


Brought to you by  JOSSEY-BASS TEACHER

DIANE TWACHTMAN-CULLEN
JENNIFER TWACHTMAN-BASSETT

FOREWORD BY
PETER WRIGHT, ESQ.,
WRIGHTSLAW

The

I E P

from **A** *to* **Z**

HOW TO CREATE
MEANINGFUL AND MEASURABLE
GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

More Praise for *The IEP From A to Z*

“This is a must-own manual for anyone involved in IEP development and special education instruction. It goes far beyond the standard academic goals to address all the ‘knottiest’ skill deficits that make learning so challenging for students with ADHD, autism spectrum disorders, language disabilities and nonverbal learning disorder. I get asked all the time about how to write IEP goals for this population. I finally have the resource I need. This book not only provides a clear-eyed understanding of the IEP process; it also provides a multitude of concrete examples of IEP goals and objectives as well as nuggets of wisdom regarding teaching strategies. No special education team should be without this book.”

—**Peg Dawson**, Ed.D., author, *Smart But Scattered: The Revolutionary “Executive Skills” Approach to Helping Kids Reach Their Potential*

“Finally, a much-needed book to guide parents and teachers through the rigors of creating IEPs. This book offers a blueprint for constructing IEPs that will be useful and not just another exercise. The authors provide us with templates and examples that work in the real world of the classroom. Anyone involved in this process—parents, students, teachers, and other professionals—should have this book on their shelves.”

—**John J. Ratey**, M.D., clinical associate professor of psychiatry,
Harvard Medical School

“This book will be a practical and invaluable resource for professionals and parents challenged with writing meaningful and functional IEPs for a range of students with developmental challenges.”

—**Barry M. Prizant**, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, adjunct professor,
Center for the Study of Human Development, Brown University

JOSSEY-BASS TEACHER

Jossey-Bass Teacher provides educators and parents with practical knowledge and tools to create a positive and lifelong impact on student learning. We offer classroom-tested and research-based teaching resources for a variety of grade levels and subject areas. Whether you are a parent, teacher, or another professional working with children in grades K-12, we want to help you make every learning experience successful.

From ready-to-use learning activities to the latest teaching framework, our value-packed books provide insightful, practical, and comprehensive materials on the topics that matter most. We hope to become your trusted source for the best ideas from the most experienced and respected experts in the field.

THE IEP FROM A TO Z

How to Create Meaningful
and Measurable Goals and
Objectives

**DIANE
TWACHTMAN-CULLEN
JENNIFER
TWACHTMAN-BASSETT**

 **JOSSEY-BASS**
A Wiley Imprint
www.josseybass.com

Copyright © 2011 by Diane Twachtman-Cullen and Jennifer Twachtman-Bassett. All rights reserved.

Published by Jossey-Bass

A Wiley Imprint

989 Market Street, San Francisco, CA 94103-1741—www.josseybass.com

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording, scanning, or otherwise, except as permitted under Section 107 or 108 of the 1976 United States Copyright Act, without either the prior written permission of the publisher, or authorization through payment of the appropriate per-copy fee to the Copyright Clearance Center, Inc., 222 Rosewood Drive, Danvers, MA 01923, 978-750-8400, fax 978-646-8600, or on the Web at www.copyright.com. Requests to the publisher for permission should be addressed to the Permissions Department, John Wiley & Sons, Inc., 111 River Street, Hoboken, NJ 07030, 201-748-6011, fax 201-748-6008, or online at www.wiley.com/go/permissions.

Readers should be aware that Internet Web sites offered as citations and/or sources for further information may have changed or disappeared between the time this was written and when it is read.

Limit of Liability/Disclaimer of Warranty: While the publisher and author have used their best efforts in preparing this book, they make no representations or warranties with respect to the accuracy or completeness of the contents of this book and specifically disclaim any implied warranties of merchantability or fitness for a particular purpose. No warranty may be created or extended by sales representatives or written sales materials. The advice and strategies contained herein may not be suitable for your situation. You should consult with a professional where appropriate. Neither the publisher nor author shall be liable for any loss of profit or any other commercial damages, including but not limited to special, incidental, consequential, or other damages.

Jossey-Bass books and products are available through most bookstores. To contact Jossey-Bass directly call our Customer Care Department within the U.S. at 800-956-7739, outside the U.S. at 317-572-3986, or fax 317-572-4002.

Jossey-Bass also publishes its books in a variety of electronic formats. Some content that appears in print may not be available in electronic books.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Twachtman-Cullen, Diane.

The IEP from A to Z : how to create meaningful and measurable objectives / Diane Twachtman-Cullen, Jennifer Twachtman-Bassett. — 2nd ed.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-0-470-56234-5 (pbk.), 978-1-118-01565-0 (ebk.), 978-1-118-01566-7 (ebk.), 978-1-118-01567-4 (ebk.)

1. Individualized education programs—United States. 2. Children with disabilities—Education—United States. 3. Educational tests and measurements—United States. I. Twachtman-Bassett, Jennifer. II. Title.

LC4031.T94 2011

371.90973—dc22

2010051343

Printed in the United States of America

FIRST EDITION

PB Printing 10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

CONTENTS

Acknowledgments	ix
The Authors	xi
Authors' Note	xiii
Foreword	xv
Introduction	1

PART ONE: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS OF THE IEP

1	Past Perspectives and Present Practices	7
2	The “Gold Standard” for Setting Goals and Measuring Progress	15
3	Setups for Successful Performance	23
4	Methodology: No Longer a Sacred Cow	31
5	Scaffolding Student Success	41
6	The Case for Generalization	53
7	Getting to the Heart of the Matter: How to Write Meaningful Goals and Objectives	59
8	Measuring Student Performance: More than a Simple “Numbers Game”	69
9	In the Shadow of No Child Left Behind	77

**PART TWO:
MOVING FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE**

10	Tools for Assessment and Decision Making	87
11	Comprehension: The Power That Fuels Expression	97
12	The Many Different Faces of Expression	111
13	All Things Social	131
14	Executive Function: The Pinnacle of Cognitive Development	149
15	Critical Thinking: An Essential Life Skill	165
	Epilogue	179
	Appendix A: Tips for Teaching Skill Development and Generalization	183
	Appendix B: Helpful Teaching Resources	187
	References	193
	Index	197

Diane Twachtman-Cullen

To my precious grandchildren Alex, Grace, Ali, and Lindsey
You have enriched my life in *every* way imaginable.

Jennifer Twachtman-Bassett

To my precious children Grace and Lindsey
You have taught me that *every* moment counts.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

First and foremost, we would like to express our deepest gratitude to the students who inspired this work, and to their families who give eloquent voice to their children's right to a free appropriate public education. For those educators, clinicians, and enlightened administrators who have the best educational interests of their students at heart and will go "the extra mile" even if it means more paperwork, you have our unending admiration and respect. At the very top of that list is Nancy Redmond, Assistant Director of Exceptional Student Education and Student Services for the Volusia County Public Schools in Florida. It was Nancy who said, "The two of you should write a book about the IEP." We are grateful to her for the prompt, the example she has set, and her friendship. Thanks also go to the Volusia County Public Schools and ESE staff for their support of our work, and most particularly for giving us the opportunity to address IEP development for parents and school personnel. We are particularly grateful to Heather Cullen and Sandra Rodrigue for providing the critical resource material that has made such a difference in this book. Special thanks go to Pat Rasch for all of her hard work in the initial stages of this project, and to Paul Collins for his invaluable input regarding children with emotional problems. We also extend our appreciation to Alma Bair, parent extraordinaire, for her very kind comments about the original book and for her excellent suggestions and guidance regarding this one. We are deeply indebted to the wonderful crew at Jossey-Bass/Wiley: to Marjorie McAneny for seeing this project through from A to Z (pun intended!); editorial assistant Tracy Gallagher for all of her hard work; Pamela Berkman for everything she has done to see this project through to completion; Sandra Beris for her excellent copyediting (it can't be easy to edit editors!); and Michael Cook for his exquisite "we loved it the minute we saw it" cover design. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to those all-important people involved in the "end game": Rebecca Still, Dimi Berkner, Hunter Stark, Sophia Ho, and Cheryl Duksta. Finally, we extend our deepest appreciation to Peter W. D. Wright, Esquire, for his superb foreword. We are humbled to have the imprimatur of a man who

X Acknowledgments

has been at the very center of special education law in this country, and one who has done so much to help students receive appropriate education that is individualized to their needs.

Diane Twachtman-Cullen, Ph.D., CCC-SLP
Jennifer Twachtman-Bassett, M.S., CCC-SLP

THE AUTHORS

Diane Twachtman-Cullen, Ph.D., CCC-SLP, is a licensed speech-language pathologist specializing in autism spectrum conditions and related disorders. She is the author of numerous chapters and articles, as well as three books: *A Passion to Believe: Autism and the Facilitated Communication Phenomenon*; *Trevor Trevor*, a metaphor for children designed to increase the sensitivity of typical peers toward their classmates with special needs; and *How to Be a Para Pro: A Comprehensive Training Manual for Paraprofessionals*. Dr. Twachtman-Cullen is the editor-in-chief of *Autism Spectrum Quarterly* (www.ASQuarterly.com), a MAGAJOURNAL[®] that bridges the gap between the research and general autism communities. A member and past co-chairperson of the Panel of Professional Advisors of the Autism Society of America, Dr. Twachtman-Cullen serves on several other professional advisory boards and was a member of the National Behavioral Health Quality Advisory Committee for the Aetna Insurance Company. She is also the recipient of the 2006 Divine Neurotypical Award (DNA) given by the Global and Regional Asperger Syndrome Partnership, Inc. (GRASP) to an individual who has made a significant contribution to the lives of those with autism and Asperger syndrome. Dr. Twachtman-Cullen provides consultative services and training seminars internationally on a variety of topics, and participated as an invited delegate in the Shafallah Center Forum in Doha, Qatar, in 2007 and 2008. She was also an invited delegate to, and speaker at, the first-ever professional conference sponsored by the United Kingdom-based National Autistic Society, held in Manchester, England, in March 2010. Dr. Twachtman-Cullen currently serves as a panel member of and consultant to the Imperative Pictures Group in Hollywood, California. Her consultation agency, ADDCON Center, LLC is located in Higganum, Connecticut (addconcenter@snet.net).

Jennifer Twachtman-Bassett, M.S., CCC-SLP, is a speech-language pathologist and member of the Autism Society of America's Panel of Professional Advisors. She also serves on the board of directors of the Autism Society of Connecticut. Ms. Twachtman-Bassett is part of the Autism Spectrum Assessment Program at Connecticut Children's Medical Center (CCMC) where, in collaboration with the Department of Developmental Pediatrics, she is involved in the diagnosis of

children with autism spectrum disorders. Ms. Twachtman-Bassett also provides social language and problem-solving evaluations for older children with Asperger syndrome and related conditions, as well as individual therapy and parent training. She has also served on CCMC's Clinical Feeding Team. In addition, Ms. Twachtman-Bassett is the speech-language consultant at Butler Hospital in Providence, Rhode Island, where she conducts evaluations and provides strategies for addressing social and language-based aspects of problem solving and behavioral issues. She has spent many years working in both public and private special education school settings with children with autism and related disabilities, and has been a full participant in the IEP process. Ms. Twachtman-Bassett is the associate editor of *Autism Spectrum Quarterly*, where she also contributes a column on translating research into practice. She has written several articles and chapters on issues related to communication, language, and feeding issues in autism spectrum conditions, and has also presented workshops at state, regional, and national conferences.

AUTHORS' NOTE

This book is written from an educational, not a legal, perspective, and is based on our interpretation of special education law IDEA 2004 as it relates to IEP development. We acknowledge that interpretation of some aspects of the law may differ from state to state, and from school district to school district. Ours relies heavily on our opinion of what is in the best educational interests of students with special needs. This book is in no way intended to advise readers on matters of law, or to serve as a substitute for obtaining sound legal advice from qualified professionals where it is warranted or desired. References and citations to the law are rendered purely for informational purposes, and as a context for our opinions.

FOREWORD

As an attorney who has represented children with special educational needs, received a unanimous decision from the United States Supreme Court, coauthored the *Wrightslaw* special education law and advocacy books, cofounded the *Wrightslaw.com* website, and taught as an adjunct law professor, I have seen thousands of Individualized Education Programs (IEPs) and have read many books on the topic. As a person who has dyslexia and ADHD, being asked to write the Foreword for this book about IEPs is an honor.

In 2002, Diane Twachtman-Cullen and her daughter, Jennifer Twachtman-Bassett, coauthored *How Well Does Your IEP Measure Up?* In my review of that best-selling book I wrote, “Finally, an IEP book that focuses on the ‘science’ of writing clear, understandable, and measurable objectives. The authors brilliantly expose the absurdity of public school IEPs and their bizarre, fuzzy-wuzzy language.”

When I was asked to write this Foreword, I struggled with how to express the fact that the authors did an even better job with this book. This is more than a second edition to the earlier work. Although *The IEP from A to Z: How to Create Meaningful and Measurable Goals and Objectives* covers some of the same material, it is far more comprehensive.

Too often, IEPs contain meaningless goals that are useless to teachers and parents. In this book, the authors provide a framework for writing goals and short-term objectives so that they mesh with popular progress reporting schedules, such as three short-term objectives and one annual goal.

When educators and parents look for IEP goals and objectives that are specific to a particular disability, they fall into the trap of “pigeonholing” the child with a label, and fail to focus on the child’s unique educational needs. This book describes diverse deficits that occur in children with many different disabilities, without regard to “labels.” These deficits affect executive function skills, concept development, language comprehension and expression, narrative development, social cognition, critical thinking, and more.

At the same time, the parent and educator who need to address educational issues in autism spectrum disorders, attention deficit disorders, speech and

language disabilities, nonverbal learning disorder, and emotional and behavioral disorders, will find the templates for goals and objectives invaluable.

In crafting an IEP, how does a teacher or parent quantify, in an objective observable manner through data collection, something that seems impossible to quantify or describe in a goal or objective? How does a teacher or parent address the acquisition of social and behavioral skills, executive function skills, and functional performance? These areas are problematic in most IEPs. Acknowledging this, Diane and Jennifer not only focus on how to write appropriate goals and objectives but also resolve these problems with clear how-to examples.

I urge you to read this book three times. On your first read, go through the book, from cover to cover. Do not use a pen or highlighter. On the second read, the essential concepts will fall into place. Make margin notes and highlight key areas. On your third read, go back and review your notes and highlighted areas.

After you finish the third read, your approach to the next IEP, whether for one of your students or your own child, will be a new experience. As you identify the truly important goals and objectives and put pen to paper, you will feel confident that, as the authors stress throughout the book, you are helping the child acquire the skills necessary to lead a productive, independent life.

This book should be required reading for every special educator and every parent of a child with special educational needs.

Peter W. D. Wright
Attorney at Law
Publisher, Wrightslaw.com
Deltaville, Virginia

THE IEP FROM A TO Z

A journey of a thousand miles begins with the first step.

—*Chinese proverb*

INTRODUCTION

It is said that you can't judge a book by its cover. You can, however, tell a great deal about the philosophy and content of this book from its title. In the case of *The IEP from A to Z: How to Create Meaningful and Measurable Goals and Objectives*, our intent is to be both thorough and comprehensive in addressing the essential elements of the IEP; the relevant changes to the reauthorized Individuals with Disabilities Education Improvement Act of 2004 (IDEA 2004); and the ramifications of these changes for students with special needs. It is our goal then to provide IEP teams with critical information about the essential elements that go into IEP development, as well as to present specific examples of how to apply these elements in practice so that they reflect the new focus on accountability and improved outcomes in IDEA 2004.

Unfortunately, in our increasingly litigious society, holding the IEP to any standard is enough to conjure up images of due process hearings. Although we recognize that in some instances due process may be necessary when IEPs don't pass muster, we leave the task of directing parents through that arduous procedure to other writers with legal expertise. In fact, we advocate avoiding due process whenever possible. Toward this end, we offer readers a modus operandi for doing just that—a step-by-step guide to help parents, educators, clinicians, and special education supervisors to get the right education program in place at the outset, thereby avoiding the need for future legal action. Simply stated, this book is about how to write thoughtful, intelligent IEPs that deliver high-quality, need-based educational programming to students with autism spectrum disorders (ASD);