

Writing Outcomes and Progress Notes for Alternate Programs and Courses

The program planning team determines whether an individualized alternate program or course is required. Alternate programs and courses must be guided by the student's exceptionality(s), assessment results, and strengths and needs. Alternate programs and/or courses are only developed when the outcomes required are outside the scope of the student's current grade level curriculum.

General and specific outcomes are individualized and based on what the student can achieve during the timeframe of the alternate program or course. They ensure that everyone on a student's program planning team has a common understanding about what the student will be working towards.

General and specific outcomes may be added to or changed throughout the school year. There are many factors that may result in unexpected progress or lack of progress by a student, and the IEP process needs to be flexible to respond to and accommodate these factors.

Since general and specific outcomes are based on the needs of the individual student, they vary greatly from one student to the next. A new skill or behavior that might be an appropriate general outcome for one student could be a specific outcome for another.

General Outcomes

General outcomes are broad statements, based on the student's strengths and needs, which identify the key components of the program or course. They are positive statements that describe observable events, and allow teachers to clearly state whether or not the student has achieved the outcome. A **general outcome equates to a goal** and should follow the principles for SMART goals summarized below.

A SMART outcome is defined as one that is specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, and time-limited.

Specific – is written in clear language and outlines exactly what is expected of the student.

Measurable – establishes concrete criteria for measuring progress.

Achievable – is realistic and attainable for the student, yet stretches the student slightly so that he/she is challenged.

Relevant – is meaningful for the student and reflect the student's needs.

Time-limited - can be accomplished in a specific time period. It must be written so that it is achievable within the time frame set for the alternate program or course.

Specific Outcomes

Specific outcomes outline the steps required in order to meet the general outcome. They are the pieces necessary to achieve the general outcome and act as indicators that it is being achieved.

Well-written specific outcomes describe concrete, teachable components. Instruction is geared toward achieving the specific outcomes. Some outcomes will be sequential while others will simply be related. For some students, and in some situations, it may not be necessary for one outcome to be fully mastered before beginning work on the next, or a related, outcome.

It is important to remember that the more specific the outcome, the easier it is to monitor progress.

General Outcome	Specific Outcomes
1. write a paragraph	<ul style="list-style-type: none">1.1 identify a subject1.2 brainstorm ideas1.3 draft a paragraph including<ul style="list-style-type: none">• topic sentence• paragraph body• concluding sentence1.4 review and revise<ul style="list-style-type: none">• spelling• grammar• sentence structure• clarity1.5 write final draft

Detailed versus Vague Specific Outcomes

Type of Program or Course	Detailed	Vague
Non-curricular Program	arrive to class on time using cues such as school bells, clocks, and personal watch or cell phone	be on time
Pre-requisite Program	identify the numerator of a fraction	understand fractions
	identify the denominator of a fraction	
Curricular Course	read numbers 0 to 100	know numbers
Non-curricular Course	recognize household hazard symbols	know common dangers
	recognize the dangers associated with household hazards	

Progress Notes

Progress notes clearly describe the student's level of achievement on a specific outcome and must be updated on a regular basis.

Detailed	Vague
Johnny is punctual for class 75% of the time using the cue of the bell. He has begun to use other cues, such as clocks and watches, to keep track of time.	Johnny is improving.
Susan identifies the numerator of fractions 100% of the time.	Susan is doing well with this.
Danny can consistently read numbers 0 to 50. He continues to have difficulty reading numbers beyond 50.	Taught. Not yet achieved.
Brittany recognizes the household hazard symbols for explosive, corrosive, flammable, and poison. She understands the concepts of poison and explosive, but does not comprehend the concepts of corrosive and flammable.	In progress.