

H7

12 SMART IEPs

"If you're not sure where you're going, you're liable to end up someplace else. If you don't know where you're going, the best made maps won't help you get there."

—Robert Mager, psychologist, writer, educator

If you are like many parents, you feel anxious and insecure at IEP meetings. What do you know? What can you offer? What should you do?

Some parents believe that if they are not educators, they have nothing of value to offer in planning their child's educational program. Other parents realize that their child's IEP is not appropriate but do not know how to resolve the problem. Diane belongs to this group:

I do not think my son's IEP is appropriate. The only goal is 'Commitment to academic success.' I imagine 'Commitment to academic success' is appropriate for all students. If 'Commitment to academic success' is not appropriate, what should I propose?

How are measurable goals defined? Can you give me an example of a well-written IEP? (Diane, parent of 15-year-old special education student)

Diane represents countless parents who are confused about IEP goals and objectives. If you are the parent of a child with a disability, you are probably confused too. How do you write IEP goals and objectives? Do you agree with Diane when she says, "Commitment to academic success is not an appropriate goal?"

Learning About SMART IEPs

The term SMART IEPs describes IEPs that are specific, measurable, use action words, are realistic and relevant, and time-limited.

- S Specific
- M Measurable
- A Use Action Words
- R Realistic and relevant
- T Time-limited

Let's examine each of these concepts.

