



# How Do I Determine My Child's Rate of Progress?

## Have you ever wondered:

- Has the Individualized Education Program (IEP) team looked at how much progress my child could make on IEP goals in a year?
- How quickly is my child capable of learning a new skill or behavior?
- Is my child making enough progress on his or her current IEP goals?

This can be called rate of progress. Rather than using opinion, data such as assessments, previous progress on IEP goals, and home and school observations should be used to determine rate of progress. Sometimes "rate of progress" is called "rate of acquisition" or "pace of learning."

To see how rate of progress fits into the special education process and development of IEP goals, note the middle arrow in the chart below.



Rate of progress should be used to develop new goals that are appropriately ambitious and to determine if your child is making sufficient progress to meet their current annual goals. According to the US Department of Education, "Each child with a disability must be offered an IEP that is designed to provide access to instruction strategies and curricula aligned to both challenging State academic content standards and ambitious goals, based on the unique circumstances of that child."

## Below is a method to help you determine your child's rate of progress.

- Make a list of all your child's current goals in the IEP.
- Next to each goal, list the information that will help you and your child's IEP team determine rate of progress, such as:
  - **IEP Progress Reports:** Written or verbal reports provided by the school about your child's progress in meeting his or her IEP goals and objectives. If you do not have those, you can call your IEP case manager and request they be sent to you.
  - **Standardized and norm-referenced testing:** Tests that measure how your child is performing in comparison to his or her peers and grade level standards. These are found in your child's special education evaluation (completed by school) or possibly an outside psychological, neuropsychological, or other evaluation completed by a medical professional. They also include state and district assessments that are given to all students once or twice yearly.
  - **Curriculum-based measurements:** Assessments used by teachers to track a child's rate of progress toward annual IEP or other goals. This method uses simple measurements and provides more frequent checks on progress than state standardized or other annual assessments.

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- o **Observation and input from teachers:** Verbal or written reports about your child’s progress provided at parent teacher conferences, IEP meetings, or during email or phone conversations.
- o **Observation and input from family members or tutors:** How your child performs at home or in the community. This could include information collected and shared with you by a medical or other specialist working with your child.
- Once you have this information, it is important to document and organize it in a way that can be easily accessed and presented to your child’s IEP team. This could be a **chart, table or list** where you **document the specific information** and note **where you found it**.

**Let’s look at an example:** Jessie’s parents will be attending their daughter’s annual IEP meeting, which takes place in April of the school year (6th grade.) The team wants to write a new reading goal and needs to determine her average rate of progress on her past reading goal in order to write a new one that is appropriate and ambitious.

**The current goal is:** Given special education reading instruction, Jessie will go from a level of reading a beginning 3rd grade level material with 50% accuracy at 30 words per minute to a beginning 4th grade level with 90% accuracy at 60 words per minute in 5 out of 5 trials.

**The team considers the following information:**

**Progress reports:** In a one year period, Jessie went from 50% to 90% on her last reading goal. In each progress report period she increased her skill level by about 10% and advanced 1.5 grade levels.

**Observation and Input from teachers:** As per the English teacher’s tracking sheet and report from last school year, Jessie struggled at the beginning of the school year in making progress on this goal but started to make gains in January.

**Meeting Result:** The team determined that Jessie’s average rate of progress is about 10% every two month period at her current level of instruction. The team agreed that if Jessie continues to make that rate of progress on her new goal, she will be 1.5 grade levels away from her peers by 7th grade.

**Based on her current level of progress, the team writes the following goal:**

**Goal:** Given special education reading instruction, Jessie will go from a level of reading a beginning 4th grade level material with 90% accuracy at 60 words per minute to an ending 5th grade level with 50% accuracy at 80 words per minute in 5 out of 5 trials.

In summary, rate of progress is an important step in writing appropriately ambitious goals and determining if your child is making sufficient progress to meet these goals.