WRITING MEANINGFUL GOALS AND MEASURABLE OBJECTIVES
COURSE OBJECTIVES

After reviewing this lesson, you will be able to answer the following questions:

- What is the difference between a goal and an objective?
- How do I know which goals to choose?
- How many goals should be chosen?
- What’s the difference between long-term and short-term goals?
- How do I write measurable objectives?
- What is a ‘compound’ objective’?
- What should be included in the ‘methods’ section?
- How do I measure progress?
- What should I do if the person is not making progress?
- Can goals and objectives be amended?
WHAT ARE GOALS?

A goal is an overarching principle that guides decision making. We can think of goals as being the Big Picture — where we hope that our efforts will ultimately bring us. Goals tend to be long on direction, and short on specific tactics. For example, you can set a goal of losing 30 pounds without having a specific plan as to how to do it. You’ve defined the destination you want to arrive at and tactics can be developed as you move forward.
The individuals that we help support have dreams and desires and things they would like to accomplish in life. We work with them to find ways to define their goals and then to create a systematic process to help them achieve those goals.
The goals that are developed are based on the individual’s desires and needs and are written without regard to the availability of services. Goal statements should be based on the assumption that people with disabilities generally want the exact same things out of life as the rest of us!
WHAT ARE GOALS?

For example, goal statements such as “remain medication compliant” or “reduce behavioral outbursts” are not meaningful or motivating long-term outcomes. These may be a means to an end, but they do not, in and of themselves, equate with the realization of one’s ultimate vision for the future.
CHOOSING GOALS

Goals should focus on outcomes that are important to the individual. They should be functional and based on principles of community inclusion, self-determination and economic self-sufficiency. They are driven by assessments; both formal and informal, and reflect ways to help individuals overcome barriers to full community participation.
Goals should correspond to assessed needs and desires that are documented in the Individual Service Plan (ISP). Personal preferences should be evident in the goals, design strategies, and networks of service. The individual should participate in goal development every step of the way.
CHOOSING GOALS

Other areas to consider for goal development may be:

- Personal autonomy
  - I want to control my own money.

- Work/education
  - I want to finish school.

- Spiritual
  - I want to get back to church.

- Social activities
  - I want to join a bowling league.

- Health/well-being
  - I want to lose weight
The following questions are helpful to ask when discussing potential goals:

- Is it something the person and/or guardian wants?
- Will it increase the number of places and people in the person’s life?
- Is it chronologically age appropriate? (young adult, middle age, retirement)
The following questions are helpful to ask when discussing potential goals:

- Is it functional for the person’s quality of life and will there be opportunities to practice?
- Will it enhance the person’s physical condition?
- Will it result in increased competence or status enhancement?
Long-term goals are often our most meaningful and important goals. One problem, however, is that the achievement of these goals is usually far in the future. Long-term goals are ones that the person will achieve over a longer period of time (e.g., 2-5 years). Short-term goals are ones that the person will achieve in the near future (e.g., 12 months or less).
For example, Mark’s long-term goal is “I want to get a job in the community that pays at least minimum wage.”
LONG-TERM AND SHORT-TERM GOALS

Through the assessment process, we discover that Mark requires a lot of support navigating the community and needs to learn a number of skills in this area.

Because Mark needs to learn a variety of community and employment skills, we might break down the long term goal even further and develop short-term goals for Mark.
For example, a short-term goal for Mark might include “…will independently use public transportation.” This short-term goal is directly related to the long-term goal as Mark will need to use public transportation to get to and from a job.
It is not always necessary to have short-term goals. The need for this depends on the person’s current abilities and how much learning needs to take place to reach the long-term goal. If a number of skills need to be learned to reach the ultimate goal, the short-term goal can help keep us focused along the way.
For example, a long-term goal such as, “I want to live in an apartment by myself” may be a very long range goal depending on the present skills of the person. To keep focused on the long-term goal, we may need to develop a series of short-term goals to help keep us on track.
Assessments indicate that the individual cannot use transportation, cannot use the microwave or stove, and cannot differentiate between people they know and trust versus strangers. So, we might develop some short-term goals to help keep us on track for the long term goal of “I want to live in an apartment by myself.”
Long-term and short-term goals

Short-term goals that might be developed might include:

“I want to prepare a frozen dinner.”
“I want to use city transportation to get to work.”
“I want to learn who is safe to have access to my personal space and possessions.”
LONG-TERM AND SHORT-TERM GOALS

Each of these short-term goals would then have a series of **objectives** to help to keep everyone on track toward goal attainment.

Objectives and short-term goals are always directly related to goal achievement.
RELATING LONG-TERM GOALS, SHORT-TERM GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Because a long term goal may be far off in the future, we want to be sure that we stay on task when writing short-term goals and objectives. To help us stay on track, we need to ask ourselves “What is preventing the person from achieving this long-term goal right now?” In other words, what are the barriers in place that are keeping the person from achieving the goal?

We then look at these barriers and develop our short-term goals (if needed) and/or objectives to help overcome these barriers.
For example, a person may have the goal “I want to lose 30 pounds”. In order to develop a plan to achieve this goal, we ask ourselves “What’s keeping the person from achieving this right now?”
The answer to that question may involve development of some short-term goals such as:

“I need to exercise more often”.

Or

“I need to make better food choices”.

From here, objectives can be developed for each of the short-term goals.
This “find the barriers” approach generally results in short-term goals/objectives that are more meaningful and more likely to result in success. Writing objectives such as “will lose 5 pounds”, “will lose 10 pounds” will likely result in failure because we are not teaching the person needed skills to help them achieve the goal.
There may be a correlation between the individual’s strengths, needs, and desires and the number of goals that are developed. If a number of goals are chosen, the individual will receive assistance from the Interdisciplinary/Community Support Team to prioritize goals. The Team discussion along with reasons for selection of goals should be documented in the person’s written plan.
In summary, remember when choosing goals, the following should be considered:

- Preferences of participant and/or family are addressed.
- Strengths, needs and preferences are identified through assessments and personal interview with the individual.
- Individual assessment information (both formal and informal) should identify relevant strengths, needs and barriers to full community participation.
DON'T CONFUSE TERMINOLOGY

After goals are chosen and prioritized by the individual in collaboration with their support team, objectives are developed to assist the individual to achieve those goals. Objectives help to determine if progress is being made toward that end. The objectives are the stepping stones to goal achievement.
Sometimes we confuse the meaning of the words “goals” and “objectives” and believe that we must write measurable goals, which is not the case. Goals should be based on individual’s wants/needs/desires as reflected in the ISP and are very general. Objectives are an organized, logical pathway to reach the goal(s) and must be written so that they are measurable.
A common way to describe goals and objectives is to say that:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>GOALS</th>
<th>OBJECTIVES</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Goals are broad.</td>
<td>Objectives are narrow in focus.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals are intangible.</td>
<td>Objectives are tangible.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals are abstract.</td>
<td>Objectives are concrete.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals are generally difficult to measure.</td>
<td>Objectives are measureable.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
WHAT ARE LEARNING OBJECTIVES?

Goals and objectives are both tools for achieving the desired outcomes; however, learning objectives are *measurable* steps toward goal achievement.

Learning Objectives are sometimes referred to as “behavioral” “teaching,” or “training” objectives. A learning objective is an attempt to clearly define the criteria for successful completion of a skill.
DEVELOPING LEARNING OBJECTIVES

Objectives are measurable intermediate steps between the individual’s present level of performance and the desired level as stated in the goal. They are individualized and based on the person’s skills and needs.
When developing learning objectives, be sure to consider what, if any, components of the task that the person can currently complete. Then, break down the remaining steps to a logical sequence of objectives.
WELL WRITTEN LEARNING OBJECTIVES ARE:

- Sequential
- Relate directly to the goal
- Measureable
- Singularly stated.
When writing a learning objective, it should be one sentence which is composed of the following five elements in this order:

1. Condition
2. Person
3. Behavior
4. Performance Criteria
5. Timeline
1. CONDITION

The *condition* describes the things that are required to happen during the program or things the person will be given to carry out the program. Conditions indicate:

- What supplies will be provided (“using a map”).
- What type of assistance or prompts will or will not be used (“When asked by staff, ‘John, what is your address?’”; “given two verbal prompts”).
- Where or when the behavior is to be demonstrated (“at bedtime”; “in the car”).
1. CONDITION

You may have seen objectives that start with the phrase “given that…” This is one way to explain the situations in which the individual is expected to complete the task.

But beware, not all “given” statements are useful. For example, “Given staff, Beth will complete her grooming” does not tell you very much about the conditions under which Beth is expected to complete a task (nor does it tell you very much about what Beth is expected to do).
1. CONDITION

Some examples of clearly written conditions are:

- “At dinner time…”
- “When handed the broom…”
- “Before shower time…”
- “When given the instruction, ‘John, it’s time for laundry…””
1. CONDITION

Examples of poorly written conditions are:

- “In order to buy the things I want…”
- “In order to increase my medication skills…”

These statements do not give any information about what is required to carry out the program.
After stating the condition, the person who will be performing the task is given. Use the person’s name not a nickname; not “he”, “she” or “you”. Sometimes “I” is used to indicate the person. However, be sure that you have not written an objective for “staff”.

The objective “After dinner, staff will take Juan to the restroom...” indicates that staff will be performing the observable action. A more appropriate way to write this type of objective might be “After dinner, Juan will walk to the restroom...”
Next, the *behavior* that will be measured is stated. Be very careful to choose a behavior that is observable; one that can be detected through one of the senses. A behavior must be observable in order to be measured.
3. **BEHAVIOR**

*Overt* behaviors can be thought of as ‘action verbs’. Avoid using behavioral terms that are general, non-specific and open to interpretation. These types of behaviors are called *covert* behaviors. Do not use covert behaviors when writing a learning objective because they are very difficult, if not impossible, to measure.
### SOME EXAMPLES OF COVERT AND OVERT BEHAVIORS ARE:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>COVERT</th>
<th>OVERT</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Think</td>
<td>Draw</td>
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<tr>
<td>Feel</td>
<td>Walk</td>
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<tr>
<td>Understand</td>
<td>Pick up</td>
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<td>Be able</td>
<td>Push</td>
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<tr>
<td>Be aware</td>
<td>Name</td>
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<tr>
<td>Know/learn</td>
<td>Write</td>
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<tr>
<td>Like</td>
<td>Describe</td>
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<tr>
<td>Appreciate</td>
<td>Repeat</td>
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Also, the behavior must be specific; “Alex will behave in public” is not specific. It would be difficult to measure “behave” in any consistent, meaningful way.

The statement “Alex will not curse in public” is a much more descriptive behavior that is more specific and less open to interpretation.
However, “Rhonda will sweep the kitchen floor with a push broom” is a behavior that is specific, can be observed and could be measured or counted. “Sweep” is an overt, action verb which can be observed.
Examine the following statements and determine if the behavior mentioned is an overt (action verb) or covert (unobservable) behavior.

1. Marty will **learn** the alphabet...
2. Terry will **participate in** making breakfast...
3. Katie will **manipulate** art materials...
4. Justin will **understand** the sequence for ...
5. Marsha will **increase enjoyment of** ...
None of the previous examples demonstrate an overt behavior. They are *not measureable* and should not be used when writing a learning objective.

How can we make them measureable behaviors?
In order to make the behavior measureable, you can change the behavior to be demonstrated to an action verb. This will make the behavior observable and therefore measureable.

For example, instead of saying “Marty will learn the alphabet...” we can use an action verb and say “Marty will recite the alphabet...”.
Objectives should be singularly stated. That is, be sure to use only one behavior in the objective that is to be measured.

An objective such as “Lois will walk to the mailbox and get the mail” would be called a compound objective because there are two behaviors (actions) stated for performance criteria. These actions are:

- Walk to the mailbox
- Get (retrieve) the mail
COMPOUND OBJECTIVES

With a compound objective, staff may have difficulty in determining which behavior or action they are measuring. This can lead to data that is confusing for the person monitoring progress since different staff may be tracking different behaviors.

If no progress is being made, we won’t know how to revise the objective because we don’t know the behavior that is being measured.
Depending on what specific behavior you want Lois to learn, a better way to write this objective might be:

“After walking to the mailbox, Lois will retrieve the mail…”

This makes the act of “walking to the mailbox” the condition and “retrieve the mail” the observable, behavior in the objective that is to be measured.
4. PERFORMANCE

The next element for writing measurable objectives is *performance*. *Performance* describes the degree to which the person will perform the task satisfactorily.

The example “Rhonda will sweep the kitchen floor with a push broom” gives a specific behavior but does not tell you very much about how well Rhonda is expected to do.

The level of performance should be stated in such a way that an observer can easily determine if Rhonda has completed the task in an acceptable manner.
The level of performance will differ based on the individual and the task being taught. For example, the level of performance for Rhonda might include a measure of:

- how quickly she must complete the task ("within five minutes"),
- how accurately ("so no visible dirt, food particles, or pieces of paper remain on the floor"), or
- the number of times she is expected to complete the task over a period of time ("five out of seven trials for four consecutive weeks").
4. PERFORMANCE

Don’t confuse things by making them so complicated that no one can understand what is expected.

Ask yourself if the level of performance makes sense for the individual and the task to be performed. For example, crossing a busy street would require a greater degree of accuracy to insure safety than making a sandwich.
4. PERFORMANCE

Performance can be measured by various methodologies; however, the performance criteria in the objective should answer one of the following questions:

- How many?
- How well?
- How fast?
- How often?
4. PERFORMANCE

- **How many?**
  This measures quantity or the number of responses. “...peels five medium potatoes” is a performance criterion measuring quantity.

- **How well?**
  This measures accuracy. In our example with Rhonda “so no visible dirt, food particles, or pieces of paper remain on the floor” is a performance criterion for accuracy.
4. PERFORMANCE

How fast?
This measures speed or length of time. Phrases such as “in less than an hour” or “within fifteen seconds” measure speed.

This can also be used to measure how long the person will perform the task. “…will talk to his mother on the phone for five minutes” measures length of time.
How often?

This measures the number of responses that are time related. For example “will make his bed four out of seven times in one week...” is an example of an objective that answers the question how often?
Some of the best performance criteria combine performance types together. For example, examine the objective: “...write down the sums of addition problems with at least 80% accuracy on four out of five addition assignments within a two week period.”

This objective uses a combination of performance types:

- How well? (at least 80% accuracy)
- How many? (four out of five addition assignments)
- How long? (within a two week period)
Examine the following objective:

“On every day that Pamela showers (condition), Pamela (person) will put her dirty clothes in the hamper (observable behavior) for six consecutive weeks (performance criteria)”.
4. PERFORMANCE

This objective appears to have the four criteria for a measurable objective discussed so far:

- Condition
- Person
- Behavior
- Performance

However, let’s assess the outcomes when staff monitored Pamela performing the task.
Every day that Pamela showers for 6 consecutive weeks, Pamela puts her dirty clothes in the hamper but it took her an hour to do it. Average for others is about 2 minutes.
4. PERFORMANCE

Every day that Pamela showers for six consecutive weeks, Pamela puts her dirty clothes in the hamper, but she put her clothes in her roommate’s hamper.

WAS THE OBJECTIVE MET?
Every day Pamela showers for six consecutive weeks, Pamela puts her dirty clothes in the hamper, but she takes out other dirty clothes from the hamper and puts them back on.

WAS THE OBJECTIVE MET?
4. PERFORMANCE

Where did the writer go wrong if the objective was technically met, but did not get at what was really intended? The answer is the *performance criteria.*

The writer may not have observed Pamela performing the task prior to writing the objective and therefore did not really write the objective with the individual in mind.

Objectives should be written tailored to the skills and needs of the individual.
A better way of writing an objective for Pamela might be...

“On days that Pamela takes a shower, Pamela will place her dirty clothes from that day into her hamper within ten minutes of drying herself, eight out of ten trials, for six consecutive weeks”.
4. PERFORMANCE

What two performance criteria are used in the new objective to make it clear and measureable?

**Answer:** The new objective includes performance criteria of *how fast* (within ten minutes of drying herself) and *how often* (“eight out of ten trials for six consecutive weeks”).
5. TIMELINE

The last of the five elements needed to write a measureable objective is the *timeline*.

The timeline is the date by which the performance criteria should be achieved. The timeline must always include a month, date and year.
In our example of Pamela’s objective:

“On every day that Pamela showers (condition), Pamela (person) will put her dirty clothes in the hamper (observable behavior) for six consecutive weeks, (performance criteria) by June 15 2015 (timeline).”

The time line is simply the month, date and year that successful completion is anticipated.
People with developmental disabilities, especially people with intellectual disability, have difficulty learning new tasks as quickly as other people. However, this does not mean that objectives should be continued indefinitely. If the individual has not learned a task or behavior within a reasonable amount of time, the teaching methods should be questioned, and possibly modified.
When setting performance criteria it is helpful to include a phrase regarding how many times the task needs to be demonstrated satisfactorily in order to be sure that the individual has truly mastered the task.

How many times does the person need to demonstrate the skill at the criterion level before you consider it mastered? **THIS IS A MEASURE THAT MUST BE DETERMINED ON A CASE BY CASE BASIS.**
CONSISTENCY AND RELIABILITY

For example:
Jim has never been without supervision in the community. Do you only use one successful time for Jim obeying rules when crossing the street as the measure for successfully completing the objective of demonstrating street safety?
Examine the following objective and answer the questions that follow.

“John will take out the trash.”

 What is the observable behavior?
 How do we know when he has mastered the task?
 What are the conditions or circumstances required?
The learning objective in this example is not complete. We know the behavior to be measured (take out the trash), but we don’t have any conditions, performance criteria or timeline for completion.

How could this learning objective be changed to make it measureable?
Examine the learning objective:

After eating dinner, John will take the trash to the dumpster five out of seven trials for four consecutive weeks by June 15, 2015.

This objective is clearly written and measurable. The objective contains the five necessary elements (Condition, Person, Behavior, Performance, and Timeline) for writing a measureable objective.
Examine the following objective and answer the questions that follow.

**Dalton will try to sit quietly for three minutes by June 15, 2015.**

- Is this learning objective measurable?
- What behavior are we measuring?
- When will we know that Dalton has mastered this objective?
The behavior to be measured seems to be “try to sit quietly”. This is not measureable. How do we know when Dalton is “trying ” to sit quietly? “Try” is not an action verb and therefore not measureable.

When will this occur? There is no condition present.

Performance criteria is not adequate. If Dalton sits quietly for 3 minutes on one occasion, is criteria met?
Examine the learning objective:

“After story time, Dalton will stay seated for 3 minutes, seven out of ten trials for three consecutive months by June 15, 2015.”

In this example all five elements for writing a measurable objective are present.
Examine the following objective and answer the questions that follow.

“After using the restroom, Sam will wash his hands with soap and water nine times out of ten by December 15, 2015.”

- Is the learning objective measureable?
- When will the criterion for mastering this task be met?
In the previous example, all five elements are present:

- **Condition** (*after using the restroom*),
- **Person** (*Sam*),
- **Measureable behavior** (*wash hands*) and
- **Criteria** (*nine times out of ten*)
- **Timeline** (*December 15, 2015*)

But we need to examine the criterion for mastering the task. If Sam washes his hands nine times, would we consider this task mastered?
Perhaps we want Sam to demonstrate this task for a longer period of time. If so we could add the phrase “for four consecutive weeks” to be sure that Sam has actually mastered the task.
IS THE OBJECTIVE MEANINGFUL?

The way an objective is written is important. If it is not written in a clear and specific way, the chances of measuring progress effectively becomes less likely.

However, even a “perfectly” written objective may not be worth implementing if it does not address issues that are important to and for the individual.
To determine if an objective is meaningful, ask yourself, “How will mastering the task in the objective increase the person’s independence?” What difference will it make if he/she learns the task or not? This may seem like a very basic issue, but there are hundreds of objectives written that are not functional – that is, they will have little or no impact on assisting the person to be less dependent on others, or to feel more comfortable as a part of his/her community, or to improve the chances that he/she will be able to work at a job that pays decent wages.
Another way to determine if the objective is functional or meaningful is to ask, “If the individual does not complete this activity, will a staff person have to do it for him/her?”

For example, if Rhonda does not sweep the kitchen floor, someone else will in all likelihood have to do it. If Lisa does not learn to shampoo her hair, someone else will need to give her assistance.
How will the objective be implemented?
In addition to the written learning objective, the program plan should include a written description of the methods that will be used to teach the skill. The training methods, which may include such things as materials needed, reinforcers to be used, schedule for implementing the program, etc. are not part of the actual objective or goal.
The objective itself tells us **WHAT** we want the person to learn. The methods tell **HOW** we are going to teach it.

Several important ideas should be considered in the development of the plan and methods that are used.
METHODS

Depending on the information that is included in the objective itself, other information that may be included in the methods section is:

- Staff responsible for implementation
- Staff responsible for monitoring
- Schedule/frequency of training
- Prompting levels, if needed
- Reinforcement schedule
We also need to know where to begin the method of teaching the task. To do this, we must understand the process as it relates to the skills, needs, necessary adaptations and preferred learning style of the individual learning the task. Remember, the objective is tailored to the individual.
METHODS

First, the task to be completed is broken down into a series of smaller steps. When this is done, it is much easier to determine what needs to be taught. Breaking down the task into a series of smaller steps is called a **task analysis**. Once the task analysis is completed, the individual would attempt to complete this series of smaller steps while being observed by a staff person.
METHODS

After the individual is observed in their attempt to complete the task, we learn what steps the individual already knows and what steps need to be taught. This difference in what the person already knows to complete the task and what needs to be learned is sometimes called a discrepancy analysis.
WHERE TO BEGIN INSTRUCTION

Pre-training Behavior

Learner’s skill and knowledge before training

Training started here is a waste of resources

Post-training Behavior

Learner’s knowledge and skill after training

Training started here causes a learning gap

The point at which instruction is started

Best point of entry for learning
The resulting discrepancy analysis would indicate which steps the person can and cannot currently complete. At this point, we can decide which steps will be taught, adapted, or modified.

For example, a task analysis for brushing teeth might include the step “remove cap from toothpaste.” If the person is unable to do this because of a physical disability, an adaptation could easily be made using a toothpaste that has a ‘pump’ container.
METHODS

In other instances, we may want to modify the step. Another important living skill is the task of putting on shoes. Clearly, tying one’s shoes is an important step to complete the task. However, the use of Velcro straps or slip-on shoes would enable the person to be more independent if tying the laces is a skill that has not been successfully taught in the past.
When evaluating the method chosen to teach the learning objective, ask yourself the following questions:

- Is there a clear outline for implementing the program, including any adaptations that will be used? In other words, if I were asked to implement this program, are the directions written in such a way that I can understand them? Is the outline specific enough so that all trainers approach the task in the same way?
Do the teaching methods take into consideration the individual’s preferences?

Different people respond to different teaching methods. Some learn better with verbal instruction. Others learn better with visual instruction. Still others require both modalities for optimal learning. Most methods will also include the kind of positive reinforcement that will be used in teaching the task, such as verbal praise, a pat on the back or some other sort of more tangible incentive.
Do the teaching methods take into account the individual’s capabilities and preferred methods of learning?

When determining what steps are to be learned, be sure that you consider the person’s capabilities and learning style to ensure that the task is broken down into logical steps that are appropriate for the individual.
EVALUATING THE METHOD

- Is the training designed to take place in a variety of natural environments?

Skills need to be taught in the environment in which they naturally occur. Teaching someone to go shopping should not be done in a simulated “store” using Monopoly money. This type of training simply makes no sense in light of what we know about how people with intellectual disabilities learn.
Shopping should be taught in local stores, and in more than one store. Crossing streets should be taught outside on community streets that the individual would be expected to cross. Teaching skills where they are actually used will assist the individual to use that skill in other similar situations.
EVALUATING THE METHOD

- Does the method include who will be responsible for implementing and monitoring the objective?

If the person implementing the objective is listed as “all staff”, then ALL STAFF should be familiar with and implement the objective. It should be more specific, such as “evening shift DSP.”

The person responsible for monitoring and the person responsible for implementing are generally two different people, although they could be the same person.
EVALUATING THE METHOD

- Does the method indicate how often data will be collected?

The methods/procedures section should indicate how often data will be collected to determine if progress is being made. This should be specifically stated such as “one time per week” and not written in vague terms such as “as needed”.
When teaching a new skill, best practice suggests that both formal and informal training sessions are warranted. The formal sessions are typically scheduled, free of distractions and data is collected. The informal sessions are completed during the other times of the day in which a natural opportunity to practice the skill occurs.
EVALUATING THE METHOD

Data isn’t needed for the informal sessions but the same methods/routine should be used to avoid creating confusion and to encourage generalization of the skill.
MEASURING PROGRESS

It is possible to have well written, functional objectives that are supported by clear and specific teaching methods based on the needs and preferences of the individual, yet have no real way to measure progress. The presence of data alone cannot insure that meaningful learning has taken place.
Have a detailed explanation of data collection procedures.  
When reviewing the data collection procedure, ask yourself:

- Would I know how to collect information about this objective?
- Will the data give me useful information about progress?
- Is the data objective rather than subjective?
MEASURING PROGRESS

- How do I gauge progress?

Once the data has been collected, it is important that it be summarized in a way which makes it easy to determine if progress is being made.

There are a number of ways to assemble data in such a way which allows you to determine progress.
Some people may use simple line graphs and some may use more complicated charts. These are not necessary; the important consideration is that you can look at the data in whatever form it may be and get a good idea if progress is improving, decreasing, or staying the same.
MEASURING PROGRESS

- Data are evaluated to determine whether the objective should be continued as written, discontinued or modified.

In situations where progress is not satisfactory, there should be a good reason for continuing the objective or the method without changes. It is not acceptable for an objective to be continued as written if there is no progress for three months. In some instances, lack of progress over a shorter period of time should lead to revision.
AMENDING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Goals and objectives are updated as needed in order to promote progress toward desired outcomes.

Generally, since long-term goals reflect outcomes that are long-range (2-5) years, they rarely change from month-to-month or even year-to-year.

Exceptions to this are goal attainment (the person achieved the goal sooner than expected) or an occurrence that made the person determine that the goal was no longer important or desirable.
AMENDING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

When revisions do need to be made, it is generally due to the fact that little or no progress is being made in the objective that the person is currently working on. Generally, if little or no progress is being made after 3 months’ time, a revision of some sort is needed. A “revision” does not mean that the entire objective needs to be abandoned; it may be that the schedule of training may need to be changed; perhaps the method of instruction requires change, etc.
AMENDING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

For example, Sandra has an objective “After dinner, Sandra will wipe the table leaving no visible residue, five out of seven trials for four consecutive weeks by 12/15/15.”

When you examine the data, you notice that Sandra is not making progress and is only completing the task an average of two out of six trials.
AMENDING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

When you look into this further, you notice that Sandra has a favorite TV show that comes on right after dinner. She is likely not completing the task because she is anxious to get into the living room and watch her show.
AMENDING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

You then change the method and decide to have her complete the task after breakfast instead. Sandra is more willing to complete the task at that time of day so data demonstrates that progress is being made.
AMENDING GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

Many times just a small change in the method can make a big difference when it comes to making progress toward achieving objectives.
Next, let's review some of the important points we learned today.
**SUMMARY OF POINTS LEARNED**

- **Goals** should be based on individual’s wants/needs/desires as reflected in the Individual Service Plan (ISP) and are very general.

- **Objectives** are an organized logical pathway to reach the goal and must be written so they are measurable.

- Short-term goals are sometimes developed to help keep focus on achieving the long-term goal.
Objectives are individualized and based on the person’s skills and needs.

A well-written leaning objective should contain the following 5 elements to assure that it is measureable:

- Condition
- Person
- Behavior
- Performance Criteria
- Timeline
In order for a *behavior* to be measureable, it must be observable. These are called ‘overt’ behaviors. They are also called ‘action verbs’.

Using more than one *performance criteria* can help the observer determine if a task has been completed in an acceptable manner. Performance criteria answer such questions as: how much? How often? How well?
SUMMARY OF POINTS LEARNED

- Objectives should be singularly stated. That is, the objective should be written so that only one behavior is to be measured.
- When teaching a new skill, best practice suggests that both formal and informal training sessions are warranted.
In addition to the written objective, the methods that will be used to teach the skill should be included. Methods may include such things as materials needed, reinforcers to be used; schedule for implementation may be included in the methods section.

Generally, if little or no progress is being made after 3 months’ time, a revision of some sort is needed. The revision may only involve the teaching methods employed.
You are finished!

You may now proceed to the test for this training module. You will earn 2 hours of continuing education (2 CEs) when you pass the test. The test can be retaken if necessary.

To take the Test, please click on the following link:
http://intranet.dhs.illinois.gov/OneNet/page.aspx?module=10&type=1020

If you have questions about the information in this training module, contact:

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