Welcome to our video for HLP 11 Identify and prioritize long- and short-term learning goals.

There are 22 High Leverage Practices for supporting students with disabilities grouped into four domains. HLP 11, Identify and prioritize long- and short-term learning goals falls under the instruction domain.

The major source for content in this video is the Chapter by Shelia Alber-Morgan and colleagues in the HLP for Inclusive Classrooms book published by Routledge and CEC, and the Progress Center website.

This video is divided into 2 parts. Part 1 defines short- and long-term goals and provides a rationale for identifying and prioritizing learning goals for students with disabilities. Part 2 demonstrates how various individual student data sources, state standards, and the IEP support educators in identifying essential areas of need to develop long- and short-term goals.

**Part 1: What are long- and short-term learning goals and why are they important?**

First, HLP 11 can apply to academic and behavioral goal setting. When HLP 11 is implemented, teachers **prioritize** what is most important for students to learn and access to benefit from general education and other contextually relevant curricula. The principles of this HLP intersect with several other HLPs, including HLP 6: Using assessment data and making instructional adjustments, HLP 12: Systematically design instruction toward a specific learning goal, and HLP 20: Provide intensive instruction.

HLP 11 refers to both long- and short-term learning goals. But what is the difference?

**Long-term** goals refer to those that focus on broader outcomes essential for teachers to develop and implement high-quality educational programming for students with disabilities. Most educators are familiar with long-term goals required as part of the IEP, referred to as measurable annual goals. These annual goals are developed by an IEP team for students found eligible for special education and are based on the students’ unique needs outlined in their evaluation report and in the students’ present levels of academic and functional performance, or PLAAFPs.

Here are examples of an academic and a behavior long-term goal:

* IEP Academic Goal Example: When given a standardized third-grade level reading probe, Michael will read 99 words read correctly in 1 minute with 95% accuracy by spring benchmarking.
* IEP Behavior Goal Example: During whole group instruction, Kenisha will remain academically engaged at least 80% of the instructional period as measured by direct behavior rating.

Educators will also use state standards and grade level benchmarks or expectations that are necessary for students to progress in the general education curriculum to develop long-term instructional goals. These goals generally focus on what students will be able to do by the end of the year and tend to focus on general academic, social, emotional, and behavioral outcomes. Success on long-term goals can be measured by state tests or grade level benchmark assessments and through progress monitoring using general outcome measures.

Once long-term goals have been identified and prioritized based on student need and grade level expectations, educators will backwards plan to identify relevant **short-term goals.** Short-term goals help teachers develop weekly and daily lesson plans and individualize instruction for students. These differ from long-term goals in that they generally focus on more targeted skills, sometimes foundational skills, necessary for the students to progress toward and achieve the long-term learning goals. Fuchs and colleagues (2015) and research by Doabler and colleagues (2012) affirmed the need to identify and prioritize students’ goals and instruction around critical content while linking to their present levels of performance.

Examples of short-term goals are:

1. Reading: When given a list of twenty 2nd grade sight words, Maya will accurately read with 98% accuracy 3 of 4 trials by the end of 1st semester.
2. Math: Given a set of numbers, Jamal will solve two-digit addition and subtraction problems with regrouping with 80% accuracy.
3. Behavior: When working in a group, Joseph will use an appropriate voice level with no more than 1 prompt from the teacher in 5 group activities.
4. Transition: Given a job application, Maddy will complete the application with 100% accuracy in 2 of 3 trials.

**Why do long and short-term goals matter?**

Research from Hattie (2008) summarized findings from 11 meta-analyses on learning goals. He found large positive effects on achievement when teachers set specific and challenging goals versus no learning goals. Short- and long-term goals support teachers in clarifying the outcomes of classroom or intervention instruction, which is essential for implementing HLP 12: Systematically designing instruction toward a specific learning goal’ and HLP 20: Providing intensive instruction.

Students with disabilities who are eligible under the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2006) receive a free appropriate public education in the least restrictive environment through an IEP. The purpose of the IEP is to ensure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, that children with disabilities are educated with peers without disabilities *[Sec. 300.114(a)(2)(i)]* and they are able to make progress in the general education curriculum *[Sec. 300.320(a)(4)(ii)].* The IEP must include a statement of measurable annual academic and functional goals. These long-term goals are designed to “(A) meet the child’s needs that result from the child’s disability to enable the child to be involved in and make progress in the general education curriculum; and (B) meet each of the child’s other educational needs that result from the child’s disability [Sec. 300.320 (a)(2)(i)(A-B)]”. For children with disabilities who take alternate assessments, the IEP is required to include a description of benchmarks or short-term goals and objectives *[Sec. 300.320(a)(2)(ii)].*

IEP goals and objectives are developed by the IEP team using data from the student’s PLAAFPs. The IEP team uses the IEP goals to develop the remaining components of the IEP, including how progress will be measured, a statement of special education, related services and supplementary aids and service, and the transition plan, depending on the student’s age. IEP goals support teachers in developing more immediate and short-term goals needed for daily, weekly, or unit-based instruction necessary to implement the IEP.

In 2017, the Supreme Court decision in *Endrew F. v. Douglas County School District (2017),* often referred to as *Endrew F,* highlighted the need to rethink and redesign IEP goals and instruction to ensure that students with disabilities experience meaningful benefits*.* The Court ruled that “[t]o meet its substantive obligation under the IDEA, a school must offer an IEP reasonably calculated to enable a child to make progress appropriate in light of the child’s circumstances.” (p. 16). In other words, learning goals should be challenging, yet attainable.

**Part 2: Developing long- and short-term goals**

Setting appropriate long- and short-term goals is best done with a collaborative team. The ‘team’ members participating in developing goals will vary based on the purpose. For example, establishing IEP goals will include a team of individuals, including families, specified in IDEA, while developing daily short-term learning goals may include only the teacher and the student. We know that when students take part in developing and owning their goals, they are often more motivated and engaged in their learning. Developing classroom instructional and behavioral goals may also include students, as well as other grade level educators, curriculum specialists, school psychologists, and instructional coaches.

Educators **identify** and **prioritize** short- and long-term learning goals using grade-level standards, assessment data, learning progressions, students’ prior knowledge, and IEP goals and benchmarks. Educator’s use of these data sources aligns with the assessment HLPs, specifically HLP 4: using multiple sources of information to develop a comprehensive understanding of a student’s strengths and needs and HLP 6: using student assessment data, analyzing instructional practices, and making necessary adjustments that improve student outcomes.

Since the purpose of the IEP is to ensure that, to the maximum extent appropriate, children with disabilities are educated with peers without disabilities, long- and short-term learning goals for students with disabilities should connect to **state grade-level standards.** Grade level standardsare designed to clarify what all students are expected to learn at each grade level to achieve school and post-school success. For students with the most significant cognitive disabilities, the IEP team may at times determine that the student will progress toward learning goals aligned to alternate academic achievement standards that align with state grade-level standards.

While the state standards and the IEP annual goals help educators to identify and prioritize long-term learning goals, educators use students’ prior knowledge, student assessment data, learning progressions, and IEP benchmarks, where appropriate, to develop short-term learning goals necessary for the student to progress toward long-term goals. Educators can use data included in the IEP PLAAFPs, formal progress monitoring data, summative data, or formal and informal classroom assessment data to understand students’ prior knowledge and learning needs.

**Learning progressions** provide teachers with a carefully sequenced trajectory of core concepts and skills aligned with grade-level standards. Teachers should begin with the most critical foundational skills and concepts based on student needs, and then sequence instruction toward the long-term goal. Instruction should be organized along a developmental trajectory from concrete skills and concepts to more complex and discrete skills, as described in HLP 12: systematically designed instruction.

**Writing Clear Long- and Short-term Learning Goals**

Learning goals should be clearly written to clarify what groups or individual students will be able to do at the end of the learning period. Goals typically are written using three key components:

* The **condition** includes the context under which the student will be able to perform the target behavior. The conditions will vary based on students’ grade level and needs and may include the type of material, the setting, level of teacher support, or whether the behavior is completed as part of a group or independently.
* The **target behavior** includes a description of the observable behavior the student is expected to perform. The target behavior should include observable action words like define, read, calculate, analyze, or demonstrate as opposed to unobservable behaviors like understand, think, or know.
* The **level of proficiency/timeline** includes the timeframe for the goal, such as annually or weekly, as well as the level of accuracy expected for mastery.

When developing learning goals, educators should ask themselves:

* Does this goal make sense and align with desired outcomes?
* Is the goal meaningful to the student?
* How will I know if and when the goal is met?

In the following sample video, Dr. Dia Jackson portrays as a special education teacher, and Dr. Michael Kennedy portrays a general education teacher.  They discuss the development of long term goals  for a student with an IEP and how they will use learning progressions to carefully sequence short term goals.

**Conclusion**

Prior to developing and implementing instruction and intervention, educators need to identify and prioritize long- and short-term learning goals. Learning goals should align with grade-level standards and needs identified in the IEP and reflect students’ current performance levels. When implementing HLP 11, educators will use their knowledge of essential curriculum components, identify essential prerequisites and foundations, and assess student performance in relation to these components to ensure learning goals are meaningful for students with disabilities.

For more information about developing long- and short-term goals and its role in supporting the needs of students with and without disabilities, please visit

* PROGRESS Center, [www.promotingPROGRESS.org](http://www.promotingPROGRESS.org)
* High Leverage Practices in Special Education, <https://highleveragepractices.org/>
* National Center for Intensive Intervention, www.intensiveintervention.org

Thanks for watching, and please continue using resources from this series on high leverage practices for supporting students with disabilities served in general and special education.