

Structural Tips for Writing Goals

Tip	Non-Example	Example
Make sure goals only use language that is observable, measurable; do NOT use terminology that refers to an internal state/ability.	Luke will learn to wash his hands... Sam will be able to brush her teeth...	Luke will wash his hands... Sam will brush her teeth...
Make sure goals are clear and complete. When an outsider picks up a list of your goals, they should be able to understand exactly how the skill will be run and how it will be measured. Make sure that your wording is clear enough to reflect this—it helps to picture exactly what you want teaching to look like while writing and even to have a colleague or friend read your goal and tell you what they think it will look like. Think WHO will be there/cue the skill, WHERE the skill is expected to happen, and HOW the skill will be done specifically.	Jayde will match colors with 100% accuracy <i>How? Pictures of colors? Colored items? Will an adult tell her to match? Will an adult hand her a picture and say match? Is this a sorting task? If yes, field of 3, 5, 10?</i>	When presented a picture of a colored item with an array of three colored pictures (e.g., green, blue, red) in front of her and given a verbal instruction from an adult (e.g., “match”), Jayde will place the item on the matching color...
Accuracy is essentially how correct something is done; independence is to what extent the skill is done without prompting—someone can do something 100% accurately, but with prompting from an adult. When thinking long-term, independence is more important than perfection. Make sure your goals include criteria for both accuracy and independence.	In natural situations when her shoe is untied, Jazlyn will tie her shoes with 100% accuracy... <i>Is an adult helping her? If so, what level of prompting? Is there a plan to fade that prompting?</i>	In natural situations when her shoe is untied, Jazlyn will tie her shoes with 100% accuracy and independence...
Make sure goals do NOT use jargon; goals need to be understandable to all those reading these documents, including parents, administrators, etc.	Michael will vocally mand for 10 new items or activities... Missy will tact 20 new pictures using her AAC...	Michael will vocally request 10 new items or activities... Missy will label 20 new pictures using augmentative alternative communication (AAC)...