

**TEACHERS' GUIDE
TO**



THE “IRVINGTON PLAAFP”

What is the PLAAFP?

The Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance, PLAAFP, includes information on all areas that are affected by a student's disability and how the disability impacts the child's progress within the general education curriculum.

Information for the PLAAFP is gathered from evaluations completed for eligibility, classroom assessments, and formal standards-based testing along with the comments and observations of teachers, parents and other knowledgeable individuals.

The PLAAFP is the foundation for writing compliant IEPs since it accurately describes the student's performance in all areas of education that are affected by the disability. It includes physical education, academics, social emotional, transition, organizational skills, speech, language, motor skills, or any other area affected by the disability and appropriate to the student's unique educational or vocational needs. The Present Level of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance determine approaches for ensuring involvement in, or adaptations/modifications to, the general curriculum. Each area of identified need in the PLAAFP, related to the disability, must be addressed in at least one of the following: annual goals, supplementary aids/services/personnel supports, or secondary transition services.

Using the PLAAFP information, the IEP Team determines appropriate supplementary aids/service/personnel support, annual goals and short term objectives, state and district-wide assessments and, when age appropriate, transitional services. In other words, it is the foundation for every decision made by the IEP team.

IDEA STATUTE: 2004 300:347 states that an IEP must contain "a statement of the child's Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance, including—H. R. 1350—62 "(aa) how the child's disability affects the child's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum" and "(bb) for preschool children, as appropriate, how the disability affects the child's participation in appropriate activities.

The PLAAFP contains a statement of the student's performance within the general education curriculum including:

1. The impact of the disability
2. Statement of academic strengths
3. Statement of academic needs/weaknesses
4. Statement of functional abilities and needs

The PLAAFP should include the student's strengths, but since it is important to establish the areas of focus for the IEP, it must document areas of weakness/in need of improvement.

Well-written and complete PLAAFPs are crucial to ensuring that an IEP is substantively and procedurally compliant under the IDEA. Why? Because the PLAAFP is the foundation of the entire IEP – the starting point for all other IEP components. If a PLAAFP is inadequate or incomplete, it is almost impossible for annual goals and short-term objectives to be legally adequate and complete, because the goals are based on the information in the PLAAFP. If the goals aren't legally adequate, then the specially designed service levels are questionable. If goals and service levels aren't legally defensible, a placement determination can be called into question.

The present levels information in the PLAAFP should correspond directly to each of the annual goals and/or short-term objectives that the IEP team will be proposing for the IEP. If a proposed goal is for the student to utilize specific organizational skills (e.g., write assignments in a planner, independently break down larger assignments into daily tasks, etc.) at a certain percentage (e.g., 70% of assignments given by the general education teachers), then the PLAAFP should indicate what percentage of the time the student currently demonstrates this skill (even if right now, it's 0%). Baseline data does not have to be generated by a standardized assessment, nor is there an absolute requirement that it be stated in numerical terms but evidence of documented data, which is measurable, must be present. If the goal is behaviorally related, the student's current behaviors should be described and described in the same manner in the PLAAFP. One of the best ways to establish that IEP goals are adequately measurable, appropriate for a student, and demonstrate progress over time, is to be able to compare an IEP's present levels from year to year. However, this is only possible if the units of measurement – that is, the way of describing the student's present levels – are largely the same from year to year.

The PLAAFP must contain a description of how the student's disability impacts the student's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum. If the student is reading at a lower grade level, what does that look like in the general education classroom? Can the student follow along (grade-level comprehension) when instructions are read, but fall behind during independent reading? Does the student attempt compensatory strategies, act out, fail to complete the assignment? What does it look like? This is descriptive section of the PLAAFP, and it's not enough to just re-state the student's disability because two students with the exact same reading level, or writing deficits, or behavioral issues, can look very different when they're in general education, depending on what they use for replacement strategies, how well they use other skills to compensate, etc.

The Ideal Irvington PLAAF

Similar to the way that a photograph gives a detailed picture of something at a certain point in time, so should the ideal PLAAF statement afford the reader with a detailed close-up of a student's Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance. To achieve this end, the PLAAF should contain current and contemporaneous input from all those who participate in the student's growth and development, at home and in school.

Thus, each teacher, therapist, behaviorist, counselor, consultant and parent/guardian who has been significantly involved with the student in the previous year should contribute to the portrayal of the student, to render an accurate, fact-based and detailed snapshot of the student's current academic achievement and functional performance. The teachers, especially, must report on the student's achievement levels in all major subject areas. Rather than relying on opinion, their report should cite to specific data collected throughout the prior year to substantiate their findings regarding subject area strengths and weaknesses and to give solid foundation to formulating goals and objectives that strike a reasonable balance between lofty aspirations and achievable ends. The parent/guardian, and the student, where appropriate, should have input into or comment upon the teachers' statement, during, or as a reflection after, the IEP meeting.

The teachers' and others' individual reports should be presented as a unified collaboration, rather than a series of disconnected paragraphs from the various contributors. The Special Education teacher should take the lead in drawing the various comments together into a cohesive narrative that affords a reader with a view of all aspects of the student's, physical, intellectual and creative capabilities and potential.

The teachers and all others noted above should also collaborate in formulating the PLAAF statement on the functional performance of the student. In this regard, a discussion of the prior year's accommodations and supports should be presented, detailing how they contributed to the student's academic achievements and overall performance throughout the previous year. The conclusions drawn from this discussion should be interwoven with those from the academic achievements discussion noted above to inform the next year's accommodations and supports, in furtherance of the goals and objectives.

TEACHER TOOLS:

Creating the Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functioning (PLAAFP)

- **Entering the PLAAFP in Easy IEP**
- **Timeline for PLAAFPs**
- **Child Study Team IEP Meeting Chart**
- **Essential Teacher Input**
- **PLAAFP Exemplars**

ENTERING THE PLAAFP IN EASY IEP

Steps:

1. On Computer access Easy IEP @ <https://go3.pcgeducation.com/njirvington>
2. Enter your full name and password and then and login (please secure your password and know that Easy IEP asks you to change the password every 90 days for security reasons)
3. On Main Menu Screen-click on the specific student
4. Next screen is the Criteria for selecting students to view: put last name of the student and click view my caseload.
5. Next Screen is Select a student. Proceed to the student you would like to work on click on specific name.
6. At top of the screen: Click IEP Process.
7. Select the area in which you would like to input information: Annual goals and objectives, or Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functional Performance.

Once on the correct area scroll down and input information. Once information is complete click on either save or save and continue. Do not forget to save because your information will be lost.

Click on the x on the far left of the page to complete.

Please make sure that spelling and grammar is correct, that your information is accurate and factual, and you have not included opinions. This is a legally binding document.

Timeline for PLAAFPS:

PLAAFPS must be completed and input into Easy IEP by 3:00PM the day prior to the scheduled IEP meeting.

Child Study Team Members will provide teachers with the following written reminders of PLAAFPS due for scheduled meetings:

1. One month advance notice before the IEP meeting is due by submitting meeting chart to teachers
2. 15 days before the meeting, a friendly reminder is sent to the teachers via email reminding them to complete the PLAAFPS in Easy IEP
3. 3 days before the meeting send an email with reminder of date and WARNING that the PLAAFPS must be completed and input into Easy IEP by 3:00PM the day prior to the scheduled IEP meeting

The CSTs will send the three reminders as documented above. If on the day of the IEP meeting the PLAAFPS has not been input into Easy IEP then the teacher has not provided the IEP Team with the legally required information to create an IEP, consequently causing non-compliance to occur.

CSTs will report any non-compliance to Administration.

Essential Teacher Input in Creating Student Present Levels of Academic Achievement and Functioning (PLAAFP)

Teachers, please input the student's current levels in Easy IEP in a *few paragraphs*. Performance should be reported in relation to the NJ Common Core Standards/objectives that you have covered in your subject/content area using these statements as a guide:

- List the NJ Student Learning Standards addressed in your class this year that the student has had the most difficulty mastering. List specific examples
- Comment on how the student's learning has been assessed (class work, reading assignments, writing assignments, projects, exams, etc.) and the progress
- Does the student work better independently, with a peer, or with a group
- Based on the current accommodations list the *academic* interventions/strategies needed in order for the student to successfully meet your classroom/subject area objectives
- List necessary interventions this student will need to fully access the general education curriculum and/or general education environment
- Include observations, as well as positive comments, about the student's social, emotional, or behavioral aspects
- A statement of how the disability affects the student's involvement and progress in the general education curriculum in academic and/or functional areas
- A description of a student's performance levels in the academic and/or functional areas affected by his or her disability
- PLAAFP must be must be: **Specific, Objective, Measurable, and be Able to collect data frequently**

PLAAFPEXEMPLARS:

Anthony: Age: 8, Grade: 3

Disability: Specific Learning Disability

Anthony enjoys hands-on activities and shows mastery in all subject areas when given the option of completing a project to demonstrate his understanding of the content. He enjoys educational games, songs, and rhymes. He has mastered his multiplication facts of 0's – 12's by using multiplication rap. Anthony struggles with reading and writing. When asked to read or write an assignment, he becomes frustrated in 8 out of 10 situations. His first district benchmark assessment in ELA yielded a score of 56%.

He recently started using a place marker while reading and his class work has improved with grades from first marking period in ELA averaging 64% to a present average of 70% accuracy. His frustration level has been greatly reduced; currently he becomes frustrated in 4 out of 10 situations. Anthony's parents have reported that he has started to read for enjoyment at home.

Anthony enjoys drawing, and working in small groups. Anthony needs 2-3 verbal prompts to start and complete each assignment. He can solve addition and subtraction math problems with three digits with 85% accuracy. He can complete one digit by one digit multiplication and division with an overall average of 83%. Recent introduction of multiplication and division problems with two digits by one digit resulted in a score of 52%; Anthony requires modeling and repetition to acquire skills.

On the last district benchmark assessment, there were 36 questions on the math assessment. Out of the 36 questions, 18 were word problems. Anthony solved 6 out of 18; his overall score on the district assessment was 52%. Over the past two weeks, Anthony has been using a math journal to draw pictures and symbols to help him remember key math vocabulary. He has also been using a graphic organizer to assist him in listing the steps of word problems. He had one assessment at the end of this two-week period and assisted by use of his math journal, he solved 6 out of 10 word problems.

When solving math word problems that have more than one step, he does not select the correct operation or misses a step. On the last district benchmark assessment, there were 36 questions on the math assessment. Out of the 36 questions, 18 were word problems. Anthony solved 6 out of 18; his overall score on the district assessment was 52%. Over the past two weeks, Anthony has been using a math journal to draw pictures and symbols to help him remember key math vocabulary. He has also been using a graphic organizer to assist him in listing the steps of word problems. He had one assessment at the end of this two-week period and assisted by use of his math journal, he solved 6 out of 10 word problems.

Roxanne: Age: 15 Grade: 9 (Algebra)

Disability: Specific Learning Disability

Roxanne currently has Algebra as her first period class; she attends regularly and is prepared. Roxanne is capable of the work when she is focused and able to ignore distractions. However, when she is off task or focused on something else, she requires frequent redirection.

On the math benchmark assessment test she scored 65. Her strengths, reflected in class work and on assessments, are in Numbers and Operations, as well as, Data Analysis and Probability. She struggles most with math problems since she is challenged by the reading component

Roxanne is able to communicate her wants and needs appropriately when someone else initiates the conversation but does not ask for help in math class. Roxanne is able to use the commutative, associative, and distributive properties of mathematics accurately in 7 out of 10 trials with numerical equations. She is successful in only 3 out of 10 trials using the distributive property with algebraic expressions

Roxanne has demonstrated on assessments that she understands the need to manipulate symbols in order to solve problems and uses the necessary algebraic skills required to simplify algebraic expressions and solve equations and inequalities in problem situations. She also enjoys working independently on math programs on the computer.

Math benchmark assessments reflect grades ranging from 62% to 76%. Roxanne completes homework and classroom assignments consistently with 70% accuracy. As was noted above regarding Roxanne's difficulties in solving word problems, because Roxanne is reading at the fifth grade level, and the word problems are written for students reading at the ninth grade level, it is reasonable to conclude that the disparity between Roxanne's reading level and the level of the word problems is adversely impacting her success with solving math word problems.

Roxanne struggles with sustaining attention and needs prompting and cueing in the classroom. Roxanne follows directions and is concerned about her own progress. She has expressed interest in attending a community college after high school. She is unsure of what type of career she wants but is interested in the computer field.

Shamirah: Age: 16 Grade 9 (Chorus, Elective)

Disability: MD (Emotionally Disturbed and Specific Learning Disability)

We have been studying basic music theory with piano as a visual aid/supplement for spatial relationships and basic singing techniques. In regards to theory, we have covered the treble and bass clef, accidentals, note and rest values, time signature, harmonic equivalents, half and whole steps. In terms as technique, we have covered breathing, how we use our mouths and lips, jaw tension, and soft palate vowels. We are currently notating rhythms of songs we know and adding solfege with the ultimate goal of transposing them to any key and writing them on the staff. Shamirah, however, was absent when we began this activity. Shamirah is completely capable of understating and learning the material. She simply finds it difficult to listen and participate long enough to learn the material. I am working with Shamirah individually and frequently asking her questions during class pertaining to what we are currently working on. Shamirah is usually unable to give correct answers, though she is very upfront about the fact that she was simply not paying attention.

When Shamirah works individually she falls asleep. When she works with a group or partner, she goes off-task immediately and distracts her group mates. I have been giving constant individual attention, reiterated to her the missing information and reminded her to stay on task on a regular basis. Shamirah is, otherwise very pleasant and friendly, but frequently distracted. I often stop by student's desk to ask them to help me figure out an answer or work with them individually; on several occasions, Shamirah has turned around in the middle of a sentence or explanation to start conversation with her peers. As a result she does not seem to have mastered all the material we have been studying, therefore I supplement by going over the material one-on-one with her during class work time. Her absences also further hinder her advancement. Her absences and inattentiveness combined have prevented her from taking the chapter test that was given on November 21st. Shamirah's cumulative classroom assignments add up to a B average(84%) and her quizzes and tests add up to a C average (75%)