

IEP Goal and Baseline Alignment Toolkit

Communication Goals

A print-ready bank of measurable SMART goals by domain, plus a goal-quality rubric for scoring any draft goal before it goes to the team. Print the bank, or build a custom goal live in the free IEP Goal Builder.

HOW TO USE THIS BANK

Find a goal near the student's need, then swap in the student's name and adjust the criterion to match the baseline you already have on file. Each goal is tagged with an age band and a skill level so you can pick a fair starting point.

WHAT'S INSIDE

- 20 measurable starter goals for Communication, each tagged with an age band and a skill level.
- A Goal-Quality Rubric to score any draft goal against the five SMART criteria before it goes to the team.
- Every other domain in the full IEP Goal Bank, or build a custom goal live in the free IEP Goal Builder.



MAKE IT LIVE

Build a measurable goal live in the free IEP Goal Builder.

<https://www.spectrumunlocked.com/tools/iep-goal-builder>

20 starter goals for Communication, in US Letter.

Communication

Speech, language, AAC use, following directions, conversational turn-taking. The most commonly targeted IEP domain for autistic students.

1. Given a structured conversational exchange, [student] will initiate a topic-relevant comment using a complete sentence (3+ words) in 4 out of 5 opportunities across 4 consecutive sessions, as measured by classroom observation data.
Elementary **Developing**
2. Given access to AAC (augmentative and alternative communication), [student] will request preferred items, activities, or breaks using 2+ symbol combinations in 80% of opportunities across 4 consecutive weeks, as measured by AAC use logs.
Early Childhood **Emerging**
3. Given a 2-step verbal direction, [student] will follow both steps independently in 4 out of 5 opportunities across 4 consecutive weeks, as measured by classroom observation.
Early Childhood **Developing**
4. Given a peer's question, [student] will respond with a topic-relevant answer (verbal or AAC) within 5 seconds in 4 out of 5 opportunities across 4 consecutive sessions, as measured by classroom observation.
Elementary **Developing**
5. Given a structured small-group activity, [student] will take a conversational turn (initiate or respond) at least 3 times in a 10-minute session across 4 consecutive weeks, as measured by tally of turns.
Elementary **Developing**
6. Given a peer's name and a greeting prompt, [student] will use a verbal or AAC greeting (e.g., "hi [name]") in 4 out of 5 opportunities across 4 consecutive sessions.
Early Childhood **Emerging**
7. Given a wh-question (who, what, where, when, why) about a familiar topic, [student] will respond with a relevant 2+ word answer in 80% of opportunities across 4 consecutive weeks.
Early Childhood **Developing**
8. Given access to a core-vocabulary AAC board, [student] will activate a new core word (e.g., "more," "stop," "go," "help") in functional context in 4 out of 5 opportunities across 4 consecutive weeks, as measured by AAC use logs.
Early Childhood **Emerging**
9. Given a familiar object or activity, [student] will produce a 2-word phrase (action + object, agent + action) to comment or request in 80% of opportunities across 4 consecutive sessions, as measured by classroom observation.
Early Childhood **Developing**
10. Given a moment when [student] is not understood by a communication partner, [student] will use a learned repair strategy (repeat, rephrase, gesture, or AAC) in 4 out of 5 opportunities across 4 consecutive sessions, as measured by classroom observation.
Elementary **Developing**
11. Given a conversational topic introduced by a peer, [student] will maintain the topic across 3 or more conversational turns in 80% of opportunities across 4 consecutive weeks, as measured by classroom observation.
Elementary **Established**

12. Given an inferential question about a familiar story or scenario ("why do you think," "how did the character feel"), [student] will respond with a relevant inference and 1 supporting detail in 4 out of 5 opportunities across 9 weeks, as measured by curriculum-based reading assessment.
- Middle Developing
13. Given a classroom discussion prompt, [student] will state an opinion and support it with at least 2 reasons in 4 out of 5 opportunities across 4 consecutive weeks, as measured by writing rubric.
- Middle Established
14. Given a need for an accommodation or break in the classroom, [student] will self-advocate using a learned phrase (e.g., "I need a break," "can you repeat that") in 4 out of 5 opportunities across 4 consecutive weeks, as measured by classroom observation.
- High School Developing
15. Given a mock job-interview question, [student] will respond with a relevant 2–3 sentence answer that includes a personal example in 80% of opportunities across 9 weeks, as measured by transition-services rubric.
- High School Established
16. Given different communication settings (library, hallway, recess), [student] will adjust voice volume to match the setting in 4 out of 5 opportunities across 4 consecutive weeks, as measured by classroom observation.
- Elementary Developing
17. Given a question during a daily home activity, [student] will answer in a sentence of 3 or more words in 4 out of 5 opportunities across 4 consecutive weeks, as measured by a caregiver tally taken three days per week.
- Elementary Developing
18. Given a difficult task during home learning, [student] will request help using words, a sign, or an AAC button instead of abandoning the task in 4 out of 5 opportunities across 4 consecutive weeks, as measured by a caregiver tally.
- Elementary Developing
19. Given a preferred item out of reach, [student] will request it using words, a sign, or an AAC button in 4 out of 5 opportunities across 4 consecutive weeks, as measured by caregiver frequency data.
- Early Childhood Emerging
20. Given a family meal, [student] will take 2 on-topic conversational turns in 4 out of 5 meals across 3 consecutive weeks, as measured by a caregiver checklist.
- Middle Developing

These are starter goals to customize for the individual student, not legal advice; follow your district policies and the student's IEP team.

Goal–Quality Rubric

Read a draft goal against each SMART criterion, score it 1 to 3, and note what to fix. A goal is ready for the IEP team when every row scores a 3.

Criterion	What a strong goal shows	Score 1–3	Note to fix
S Specific	Names one observable skill and the exact condition it is performed under.		
M Measurable	States a number you can count or a percent you can calculate from data.		
A Achievable	Reaches beyond the baseline but stays within one year of instruction.		
R Relevant	Ties to a documented need and helps the student access the curriculum or daily life.		
T Time-bound	Sets a review window (weeks, sessions) and a data collection method.		
Total	Ready for the team at 15. Revise any row under 3.		

MORE FREE TOOLS



EVERY DOMAIN

Browse the whole goal bank by domain, age band and level, and print any part of it.

<https://www.spectrumunlocked.com/tools/iep-goal-bank>



ACCOMMODATIONS

Over 150 accommodations for IEP and 504 plans, free to browse and print.

<https://www.spectrumunlocked.com/tools/accommodations-bank>

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