The IEP Specialist

Advocacy Access Equity Inclusion

Tip Sheet

5 Things to Look for in a Progress Report

And What to Ask the IEP Team

Before you start: Keep your child's IEP next to the progress report. You'll need the present levels, each annual goal, and how each goal is measured.

1 Real numbers, not just words

Ratings like "progressing" or "emerging" don't show how much your child has grown. Look for scores, percentages, or counts.

Ask: *"Can you show me the data behind this rating?"*

2 A match with the IEP

Every goal in the IEP should have its own update. Compare each one to the starting point and the target written in the IEP.

Ask: *"Where did this goal start, and how close is my child to the target?"*

3 Whether your child is on track

Look at the pace of progress, not just whether there's been some. Compare how much of the year has passed with how far your child has come.

Ask: *"At this rate, will my child meet this goal by the annual review?"*

4 A plan if progress stalls

Flat progress is a signal to adjust the plan, not to wait another year. You can ask for a meeting anytime.

Ask: *"What will we change if progress stays flat?"*

5 A new goal if one is mastered early

If a goal is met ahead of schedule, check that the skill holds up over time and in different settings. Then the IEP can be updated with a new goal.

Ask: *"Can we add a new goal that builds on this skill?"*

Progress is measured by how far your child has come.
Keep the IEP close by every time a progress report comes home.

This tip sheet is for educational purposes only and reflects general information about federal special education law. It is not legal advice. Every child's situation is different, and requirements can vary by state and school district. Read the full article, Special Education Isn't About "Catching Up": It's About Progress, at TheIEPSpecialist.com.