

Embedding IEP Goals In Home Activities and Routines

In the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic, families may find themselves adapting to schooling at home. Occupational therapists and occupational therapy assistants are in the unique position to bridge the gap between the home and school contexts and to support parents as students spend more time learning at home.

An excellent way to complement special education and related service delivery during remote learning is to develop an IEP matrix for home. A home individualized education program (IEP) matrix includes the family's typical home routine and/or daily activities and provides parents and other caregivers with activities they can realistically incorporate to support IEP goals outside of the traditional school setting. IEP teams include educational members (e.g., teachers, related services providers), as well as parents or caregivers and students. Some IEP teams develop collaborative goals based on student needs. Collaborative goals usually have more than one educational staff member working to address them. In other situations, teams may decide to have goals that are implemented by one team member.

Considerations for Developing an IEP Matrix

- Gather information about the family's typical daily routines and schedule at home.
 - Consider developing a new [occupational profile](#) that takes into consideration the family's priorities, given the new educational context.
- Gather information about the occupations the student typically engages in during e-learning days at home.
- Collaborate with the entire IEP team to review student goals.
- Introduce the IEP Matrix to the family.
 - List each of the student's IEP goals or the domain areas on the grid.
 - List the family's daily routine or schedule, or the student's typical occupations.
- Collaborate with the family to identify activities that are a good match for their daily routine.
- Consider maximizing opportunities to address goals during naturally occurring activities (e.g., eating meals or getting dressed in the morning).
- Suggest other activities that are practical for the family to include in their daily schedule.
- Consider the resources (e.g., materials, supplies, and time) that are needed to complete the activities, and work with families and the school district to identify ways to access resources if needed.
- Encourage the family to check the IEP Matrix as part of their daily routine.
- Collaborate with the family to identify ways to share information about how the student performed during each activity.
- Some students may spend the school day at daycare, community centers, or in the homes of family members or friends. Consider adapting the IEP Matrix to include the opportunities that present themselves in these settings.

IEP Matrix for Home—Example

Creating predictable family routines and activities can help to maximize home learning environments for children. This table can be used to help you think about your existing routines and activities and how to use them to support your child's IEP goals. Choose the strategies that fit best with your family life.

IEP Domain	English Language Arts	Math	Communication	Life skills	Social emotional and behavioral health
IEP Goal	Student will use words to describe objects and action sequences.	Student will count to 100 by ones and fives.	Student will ask and answer questions to seek help or get information.	Student will independently use and manage school materials.	Student will demonstrate self-control during frustrating tasks.
Implementer	IEP Team	IEP Team	IEP Team	IEP Team	IEP Team
Mealtimes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name items that belong on the table or in the kitchen. Play quiz games that focus on features or functions of different items (e.g., What does this appliance do? What are 3 ways to warm up food? What are all the ways we can eat eggs?). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Count items. Compare more/less with food, or bigger vs smaller with other items. Do simple addition and subtraction using pieces of cereal or crackers. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Request more of a food item with words, sign language, or visual supports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Assist with setting up and cleaning up during mealtimes. Eat with utensils. Drink from a cup. Use a napkin to wipe face. Open and close bottles and Ziplock baggies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Use table manners. Share condiments. Pass food items.
Morning and nighttime routines	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name things needed when getting dressed. Name items needed for grooming or other types of self-care. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Count to 20 while brushing teeth. Count to a certain number when washing hands. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ask for help when needed. Express preferences for certain clothing items. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wash face. Brush teeth. Change in and out of pajamas. Change into clothes. Brush hair. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Complete routine without protest. Take a break during routine when feeling overwhelmed. Use a self-calming strategy.

IEP Domain	English Language Arts	Math	Communication	Life skills	Social emotional and behavioral health
IEP Goal	Student will use words to describe objects and action sequences.	Student will count to 100 by ones and fives.	Student will ask and answer questions to seek help or get information.	Student will independently use and manage school materials.	Student will demonstrate self-control during frustrating tasks.
Implementer	IEP Team	IEP Team	IEP Team	IEP Team	IEP Team
Chores	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write steps for completing activities like doing laundry, engaging in pet care, and putting away laundry. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete addition and subtraction when putting away items or sorting laundry. • Estimate the amount of time it might take to complete tasks. • Graph how many of a certain item are in the sink or in the laundry basket. 		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sort laundry • Sort toys into appropriate containers/shelves. 	
Free Time	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Read aloud. • Turn pages of a book. • Point to pictures in a book. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Count toys. • Count puzzle pieces. • Organize items by shape and size. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Request different toys. • Comment on toys (e.g., I like the blue ball). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean up toys after play, play dress up, play “kitchen” or “house”. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Play turn-taking games. • Share toys. • Stop engaging in free time and return to schoolwork when prompted.

Developed for AOTA by: Mary "Betsey" Tallon, MEd, OT/L, Director of Educational and Clinical Services; the Illinois Autism Partnership Team at Easterseals of Metropolitan Chicago; and AOTA staff. Reviewed by Members of the AOTA Children and Youth Special Interest Section.