



Each and Every Child

Quick news for Parents, Teachers and Students

An e-newsletter by the Iowa Department of Education's Bureau of Student and Family Support Services

An IEP is just the beginning, not the end

Once the IEP is created, you can sit back and relax. Right? Wrong.

Monitoring progress of students on IEPs is critical to ensuring that the instructional strategies – and indeed, the IEP itself – is on target.

There are two critical components to effective monitoring of IEPs:

- The goals of the IEP need to be appropriate and meaningful in

order to benefit the student.

- To determine if a student is making sufficient progress, conduct frequent assessments that align directly with the goals set to ascertain the student's skills. With each assessment, you should see an increase in the skill level of the student. Typically, you should expect weekly



progress; most definitely, there should be marked improvement on a month-to-month basis.

The monitoring tools for the weekly assessments need to be efficient, taking the teacher only 3 to 5 minutes from testing through grading.

And this is important: Ensure the weekly assessments are of similar quality and difficulty to ensure you're getting a proper

look at progress. Put another way, let's assume your doctor checks your reflexes with the little tool normally used on the knee. At the next visit, the doctor would want to use the same tool to see an apples-to-apples comparison. But if the doctor changed tools and used a hammer instead, you can be assured the outcome would be different.

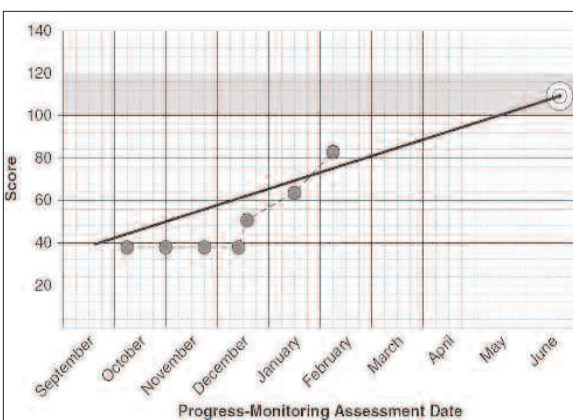
Would it reflect a real change? Nope.

When student progress is falling short

If sufficient progress isn't being made on the IEP, the teacher and parents should first consider altering instructional techniques. Some things to consider:

- The amount of time the student is receiving intervention.
- Does the feedback to the student need to be more focused?
- Maybe the student needs more practice time both in and out of school.
- Perhaps the student's group size is too big.

If tweaking the techniques doesn't improve progress, it's time to make sure that the IEP is suitable for the student's progress.



Parents + participation = success

There was a time in the not-too-distant past when teachers and parents relied upon the occasional conference to keep up with a student's progress. No more. Parents are fast-becoming an integral

part of the student's education. Simply: The more the parent participates in the process, the better the outcome for the child. How do you, as a parent or teacher, get more involved? Here are some quick tips:

1. Involve the parents in homework through discussion or activities.
2. Inform parents what is occurring in class via newsletters or website.
3. If their schedules per-



mit, ask parents to occasionally volunteer within the classroom.

4. Hold events, such as before-school breakfasts, to get to know each other better.

MYTH: The special educator's most important task is to give students self esteem.

FACT: The special educator's most important task is to give students a free, appropriate public education.