



# SPECIAL EDUCATION RESOURCE

September 2019

## Disability Related Need Affecting Reading for Students Eligible for an IEP with a Speech and Language Impairment

Often, speech and language pathologists will contact the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) with questions relating to students who have been identified with a speech/language impairment and found to be eligible to receive special education services through an individualized education program (IEP).

The following IEP team and student scenario is described:

During an IEP team meeting, the IEP team checks “yes” that reading is impacted, as the child is shown to be performing below grade level in a variety of English language arts standards, including reading and language arts standards (e.g. based on data provided by the general education teacher, the parent, or student records).

This scenario addresses the following in the IEP forms:

Does the student’s disability adversely affect his or her progress toward meeting grade-level reading standards? For preschoolers, does the disability adversely affect progress toward the early learning standards for language development, communication and/or early literacy?

Yes       No

At this point in the CCR IEP five step process, the team has discussed grade-level standards and functional expectations and identified the student’s strengths and needs. The team now moves to Step 2, identifying HOW the student’s disability affects academic achievement and functional performance – in this case reading. So it is up to the team to determine – is

*IEP teams should be sure to have the conversation about whether or not the student’s disability adversely affects reading as opposed to checking yes simply based on a student performing below grade level in reading.*

the student's disability adversely affecting the student's access, engagement, and progress in grade level reading curriculum, instruction, or environments?

If the student's disability affects reading, a root cause analysis should be conducted to determine **WHY** a student is not meeting grade-level standards in reading. Keep in mind the why may be functional or academic in nature. The disability-related needs are summarized. If there is a disability-related need affecting reading (academic or functional) the IEP must include a goal to address the need. This may be a "reading" goal, or may be a different kind of goal (e.g., articulation, oral language, behavior). Special education services are then aligned to enable the student to make progress towards their IEP goals and in the general education curriculum.

Depending on the identified needs, the IEP team could address the disability-related needs that affect reading in the following ways:

- **Create goal(s) in the IEP targeting the speech/language skills related to reading.** The goal(s) will depend on the reason(s) why the student is not meeting grade-level standards/expectations in reading and should not be based solely on the student's area of impairment (e.g. specific learning disability, emotional behavioral disability, speech and language). The goal(s) addresses why the student is not meeting grade-level standards and flows from the root cause analysis.

For instance, if the student is not meeting grade-level standards/expectations in reading because the student has needs in organizing language expressively, then the goal may address expressive language. The expressive language goal and associated special education services may be sufficient for the student to access and make progress towards grade-level standards in reading and in the general education curriculum.

- **Create reading goal via the IEP and have specially designed instruction in reading provided by a special education teacher or licensed (1316) reading teacher.** For some students, speech and language services may be sufficient to positively impact reading achievement. For other students, they may also need specially designed instruction in reading in addition to the speech and language services. This is an IEP team decision based on the unique needs of the student. If the IEP goals for the student reflect core content instruction in the area of reading, this requires the teacher to hold the appropriate

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license. While speech and language pathologists address many areas of literacy that impact reading, they are not licensed to teach reading. In this situation the speech and language pathologist and other educators work in collaboration to meet the needs of the student.

If the needs of the student are beyond the services provided by speech and language, the IEP team may want to conduct a re-evaluation to consider eligibility for other impairment areas. A student is eligible for specially designed reading instruction provided by a special education teacher or licensed reading teacher regardless of impairment area. However, it may be advantageous to reevaluate the student for other impairment areas so that the IEP team can better determine the student's needs.

### **How would you write an intervention in the IEP?**

Interventions available to all students as part of the regular education program are not documented in the IEP unless required as a supplementary aid or service to enable the student with a disability to be educated with nondisabled students to the maximum extent appropriate. Previous and current interventions and effects of interventions can be included in the summary of academic performance (e.g., present levels).

### **Who writes the reading goal?**

The IEP team writes the reading goal at the IEP team meeting during Step 3 of the CCR IEP process. Keep in mind that the "reading" goal, may not necessarily be about the components of reading (e.g., comprehension, decoding, fluency). It might be about the functional skills (articulation, oral language, behavior, etc.) that the team believes, through a root cause analysis discussion, is leading to the disability affecting reading. There may be goals to address the components of reading and the functional skills.

### **Who monitors progress toward the reading goal?**

Whoever provides the service should monitor progress toward the goal. As a reminder, if it is an "academic" reading goal, the service could be provided and progress monitored by a reading teacher or special education teacher. Just because a student has been identified as having a speech/language impairment does not mean that they can only receive special education services from a speech/language pathologist. Progress towards the reading goal must be included in the IEP goal progress reports provided to parents, and periodic progress measures must align with the baseline and level of attainment measures to allow for comparisons.

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## Does every student's IEP have to contain a reading goal?

The IEP team must include information/data about each student's reading achievement compared to grade-level standards in the present levels of academic achievement. Based on this information, the IEP team determines if a student is meeting grade-level reading standards/expectations or if the student's disability is adversely affecting reading achievement and IEP goals and services are necessary (see *Who writes the reading goal?*).

Note: This document sources information from DPI Sample Forms Frequently Asked Questions found at: <https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/laws-procedures-bulletins/procedures/sample>.

*More information about the College and Career Reading IEP 5-Step Process may be found at <https://dpi.wi.gov/sped/college-and-career-ready-ieps>.*



Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction  
Special Education Team  
125 S. Webster Street, P.O. Box 7841  
Madison, WI 53707-7841  
(608) 266-7475  
<http://dpi.wi.gov/>

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