



Question: What are areas to focus on for improving PLAAFP (Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance) statements in IEPs?

Answer:

Make Data-Driven Statements

Ensure that PLAAFP sections are grounded in specific, measurable data. This can include assessment scores, observations, work samples, and progress monitoring data. Avoid general statements; instead, provide concrete examples of the student's current performance levels. For example, "John reads 50 words per minute with 80% accuracy on grade-level text" is more informative than "John struggles with reading."

Connect to Functional Performance

Remember that PLAAFP is not just about academic achievement but also about functional performance—how the student's disability affects their daily life and progress in the general education curriculum. Directors should encourage teams to include information about behavior, social skills, communication, and self-help skills, as appropriate.

Tie Directly to Goals and Services

The PLAAFP should clearly lead to the development of meaningful IEP goals and services. If the statement mentions a need, that need must be addressed in the IEP. For instance, if the PLAAFP describes difficulty with reading comprehension, a corresponding goal and service should target that area.

Ensure Parent and Student Input

Incorporating family and student perspectives can make the PLAAFP more holistic. Gather insights from parents and, if appropriate, the student to understand their concerns, priorities, and observations of strengths and needs outside the school setting. This ensures a well-rounded understanding of the student.





Use Clear, Accessible Language

The PLAAFP should be written in a way that is easily understood by all stakeholders — parents, general education teachers, and service providers. Avoid jargon and ensure clarity. Parents need to understand how their child is performing and why certain goals or services are being proposed.

By focusing on these areas, special educators and directors can guide their teams toward more effective, actionable, and student-centered PLAAFP statements.

