

Topic Brief

GUIDELINES for Writing Post-School Outcome Goal Statements (PSOGS) and Annual Goals for Students with Disabilities

1. A Post-School Outcome Goal Statement (PSOGS) is “**generally understood to refer to those goals that a child hopes to achieve after leaving secondary school**” (IDEA 2004 Part B Regulations, §300.320(b), discussion of Final Rule p. 46,668). Use phrases such as: “after graduation,” “upon exiting from high school,” “after high school,” “immediately following graduation,” “upon receiving a diploma,” etc.
2. A Post-School Outcome Goal Statement is **NOT the *process* of pursuing or moving toward a desired outcome**. The PSOGS must be able to be measured, counted, observed, etc.
3. **Every student MUST have a minimum of TWO PSOGSs** - one PSOGS in the area of **Postsecondary Education/Training** and one PSOGS in the area of **Employment**, and if appropriate, a third PSOGS in the area of **Independent Living Skills**.
4. For some student populations (e.g., students with more significant disabilities), it might be easier to **write one comprehensive PSOGS that encompasses the two (PSEd/Trng & Emp) or three (ILS) goal areas** on which a particular student is working. Each PSOGS may be written in the appropriate section (#5a – c) on the Transition page (page 6) of the Individualized Education Program (IEP). (See **Combination Statements** in the *Sample Post-School Outcome Goal Statements*.)
5. **For all students, the overarching goal is to help the student to become as independent, self-determined, and responsible as possible given his/her abilities, weaknesses, interests and preferences.**
6. **Postsecondary Education/Training** – can be defined as focusing on life-long learning. How can a student learn to identify an area/skill he/she wants to learn; explore ways to learn that skill (e.g., college courses, continuing education, commercial classes, community classes, online learning, tutoring); develop the skills to explore, evaluate, and access the learning environment; and develop the skills necessary to be able to actively participate in a learning environment? This could also include learning about oneself (e.g., strengths, weaknesses, interests, preferences) and learning how to plan ahead and set and evaluate goals.
7. **Employment** – can be defined as participating in competitive employment (e.g., same wages, benefits, and skill requirements as any other individual) – with or without support such as a job coach or Personal Care Assistant (PCA). If competitive employment is not a viable option (do NOT automatically assume that this is the case), then focus on tasks that an individual can do that will

assist him/her to become a useful, viable, responsible member of society or some type of community (e.g., doing chores, performing tasks for the community in which individual resides, volunteer work). A student can initially focus on ALL of the skills that would be necessary to entertain any type of employment that might include independent living/life skills for some students. Volunteer work and community service can help students to select a job or career.

8. **Independent Living Skills (ILS)** – are identified as any skill a student needs to learn to do independently, regardless of the severity or limitations of his/her disability. ILS can range from Adult Daily Living (ADL) skills such as cooking, cleaning, shopping, and daily hygiene routines to arranging and taking transportation, interpersonal skills, addressing healthcare needs, asking for assistance, self-disclosure, asking for appropriate accommodations, etc. **ILS are NOT just for students with more severe disabilities.** For example, a student with ADHD will need to know how to refill his/her medication when going off to college in another state.
9. **Many students will not know what they want to do/be “when they grow up.”** It is appropriate to start with a generic PSOGS and assist the student through annual IEP goals and objectives to explore and narrow down the post-school options that interest him/her and are a good match with his/her abilities. The goal is to help the student at least narrow down choices and explore them prior to exiting HS. Take students where they are at the moment and move them forward to explore future options for learning and employment, making a good match with their strengths, interests and preferences and also considering their weaknesses.
10. **Students also need to be realistic about their career and future education choices.** College is not for everyone nor is a college degree necessary for every type of job. However, ALL students must be prepared for life-long learning, even if it means learning new skills on the job. Some students start with an unrealistic goal (e.g., being an NBA basketball player) and may need to explore what that means before they can see that they may need to change goals or at least have a “Plan B or C or more alternatives.” Some students need to explore the option of finding a more realistic way of supporting themselves through a job and then look at how they can participate in their passions such as sports, art, music, theater, etc. in other ways.
11. Students must have **at least one annual goal and objectives in each PSOGS area** (Postsecondary Education/Training, Employment and if appropriate, Independent Living Skills. Make sure to check the correct box at the top of page 7 FIRST! Then you may select ONE other area for each annual goal if you choose.
12. Helping students to develop skills in **goal-setting, problem solving, decision making, planning, finding resources, learning about self, self-advocacy, self-determination, self-evaluation, independence, and accepting responsibility for their actions** – are just as important as specific goals in education, employment and independent living skills and can all apply to obtaining a job and life-long learning.
13. **Assist students to collect and analyze their own data.** In order to plan, set goals, and determine one’s progress toward a goal, students need to learn how to do self-assessment (collect data),

analyze the data, and use that data to refine and set new goals in all aspects of their lives. For some students this might be with regard to how they are doing in a class, or on standardized tests or perhaps keeping track of RTI or SRBI progress monitoring data.

14. **Functional and academic performance** are areas that LEAs must report about a student on the **Summary of Performance (SOP)** to assist in the transition from high school to adult life. What a student can “DO” is critical information for postsecondary education, state agencies, and employers to know in order to plan for appropriate accommodations or services needed to be successful as an adult. Make sure that students and families are aware of when the SOP will be reviewed with them.
15. **Goals and objectives for parents and family members** could be written through a student’s IEP either as a formal annual goal or as an informal suggestion on page 2 of the IEP. For example, if a family is struggling with allowing a stranger to assist a student with personal care (i.e., PCA), a goal might be to help the family assist the student to become more independent and self-reliant by learning how to work with a PCA. At times the family might be reluctant to “let go” of a child with a disability and may need assistance in exploring what life after high school might mean for their child. Such issues may be getting in the way of a student developing the skills he/she needs to move forward. With families it is critical to help them to know what resources exist in the community to help them and their adult child with a disability.
16. **Identify transition resources** including: the **Medical Home/Care-Coordination** model - (http://www.ct.gov/dph/lib/dph/family_health/children_and_youth/pdf/cmhi_contractor_contact_sheet_072209.pdf); **higher education (HEATH Resource Center** - <http://www.heath.gwu.edu/>; <http://www.thinkcollege.net/>); **CT College Disability Contacts** - <http://www.cped.uconn.edu/LD-DSS.html>); **employment (CT DOL** - <http://www.ctdol.state.ct.us/youth/main.htm>; National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability - **NCWD for Youth** - <http://www.ncwd-youth.info/>), **participating outside agencies (BRS, DDS, DMHAS, BESB** - <http://www.ct.gov/ctportal/cwp/view.asp?a=843&q=246466>), **BRS – School to Work Transition** - <http://www.ct.gov/brs/cwp/view.asp?a=3891&q=456934&brsNav=|>; **Personal Assistant Services (PAS)** (<http://www.pascenter.org/about/>; BRS – Personal Assistant Services: <http://www.ct.gov/brs/cwp/view.asp?a=3955&q=465114&brsNav=|>), **Connect-Ability** (<http://connect-ability.com>), **assistive technology (Technology Act/BRS** - <http://www.cttechact.com/>, **NEAT Marketplace/NEAT Center at Oak Hill** - <http://www.neatmarketplace.org/>, **Disability Resource Center of Fairfield County** - <http://www.drcfc.org/>); **transportation** (<http://connect-ability.com>); **benefits (BRS/Connect to Work Center** - <http://www.ct.gov/connecttowork/site/default.asp?>; and the **Job Accommodation Network** (<http://askjan.org/>). Just to name a few . . .
17. Make sure to **incorporate district personnel who can inform the development of the student’s IEP** in transition planning PPTs, such as school counselors, social workers, school nurses, OT, PT, Speech and Language, or career center staff.

Additional SOGS/Postsecondary Goal information can be found at: The National Secondary Transition Technical Assistance Center: <http://www.nsttac.org/>