of concern interferes with the student's ability to participate and make progress in the common core standards and/or classroom environment or in age-appropriate activities for preschool children.

Statements of Resulting Needs must be written in general terms, such as a special education accommodation, modification, specialized instruction, a specific related service that will allow the student to participate and make progress in the common core state standards and/or classroom environment or in age-appropriate activities for preschool children Indicate whether or not a goal will be developed to support the acquisition of a specific skill that relates to the impact or need.

> *Sidebar: The IEP team should consider and document in the PLAAFP the intellectual functioning and learning styles of the student such as…*
>
> - *Visual (spatial)*
> - *Aural (auditory-musical)*
> - *Verbal (Linguistic)*
> - *Physical (Kinesthetic)*
> - *Logical (mathematical)*
> - *Social (Interpersonal)*
> - *Solitary (Intrapersonal)*
> - *Social (Interpersonal)*
> - *Solitary (Intrapersonal)*

2 Case Study: Using the Three Point Framework to Writing A PLAAFP

Using the PLAAFP form, the IEP team will identify the areas of need for the Case Study: Michael, whom has just concluded the 8th grade, will be enrolling in a new school in the fall for his 9th grade year. Michael has a current IEP from his previous school. He is diagnosed as having a specific learning disability in reading comprehension, and a diagnosis of ADHD based on current medical documentation submitted by the parent.

Student's		IEPT	
Name:	Michael	Date:	10-7-2015

Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

FACTORS TO CONSIDER

General

The IEP team must consider each of the following:

The strengths of the student:

Michael is less impulsive in conversations and is able to maintain focus on a topic of his interest. Michael completes his homework assignments on time when given a verbal reminder. Testing indicates his strengths to be in oral expression, which fell in the average range when compared to others his age. His written expression, fell slightly below the average range when compared to his same age peers. However, when he is provided a story starter and /or graphic organizer, he is a very capable writer. Michael likes to play any sport and draw.

Input from the parent/student for enhancing the education of the student:

According to the parent, Michael likes school most of the time and is progressing but struggles with the completion of homework assignments. Michael's mom believes that Michael needs additional time in the resource program and less time in the general education setting.   Michael enjoys video games, playing hockey and basketball. Michael's mom states that he needs help in his science and math classes due to difficulties with understanding reading assignments.

The results of the most recent evaluation(s) of the student which may include formal/informal assessments, individual, state and/or district-wide testing:

When compared to his same age peers, Michael's cognitive weaknesses are in the areas of comprehension knowledge SS 79, which falls in the low range, fluid reasoning SS 82, which falls in the low range, and long-term retrieval SS 79, which falls in the low range. Michael was assessed using the Woodcock Johnson IV Tests of Academic Achievement. The results indicated that Michael is significantly weak in reading comprehension. Therefore, grade level material will be quite difficult for him to read and understand.

Michael was assessed using the NWEA MAP district assessment.

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Language Usage	200/216	203/218	217/219	203/218

MEAP	Math	Reading	Writing	Science
7th	4-Not Proficient	4-Not Proficient	3-Partially Proficient	N/A

Special Factors

The IEP team must consider the following for the student (check boxes to indicate consideration):

☒ The communication needs of the student.

☒ The need for assistive technology devices and services for the student.

The IEP team must consider the following for the student, as appropriate (check all that apply):

☐ The use of positive behavioral interventions and supports, and other strategies, to address behavior because the student has behavior that impedes his or her learning or the learning of others.

☐ The language needs of the student because the student has limited English proficiency.

☐ Braille instruction because the student is blind or visually impaired.

☐ The mode of language and communication because the student is deaf or hard of hearing.

IEPT

Student's Name ___Michael___ Date ___10-7-2015___

Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance

After reviewing the student's progress in the general education curriculum and any prior special education goals and objectives, describe how the student accesses or makes progress in the general education curriculum based on grade level content standards for the grade in which the student is enrolled or would be enrolled based on age.

	Baseline Data Report and describe baseline data such as curriculum-based assessments, student work, teacher observations, parent input, and other relevant data for each area of need.	**Impact and Resulting Needs** Describe how the student's academic, developmental, and functional needs affect involvement and progress in the general education curriculum or participation in appropriate activities for preschool or post-secondary students.
GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM - READING *Involvement and progress in the general education curriculum, or participation in age-appropriate activities for preschool students.* ☐ Considered, not applicable	When compared to his same age peers Michael is significantly weak in reading comprehension with a SS of 80, which falls in the low range. Michael struggles to read and understand grade level material. Michael's mom states that he needs help in his science and math classes due to difficulties with understanding reading assignments.	**Impact:** Michael's low reading comprehension skills impact his ability to understand the grade level common core curriculum in reading , science, and social studies. **Resulting Need:** Michael is most successful in a smaller group settings with fewer distractions and affords him opportunities to pace his responses to questions without disrupting others in the general education setting. Books on tape and a peer buddy are accommodatons that assist Michael in the general education classroom. Michael will need accommodations to support his reading comprehension in the general education setting and in all academic areas.
GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM - WRITING X Considered, not applicable		
GENERAL EDUCATION CURRICULUM – MATH X Considered, not applicable		

October 2015

SECONDARY TRANSITION ASSESSMENTS *Age-appropriate assessment related to training, education, employment, and independent living skills.* ☐ Considered, not applicable	On December 18, 2014, Michael completed the Student Transition Assessment Tool - Revised (STAT-R). In discussing the results with Michael, it was decided that his goal is to attend college and obtain a job in the medical field. He would like to live on his own and get a car. His EDP from May 10, 2014 was also reviewed which supported his interest in the medical field. His mother reports that he has started to help occasionally at home with starting meals, doing laundry, and grocery shopping. He realizes he needs to learn vocational skills	Impact: Michael is unclear about potential medical careers and appropriate colleges. During the interview, Michael stated that he wants to get a driver's license and find a part-time job to help with household expenses. He also realizes he needs work experience and help with managing his earnings. After the STAT and interview, Michael's teachers felt that inviting MRS to the IEP would be a good idea, but he and his mother decided to wait until the next IEP. **Resulting Needs**: Research medical careers. Investigate college entrance requirements, learn the driver's training process, and learn independent living skills: banking, shopping, money management, apartment living, etc. Improve work skills to support competitive employment. Also needs to explore part time job opportunities
COMMUNICATION/ SPEECH & LANGUAGE **X Considered, not applicable**		
SOCIO-EMOTIONAL/ BEHAVIORAL ☐ Considered, not applicable	Currently, Michael is receiving the related services of School Social Work. The general education teacher and special education teacher noted that during structured times Michael stays on task and is able to complete assignments successfully. Michael is challenged during unstructured times. He often is inattentive and disruptive.	**Impact:** Michael continues to need supprt with maintaining a topic during a conversation and remaining calm while interacting with his classmates. **Resulting Needs:** Social Work services will still be needed to support his current goal of reducing impulsive behaviors such as talking out of turn during instruction, moving from assigned seating area during cooperative learning tasks, and wanting to exit the classroom during choral reading time.
PERCEPTION/MOTOR/ MOBILITY **X Considered, not applicable**		

ADAPTIVE/INDEPENDENT LIVING SKILLS X Considered, not applicable		
MEDICAL *Health, vision, hearing, or other physical/medical issues.* ☐ Considered, not applicable	Michael has been diagnosed with ADHD, which he currently takes perscription medication for twice per day (once administered during the school day).	**Impact:** Michael has difficulty analyzing a task that has more than three steps. During unstructured times, he is often ~~is~~ inattentive and disruptive. On days that Michael misses his prescribed dosage, he becomes impulsive by leaving his assigned seat and/or area and at times being disruptive in regards to talking out of turn. **Resulting Need:** The general education teacher noted that peer support assists Michael with his focus.

2.1 Alignment of Resulting Needs with the Remaining IEP Components

(Programs, Services, Supplemental Aids, and Goals)

Once the PLAAFP narrative has been developed, the IEP team must identify the needed special education program and services that will allow the student to participate and make progress in the common core state standards and/or classroom environment. All areas of need as stated in the PLAAFP narrative must be addressed in one or more of the following sections of the IEP:

- annual measurable goals and instructional objectives
- supplementary aids/services/supports
- special education programs and services
- secondary transition services

Example: Alignment of Resulting Needs with the remaining IEP components:

(Table Talk leading to the development of the remaining sections of the IEP**)**

Based on gathered data and a careful review of Michael's current academic and behavioral needs, he will continue to need the special education programs and services as follows:

Program: Resource Program
Supplemental Aids and Services: Accommodations/Modifications
✓ Preferential seating (sitting in back of class to reduce distractions. By doing so, Michael impulsivity is reduced due to the elimination of what is happening behind him-he can focus forward towards teacher.)
✓ Color coded assignment notebook to help with organization (Blue for Math; Red for Science, etc.).
✓ Blank graphic organizers will help organize information to assist with comprehension of material.
✓ Small Group Settings (Resource pull out supports during Science and ELA for re-teaching materials as required)
✓ "Chunking" information – breaking down lengthy reading passages into smaller selections
✓ Guided-Reading Activities during Direct Instruction sessions.
✓ Study Sheets/review/summaries
Related Services: SSW
Sample Goals: By June 2016, when given 9th grade literary text, Michael will determine the theme or central idea of the assigned reading task and analyze in detail its development over the course of the text during the first semester with 90% accuracy in three trials as measured by collected sample student class work and written student reports.

Sample Objectives for Michael based on required annual goal.

By:	The Student:	Will:	Given:	Based on:	As Measured By:
Within the first five weeks of the semester	Michael	Recall and describe the main idea of story in a written format.	A first semester assigned 9th grade reading selection	A score of 90% out of three written trials within the scheduled timeframe	Collected student work and written student reports
By: Within the first five weeks of the semester	**The Student:** Michael	**Will:** Recall, describe, and analyze the primary characters	**Given:** A first semester assigned 9th grade reading selection	**Based on:** A score of 90% out of three trials within the scheduled timeframe	**As Measured By:** Collected student work and guided-reading activities.

3 Compliance Indicators for PLAAFPs

Prior to the conclusion of the annual IEPT meeting, the members need to check for quality, measurability, and meaningful outcomes by circling "Y" for yes confirming the presence of the criteria or "N" for lack of evidence of the criteria.

1. Do the current performance levels provide an accurate "picture" of the student? Including instructionally relevant information about the student.	Y	N
2. In determining the PLAAFP did the IEP team consider multiple information sources that exceed a label or test score?	Y	N
3. Does the PLAAFP narrative describe the student's current educational, behavioral, and functional performance, including grade or functioning level as appropriate, which is sufficient to determine the goals, program and services required for the student to receive FAPE?	Y	N
4. Are the data sources current (not more than one year)?	Y	N
5. Would anyone be able to begin instruction or intervention based on the PLAAFP narratives?	Y	N
6. Is the information understandable so that goals may easily be developed?	Y	N
7. Each PLAAFP statement of need is represented either in the program, service, supplemental aids, or goals section of the IEP?	Y	N
8. Is the PLAAFP individualized?	Y	N
9. Are the student's strengths evident in the narrative?	Y	N
10. Is the PLAAFP written in objective, descriptive terms?	Y	N
11. Does the PLAAFP reflect the concerns of the parents for enhancing the education of their child?	Y	N
12. Does the PLAAFP address all areas affected by the student's disability?	Y	N
13. Have all special factors been considered? (e.g. health, motor skills, mobility, assistive technology, & communication)	Y	N

October 2015